This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google books

https://books.google.com

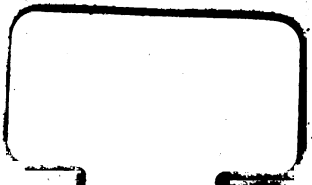


Digitized by Google

Presented to the
Univ. of Michigan
by
Henry C. Granger
Class of 71.

GENERAL LIBRARY
OF
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

PRESENTED BY
Rev. Henry C. Granger
Class of 1871 Jan. 25 1900



Digitized by Google

BX
8915
.F58
1770

Sept 9 1770

1 Humphries his book

3 Vollom

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

353

MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

Late MINISTER of the GOSPEL at *Dartmouth* in *Devon*.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An Alphabetical TABLE of the principal Matters contained in the Whole.

THE EIGHT EDITION.

VOL. III.

PAISLEY:

Printed by A. WEIR and A. M'LEAN.

And sold at the Shop of A. WEIR, near the Cross.

MDCCLXX.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

The METHOD of GRACE.

SERMON XXVIII.

Gal. v. 24. "And they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the "fleſh, with the affections and luſts." *page* 1

SERMON XXIX.

Of the Imitation of Chriſt, in Holineſs of Life, and the neceſſity of it in all Believers.

1 John ii. 6. "He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf "alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked," 18

SERMON XXX.

1 John ii. 6. "He that ſaith he abideth in him, ought himſelf "alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked," 36

SERMON XXXI.

Of the State of ſpiritual Death, and the Miſery thereof.

Eph. v. 14. "Wherefore he ſaith, Awake thou that ſleepeſt, "and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light," 45

SERMON XXXII.

The Condemnation of Unbelievers, opened and applied.

1 John iii. 18. "——But he that believeth not, is condemned "already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the "only begotten Son of God." 55

SERMON XXXIII.

Of the Aggravation of the Sin, and Puniſhment of Unbelief under the Light of the Goſpel.

John iii. 19. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come

Digitized by Google

Pag.

" into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light,
" becauſe their deeds were evil," 64

SERMON XXXIV.

The blinding Policies of Satan opened, as the Cauſe of Unbelief, and Forerunner of Deſtruction.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. " But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them
" that are loſt; in whom the God of this world hath blinded
" the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the
" glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould
" ſhine unto them," 75

SERMON XXXV.

2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. " But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them
" that are loſt," &c. 89

A TREATISE of the SOUL of MAN.

The Epiſtle Dedicatory, 101

The PREFACE, 108

DISCOURSE I.

Gen. ii. 7. " And the Lord God formed man out of the duſt
" of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of
" life; and man became a living ſoul," 114

DISCOURSE II.

Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11. " And when he had opened the fifth ſeal,
" I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain for
" the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held.
" And they cried with a loud voice, ſaying, How long, O
" Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our
" blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white
" robes were given unto every one of them, and it was ſaid
" unto them, that they ſhould reſt yet for a little ſeaſon,
" until their fellow-ſervants alſo, and their brethren, that
" ſhould be killed as they were, ſhould be fulfilled," 187

Digitized by Google

Pag.

DISCOURSE III.

Eph. v. 29. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but "nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the "church," 223

DISCOURSE IV.

2 Pet. i. 13, 14. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this "tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance. "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, "even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me," 245

DISCOURSE V.

Heb. xii. 23. "——And to the Spirits of just men made per- "fect," 262

DISCOURSE VI.

1 Pet. iii. 19. "By which also he went and preached unto the "spirits in prison," 381

DISCOURSE VII.

Matth. xvi. 26. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain "the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a "man give in exchange for his soul?" 407

DISCOURSE VIII.

Eph. v. 16. "—Redeeming the time (or opportunity) because "the days are evil," 483

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE METHOD OF GRACE.

* *

SERMON XXVIII.

GAL. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

From hence our observation was,

THAT a saving interest in Christ, may be regularly and strongly inferred and concluded, from the mortification of the flesh, with its affections and lusts.

Having opened the nature, and necessity of mortification in the former sermon, and shewn how regularly a saving interest in Christ may be concluded from it; we now proceed to apply the whole, by way of

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.
3. Direction.
4. Examination.
5. Consolation.

First use, for information.

Infer. 1. If they that be Christ's have crucified the flesh, *Then the life of Christians is no idle or easy life:* the corruptions of his heart continually fill his hands with work, with work of the most difficult nature; sin-crucifying work, which the scripture calls the cutting off the right hand, and plucking out of the right eye: sin-crucifying work is hard work, and it is constant work throughout the life of a Christian; there is no time nor place freed from this conflict; every occasion stirs corruption, and every stirring of corruption calls for mortification: corruptions work in our very best duties, Rom. vii. 23. and put the Christian upon mortifying labours. The world and the devil are great enemies, and fountains of many temptations to believers, but not like the corruptions of our own hearts; they only tempt objectively and externally; but these tempt internally, and therefore much more dangerous; they only tempt at times and seasons; these continually, at all times and seasons: besides, whatever Satan, or the world attempts upon us, would be altogether ineffectual were it not for our own corruptions, John xiv.

Digitized by Google

30. So that the corruptions of our own hearts, as they give us most danger, so they must give us more labour; our life and this labour must end together; for sin is long a dying in the best heart: those that have been many years exercised in the study of mortification, may haply feel the same corruption tempting and troubling them now, which put them into tears, and many times brought them to their knees twenty or forty years ago. It may be said of sin as it was of Hannibal, that active enemy; that it will never be quiet, whether conquering or conquered; and until sin cease working the Christian must not cease mortifying

Infer. 2. If mortification be the great work of a Christian, *then certainly those that give the corruptions of Christians an occasion to revive, must needs do them a very ill office:* they are not our best friends that stir the pride of our hearts by the flattery of their lips. The graces of God in others, I confess, are thankfully to be owned, and under discouragements, and contrary temptations, to be wisely and modestly spoken of; but the strongest Christians do scarcely shew their own weakness in any one thing more than they do in bearing their own praises. Christian, thou knowest thou carriest gunpowder about thee, desire those that carry fire to keep at a distance from thee; 'tis a dangerous *crisis* when a proud heart meets with flattering lips; *auferte ignem*, &c. take away the fire, (said a holy divine of Germany, when his friend commended him upon his death-bed) for I have yet combustible matter about me; faithful, seasonable, discreet reproofs are much more safe to us, and advantageous to our mortifying work; but alas, how few have the boldness or wisdom duly to administer them? It is said of Alexander, that he bid a philosopher (who had been long with him) to be gone; for, said he, so long thou hast been with me, and never reproved me; which must needs be thy fault; for either thou sawest nothing in me worthy of reproof, which argues thy ignorance; or else, thou durst not reprove me, which argues thy unfaithfulness. A wise and faithful reprover is of singular use to him that is heartily engaged in the design of mortification; such a faithful friend, or some malicious enemy, must be helpful to us in that work.

Infer. 3. Hence it follows, *that manifold and successive afflictions are no more than what is necessary for the best of Christians;* the mortification of our lusts requires them all, be they never so many, 1 Pet. i. 5. "If need be, ye are in heaviness;" it is no more than need, that one loss should follow another, to mortify an earthly heart; for so intensely are our affections set upon the world, that it is not one, or two, or many checks of

Digitized by Google

providence, that will suffice to wean and alienate them. Alas, the earthlineſs of our hearts will take all this, it may be much more than this, to purge them: the wiſe God ſees it but neceſſary to permit frequent diſcoveries of our own weakneſs, and to let looſe the tongues of many enemies upon us, and all little enough to pull down our pride, and the vanity that is in our hearts: Chriſtian, how difficult ſoever it be for thee to bear it; yet the pride of thy heart requires all the ſcoffs and jeers, all the calumnies and reproaches, that ever the tongues or pens of thy bittereſt enemies, or miſtaken friends, have at any time thrown upon thee. Such rank weeds as grow in our hearts, will require hard froſts and very ſharp weather to rot them; the ſtraying bullock needs a heavy clog, and ſo doth a Chriſtian, whom God will keep within the bounds and limits of his commandments, Pſal. cxix. 67. Dan. xi. 35.

Infer. 4. If they that be Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh *, *Then the number of real Chriſtians is very ſmall.* It is true, if all that ſeem to be meek, humble, and heavenly, might paſs for Chriſtians, the number would be great; but if no more muſt be accounted Chriſtians, than thoſe who crucify the fleſh, with its affections and luſts, O how ſmall is the number! For, O how many be there under the Chriſtian name, that pamper and indulge their luſts, that ſecretly hate all that faithfully reprove them, and really affect none but ſuch as feed their luſts, by praiſing and admiring them? How many that make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil its luſts, who cannot endure to have their corruptions croſſed? How many are there that ſeem very meek and humble, until an occaſion be given them to ſtir up their paſſion, and then you ſhall ſee in what degree they are mortified: the flint is a cold ſtone, till it be ſtruck, and then it is all fiery. I know the beſt of Chriſtians are mortified but in part; and ſtrong corruptions are oftentimes found in very eminent Chriſtians; but they love them not ſo well as to purify for them; to protect, defend, and countenance them; nor dare they ſecretly hate ſuch as faithfully reprove them: as many thouſands that go under the name of Chriſtians do. Upon the account of mortification it is ſaid, Mat. vii. 13. "Narrow is "the way, and ſtrait is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few "there be that find it."

Infer. 5. If they that be Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh, *i. e.*

* He who is not crucified with Chriſt, and who is not a member of Chriſt, is not ſaved by his croſs. *Proſper.*

Digitized by Google

Mortification is their daily work and ſtudy; *then how falſely are Chriſtians charged as troublers of the world, and diſturbers of the civil peace, and tranquillity of the times, and places they live in?* Juſtly may they retort the charge, as Elijah did to Ahab, "It is not I that trouble Iſrael, but thou and thy father's houſe:" It is not the holy, meek, and humble Chriſtians that put the world into confuſion: this is done by the profane and atheiſtical; or by the deſigning and hypocritical world, and laid at the innocent Chriſtian's door; as all the public calamities which from the immediate hand of God, or by foreign, or domeſtic enemies befel Rome, were conſtantly charged upon Chriſtians; and they condemned and puniſhed, for what the righteous hand of God inflicted, on the working heads of the enemies of that ſtate, without their privity, contrived. The apoſtle James propounds, and anſwers a queſtion, very pertinent to this diſcourſe, James iv. 1. "From whence come wars and fightings among "you? Come they not hence, even of your luſts that war in "your members?" O if all men did but ſtudy mortification and ſelf-denial, and live as much at home in the conſtant work of their own hearts, as ſome men do; what tranquillity and peace, what bleſſed halcyon-days ſhould we quickly ſee! it is true, Chriſtians are always fighting and quarrelling, but it is with themſelves, and their own corrupt hearts and affections; they hate no enemy but ſin; they thirſt for the blood and ruin of none but of that enemy; they are ambitious of no victory, but what is over the corruptions of their own hearts; they carry no grudge except it be againſt this enemy, ſin: and yet theſe are the men who are the moſt ſuſpected and charged of diſturbing the times they live in; juſt as the wolf accuſed the lamb, which was below him, for puddling and defiling the ſtream. But there will be a day, when God will clear up the innocency and integrity of his miſtaken and abuſed ſervants; and the world ſhall ſee, it was not preaching, and praying, but drinking, ſwearing, profaneneſs, and enmity unto true godlineſs, which diſturbed and broke the tranquillity, and quietneſs of the times: mean time let innocency commit itſelf unto God, who will protect, and in due time vindicate the ſame.

Infer. 6. If they that be Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh, *Then whatſoever religion, opinion, or doctrine doth in its own nature countenance and encourage ſin, is not of Chriſt.* The doctrine of Chriſt every where teacheth mortification: the whole ſtream of the goſpel runs againſt ſin; the doctrine it teacheth is holy, pure and heavenly, it hath no tendency to extol corrupt nature, and feed its pride, by magnifying its freedom and pow-

Digitized by Google

er, or by ſtamping the merit and dignity of the blood of Chriſt upon its works and performances; it never makes the death of Chriſt a *cloke* to cover ſin, but an *inſtrument* to deſtroy it. And whatſoever doctrine it is which nouriſhes the pride of nature, to the diſparagement of grace, or encourages licentiouſneſs and fleſhly luſt, is not the doctrine of Chriſt, but a ſpurious off-ſpring begotten by Satan upon the corrupt nature of man.

Infer. 7. If mortification be the great buſineſs and character of a Chriſtian, *Then that condition is moſt eligible and deſireable by Chriſtians, which is leaſt of all expoſed to temptation,* Prov. xxx. 8. "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed "me with food convenient." That holy judicious man was well aware of the danger lurking in both extremes, and how near they border upon deadly temptations, and approach the very precipiece of ruin, that ſtand upon either ground: few Chriſtians have any head ſtrong and ſteady enough to ſtand upon the pinacle of wealth and honour; nor is it every one that can grapple with poverty and contempt. A mediocrity is the Chriſtians beſt external ſecurity, and therefore moſt deſirable: and and yet how do the corruption, the pride and ignorance of our hearts graſp and covet that condition which only ſerves to warm and nouriſh our luſts, and make the work of mortification much more difficult? 'Tis well for us, that our wiſe Father leaves us not to our own choice, that he frequently daſhes our earthly projects, and diſappoints our fond expectations. If children were left to carve for themſelves, how often would they cut their own fingers?

Infer. 8. If mortification be the great buſineſs of a Chriſtian, *then Chriſtian fellowſhip, and ſociety duly managed, and improved, muſt needs be of ſingular uſe, and ſpecial advantage to the people of God.* For thereby we have the friendly help and aſſiſtance of many other hands, to carry on our great deſign, and help us in our moſt difficult buſineſs; if corruption be too hard for us, others, this way, come in to our aſſiſtance, Gal. vi. 1. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpi-"ritual reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs." If temptations prevail, and overbear us that we fall under ſin, it is a ſpecial mercy to have the reproofs, and counſels of our brethren, who will not ſuffer ſin to reſt upon us, Levit. xix. 17. Whilſt we are ſluggiſh and ſleepy, others are vigilant, and careful for our ſafety: The humility of another, reproves and mortifies my pride: The activity, and livelineſs of another, awakens and quickens my deadneſs: The prudence, and gravity of another, detects and cures my levity and vanity: The heavenlineſs, and

Digitized by Google

ſpirituality of another, may be exceeding uſeful, both to reprove, and heal the earthlineſs, and ſenſuality of my heart. Two are better than one, but wo unto him that is alone. The devil is well aware of this great advantage, and therefore ſtrikes with ſpecial malice againſt embodied Chriſtians, who are as a well diſciplined army, whom he therefore more eſpecially endeavours to rout, and ſcatter by perſecutions, that thereby particular Chriſtians may be deprived of the ſweet advantages of mutual ſociety.

Infer. 9. *How deeply hath ſin fixed its roots, in our corrupt nature, that it ſhould be the conſtant work of a Chriſtian's whole life, to mortify and deſtroy it?* God hath given us many excellent helps, his Spirit within us, variety of ordinances and duties are alſo appointed as inſtruments of mortification: And from the very day of regeneration unto the laſt moment of diſſolution, the Chriſtian is daily at work, in the uſe of all ſanctified means, external and internal, yet can never dig up, and deſtroy corruption at the root all his life long. The moſt eminent Chriſtians, of longeſt ſtanding in religion, who have ſhed millions of tears for ſin, and poured out many thouſand prayers for the mortification of it, do, after all, find the remains of their old diſeaſe, that there is ſtill life, and ſtrength in thoſe corruptions which they have given ſo many wounds unto in duty. O the depth, and ſtrength of ſin! which nothing can ſeparate from us, but that which ſeparates our ſouls and bodies. And upon that account, the day of a believer's death, is better than the day of his birth. Never till then, do we put off our armour, ſheath our ſword, and cry victory, victory.

Second uſe, for exhortation.

If they that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh, *&c.* Then as ever we hope to make good our claim to Chriſt, let us give all diligence to mortify ſin, in vain elſe are all our pretences unto union with him. This is the great work, and diſcriminating character of a believer. And ſeeing it is the main buſineſs of life, and great evidence for heaven, I ſhall therefore preſs you to it by the following motives and conſiderations.

1 *Motive.* And firſt, methinks the comfort, and ſweetneſs, reſulting from mortification, ſhould effectually perſuade every believer to more diligence about it. There is a double ſweetneſs in mortification, one in the nature of the work, as it is a duty, a ſweet chriſtian duty; another as it hath reſpect to Chriſt, and is evidential of our union with him. In the firſt conſideration there is a wonderful ſweetneſs in mortification, for doſt thou not feel a bleſſed calmneſs, chearineſs, and tranquillity in thy con-

Digitized by Google

ſcience, when thou haſt faithfully repelled temptations, ſucceſsfully reſiſted and overcome thy corruptions? Doth not God ſmile upon thee; conſcience encourage, and approve thee? Haſt thou not an heaven within thee? whilſt others feel a kind of hell in the deadly gripes, and bitter accuſations of their own conſciences: are covered with ſhame, and filled with horrors. But then, conſider it alſo as an evidence of the ſoul's intereſt in Chriſt, as my text conſiders it; and what an heaven upon earth muſt then be found in mortification! Theſe endeavours of mine to ſubdue and mortify my corruptions, plainly ſpeak the Spirit of God in me, and my being in Chriſt; and O what is this! What heart hath largeneſs, and ſtrength enough to receive and contain the joy, and comfort which flow from a cleared intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt! Certainly, Chriſtians, the tranquillity, and comfort of your whole life depends upon it: and what is life without the comfort of life? Rom. viii. 13. "If ye through the Spirit do "mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live," (*i. e.*) you ſhall live a ſerene, placid, comfortable life; for it is corruption unmortified which clouds the face of God, and breaks the peace of his people, and conſequently imbitters the life a Chriſtian.

2. *Motive.* As the comfort of your own lives, which is much, ſo your inſtrumental fitneſs for the ſervice of God, which is much more, depends upon the mortification of your ſins, 2 Tim. ii. 21. "If a man therefore purge himſelf from theſe, he ſhall be "a veſſel unto honour; ſanctified and meet for the Maſter's "uſe, and prepared unto every good work." Where is the mercy of life, but in the uſefulneſs and ſerviceableneſs of it unto God? It is not worth while to live ſixty, or ſeventy years in the world, to eat and drink, to buy and ſell, to laugh and cry, and then go down to the place of ſilence. So far as any man lives to God, an uſeful, ſerviceable life to his praiſe and honour; ſo far only, and no farther doth he anſwer the end of his being. But it is the purged, mortified ſoul which is the veſſel of honour, prepared, and meet for the Maſter's uſe. Let a proud, or an earthly heart be employed in any ſervice for God, and you ſhall find that ſuch an heart will both ſpoil the work, by managing it for a ſelf-end as Jehu did; and then devour the praiſe of it by a proud boaſt: *Come ſee my zeal.* When the Lord would employ the prophet Iſaiah in his work and ſervice, his iniquity was firſt purged; and after that he was employed, Iſa. vi. 6, 7, 8. Sin is the ſoul's ſickneſs, a conſumption upon the inner man; and we know that languiſhing conſumptive perſons are very unfit to be employ'd in difficult and ſtrenuous labours: Mortification, ſo far as it prevails, cures the diſeaſe, recovers our

Digitized by Google

ſtrength, and enables us for ſervice to God in our generations.

3. *Motive.* Your ſtability, and ſafety in the hour of temptation, depends upon the ſucceſs of your mortifying endeavours. Is it then a valuable mercy in your eyes to be kept upright, and ſtedfaſt in the critical ſeaſon of temptation, when Satan ſhall be wreſtling with you for the crown, and prize of eternal life! Then give diligence to mortify your corruptions. Temptation is a ſiege, Satan is the enemy without the walls, labouring to force an entrance; natural corruptions are the traitors within, that hold correſpondence with the enemy without, and open the gate of the ſoul to receive him. It was the covetouſneſs of Judas his heart which overthrew him in the hour of temptation. They are our fleſhly luſts which go over unto Satan in the day of battle, and *fight againſt our ſouls*, 1 Pet. ii. 11. the corruptions (or infectious atoms which fly up and down the world in times of temptation, as that word μιασματα, 2 Pet. ii. 20. imports) are through luſts, 2 Pet. i. 4. It is the luſt within, which gives a luſtre to the vanities of the world without, and thereby makes them ſtrong temptations to us, 1 John ii. 16. Mortify therefore your corruptions, as ever you expect to maintain your ſtation in the day of trial: cut off thoſe advantages of your enemy, leſt by them he cut off your ſouls, and all your hopes from God.

4. *Motive.* As temptations will be irreſiſtable, ſo afflictions will be unſupportable to you without mortification. My friends, you live in a mutable world, providence daily rings the changes, in all the kingdoms, cities, and towns, all the world over. You that have huſbands or wives to day, may be left deſolate to-morrow: You that have eſtates, and children now, may be bereaved of both before you are aware. Sickneſs will tread upon the heel of health, and death will aſſuredly follow life, as the night doth the day. Conſider with yourſelves, are you able to bear the loſs of your ſweet enjoyments with patience? Can you think upon the parting hour without ſome tremblings? O get a heart mortified to all theſe things, and you will bleſs a taking, as well as a giving God. It is the living world, not the crucified world, that raiſes ſuch tumults in our ſouls in the day of affliction. How chearful was holy Paul under all his ſufferings! and what think you gave him that peace and chearfulneſs, but his mortification to the world? Phil. iv. 12. "I know both how to be abaſed, and I know how "to abound; every where, and in all things I am inſtructed, "both to be full, and to be hungry, both to abound, and ſuf-"fer need." Job was the mirror of patience, in the greateſt

Digitized by Google

ſhock of calamity, and what made him ſo, but the mortifiedneſs of his heart, in the fulleſt enjoyment of all earthly things? Job xxxi. 25.

5. *Motive.* The reputation, and honour of religion, is deeply concerned in the mortification of the profeſſors of it: For unmortified profeſſors will, firſt or laſt, be the ſcandals, and reproaches of it. The profeſſion of religion may give credit to you, but to be ſure you will never bring credit to it. All the ſcandals, and reproaches that fall upon the name of Chriſt in this world, flow from the fountain of unmortified corruption. Judas and Demas, Hymeneus and Philetus, Ananias and Saphira ruined themſelves, and became rocks of offence to others, by this means. If ever you will keep religion ſweet, labour to keep your hearts mortified and pure.

6. *Motive.* To conclude, what hard work will you have in your dying hour, except you get a heart mortified to this world, and all that is in it? Your parting hour is like to be a dreadful hour, without the help of mortification. Your corruptions, like glew, faſten your affections to the world, and how hard will it be for ſuch a man to be ſeparated by death? O what a bitter, and doleful parting have carnal hearts from carnal things! whereas the mortified ſoul can receive the meſſengers of death without trouble, and as chearfully put off the body at death, as a man doth his cloaths at night: Death need not pull and hale; ſuch a man goes half way to meet it, Phil. i. 23. "I deſire to "be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better." Chriſtian, wouldſt thou have thy death-bed ſoft and eaſy; wouldſt thou have an εὐθανασια, as the *philoſopher* deſired for himſelf, an eaſy death, without pain or terror; then get a mortified heart: the *chirurgeon's* knife is ſcarce felt, when it cuts off a mortified member.

Third uſe, for direction.

Are you convinced, and fully ſatisfied of the excellency and neceſſity of mortification, and inquiſitive after the means, in the uſe whereof, it may be attained? then, for your help and encouragement, I will, in the next place, offer my beſt aſſiſtance, in laying down the rules for this work.

Rule 1. If ever you will ſucceed, and proſper in the work of mortification, then get, and daily exerciſe more faith. Faith is the great inſtrument of mortification: "This is the victory, (or "ſword by which the victory is won, the inſtrument) by which "you overcome the world, even your faith," 1 John v. 4. By faith alone eternal things are diſcovered to your ſouls, in

Digitized by Google

their reality and excelling glory, and these are the preponderating things, for the sake whereof, self-denial and mortification becomes easy to believers; by opposing things eternal to things temporal, we resist Satan, 1 Pet. v. 8. This is the shield by which we quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, Eph. vi. 16.

Rule 2. Walk in daily communion with God, if ever you will mortify the corruptions of nature; that is the apostle's own prescription, Gal. i. 16. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, "and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Spiritual and frequent communion with God, gives manifold advantages for the mortification of sin: as it is a bright glass wherein the holiness of God, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as it is opposite thereunto, are most clearly and sensibly discovered, than which, scarce any thing can set a keener edge of indignation upon the spirit of a man against sin. Besides, all communion with God is assimilating, and transformative of the soul into his image; it leaves also a heavenly relish and savour upon the soul; it darkens the lustre and glory of all earthly things, by presenting to the soul a glory which excelleth: it marvellously improves, and more deeply radicates sanctification in the soul; by all which means it becomes singularly useful and successful in the work of mortification.

Rule 3. Keep your consciences under the awe and in the fear of God continually, as ever you hope to be successful in the mortification of sin. The fear of God is the great preservative from sin, without which all the external rules and helps in the world signify nothing: "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from "evil," Prov. xvi. 6. Not only from external and more open evils, which the fear of men, as well as the fear of God, may prevent, but from the most secret and inward evils, which is a special part of mortification, Lev. xix. 14. It keeps men from those evils, which no eye nor ear of man can possibly discover. The fear of the Lord breaks temptations, baited with pleasure, with profit, and with secrecy. In a word, if ever you be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, it must be by the fear of God, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

* *Rule* 4. Study the vanity of the creature, and labour to get true notions of the emptiness and transitoriness thereof; if

* Readers, if ever you would have a true sight of the emptiness and vanity of the creature, and get a mortified heart to the world, now is the time; for at this day the providence of God hath withered all the fading flowers of earthly delights, and shewed you the world's back parts, as it is departing from you.

Digitized by Google

ever you will attain to the mortification of your affections towards it. It is the false picture and image of the world, in our fancy, that crucifies us with so many cares, fears and sollicitudes about it: and it is the true picture and image of the world, represented to us, in the glass of the word, which greatly helps to crucify our affections to the world. O if we did but know and believe three things about the world, we should never be so fond of it as we are, *viz.* the fading, defiling, and destroying nature of it. The best and sweetest enjoyments of the world, are but fading flowers and withered grass, Isa. xiv. 6. James i. 10, 11. yea, it is of a defiling, as well as a fading nature, 1 John v. 19. it lies in wickedness, it spreads universal infection among *all* mankind, 2 Pet. i. 4. yea, it destroys, as well as defiles multitudes of souls, *drowning men in perdition*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. Millions of souls will wish, to eternity, they had never known the riches, pleasures, or honours of it. Were this believed, how would men slacken their pace, and cool themselves in the violent and eager pursuit of the world! This greatly tends to promote mortification.

Rule 5. Be careful to cut off all the occasions of sin, and keep at the greatest distance from temptations, if ever you will mortify the deeds of the body: The success, and prevalency of sin, mainly depends upon the wiles, and stratagems it makes use of, to ensnare the incautious soul; therefore the apostle bids us keep off, at the greatest distance. 1 Thes. v. 22. "Abstain "from all appearances of evil." Prov. viii. 8. "Come not nigh "unto the door of her house." He that dares venture to the very brink of sin, discovers but little light in his understanding, and less tenderness in his conscience; he neither knows sin, nor fears it, as he ought to do: And it is usual with God to chastise self-confidence, by shameful lapses into sin.

Rule 6. If you will successfully mortify the corruptions of your nature, never engage against them in your own single strength, Eph. vi. 10. When the apostle draws forth Christians into the field, against sin, he bids them "be strong in the "Lord, and in the power of his might." O remember what a mere feather thou art, in the gusts of temptation; call to mind the height of Peter's confidence, "though all men forsake thee, "yet will not I;" and the depth of his fall, shame and sorrow. A weak Christian, trembling in himself, depending by faith, upon God, and graciously assisted by him, shall be able to stand, against the shock of temptation, when the bold, and confident

Digitized by Google

reſolutions of others (like Pendleton in our Engliſh ſtory) ſhall melt away, as wax before the flames.

Rule 7. Set in with the mortifying deſign of God, in the day of thine affliction; ſanctified afflictions are ordered, and preſcribed in heaven, for the purging of our corruptions. Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this, therefore, ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, "and this is all the fruit, to take away his ſin." It is a fair glaſs to repreſent the evil of ſin, and the vanity of the creature, to imbitter the world, and diſguſt thy affections toward it: Fall in, therefore, with the gracious deſign of God; follow every affliction with prayer, that God would follow it with his bleſſing. God kills thy comforts, out of no other deſign but to kill thy corruptions with them; wants are ordained to kill wantonneſs, poverty is appointed to kill pride, reproaches are permitted to pull down ambition: Happy is the man who underſtands, approves, and heartily ſets in with the deſign of God, in ſuch afflicting providences.

Rule 8. Bend the ſtrength of your duties, and endeavours, againſt your proper, and ſpecial ſin; it is in vain to lop off branches, whilſt this root of bitterneſs remains untouched: This was David's practice, Pſal. xviii. 23. "I was, alſo, upright be-"fore him, and I kept myſelf from mine iniquity." We obſerve, in natural men, that one faculty is more vigorous than another; we find, in nature, that one ſoil ſuits with ſome ſorts of ſeed, rather than another: And every believer may find his nature, and conſtitution, inclining him to one ſin, rather than another: As graces, ſo corruptions exceed one another, even in the regenerate. The power of ſpecial corruptions ariſes from our conſtitutions, education, company, cuſtom, callings, and ſuch like occaſions; but from whenceſoever it comes, this is the ſin that moſt endangers us, moſt eaſily beſets us; and, according to the progreſs of mortification in that ſin, we may ſafely eſtimate the degrees of mortification in other ſins: Strike, therefore, at the life, and root of your own iniquity.

Rule 9. Study the nature, and great importance of thoſe things which are to be won, or loſt, according to the ſucceſs, and iſſue of this conflict: Your life is a race, eternal glory is the prize, grace and corruption are the antagoniſts, and, accordingly as either finally prevails, eternal life is won, or loſt. 1 Cor. ix. 24. "Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, "but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." This condition will make mortification appear the moſt rational, and neceſſary thing to you, in the whole world. Shall I loſe heaven for indulging the fleſh, and humouring a wanton appe-

Digitized by Google

tite! God forbid. "I keep under my body (ſaith Paul) and "bring it into ſubjection; leſt that by any means, when I "have preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a caſt-away," 1 Cor. ix. 28.

Rule 10. Accuſtom your thoughts to ſuch meditations as are proper to mortify ſin in your affections, elſe all endeavours, to mortify it, will be but faint, and languid: To this purpoſe, I ſhall recommend the following meditations, as proper means to deſtroy the intereſt of ſin.

Meditation 1. Conſider the evil that is in ſin, and how terrible the appearances of God will one day be, againſt thoſe that obey it, in the luſt thereof. Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of God "is revealed from heaven, againſt all ungodlineſs, and unrighteouſneſs of men." 1 Theſ. i. 7, 8, 9. "The Lord Jeſus "ſhall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and "that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: who ſhall "be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of "the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Let your thoughts dwell much upon the conſideration of the fruits, and conſequences of ſin; it ſhews its faireſt ſide to you, in the hour of temptation. O but conſider how it will look upon you, in the day of affliction, Num. xxii. 23. in that day your ſin will find you out: Think what its aſpect will be, in a dying hour. 1 Cor. xv. 56. "The ſting of death is ſin." Think what the frightful remembrances of it will be, at the bar of judgment, when Satan ſhall accuſe, conſcience ſhall upbraid, God ſhall condemn, and everlaſting burnings ſhall avenge the evil of it: ſuch thoughts as theſe are mortifying thoughts.

Meditation 2. Think what it coſt the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to expiate the guilt of ſin, by ſuffering the wrath of the great and terrible God for it, in our room: the meditations of a crucified Chriſt, are very crucifying meditations unto ſin, Gal. vi. 14. he ſuffered unſpeakable things for ſin; it was a divine wrath which lay upon his ſoul for it; that wrath, of which the prophet ſaith, Nahum i. 5, 6. "The mountains quake at him, and the hills "melt. Who can ſtand before his indignation? And who can "abide in the fierceneſs of his anger? his fury is poured out "like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him." It was unmixed, and unallayed wrath, poured out in the fulneſs of it, even to the laſt drop; and ſhall we be ſo eaſily drawn to the commiſſion of thoſe ſins, which put Chriſt under ſuch ſufferings? O do but read ſuch ſcriptures as theſe, Luke xxii. 44. Mat. xxvi. 36, 37. Mark xiv. 33. and ſee what a plight ſin put

Digitized by Google

the Lord of glory into; how the wrath of God put him into a sore amazement, a bloody sweet, and made his soul heavy, even unto death.

Meditation 3. Consider what a grief and wound the sins of believers are to the Spirit of God, Eph. iv. 30. Ezek. xvi. 43. Isa. lxiii. 10. O how it grieves the holy Spirit of God! Nothing is more contrary to his nature. "O do not that abominable "thing which I hate," saith the Lord, Jer. xliv. 4. Nothing obstructs, and crosses the sanctifying design of the Spirit, as sin doth; defacing and spoiling the most rare, and admirable workmanship, that ever God wrought in this world; violating all the engagements laid upon us by the love of the Father, by the death of his Son, by the operations of his Spirit, in all his illuminations, convictions, compunctions, renovation, preservation, obsignation, and manifold consolations. Lay this meditation upon thy heart, believer, and say, *Sicne rependis?* dost thou thus requite the Lord, O my ungrateful heart, for all his goodness? Is this the fruit of his temporal, spiritual, common, and peculiar mercies, which are without number?

Meditation 4. Consider with yourselves, that no real good, either of profit, or pleasure, can result from sin; you can have no pleasure in it, whatever others may have, it being against your new nature; and as for that brutish pleasure, and evanid joy, which others have in sin, it can be but for a moment; for either they must repent, or not repent: if they do repent, the pleasure of sin will be turned into the gall of asps, here; if they do not repent, it will terminate in everlasting howlings, hereafter. That is a smart question, Rom. vi. 21. "What fruit had "ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end "of those things is death." You that are believers, must never expect any pleasure in sin; for you can neither commit it, without regret; nor reflect upon it, without shame, and confusion: expect no better consequents of sin, than the woundings of conscience, and dismal cloudings of the face of God; that is all the profit of sin. O let these things sink into your heart.

Meditation 5. Consider what the damned suffer for those sins which the devil now tempteth you to commit; it hath deprived them of all good, all outward good, Luke xvi. 25. all spiritual good, Mat. xxv. 41. and of all hope of enjoying any good, for ever: and as it hath deprived them of all good, so it hath remedilesly plunged them into all positive misery: misery from without, the wrath of God being come upon them to the uttermost; and misery from within, for *their worm dieth not*, Mark ix. 44. The memory of things past, the sense of things present, and the

Digitized by Google

fearful expectations of things to come, are the gnawings and bitings of the worm of conscience, at every bite whereof, damned souls give a dreadful shriek; crying out, O the worm! the worm! Would any man, that is not forsaken by reason, run the hazard of those eternal miseries, for the brutish pleasures of a moment?

Meditation 6. Bethink yourselves what inexcusable hypocrisy it will be in you, to indulge yourselves in the private satisfaction of your lusts, under a contrary profession of religion: you are a people that profess holiness, and professedly own yourselves to be under the government and dominion of Christ: and must the worthy name of Christ be only used to cloak and cover your lusts and corruptions, which are so hateful to him? God forbid. You daily pray against sin, you confess it to God, you bewail it, you pour out supplications for pardoning and preventing grace; are you in jest or earnest, in these solemn duties of religion? Certainly, if all those duties produce no mortification, you do but flatter God with your lips, and put a dreadful cheat upon your own souls. Nay do you not frequently censure and condemn those things in others, and dare you allow them in yourselves? What horrid hypocrisy is this? Christians are dead to sin, Rom. vi. 2. dead to it by profession, dead to it by obligation, dead to it by relation to Christ, who died for them; and how shall they, that are so many ways dead to sin, live any longer therein? O think not that God hates sin the less in you, because you are his people *, nay, that very consideration aggravates it the more, Amos iii. 2.

Meditation 7. Consider with yourselves what hard things some Christians have chosen, to endure and suffer, rather than they would defile themselves with guilt; and shall every small temptation ensnare and take your souls? Read over the xi. chapter to the Hebrews, and see what the saints have endured to escape sin; no torments were so terrible to them, as the displeasure of God, and woundings of conscience; and did God oblige them more by his grace and favour, than he hath obliged you? O Christians, how can you, that have found such mercies, mercies as free, pardons as full as ever any souls found, show less care, less fear, less tenderness of grieving the Spirit of God than others have done; certainly, if you did see sin with the same eyes they saw it, you would hate it as deeply, watch against it as

* The very faults and sins of the faithful are the objects of God's hatred and displeasure, but this is merely a hatred of their sin, not of their persons. *Daven. on Col.* i. 10.

Digitized by Google

carefully, and resist it as vigorously as any of the saints have done before you.

Meditation 8. Consider with yourselves what sweet pleasure, rational and solid comfort is to be found in the mortification of sin: It is not the fulfilling of your lusts can give you the thousandth part of that comfort, and contentment that the resistance of them, and victory over them will give you. Who can express the comfort that is to be found in the chearing testimony of an acquitting, and absolving conscience? 2 Cor. i. 12. Remember what satisfaction and peace it was to Hezekiah upon his supposed death-bead, when he turned to the wall, and said, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked "before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; and have done "that which is good in thy sight," Isa. xxxviii. 3.

Fourth use, for examination.

In the next place, this point naturally puts us upon the examination, and trial of our own hearts, whether we, who so confidently claim a special interest in Christ, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. And because two sorts of persons will be concerned in this trial, *viz.* the weaker, and the stronger Christians; I shall therefore lay down two sorts of evidences of mortification, one respecting the sincerity, and truth, the other respecting the strength, and progress of that work in confirmed and grown Christians, and both excluding false pretenders.

First, There are some things that are evidential of the truth and sincerity of mortification, even in the weakest Christians: as,

First, True tenderness of conscience in all known sins, one as well as another, is a good sign sin hath lost its dominion in the soul. O it is a special mercy to have a heart that shall smite and reprove us for those things that others make nothing of: To check, and admonish us for our secret sins, which can never turn to our reproach among men: this is a good sign that we hate sin: However, through the weakness of the flesh we may be ensnared by it. Rom. vii. 15. "What I hate, that I do."

Secondly, The sincere and earnest desires of our souls to God in prayer for heart-purging, and sin-mortifying grace, is a good sign our souls have no love for sin. Canst thou say, poor believer, in the truth of thy heart; that if God would give thee thy choice, it would please thee better to have sin cast out, than to have the world cast in; that thy heart is not so earnest with God for daily bread, as it is for heart-purging grace? This is a comfortable evidence that sin is nailed to the cross of Christ.

Digitized by Google

Thirdly, Do you make conſcience of guarding againſt the occaſions of ſin? Do you keep a daily watch over your hearts and ſenſes, according to 1 John v. 18. Job xxxi. 1. This ſpeaks a true deſign and purpoſe of mortification alſo.

Fourthly, Do you rejoice, and bleſs God from your hearts, when the providence of God orders any means for the prevention of ſin? Thus did David, 1 Sam. xxv. 33. "And David "ſaid to Abigail, Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael which ſent "thee this day to meet me, and bleſſed be thy advice, and bleſ-"ſed be thou which haſt kept me this day from coming to "ſhed blood, and from avenging myſelf with my own hand."

Fifthly, In a word, though the thoughts of death may be terrible in themſelves, yet if the expectation, and hope of your deliverance from ſin thereby, do ſweeten the thoughts of it to your ſouls, it will turn unto you for a teſtimony, that you are not the ſervants and friends of ſin. And ſo much briefly of the firſt ſort of evidences.

Secondly, There are other ſigns, of a more deep and thorough mortification of ſin, in more grown and confirmed believers, and ſuch are theſe.

Firſt, The more ſubmiſſive and quiet any man is under the will of God, in ſmart and afflicting providences, the more that man's heart is mortified unto ſin, Pſal. cxix. 67, 71. Col. i. 11.

Secondly, The more able any one is to bear the reproaches, and rebukes of his ſin, the more mortification there is in that man, Pſal. cxli. 5.

Thirdly, The more eaſily any man can reſign, and give up his deareſt earthly comforts, at the call and command of God, the more progreſs that man hath made in the work of mortification, Heb. xi. 17. 2 Sam. xv. 25.

Fourthly, The more power any man hath to reſiſt ſin in the firſt motions of it, and ſtifle it in the birth; the greater degree of mortification that man hath attained, Rom. vii. 23, 24.

Fifthly, If great changes, upon our outward condition, make no change for the worſe upon our ſpirits, but we can bear proſperous, and adverſe providences with an equal mind; then mortification is advanced far in our ſouls, Phil. iv. 11, 12.

Sixthly, The more fixed, and ſteady our hearts are with God in duty, and the leſs they are infeſted with wandering thoughts, and earthly interpoſitions; the more mortification there is in that ſoul. And ſo much briefly of the evidences of mortification.

Digitized by Google

Fifth use, for consolation.

It only remains, that I shut up all with a few words of consolation unto all that are under the mortifying influence of the Spirit. Much might be said for the comfort of such. In brief,

First, Mortified sin shall never be your ruin: 'Tis only *reigning* sin that is *ruining* sin, Rom. viii. 13. Mortified sins, and pardoned sins, shall never lie down with us in the dust.

Secondly, If sin be *dying*, your souls are *living*; for dying unto sin, and living unto God, are inseparably connected, Rom. vi. 11.

Thirdly, If sin be dying in you, it is certain that Christ died for you, and you cannot desire a better evidence of it, Rom. vi. 5, 6.

Fourthly, If sin be dying under the mortifying influences of the Spirit, and it be your daily labour to resist and overcome it, you are then in the direct way to heaven, and eternal salvation; which few, very few in the world shall find, Luke xiii. 24.

Fifthly, To shut up all, if you, through the Spirit, be daily mortifying the deeds of the body, then the death of Christ is effectually applied by the Spirit unto your souls, and your interest in him is unquestionable: For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, and they that have so crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts, are Christ's.

Blessed be God for a crucified Christ.

* *

SERMON XXIX.

Of the Imitation of CHRIST, in holiness of Life, and the necessity of it in all Believers.

1 JOHN ii. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

THE express, and principal design of the apostle in this chapter, is to propound marks and signs, both *negative* and *positive*, for the trial and examination of men's claims to Christ; amongst which (not to spend time about the coherence) my text is a principal one; a trial of mens interest in Christ, by their imitation of Christ. It is supposed by some expositors, that the apostle, in laying down this mark, had a special design

Digitized by Google

to overthrow the wicked doctrine of the Carpocratians, who taught (as Epiphanius relates it) that men might have as much communion with God in sin, as in duty. In full opposition to which the apostle lays down this proposition, wherein he asserts the necessity of a Christ-like conversation, in all that claim union with him, or interest in him. The words resolve themselves into two parts, *viz.*

1. A claim to Christ supposed.

2. The only way to have our claim warranted.

First, We have here a claim to Christ supposed; "if any man "say he abideth in him:" Abiding in Christ is an expression denoting proper, and real interest in Christ, and communion with him; for it is put in opposition to those temporary, light, and transient effects of the gospel, which are called a morning dew, or an early cloud; such a receiving of Christ as that, Mat. xiii. 21. which is but a present flash, sudden and vanishing; abiding in Christ notes a solid, durable, and effectual work of the Spirit, thoroughly and everlastingly joining the soul to Christ. Now, if any man, whosoever he be (for this indefinite is equivalent to an universal term) let him never think his claim to be good, and valid, except he take this course to adjust it.

(2.) *Secondly*, The only way to have this claim warranted, and that must be by *so walking even as he walked;* which words carry in them the necessity of our imitation of Christ. But it is not to be understood indefinitely, and universally of all the works or actions of Christ, some of which were extraordinary and miraculous; some purely mediatory, and not imitable by us: In these paths no Christian can follow Christ; nor may so much as attempt to walk as he walked. But the words point at the ordinary, and imitable ways, and works of Christ; therein it must be the care of all to follow him, that profess and claim interest in him; they must so walk as he walked, this [so] is a very bearing word in this place; the emphasis of the text seems to lie in it; however, certain it is that this *so walking* doth not imply an equality with Christ in holiness, and obedience; for as he was filled with the Spirit without measure, and anointed with that oil of gladness above his fellows, so the purity, holiness, and obedience of his life are never to be matched, or equalized by any of the saints. But this *so walking*, only notes a sincere intention, design, and endeavour to imitate and follow him in all the paths of holiness, and obedience, according to the different measures of grace received. The life of Christ is the believer's copy, and though the believer cannot

Digitized by Google

draw one line, or letter exact as his copy is, yet his eye is ſtill upon it, he is looking unto Jeſus, Heb. xii. 2. and labouring to draw all the lines of his life, as agreeably as he is able, unto Chriſt his pattern.

Hence the obſervation is,

Doct. *That every man is bound to the imitation of Chriſt, under penalty of forfeiting his claim to Chriſt.*

The ſaints imitation of Chriſt is ſolemnly enjoined by many great and expreſs commands of the goſpel; ſo you find it, 1 Pet. i. 15, "But as he that hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in "all manner of converſation:" So Eph. v. 1, 2. "Be ye there- "fore followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as "Chriſt alſo hath loved us." "Chriſtians (ſaith * Bernard) "receive this name from Chriſt; and it is very meet that as "they inherit his name, ſo they ſhould alſo imitate his holi- "neſs." Now to ſtate the method of this diſcourſe, it will be needful to diſcuſs, and open three things in the doctrinal part.

1. What the ſaints imitation of Chriſt ſuppoſes, and comprizes.

2. In what particulars they are eſpecially bound to imitate Chriſt.

3. Why no claim to Chriſt is valid without this imitation of him.

And then apply the whole in divers uſes.

(1.) *Firſt*, What the ſaints imitation of Chriſt ſuppoſeth and compriſeth. Now there are divers great, and weighty truths ſuppoſed and implied in this imitation of Chriſt; or walking as he walked, *viz.*

Firſt, It ſuppoſes, that no Chriſtian, is, or may pretend to be a rule to himſelf, to act according to the dictates of his own will and pleaſure, for as no man hath wiſdom enough to direct and govern himſelf; ſo if his own will were made the rule of his own actions, it would be the higheſt invaſion of the divine prerogative that could be imagined: "I know, O Lord, (ſaith Je- "remy) that the way of man is not in himſelf, it is not in him "that walketh to direct his own ſteps," Jer. x. 23. We may as well pretend to be our own makers as our own guides. It is a pretty obſervation of Aquinas, that if the workman's hand were the rule of his work, it were impoſſible he ſhould ever err in working: And if the will of man were the only law and guide

* *Chriſtiani a Chriſto nomen acceperunt, et operæ prætium eſt, ut ſicut ſunt hæredes nominis, ita ſint imitatores ſanctitatis.* Bern. ſent. lib. p. 436.

Digitized by Google

of his way, we might then say no man would sin in his walking. The apostle indeed, saith of the Heathens, Rom. ii. 14. "That "they are a law to themselves;" but it is not his meaning, that their will is their law, but the law of God engraven upon their hearts; the light and dictates of their own consciences, did oblige, and bind them as a law.

Secondly, This imitation of Christ implies, that as no man is, or may pretend to be his own guide, so no mere man, how wise, or holy soever he be, may pretend to be a rule to other men; but Christ is the rule of every man's way, and walking. It is true, indeed, the apostle saith, "We should be followers of them, who "through faith, and patience, inherit the promises," Heb. vi. 12. And, again, James v. 10. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, "who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of "suffering affliction, and of patience." But you must always remember, that there is a two-fold rule;

1. *Regula regulans*, the rule ruling.
2. *Regula regulata*, the rule ruled.

The wisest, and holiest among men, may pretend no higher than *a ruled rule*. The great apostle, though filled with as great a measure of the Spirit of wisdom, and holiness, as ever was possessed by any mere man; yet goes no higher than this, 1 Cor. xi. 1. "Be ye followers of me, as I, also, am of Christ." The best of men are but men, at best; they have their errors, and defects, which they freely acknowledge; and where they differ from Christ, it is our duty to differ from them: We may not pin our faith upon any man's sleeve, for we know not where he will carry it. It was the commendation which Paul gave of the Thessalonians, 1 Thes. i. 6. "And ye became fol- "lowers of us and of the Lord." The noble Bereans were also commended for searching the scriptures, and examining the apostles doctrine by it; and it was a good reply of the *father* to a clamorous disputant, crying, Hear me, hear me; "* I will nei- "ther hear thee, nor do thou hear me; but let us both hear "Christ."

Thirdly, The imitation of Christ implies the necessity of sanctification, in all his followers; forasmuch as it is impossile there should be a practical conformity, in point of obedience, where there is not a conformity in spirit, and in principle; all external conformity to Christ's practice, depends upon an internal conformity to Christ, in the principle, and Spirit of holiness. It is very plain, from Ezek. xi. 19, 20. that a new heart must be giv-

* *Nec ego te, nec tu me, sed ambo audiamus Christum.* Aug.

Digitized by Google

en us, and a new Spirit put into us, before we can walk in God's ſtatutes; we muſt firſt live in the Spirit, before we can walk in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25.

Fourthly, The imitation of Chriſt plainly holds forth this, that chriſtian religion is a very preciſe, and ſtrict religion; no way countenancing licentiouſneſs, or indulging men in their luſts; it allows no man to walk looſely, and inordinately; but rejects every man's claim to Chriſt, who ſtudies and labours not to tread exactly in the foot-ſteps of his holy, and heavenly example. Prophaneneſs, and licentiouſneſs, therefore, can find no ſhelter, or protection under the wing of the goſpel; this is the univerſal rule, laid upon all the profeſſors of the chriſtian religion; "Let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, de-" part from iniquity," 2 Tim. ii. 19. (*i. e.*) let him either put on the life of Chriſt, or put off the name of Chriſt; let him ſhew the hand of a Chriſtian, in works of holineſs, and obedience, or elſe the tongue, and language of a Chriſtian, muſt gain no belief, or credit.

Fifthly, The imitation of Chriſt neceſſarily implies the defectiveneſs, and imperfection of the beſt of men in this life; for if the life of Chriſt be our pattern, the beſt, and holieſt of men muſt confeſs they come ſhort in every thing, of the rule of their duty. Our pattern is ſtill above us, the beſt of men are aſhamed, when they compare their lives with the life of Chriſt: It is true, a vain heart may ſwell with pride, when a man compares himſelf with other men; thus meaſuring ourſelves by ourſelves, and comparing ourſelves among ourſelves, we ſhew our folly, and nouriſh our pride; but if any man will compare his own life with Chriſt's, he will find abundant cauſe, at every time, and in every thing, to be humbled. Paul was a great proficient in holineſs, and obedience; he had been long ſtriving to come up to the top of holineſs: yet when he looks up, and ſees the life of Chriſt, and rule of duty, ſo far above him, he reckons himſelf ſtill but at the foot of the hill. Phil. iii. 12. "Not as though I had already attained, either were al-" ready perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend, " that for which, alſo, I am apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus." *q. d.* Alas! I am not come up to my duty; I am a great way behind: but I am following after, if at laſt I may attain it: Perfection is in my expectation, and hope, at laſt, not in my attainment here.

Sixthly, The imitation of Chriſt, as our general rule, and pattern, neceſſarily implies the tranſcending holineſs of the Lord Jeſus; his holineſs is greater than the holineſs of all creatures,

Digitized by Google

" For only that which is first, and best, in every kind, is the " rule, and measure, of all the rest *." It is the height of saint's ambition, to be made conformable to Christ, Phil. iii. 10. Christ hath a double perfection, a perfection of *being*, and a perfection of *working*: His life was a perfect rule; no blot or error could be found therein; for he was " holy, harmless, un- " defiled, separate from sinners:" And such an high-priest, became us, as the apostle speaks, Heb. vii. 26. The conformity of professors to Christ's example, is the test, and measure of all their graces; the nearer any man comes to this pattern, the nearer he approaches towards perfection.

Seventhly, The Christian's imitation of Christ, under penalty of losing his claim to Christ, necessarily implies sanctification, and obedience, to be the evidences of our justification, and interest in Christ: Assurance is unattainable, without obedience; we can never be comfortable Christians, except we be strict, and regular Christians. Gal. vi. 16. " As many as walk " according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy; and up- " on the Israel of God." A loose, and careless conversation, can never be productive of true peace, and consolation. 2 Cor. i. 12. " This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience; " that in simplicity, and godly sincerity; not with fleshly wis- " dom, but by the grace of God; we have had our conversation " in the world." Let men talk what they will, of the immediate sealings, and comforts of the Spirit, without any regard to holiness, or respect to obedience: Sure I am, whatever delusion they meet with in that way, true peace, and consolation, is only to be expected, and found here: " The fruit of righteousness " shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness, and " assurance for ever." We have it not for our holiness, but we always have it in the way of holiness. And so much of the first particular, namely, what the imitation of Christ implies and comprizes in it.

Secondly, In the next place, we are to enquire, in what things all, who profess Christ, are obliged to the imitation of him; or what those excellent graces, in the life of Christ, were, which are propounded as patterns to the saints.

The life of Christ was a living law; all the graces, and virtues of the Spirit, were represented in their glory, and brightest lustre in his conversation upon earth †: Never Man spake,

* *Primum et optimum in unoquoque genere est regula et mensura cæterorum.*

† What have you to do with virtues, who are ignorant of Christ's virtue?

Digitized by Google

as he ſpake; never any lived, as he lived. "We beheld his "glory (ſaith the evangeliſt) as the glory of the only begotten "of the Father, full of grace, and truth," John i. 14. But to deſcend to the particular, imitable excellencies, in the life of Chriſt, which are high patterns, and excellent rules, for the converſation of his people; we ſhall, from among many others, ſingle out the ten following particulars, which we are obliged to imitate.

Pattern 1. And firſt of all, the purity, and holineſs of the life of Chriſt, is propoſed as a glorious pattern for the ſaint's imitation. 1 Pet. i. 15. "As he which hath called you is holy, "ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation;" εν πασῃ ἀναστροφῃ, in every point, and turning of your lives. There is a two-fold holineſs in Chriſt, the holineſs of his nature, and the holineſs of his practice; his holy being, and his holy working: This obligeth all that profeſs intereſt in him, to a two-fold holineſs, *viz.* holineſs *in actu primo*, in the principles of it, in their hearts; and holineſs *in actu ſecundo*, in the practice, and exerciſe of it, in their converſations. It is very true, we cannot, in all reſpects, imitate the holineſs of Chriſt, for he is *eſſentially* holy; proceeding, by nature, as a pure beam of holineſs from the Father: and when he was incarnate, he came into the world immaculate, and pure from the leaſt ſtain of pollution: There it was ſaid, Luke i. 25. "That holy thing which ſhall be born "of thee ſhall be called the Son of God." In this we can never be like Chriſt, in the way of our production; for "who "can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean? Not one." The Lord Jeſus was, alſo, *efficiently* holy, (*i. e.*) he makes others holy; therefore his ſufferings, and blood, are called a fountain opened "for ſin and for uncleanneſs, (*i. e.*) to cleanſe other men's ſouls, Zech. xiii. 1. In this Chriſt, alſo, is inimitable; no man can make himſelf, or others, holy. That is a great truth, though it will hardly go down with proud nature, *Minus eſt te feciſſe hominem, quam ſanctum;* we may ſooner make ourſelves to be men, than to be ſaints. Beſide, Chriſt is infinitely holy, as he is *God;* and there are no meaſures ſet to his holineſs, as *Mediator*. John iii. 34. "For God giveth not "the Spirit by meaſure unto him." But, notwithſtanding theſe excepted reſpects, the holineſs of Chriſt is propounded as a pattern, for our imitation, ſix ways.

virtue? Where, pray you, is true prudence, but in Chriſt's doctrine? Or true temperance, but in Chriſt's life? Or true fortitude, but in Chriſt's paſſion?

Digitized by Google

First, He was *truly*, and *sincerely* holy, without fiction, or simulation; and this appeared in the greatest trial of the truth of *holiness*, that ever was made in this world. John xiv. 30. "*The* prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me:" When he was agitated, and shaken, with the greatest temptations, no dregs appeared; he was like pure fountain-water, in a crystal glass. The hypocrite makes shew of more holiness than he hath, but there was more holiness in Christ, than ever appeared to the view of men. We may say, of the way of Christ, what the ‡ *philosopher* saith of the *milky way* in the heavens; that those faint streams of light, which we see there, are nothing else but the reflection of innumerable stars which shine there, though they are invisible to us. There was much inward beauty in him, and so there ought to be in all his followers; our holiness, like Christ's, must be sincere, and real, Eph. iv. 24. shining with inward beauty towards God, rather than towards men.

Secondly, Christ was *uniformly* holy, at one time, as well as another; in one place, and company, as well as another: He was still like himself, an holy Christ; one and the same tenor of holiness ran throughout his whole life, from first to last: So must it be with all his people, holy in all manner of conversation. Christians, look to your copy, and be sure to imitate Christ, in this; write fair, after your copy; let there not be here a word, and there a blot; one part of your life heavenly, and pure, and another earthly, and dreggy; or (as one expresses it) now an heavenly rapture, and by and by a fleshly frolic.

Thirdly, Christ was *exemplarily* holy; a pattern of holiness to all that came nigh him, and conversed with him: O imitate Christ in this. It was the commendation of the Thessalonians, that they "were ensamples to all that believed in Macedonia "and Achaia; and that in every place their faith to God-ward "was spread abroad," 1 Thes. i. 7, 8. Let no man go out of your company, without conviction, or edification; so exemplary were the primitive Christians, Phil. iii. 17.

Fourthly, Christ was *strictly*, and *precisely* holy: "Which "of you convinceth me of sin?" The most envious, and observing eyes of his greatest enemies, could not pick a hole, or

‡ The Galaxy is a very great multitude of stars of the smallest size, whose smallness hinders their being perceived by us distinctly like the other stars, and their beams are mutually intermingled and confounded. *Contmb. de Meteor. cap.* 2.

Digitized by Google

find a flaw in any of his words, or actions: It is our duty to imitate Christ in this. Phil. ii. 15. "That ye may be blameless, "and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of "a crooked, and perverse nation, among whom ye shine" (or, as the word may be rendered, imperatively, φαινεσθε ως φωστηρες, "among whom shine ye) as lights in the world." Thus it becomes the followers of Christ to walk circumspectly, or precisely; "for so is the will of God that with well-doing ye may put "to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 1 Pet. ii. 15.

Fifthly, Christ was preservingly holy, holy to the last breath; as he began, so he finished his whole life in a constant course of holiness: in this also he is our great pattern. It becomes not any of his people to begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh; but on the contrary, their last works should be more than their first: "Let him that is holy, be holy still," Rev. xxii. 11.

Sixthly, In a word, the delight of Christ was only in holy things, and holy persons; they were his chosen companions; even so it becometh his people to have all their delights in the saints, and in the excellent of the earth, Psal. xvi. 3. Thus, Christians, be ye followers of Christ in his holiness; God hath decreed this conformity to Christ in all that shall be saved, Rom. viii. 29. he banisheth all unholy ones from his gracious presence for ever, 1 Cor. vi. 9. Heb. xii. 14. The design of Christ in dying for you was to make you pure and holy, Eph. v. 25, 26. O then, study holiness, eye your pattern, and as dear children, be ye followers of your most holy Lord Jesus Christ.

Pattern 2. The obedience of Christ to his Father's will, is a pattern for the imitation of all Christians: it is said of Christ, Heb. v. 8. that he "learned obedience by the things which he "suffered;" a text which labours under some difficulties: Christ learned obedience, and yet was not ignorant before of what he learned afterward; he was perfect in knowledge, and yet the apostle speaks of him as a proficient in the school of wisdom. But we must consider there are two ways of learning, *viz.* by

1. The comprehension of the mind.
2. By the experience of the sense.

Christ, as God, was perfect in knowledge; nothing could be added to him: but when he became man, then he came to understand, or learn by sufferings, as the apostle here speaks; which though it added nothing to his knowledge, yet it was a new method and way of knowing. Now the obedience of Christ is our pattern, whereunto we are obliged (as ever we will wor-

Digitized by Google

rant our claim of interest in him) to conform ourselves, in the following properties of it.

First, Christ's obedience was free and voluntary, not forced or compulsory; it was so from the very first undertaking of the work of our redemption, Prov. viii. 30, 31. "Then was I by "him as one brought up with him, And I was daily his delight, "rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part "of his earth; and my delights were with the Sons of men." And when the fulness of time was come for executing that blessed design, which had been in prospect from all eternity, how chearfully did the will of Christ echo to his Father's call, Psal. xl. 7. "Then said I, lo I come, in the volume of thy book it is "written of me." I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, "thy law is within my heart." Nor was this a flourish before he came into the field, and saw the enemy; for he laid down his life with the greatest chearfulness and spontaneity that could be, John x. 17, 18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because "I lay down my life, that I might take it again; no man taketh "it from me, but I lay it down of myself:" and indeed the voluntariness of Christ, in his obedience unto death, gave his death the nature, and formality of a sacrifice; for so all sacrifices ought to be offered, Lev. i. 3. and so Christ's sacrifice was offered unto God, Eph. v. 2. It was as grateful a work to Christ to die for us, as it was to Moses his mother to take him to nurse from the hand of Pharaoh's daughter. O Christians tread in the steps of Christ's example; do nothing grudgingly for God, let not his commands be grievous, 1 John v. 3. If you do any thing for God willingly, you have a reward; if otherwise, a dispensation only is committed to you, 1 Cor. ix. 7. Obedince in Christ was an abasement to him, but in you a very great honour and advancement; you have reason therefore to obey with chearfulness.

Secondly, The obedience of Christ was universal and compleat, he was obedient to all the will of God, making no *demur* to the hardest service imposed by the will of God upon him, Phil. ii. 8. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of "the cross;" and though it is true, the humanity of Christ recoiled, and staggered, when that bitter cup of the wrath of God was given him to drink; yet how soon was that innocent aversation overcome in him, by a perfect submission? "Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done," Mat. xxvi. 39. Christians here is your pattern: happy art thou, reader, if thou canst say, when God calls thee to suffering, and self-denying

work, I am filled with the will of God. Such was Paul's *obedience*, Acts xxi. 13. "I am ready not only to be bound, but to "die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus."

Thirdly, The obedience of Chriſt was ſincere and pure, without any baſe or by-end, purely aiming at the glory of God, John xvii. 4. "I have glorified thee on earth, I have finiſhed "the work thou gaveſt me to do." He ſought not honour of men. This was the great deſire of his ſoul, John xii. 28. "Father glorify thy name:" and truly the choiceſt part of your obedience conſiſts in the purity of your ends, and in this Chriſt is propounded as your pattern, Phil. ii. 3, 4, 5.

Fourthly, The ſtreams of Chriſt's obedience flowed from the ſpring and fountain of ardent love to God, John xiv. 31. "But "that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the "Father gave me commandment, even ſo I do:" Thus let all your obedience to God turn upon the hinge of love; for "love "is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii. 10. Not as if no other duty but love were required in the law; but becauſe no act of obedience is acceptable to God, but that which is performed in love.

Fifthly, In a word, The obedience of Chriſt was conſtant, he was obedient unto the death, he was not weary of his work to the laſt. Such a patient continuance in well-doing is one part of your conformity to Chriſt, Rom. ii. 7. it is laid upon you by his own expreſs command, and a command backed with the moſt encouraging promiſe, Rev. ii. 10. "Be thou faithful "unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life."

Pattern 3. The *ſelf-denial* of Chriſt is the pattern of believers, and their conformity unto it is their indiſpenſible duty, Phil. ii. 4, 5, 6. 2 Cor. viii. 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſ-"us Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became "poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Jeſus Chriſt, for the glory of God, and the love he bare to the elect, denied himſelf all the delights and pleaſures of this world Mat. xx. 28. "The ſon of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to "miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many;" he was all his life-time in the world, "a man of ſorrows and acquainted "with grief," Iſa. liii. 5. more unprovided of comfortable accommodations, than the birds of the air, or beaſts of the earth, Luke ix. 58. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air "have neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" *. Yet this was the leaſt part of Chriſt's ſelf-denial: What did

* *Vulpibus in ſaltu rupes exciſa latebras*
Præbet, et aereis avibus dat ſilva quietem:

Aſt

Digitized by Google

he not deny when he left the bosom of his Father, with the ineffable delights and pleasures he there enjoyed from eternity, and instead thereof to drink the cup, the bitter cup of his Father's wrath, for our sakes? O Christians, look to your pattern, and imitate your self-denying Saviour. There is a threefold self you are to deny for Christ.

First, Deny your *natural self* for him, Luke xiv. 26. Hate your own life, in competition with his glory, as well as your natural lusts, Titus ii. 12.

Secondly, Deny your *civil self* for Christ; whether they be gifts of the mind, Phil. iii. 8. or your dearest relations in the world, Luke xiv. 26.

Thirdly, Deny your *moral* and *religious self*, for Christ, your own righteousness, Phil. iii. 10. Deny sinful self absolutely, Col. iii. 4, 5. Deny natural self conditionally, *i. e.* be ready to forsake its interests at the call of God. Deny your religious self, even your own graces, comparatively, not in the notion of duties, but in the notion of righteousness: and to encourage you in this difficult work, consider,

First, What great things Christ denied for you, and what small matters you have to deny for him.

Secondly, How readily he denied all for your sakes, making no objections against the difficultest commands.

Thirdly, How uncapable you are to put any obligation upon Christ, to deny himself in the least for you, and what strong obligations Christ hath put you under, to deny yourselves in your greatest interests upon earth for him.

Fourthly, Remember that your self-denial is a condition consented to, and subscribed by yourselves, if ever you received Christ aright.

Fifthly, In a word, Consider how much your self-denial for Christ, makes for your advantage in both worlds, Luke, xviii, 29. O therefore look not every man upon his own things, but upon the things that are of Christ; let not that be justly charged upon you, which was charged upon them, Phil. ii. 21. "All seek "their own, not the things which are Christ's.

Pattern 4. The activity and diligence of Christ in finishing

Aft hominis Nato nullis succedere tectis
Est licitum.---------- Heins. in loc.
The craggy rock to foxes holes affords,
The pleasant woods a resting-place to birds;
For Christ no fixed habitation's found,
But what was borrow'd, or the naked ground.

Digitized by Google

the work of God, which was committed to him, was a pattern for all believers to imitate. It is said of him, Acts x. 38. "He "went about doing good." O what a great and glorious work did Christ finish in a little time! A work to be celebrated to all eternity by the praises of the redeemed. Six things were very remarkable in the diligence of Christ about his Father's work.

First, That his heart was intently set upon it, Psal. iv. 8. "Thy law is in the midst of my heart," or bowels.

Secondly, That he never fainted under the many great discouragements he frequently met withal in that work, Isa. xliii 4. "He shall not fail, nor be discouraged.

Thirdly, That the shortness of his time provoked him to the greatest diligence, John ix. 4. "I must work the work of him that "sent me, while it is day, for the night cometh when no man "can work."

Fourthly, That he improveded all opportunities, companies, and occurrences to further the great work, which was under his hand, John iv. 6, 10.

Fifthly, Nothing more displeased him than when he met with dissuasions and discouragements in his work; upon that account it was that he gave Peter so sharp a check, Mat. viii. 33. "Get "thee behind me, Satan."

Sixthly, Nothing rejoiced his soul more, than the prosperity and success of his work, Luke x. 20, 21. When the disciples made the report of success of their ministry, 'tis said, "In that "hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit." And O what a triumphant shout was that upon the cross at the accomplishment of his work, John xix. 30. *It is finished*!

Now, Christians, eye your pattern, look unto Jesus; trifle not away your lives in vanity. Christ was diligent, be not you slothful. And to encourage you in your imitation of Christ in labour and diligence, consider,

First, How great an honour God puts upon you, in employing you for his service: every vessel of service is a vessel of honour, 2 Tim. ii. 21. The apostle was very ambitious † of that honour, Rom. xv. 20. It was the glory of Eliakim to be fastned as a nail in a sure place, and to have many people hang upon him, Isa. xxii. 33.

Secondly, Your diligence in the work of God will be your great security in the hour of temptation; for "the Lord is "with you while you are with him," 2 Chron. xv. 2. The *schoolmen* put the question, How the saints in heaven became impeccable? and resolve it thus, that they are therefore freed from

† Φιλοτιμεῖσθαι, *ambio, dictum verbum ab amore honoris*, Zanch.

Digitized by Google

ſin, becauſe they are continually imployed and ſwallowed up in the bleſſed viſions of God.

Thirdly, Diligence in the work of God is an excellent help to the improvement of grace. For, tho' gracious habits are not acquired, yet they are greatly improved by frequent acts; "To him that hath ſhall be given," Mat. xxv. 29. 'Tis a good note of *Luther*, *Fides pingueſcit operibus*, Faith improves by obedience.

Fourthly, Diligence in the work of God is the direct way to the aſſurance of the love of God, 2 Pet. xv. 10. This path leads you into heaven upon earth.

Fifthly, Diligence in bedience is a great ſecurity againſt backſliding: ſmall remiſſions in duty, and little neglects, increaſe by degrees unto great apoſtaſies, you may ſee how that diſeaſe is bred, by the method preſcribed for its cure, Rev. ii. 5. *Do thy firſt works.*

Sixthly, In a word, laborious diligence, in the day of life, will be your ſingular comfort when the night of death overtakes you, 2 Pet. i. 11. 2 Kings xx. 3.

Pattern 5. *Delight in God*, and in his ſervice, was eminently conſpicuous in the life of Chriſt, and is a rare pattern for believers imitation, John iv. 32, 34. "But he ſaid unto them, I have meat "to eat that ye know not of, my meat is to do the will of "himthat ſent me, and to finiſh his work." The delights of Chriſt were all in heaven. The Son of man was in heaven, in reſpect of delight in God, while he converſed here among men. And if you be Chriſt's, heavenly things will be the delight of your ſouls alſo. Now ſpiritual delight is nothing elſe but the complacency and well-pleaſedneſs of a renewed heart, in converſing with God, and the things of God; reſulting from the agreeableneſs of them to the ſpiritual temper of his mind. Four things are conſiderable about ſpiritual delight.

Firſt, The nature of it, which conſiſteth in the complacency, reſt, and ſatisfaction of the mind in God, and ſpiritual things. The heart of a Chriſtian is centred, it is where it would be; it is gratified, in the higheſt, in the actings forth of faith, and love upon God; as the taſte is gratified with a ſuitable delicious reliſh, Pſal. lxiii. 5, 6, Pſal. cxix. 14. 24. Pſal. xvii. 18.

Secondly, The object of ſpiritual delight, which is God himſelf, and the things which relate to him. He is the bleſſed ocean into which all the ſtreams of ſpiritual delight do pour themſelves, Pſal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and "on earth there is none that I deſire in compariſon of thee."

Thirdly, The ſubject of ſpiritual delight, which is a renewed

Digitized by Google

heart, and that only ſo far as it is renewed, Rom. vii. 22. "I "delight in the law of God after the inward man."

Fourthly, The principle and ſpring of this delight, which is the agreeableneſs of ſpiritual things to the temper and frame of a renewed mind. A ſenſitive pleaſure ariſes from the ſuitableneſs of the faculty and object. So it is here, no delicious ſweetneſs can be ſo pleaſant to the taſte, or beautiful colours to the eye, or melodious ſounds to the ear, as ſpiritual things to the renewed ſouls, becauſe ſpiritual ſenſes are delicate, and the objects more excellent.

But my buſineſs here, is not ſo much to open its natnre, as preſs you to the practice thereof in conformity to your great pattern, whoſe life was a life of delight in God, and whoſe work was performed with the greateſt delight for God. "I delight "to do thy will, O my God." O Chriſtians, ſtrive to imitate your pattern in this. And to encourage you, I will briefly hint a few things.

Firſt, Scarce any thing can be more evidential of ſincerity, than a heart delighting in God, and the will of God. Hypocrites go as far as others in the material parts of duties, but here they are defective; they have no delight in God and things ſpiritual; but do whatſoever they do in religion, from the compulſions of conſcience, or accommodations of ſelf-ends.

Secondly, An heart delighting in God will be a choice help and means to perſeverance. The reaſon why many ſo eaſily part with religion is, becauſe their ſouls never taſted the ſweetneſs of it; they never delighted in it; but the Chriſtian who delights in the law of God, will be meditating on it day and night, and ſhall be like a tree planted by a river of water, whoſe leaf fadeth not, Pſal. i. 2, 3.

Thirdly, This will repreſent religion very beautifully, to ſuch as are yet ſtrangers to it; you will then be able to invite them to Chriſt by your example, the language whereof will be like that, Pſal. xxxiv. 8. "O taſte and ſee that God is "good."

Fourthly, This will make all your ſervices to God very pleaſing, and acceptable through Chriſt; you will now begin to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; your duties are ſo far *angelical* as they are performed in the ſtrength of delight in God.

Object. But may not a ſincere Chriſtian act in duty without delight? Yea, may he not feel ſome kind of wearineſs in duties?

Solut. Yes doubtleſs he may; but then we muſt diſtinguiſh

Digitized by Google

betwixt the *temper*, and *distemper*, of a renewed heart; the best hearts are not always in their right frame.

Pattern 6. The *inoffensiveness* of the life of Christ upon earth, is an excellent pattern to all his people; he injured none, offended none, but was holy, and harmless, as the apostle speaks, Heb. vii. 26. He denied his own liberty to avoid occasion of offence; as in the case of the tribute-money, Mat. xix. 27. "The "children are free, notwithstanding lest we should offend them, "go," &c. So circumspect was Christ, and inoffensive among all men, that tho' his enemies sought occasion against him, yet could they find none, Luke vi. 7. Look unto Jesus, O ye professors of religion; imitate him in this gracious excellency of his life, according to his command, Phil. ii. 15. "That ye may "be harmless and blameless, the sons of God, without rebuke, "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." You are indeed, allowed the exercise of your prudence, but not a jot farther than will consist with your innocence. "Be ye wise as "serpents, and harmless as doves." 'Tis the rule of Christ, that you offend none, 1 Cor. x. 32. 2 Cor. vi. 3. And to engage you to the imitation of Christ in this, I must briefly press it with a few encouragements, which methinks should prevail with any heart that's truly gracious.

First, For the honour of Jesus Christ, be you inoffensive, his name is called upon you, his honour is concerned in your deportment; if your carriage in the world give just matter of offence, Christ's worthy name will be blasphemed thereby, Jam. ii. 7. Your inoffensive carriage is the only means to stop the mouths of detractors, 1 Pet. ii. 15.

Secondly, For the sake of souls, the precious and immortal souls of others, be wary that you give no offence: "Wo to the "world, (saith Christ), because of offence," Matth. xiii. 7. Nothing was more commonly objected against Christ, and religion, by the Heathen in Cyprian's time, than the loose and scandalous lives of professors: * "Behold, say they, these are the men, who "boast themselves to be redeemed from the tyranny of Satan, "to be dead to the world; nevertheless, see how they are o-"vercome by their own lusts." And much after the same rate Salvian brings in the wicked of his time, stumbling at the looseness of professors, and saying, Where is that catholic law which

* *Ecce qui jactant se redemptis a tyrannide Satanæ, qui prædicant se mortuos esse mundo, nihilominus vincuntur cupiditatibus suis.* Cyprian.

Digitized by Google

they believe? Where are the examples of piety, and chaſtity, which they have learned? *&c.* O Chriſtians, draw not the guilt of other men's eternal ruin upon your ſouls.

Thirdly, In a word, anſwer the ends of God in your ſanctification, and providential diſpoſe in the world, this way; by the holineſs and harmleſneſs of your lives, many may be won to Chriſt, 1 Pet iii. 1. What the Heathens ſaid of moral virtue, (which they called *verticordia*, turn-heart) that if it were but viſible to mortal eyes, all men would be enamoured with it, will be much more true of religion, when you ſhall repreſent the beauty of it in your converſation.

Pattern 7. The humility, and lowlineſs of Chriſt is propounded by himſelf, as a pattern for his people's imitation. Matth. xi. 29. "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." He could abaſe, and empty himſelf of all his glory, Phil ii. 5, 6, 7. He could ſtoop to the meaneſt office, even to waſh the diſciples feet. We read but of one triumph in all the life of Chriſt upon earth, when he rode to Jeruſalem, the people ſtrewing branches in the way, and the very children in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, crying, "Hoſanna to the ſon of David, Hoſanna in the higheſt;" and yet with what lowlineſs and humility was it performed by Chriſt, Matth. xxi. 5. "Behold thy King commeth unto thee "meek and lowly." The humility of Chriſt appeared in every thing he ſpake, or did. Humility diſcovered itſelf in his language, Pſal. xxii. 6. "I am a worm, and no man." In his actions, not refuſing the meaneſt office, John iii. 14. In his condeſcenſions to the worſt of men, upon which ground they called him "a friend to publicans and ſinners," Matth. xi. 19. But eſpecially, and above all, in ſtooping down from all his glory to a ſtate of the deepeſt contempt, for the glory of God, and our ſalvation. Chriſtians! here is your pattern; look to your meek, and humble Saviour, and tread in his ſteps; be you "cloathed with humility," 1 Pet. v. 5. Whoever are ambitious to be the world's *great ones*, let it be enough for you to be Chriſt's *little ones*. Convince the world, that ſince you knew God, and yourſelves, your pride hath been dying from that day. Shew your humility in your *habits*, 1 Pet. iii. 3. 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. In your *company*, not contemning the meaneſt, and pooreſt that fear the Lord, Pſal. xv. 4. Rom. xii. 16. In your *language*; that *dialect* befits your lips, Eph. iii. 8. "Leſs than "the leaſt of all ſaints;" but eſpecially in the low value, and humble thoughts you have of yourſelves, 1 Tim. i. 15. And to preſs this, I beſeech you to conſider,

Firſt, From how vile a root pride ſprings. Ignorance of

Digitized by Google

God, and of yourselves, gives rise and being to this sin: They that know God will be humble, Isa. vi. 5. And they that know themselves cannot be proud, Rom. vii. 9.

Secondly, Consider the mischievous effects it produces: it estrangeth the soul from God, Psal. cxxxviii. 6. It provokes God to lay you low, Job xl. 11, 12. It goes before destruction, and a dreadful fall, Prov. x. 18.

Thirdly, As it is a great *sin*, so it is a bad *sign*, Hab. ii. 4. "Behold his heart which is lifted up, is not upright in him."

Fourthly, How unsuitable it is to the sense you have, and the complaints you make of your own corruptions, and spiritual wants; and, above all, how contrary it is to your pattern and example: Did Christ speak, act, or think as you do? O learn humility from Jesus Christ; it will make you precious in the eyes of God, Isa. lvii. 15.

Pattern 8. The contentation of Christ, in a low and mean condition in the world, is an excellent pattern for his people's imitation. His lot, in this world, fell upon a condition of deepest poverty, and contempt: Yet how well was he satisfied, and contented with it! hear him expressing himself about it, Psal. xvi. 6. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; "yea, I have a goodly heritage." The contentation of his heart with a suffering condition, evidenced itself in his silence, under the greatest sufferings, Isa. liii. 7. "He was oppressed, and he "was afflicted: yet he opened not his mouth: He is brought "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers "is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." O that in this also the poorest Christians would imitate their Saviour, and learn to manage an afflicted condition with a contented spirit: Let there be no murmurs, complaints, or foolish charges of God heard from you, whatever straits, or troubles he brings you into: For,

First, The meanest, and most afflicted Christian is owner of many rich, invaluable mercies, Eph. i. 3. 1 Cor. iii. 33. Is sin pardoned, and God reconciled? then never open your mouths any more, Ezek. xvi. 63.

Secondly, You have many precious promises, that God will not forsake you in your straits, Heb. xiii. 5. Isa. xli. 17. And your whole life hath been a life of experiences of the faithfulness of God in his promises. Which of you cannot say with the church, Lam. iii. 23. "His mercies are new every morning, and "great is his faithfulness."

Thirdly, How useful and beneficial are all your afflictions to

Digitized by Google

you! They purge your sins, prevent your temptations, wean you from the world, and turn to your salvation: and how unreasonable then must your discontentedness at them be?

Fourthly, The time of your relief and full deliverance from all your troubles is at hand; the time is but short that you shall have any concernment about these things, 1 Cor. vii. 29. If the candle of your earthly comfort be blown out, yet remember it is but a little while to the break of day, and then there will be no need of candles. Besides,

Fifthly, Your lot falls by divine direction, upon you, and as bad as it is, it is much easier and sweeter than the condition of Christ in this world was: Yet he was contented, and why not you? O that we could learn contentment from Christ in every condition. And thus I have laid before you some excellent patterns in the life of Christ, for your imitation.

* *

SERMON XXX.

1 JOHN xi. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

THESE words having been resolved into their parts, and their sense opened in the former sermon: The observation was this;

That every man is bound to the imitation of Christ, under penalty of forfeiting his claim to Christ.

In prosecution of this point, we have already shewn what the imitation of Christ imports, and what the imitable excellencies in the life of Christ are: It now remains that I shew you, in the next place, why all that profess Christ, are bound to imitate his example, and then apply the whole. Now the necessity of this imitation of Christ, will convincingly, appear divers ways.

First, From the established order of Salvation, which is fixed and unalterable: God that hath appointed the end, hath also established the means and order by which men shall attain the ultimate end. Now conformity to Christ is the established method in which God will bring souls to glory, Rom. viii. 29. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son; that he might be the first-born among many brethren." The same God who hath predestinated men to salvation, hath, in order thereunto, predestinated them

Digitized by Google

unto conformity to Christ, and this order of heaven is never to be reversed: we may as well hope to be saved without Christ, as to be saved without conformity to Christ.

Secondly, The nature of Christ-mystical requires this conformity, and renders it indispensably necessary. Otherwise, the body of Christ must be *heterogeneous*: of a nature different from the head; and how monstrous, and uncomely, would this be? This would represent Christ to the world in an image, or idea, much like that, Dan. ii. 32, 33. "The head of fine gold, the "breast and arms of silver, the thighs of brass, the legs of iron, "the feet part of iron, and part of clay." Christ, the head, is pure and holy, and therefore very unsuitable to sensual, and earthly members. And therefore the apostle, in his description of Christ-mystical, describes the members of Christ (as they ought to be) of the same nature, and quality with the head, 2 Cor. xv. 48, 49. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have born the image of the earthy, so we "shall also bear the image of the heavenly." That image, or resemblance of Christ, which shall be complete, and perfect, after the resurrection, must be begun in its first draught here, by the work of regeneration.

Thirdly, This resemblance, and conformity to Christ, appears necessary from the communion, which all believers have with Christ, in the same spirit of grace, and holiness. Believers are called Christ's *fellows*, or copartners, Psal. xlv. 7. from their participation with him of the same spirit; as it is 1 Thes. iv. 8. God giveth the same spirits unto us, which he more plentifully poured out upon Christ. Now where the same spirit, and principle is, there the same fruits, and operations must be produced, according to the proportions, and measures of the spirit of grace communicated; and this reason is further enforced, by the very design, and end of God, in the infusion of the Spirit of grace: For it is plain, from Ezek. xxxvi. 27. that practical holiness, and obedience, is the scope, and design, of that infusion of the Spirit. The very innate property of the Spirit of God, in men, is to elevate their minds, and set their affections upon heavenly things, to purge their hearts from earthly dross, and fit them for a life of holiness, and obedience: Its nature, also, is assimilating, and changeth them, in whom it is, into the same image with Jesus Christ, their heavenly head, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Fourthly, The necessity of this imitation of Christ may be argued, from the design, and end of Christ's exhibition to the world, in a body of flesh. For though we detest that doctrine of the Socinians, which makes the exemplary life of Christ to

Digitized by Google

be the whole end of his incarnation; yet we must not run so far from an error, as to lose a precious truth. We say, the satisfaction of his blood was a main, and principal end of his incarnation, according to Mat. xx. 28. We affirm, also, that it was a great design, and end of the incarnation of Christ, to set before us a pattern of holiness, for our imitation: For so speaks the apostle, 1 Pet. ii. 21. "He hath left us an example, "that we should follow his steps." And this example of Christ greatly obliges believers to his imitation. Phil. ii. 5. "Let this "mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus."

Fifthly, Our imitation of Christ, is one of those great articles which every man is to subscribe, whom Christ will admit into the number of his disciples. Luke xiv. 27. "Whosoever doth "not come after me, cannot be my disciple." And again, John xii. 26. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." To this condition we have submitted, if we be sincere believers; and therefore are strictly bound to the imitation of Christ, not only by God's *command*, but by their own *consent*. But if we profess interest in Christ, when our hearts never consented to follow, and imitate his example; then are we self-deceiving hypocrites, wholly disagreeing from the scripture character of believers, Rom. viii. 1. They that are Christ's, being there described to be such as walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. And Gal. v. 25. "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit.

Sixthly, The honour of Christ necessitates the conformity of Christians to his example, else what way is there left to stop detracting mouths, and vindicate the name of Christ from the reproaches of the world? How can wisdom be justified of her children, except it be this way? By what means shall we cut off occasion from such as desire occasion, but by regulating our lives by Christ's example? The world hath eyes to see what we *practise*; as well as ears to hear what we *profess*: Therefore either shew the consistency betwixt your profession, and practice, or you can never hope to vindicate the name, and honour of the Lord Jesus. The uses follow; for,

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.
3. Consolation.

First use, for information.

Infer. 1. *If all that profess interest in Christ, be strictly bound to imitate his holy example; then it follows, that religion is very unjustly charged, by the world, with the scandals, and evils of them that profess it.* Nothing can be more unjust and irrational, if we consider,

Digitized by Google

First, That the Christian religion severely censures loose, and scandalous actions, in all professors, and therefore is not to be censured for them. 'Tis absurd to condemn religion, for what itself condemns: looseness no way flows from the principles of Christianity, but is most opposite, and contrary to it. Tit. ii. 11, 12. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath "appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, "and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and "godly, in this present world."

Secondly, It is an argument of the excellency of Christian religion, that even wicked men, themselves, covet the name, and profession of it, though they only cloak, and cover their evils under it. I confess it is a great abuse of such an excellent thing as religion is; but yet, if it had not an awful reverence paid it, by the consciences of all men, it would never be abused to this purpose, by hypocrites, as it is.

Thirdly, According to this reasoning, there can be no religion in the world; for name me that religion which is not scandalized by the practices of some that profess it. So that this practice hath a natural tendency to Atheism, and is, no doubt, encouraged by the devil, for that end.

Infer. 2. *If all men forfeit their claim to Christ, who endeavour not to imitate him in the holiness of his life, then how small a number of real Christians are there in the world?* Indeed, if liberal talking, without accurate walking; if common profession, without holy practices, were enough to constitute a Christian; then this quarter of the world would abound with Christians: But if Christ owns none for such, but those that tread in the steps of his example; then the number of real Christians is very small. The generality of men that live under the Christian name, are such as walk after the flesh, Rom. viii. 2. according to the course of this world, they yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, Rom. vi. 13. Strict godliness is a mere bondage to them; narrow is the way, and few there be that walk therein.

Infer. 3. *What blessed times should we all see, if true religion did once generally obtain, and prevail in the world!* How would it humble the proud, meeken the passionate, and spiritualize those that are carnal! The perverse world charges religion with all the tumults, and disturbances that are in it; when as nothing in the world, but religion, advanced in the power of it, can heal, and cure these *epidemical* evils. O if men were once brought under the power of religion, indeed, to walk after Christ in holiness, obedience, meekness, and self-denial; no such miseries as

Digitized by Google

these would be heard of among us. Isa. xi. 8, 9. "The suck-
" ing child shall play upon the hole of the asp, and a weaned
" child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den; they shall not
" hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain: For the earth shall
" be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the
" sea."

Infer. 4. *Hence it also follows, that real Christians are the sweetest companions.* 'Tis a comfortable thing to walk with them that walk after the example of Christ; the holiness, heavenliness, humility, self-denial, and diligence in obedience, which was in Christ, is, in some measure, to be found in all sincere Christians: They shew forth the virtues of him that calleth them; the graces of the Spirit do more, or less, shine forth in them: And O how endearing, sweet, and engaging, are these things! Upon this very account the apostle invited others into the fellowship of the saints. 1 John i. 3. "That ye may have
" fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Fa-
" ther, and with his Son Christ Jesus." And is it not sweet to have fellowship with them, who have fellowship with Christ? O let all your delights be in the saints, and in the excellent of the earth, who excel in virtue, Psal. xvi. 3. yet, mistake not, there is a great deal of difference betwixt one Christian, and another, and even the best of Christians are sanctified but in part. If there be something sweet, and engaging, there is also, something bitter, and distasteful, in the best of men. If there be something to draw forth your delight, and love; there is, also, something to exercise your pity, and patience. Yet this is most certain, that notwithstanding all their infirmities, and corruptions, they are the best, and sweetest company, this world affords.

Infer. 5. *In a word, if no man's claim to Christ be warranted, but theirs that walk as he walked; how vain, and groundless, then, are the hopes, and expectations of all unsanctified men, who walk after their own lusts?* None are more forward to claim the privileges of religion, than those that reject the duties of it; multitudes hope to be saved by Christ, who yet refuse to be governed by him: But such hopes have no scripture warrant to support them; yea, they have no scripture testimonies against them. 1 Cor. vi. 9. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not
" inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither forni-
" cators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abu-
" sers of themselves with mankind; nor thieves, nor covetous,
" nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the
" kingdom of God." O how many thousand vain hopes are laid

Digitized by Google

in the duſt, and how many thouſand ſouls are ſentenced to hell by this one ſcripture!

Second uſe, for exhortation.

If this be ſo, it naturally preſſes all the profeſſors of Chriſtianity to ſtrict godlineſs in their converſations, as ever they expect benefit by Chriſt. O profeſſors, be ye not conformed unto this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds: Set the example of Chriſt before you, and labour to tread in his ſteps. This is the great buſineſs of religion, the main ſcope of the goſpel. Give me leave, therefore, cloſely to preſs it upon your hearts, by the following motives.

Motive 1. Chriſt hath conformed himſelf to you, by his abaſing incarnation; how reaſonable therefore is it that you conform yourſelves to him in the way of obedience and ſanctification? He came as near to you, as it was poſſible for him to do, ſtrive you therefore to come as near to Chriſt as it is poſſible for you to do: he hath taken your nature upon him, Heb. ii. 14. yea, and with your nature he hath taken your weakneſſes and infirmities, Rom. viii. 3. and not only your natures and your infirmities, but your condition alſo, for he came under the law for your ſakes, Gal. iv. 4. He conformed himſelf to you, though he was infinitely above you, that was his abaſement; do you conform yourſelves to him, who are infinitely beneath him, that will be your advancement: his conformity to you emptied him of his glory, your conformity to him will fill you with glory: he conformed himſelf to you, though you had no obligation upon him; will you not conform yourſelves to him, who lie under infinite obligations ſo to do?

Motive 2. You ſhall be conformed to Chriſt in glory; how reaſonable therefore is it you ſhould now conform yourſelves to him in holineſs? The apoſtle ſaith, 1 John iii. 2. "We ſhall "be like unto him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is:" Yea, not only your ſouls ſhall be like him, but your very bodies, even thoſe vile bodies of yours, "ſhall be changed, that they may be faſhi-"oned like unto his glorious body." How forcible a motive is this to bring men into conformity with Chriſt here! eſpecially, ſeeing our conformity to him in holineſs, is the evidence of our conformity to him in glory, Rom. vi. 5. 2 Pet. iii. 11. O profeſſors, as ever you look to be with Chriſt in glory hereafter, ſee that ye walk after Chriſt's example in holineſs and obedience here.

Motive 3. The conformity of your lives to Chriſt your pattern, is your higheſt excellency in this world: The meaſure

Digitized by Google

of your grace is to be eſtimated by this rule. The excellency of every creature riſes higher and higher, according as it approaches ſtill nearer and nearer to its original; the more you reſemble Chriſt in grace, the more illuſtrious and reſplendent will your converſations be in true ſpiritual glory.

Motive 4. So far as you imitate Chriſt in your lives, and no farther, you will be beneficial to the world in which you live: ſo far as God helps you to follow Chriſt, you will be helpful to bring others to Chriſt, or build them up in Chriſt; for all men are forbidden by the goſpel to follow you one ſtep farther than you follow Chriſt, 1 Cor. xi. 1. and when you have finiſhed your courſe in this world, the remembrance of your ways will be no further ſweet to others, than they are ways of holineſs and obedience to Chriſt, 1 Cor. iv. 17. If you walk according to the courſe of this world, the world will not be the better for your walking.

Motive 5. To walk as Chriſt walked, is a walk only worthy of a Chriſtian; this is to "walk worthy of the Lord," 1 Theſſ. ii. 12. Col. i. 10. By worthineſs * the apoſtle doth not mean meritorioufneſs, but comelineſs, or that decorum which befits a Chriſtian: as, when a man walks ſuitably to his place and calling in the world, we ſay he acts like himſelf; ſo, when you walk after Chriſt's pattern, you then act like yourſelves, like men of your character and profeſſion: this is conſonant to your vocation, Eph. iv. 1. "I beſeech you, that you walk worthy of "the vocation wherewith you are called." This walking ſuits with your obligation, 2 Cor. v. 15. for it is to live unto him who died for us. This walking only ſuits with your deſignation, Eph. ii. 10. "For you are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto "good works, which God hath before ordained we ſhould "walk in them." In a word, ſuch walking as this, and ſuch only becomes your expectation, 2 Pet. iii. 14. "Wherefore "[beloved], ſeeing that you look for ſuch things, be diligent, "that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and "blameleſs."

Motive 6. How comfortable will the cloſe of your life be at death, if you have walked after Chriſt's pattern and example in this world! A comfortable death is ordinarily the cloſe of a holy life, Pſal. xxxvii. 37. "Mark the perfect man, and behold

* The word worthineſs, as uſed in ſcripture, does not always denote an exact proportion of equality between one thing and another, but a certain ſuitableneſs and fitneſs which excludes inconſiſtency. *Davenant on Coloſſ. p.* 25.

Digitized by Google

"the upright; for the end of that man is peace." A loose, careless life puts many terrible stings into death. As worms in the body are bred of the putrefaction there, so the worm of conscience is bred of the moral putrefaction, or corruption that is in our natures and conversations. O then be prevailed with by all these considerations to imitate Christ in the whole course, and compass of your conversations.

Third use, for consolation.

Lastly, I would leave a few words of support and comfort to such as sincerely study and endeavour, according to the tendency of their new nature, to follow Christ's example, but being weak in grace, and meeting with strong temptations, are frequently carried aside from the holy purposes, and designs of their honest, well-meaning hearts, to the great grief, and discouragement of their souls. They heartily wish and aim at holiness, and say with David, Psal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways "were directed to keep thy statutes." They follow after exactness in holiness as Paul did, Phil. iii. 12. "If by any means "they might attain it." But finding how short they come, in all things, of the rule and pattern, they mourn as he did, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from "the body of this death?" Well, if this be thy case, be not discouraged, but hearken to a few words of support and comfort, with which I shall close this point.

SUPPORT I.

Such defects in obedience make no flaw in your justification: for your justification is not built upon your obedience, but upon Christ's, Rom. iii. 24. and how incompleat, and defective soever you be in yourselves, yet at the same instant, "you are "compleat in him which is the head of all principality and "power," Col. ii. 10. Wo to Abraham, Moses, David, Paul, and the most eminent saints that ever lived, if their justification, and acceptation with God, had depended upon the perfection, and compleatness of their own obedince.

SUPPORT. II.

2. Your deep troubles for the defectiveness of your obedience, do not argue you to be less, but more sanctified, than those who make no such complaints; for these prove you to be better acquainted with your own hearts, than others are; to have a deeper hatred of sin than others have; and to love God, with a more fervent love than others do; the most eminent saints have made the bittereſt complaints upon this account, Psal. lxv. 3. Rom. vii. 23, 24.

Digitized by Google

SUPPORT III.

3. The Lord makes excellent uſes even of your infirmities and failings to do you good, and makes them turn to your unexpected advantage: for, by theſe defects he hides pride from your eyes; he beats you off from ſelf-dependence; he makes you to admire the riches of free grace; he makes you to long more ardently for heaven, and entertain the ſweeter thoughts of death: and doth not the Lord then make bleſſed fruits to ſpring up to you from ſuch a bitter root? O the bleſſed chymiſtry of heaven, to extract ſuch mercies out of ſuch miſeries!

SUPPORT IV.

4. Your bewailed infirmities do not break the bond of the everlaſting covenant. The bond of the covenant holds firm, notwithſtanding your defects and weakneſſes, Jer. xxxii. 40. "Iniquities prevail againſt me," ſaith David, yet in the ſame breath he adds, "as for our tranſgreſſions thou ſhalt purge "them away," Pſal. lxv. 3. He is ſtill thy God, thy Father for all this.

SUPPORT V.

5. Though the defects of your obedience are grievous to God, yet your deep ſorrows for them are well-pleaſing in his eyes, Pſal. li. 17. "The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit, a "broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe." Ephraim was never a more pleaſant child to his father, than when he moaned himſelf, and ſmote upon his thigh as thou doſt, Jer. xxxi. 20. Your ſins grieve him, but your ſorrows pleaſe him.

SUPPORT VI.

6. Though God have left many defects to humble you, yet he hath given many things to comfort you. This is a comfort that the deſire of thy ſoul is to God, and to the remembrance of his name. This is a comfort, that thy ſins are not thy delight as once they were; but thy ſhame and ſorrow. This is a comfort, that thy caſe is not ſingular; but, more or leſs, the ſame complaints and ſorrows are found in all gracious ſouls through the world; and, to ſay all in one word, this is the comfort above all comforts, that the time is at hand, in which all theſe defects, infirmities, and failings ſhall be done away, 1 Cor. xiii. 10. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is "in part ſhall be done away."

For ever bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.

And thus I have finiſhed the third general uſe of examination, whereby every man is to try his intereſt in Chriſt, and

Digitized by Google

discern whether ever Christ hath been effectually applied to his soul. That which remains is

An use of Lamentation.

Wherein the miserable and most wretched state of all those to whom Jesus Christ is not effectually applied, will be yet more particularly discovered, and bewailed.

* *

SERMON XXXI.

Of the State of Spiritual Death, and the Misery thereof.

Eph. v. 14. *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

THIS scripture represents unto us the miserable, and lamentable state of the unregenerate, as being under the power of spiritual death, which is the cause, and inlet of all other miseries. From hence, therefore, I shall make the first discovery of the woful, and wretched state of them that apply not Jesus Christ to their own souls.

The scope of the *apostle* in this *context*, is to press believers to a circumspect, and holy life; to "walk as children of light." This exhortation is laid down in ver. 8. and pressed by divers arguments in the following verses.

First, From the tendency of holy principles, unto holy fruits and practice, ver. 9, 10.

Secondly, From the convincing efficacy of practical godliness, upon the consciences of the wicked, ver. 11, 12, 13. It awes, and convinces their consciences.

Thirdly, From the co-incidence of such a conversation with the great design, and drift of the scriptures; which is to awaken men, by regeneration, out of that spiritual sleep, or rather death, which sin hath cast them into: and this is the argument of the text, *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest*, &c. There is some difficulty in the reference of these words. Some think it is to Isa. xxvi. 19. "Awake, and sing ye that dwell in "the dust." Others to Isa. lx. 1. "Arise, shine, for thy light "is come," *&c.* But most probably, the words neither refer to this, or that particularly, but to the drift and scope of the whole scriptures, which were inspired, and written upon this great design, to awaken, and quicken souls out of the state of

Digitized by Google

spiritual death. And in them we are to consider these three things, more distinctly, and particularly.

1. The miserable state of the unregenerate; they are *asleep and dead.*

2. Their duty; which is to "awake, and stand up from the "dead."

3. The power enabling them thereunto; "Christ shall give "thee light."

First, The miserable state of the unregenerate, represented under the notions of *sleep*, and *death*; both expressions intending one and the same thing, though with some variety of notion. The Christless, and unregenerate world is in a deep sleep; a spirit of slumber, senselessness, and security is fallen upon them, though they lie exposed immediately to eternal wrath and misery, ready to drop into hell every moment. Just as man that is fast asleep in a house on fire, and whilst the consuming flames are round about him, his fancy is sporting itself in some pleasant dream; this is a very lively resemblance of the unregenerate soul. But yet he that sleeps hath the principle of life entire in him, though his senses be bound, and the actions of life suspended by sleep. Lest therefore we should think it is only so with the unregenerate, the expression is designedly varied, and those that were said to be *asleep*, are positively affirmed to be *dead*; on purpose to inform us that it is not a simple *suspension* of the acts, and exercise, but a total *privation*, of the principle of spiritual life, which is the misery of the unregenerate.

Secondly, We have here the duty of the unregenerate, which is to "awake out of sleep, and arise from the dead." This is their great concernment: no duty in the world is of greater necessity and importance to them. "Strive (saith Christ) to enter in "at the strait gate," Luke xiii. 24. And the order of these duties is very natural. First awake, then arise. Startling, and rousing convictions make way for spiritual life; till God awake us by convictions of our misery, we will never be persuaded to arise, and move towards Christ for remedy and safety.

Thirdly, But you will say, if unregenerate men be dead men, to what purpose is it to persuade them to arise and stand up: The very exhortation supposes some powers or ability in the unregenerate: else vain are they commanded to arise *. This

* Though the words seem to import a willingness first to awake and rise, and then to be enlightened, yet we are to understand, that it is by the efficacy of Christ's light that the sinner is made to awake and rise. *Rolt. on the place.*

Digitized by Google

difficulty is solved in this very text, though the duty is ours, yet the power is God's. God commands that in his word, which only his grace can perform. "Christ shall give thee light." Popish commentators would build the tower of free-will upon this scripture, by a very weak argument, drawn from the order wherein these things are here expressed; which is but a weak foundation to build upon, for it is very usual in scripture to put the effect before, and the cause after, as it is here, so in Isa. xxvi. 19. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust." But I will not here intangle my discourse with that controversy, that which I aim at is plain in the words, *viz.*

Doct. *That all Christless souls are under the power of spiritual death; they are in the state of the dead.*

Multitudes of testimonies are given in scripture to this truth; Eph. ii. 1, 5. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Col. ii. 13. "And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him;" with many other places of the same importance. But the method in which I shall discourse this point will be this:

First, I will shew you in what sense Christless, and unregenerate men are said to be dead.

Secondly, What the state of spiritual death is.

Thirdly, How it appears that all unregenerate men are in this sad state. And then apply it.

First, In what sense are Christless, and unregenerate men said to be dead men.

To open this, we must know there is a three-fold death, *viz.*

1. Natural.
2. Spiritual.
3. Eternal.

Natural death is nothing else but the privation of the principle of natural life, or the separation of the soul from the body, James ii. 26. "The body without the spirit is dead." Spiritual death is the privation of the principle of spiritual life, or the want and absence of the quickening Spirit of God in the soul; the soul is the life of the body, and Christ is the life of the soul; the absence of the soul is death to the body, and the absence, or want of Christ is death to the soul. Eternal death is the separation both of body and soul from God, which is the misery of the damned. Now christless, and unregenerate men are not dead in the first sense; they are naturally alive though they are dead while they live: nor are they yet dead in the last sense, eternally separated from God, by an irrevocable sentence

Digitized by Google

as the damned are; but they are dead in the second sense; they are spiritually dead, whilst they are naturally alive; and this spiritual death is the fore-runner of eternal death. Now spiritual death is put in scripture in opposition of a two-fold spiritual life, *viz.*

1. The life of justification.
2. The life of sanctification.

Spiritual death, in opposition to the life of justification, is nothing else but the guilt of sin bringing us under the sentence of death. Spiritual death, in opposition to the life of sanctification, is the pollution, or dominion of sin. In both these senses, unregenerate men are dead men; but it is the last which I am properly concerned to speak to in this place: and therefore,

Secondly, Let us briefly consider what this spiritual death is, which, as before was hinted, is the absence of the quickening Spirit of Christ from the soul of any man. That soul is a dead soul, into which the Spirit of Christ is not infused in the work of regeneration; and all its works are dead works, as they are called, Heb. ix. 14. For, look how it is with the damned, they live, they have sense and motion, and an immortality in all these; yet because they are eternally separated from God, the life which they live, deserves not the name of life, but it is every where in scripture stiled death: so the unregenerate, they are naturally alive; they eat, and drink, they buy, and sell, they talk, and laugh, they rejoice in the creatures; and many of them spend their days in pleasures, and then go down to the grave. This is the life they live, but yet the scripture rather calls it death than life; because though they live, yet it is without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. though they live, yet it is a life alienated from the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. And therefore while they remain naturally alive, they are in scripture said "to remain in death," 1 John iii. 14. and to be "dead while "they live," 1 Tim. v. 6. And there is great reason why a Christless, an unregenerate state, should be represented in scripture under the notion of death; for there is nothing in nature which more aptly represents that miserable state of the soul, than natural death doth. The dead see, and discern nothing; and the natural man perceiveth not the things that are of God. The dead have no beauty, or desireableness in them; "Bury my "dead, (said Abraham,) out of my sight:" neither is there any spiritual loveliness in the unregenerate. True it is, some of them have sweet natural qualities, and moral excellencies, which are engaging things; but these are so many flowers, deck-

Digitized by Google

ing and adorning a dead corpse. The dead are objects of pity, and great lamentation: men use to mourn for the dead, Eccl. xii. 5. "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go a-"bout the streets." But unregenerate, and Christless souls, are much more the objects of pity and lamentation. How are all the people of God (especially those that are naturally related to them) concerned to mourn over them, and for them, as Abraham did for Ishmael, Gen. xvii. 18. "O that Ishmael might "live before thee." Upon these, and many other accounts, the state of unregeneracy is represented to us in the notion of death.

Thirdly, And that this is the state of all Christless, and unsanctified persons, will, undeniably, appear two ways.

1. The causes of spiritual life have not wrought upon them.

2. The effects and signs of spiritual life, do not appear in them; and therefore they are in the state, and under the power, of spiritual death.

First, The causes of spiritual life have not wrought upon them. There are two causes of spiritual life,

1. Principal, and internal.

2. Subordinate, and external.

The principal, internal cause of spiritual life, is the regenerating Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 2. "The law of the Spirit of "life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and "death." It is the Spirit, as a regenerating Spirit, that unites us with Christ, in whom all spiritual life originally is, John v. 25, 26. "Verily, I say unto you, that the hour is coming, and "now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: "and they that hear, shall live: For as the Father hath life in "himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." As all the members of the natural body receive animation, sense, and motion, by their union with their natural head; so all believers, the members of Christ, receive spiritual life and animation by their union with Christ their mystical head, Eph. iv. 15, 16. Except we come to him, and be united with him in the way of faith, we can have no life in us, John. v. 40. "Ye "will not come unto me that ye may have life." Now the Spirit of God hath yet exerted no regenerating, quickening influences, nor begotten any special saving faith in natural, unsanctified men; whatever he hath done for them in the way of natural, or spiritual common gifts, yet he hath not quickened them with the life of Christ. And as for the subordinate external means of life, *viz.* the preaching of the gospel, which is the in-

Digitized by Google

ſtrument of the Spirit in this glorious work, and is therefore called, *The word of life*, Phil. ii. 16. This word hath not yet been made a regenerating quickening word to their ſouls. Poſſibly it hath enlightened them, and convinced them: it hath wrought upon their minds in the way of common illumination, and upon their conſciences, in the way of conviction, but not upon their hearts and wills, by way of effectual converſion. To this day the Lord hath not given them an heart opening itſelf, in the way of faith, to receive Jeſus Chriſt.

Secondly, The effects and ſigns of ſpiritual life, do not appear in them: For,

Firſt, They have no feeling, or ſenſe of miſery, and danger. I mean, no ſuch ſenſe as throughly awakens them to apply Chriſt their remedy. That ſpiritual judgment lies upon them, Iſa. vi. 9, 10. "And he ſaid, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, "but underſtand not; and ſee ye indeed, but perceive not; "make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and "ſhut their eyes."

Secondly, They have no ſpiritual motions towards Chriſt, or after things that are ſpiritual; all the arguments in the world cannot perſuade their wills to move one ſtep towards Chriſt in the way of faith, John v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me:* Were there a principle of ſpiritual life in their ſouls, they would move Chriſt-ward and heaven-ward, John iv. 14. It would be in them a well of water ſpringing up into eternal life. The natural tendency of the ſpiritual life is upward.

Thirdly, The unregenerate have no appetite unto ſpiritual food; they ſavour not things that are ſpiritual; they can go from week to week, and from year to year, all their life-time, without any communion betwixt God and their ſouls, and feel no need of it, nor any hungerings nor thirſtings after it; which could never be, if a principle of ſpiritual life were in them; for then they would "eſteem the words of God's mouth more than "their neceſſary food," Job xxx. 12.

Fourthly, They have no heat, or ſpiritual warmth, in their affections to God, and things above; their hearts are as cold as a ſtone to ſpiritual objects. They are heated, indeed, by their luſts, and affections to the world, and the things of the world: but O how cold, and dead are they towards Jeſus Chriſt, and ſpiritual excellencies.

Fifthly, They breathe not ſpiritually, therefore they live not ſpiritually: were there a ſpiritual principle of life in them, their ſouls would breathe after God in ſpiritual prayer, Acts ix. 11. "Behold he prayeth." The lips of the unregenerate may

Digitized by Google

move in prayer, but their hearts and desires do not breathe and pant after God.

Sixthly, They have no cares, or fears, for self-preservation, which is always the effect of life; the poorest flie, or silliest worm, will shun danger: the wrath of God hangs over them in the threatenings, but they tremble not at it: hell is but a little before them; they are upon the very precipice of eternal ruin, yet will use no means to avoid it. How plain, therefore, is this sad case, which I have undertaken here to demonstrate, *viz.* that Christless and unregenerate souls are dead souls? The uses follow.

Infer. 1. *If all Christless and unregenerate souls be dead souls, then how little pleasure can Christians take in the society of the unregenerate?*

Certainly, it is no pleasure for the living to converse among the dead. It was a cruel torment, invented by Mezentius the tyrant, to tie a dead and living man together. The pleasure of society arises from the harmony of spirits, and the hopes of mutual enjoyment in the world to come; neither of which can sweeten the society of the godly with the wicked in this world *. It is true, there is a necessary civil converse which we must have with the ungodly here; or else, (as the apostle speaks), we must go out of the world. There are also duties of relation, which must be faithfully and tenderly paid, even to the unregenerate: but certainly, where we have our free election, we shall be much wanting both to our duty and comfort, if we make not the people of God our chosen companions. Excellently to this purpose speaks a modern author †, "Art thou a godly master? "when thou takest a servant into thine house, chuse for God, "as well as thyself.—A godly servant is a greater blessing than "we think on: he can work, and set God on work also for his "master's good, Gen. xxiv. 12. "O Lord God of my master A-"braham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew "kindness unto my master." And sure he did his master as much "service by his prayer, as by his prudence, in that journey.— "Holy David observed, while he was at Saul's court, the mis-"chief of having wicked and ungodly servants, (for with such

* As diseases bred in one part of the body, use to spread their pernicious influence to the other members which are near to that part; so the vices of the wicked use to infect those that have intercourse with them. *Tertullian against Valentine.*

† Gurnal's Christian Armour, part 2. p. 256, 257.

Digitized by Google

" was that unhappy king so compassed, that David compares " his court to the prophane and barbarous Heathens, among " whom there was scarce more wickedness to be found, Psal. " cxx. 6. " Wo is me, that I sojourn, in Meshech, that I dwell " in the tents of Kedar;" *i. e.* among those who were as pro- " digiously wicked as any there); and no doubt, but this made " this gracious man, in his banishment, before he came to the " crown, (having seen the evil of a disordered house), to resolve " what he would do when God should make him the head of " such a royal family, Psal. ci. 7. " He that worketh deceit, shall " not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies, shall not " tarry in my sight."

" Art thou godly? shew thyself so in the choice of husband " or wife. I am sure, if some, (and those godly ones), could " bring no other testimonials for their godliness, than the care " they have taken in this particular, it might justly be called in- " to question, both by themselves and others. There is no one " thing that gracious persons, (even those recorded in scripture " as well as others), have shewn their weakness, yea, given of- " fence and scandal more in, than in this particular, " The sons " of God saw that the daughters of men were fair," Gen. vi. 2. " One would have thought, that the sons of God should have " looked for grace in the heart, rather than beauty in the face; " but we see, even they sometimes turn in at the fairest sign, " without much enquiring what grace is to be found dwelling " within." Look to the rule, O Christian, if thou wilt keep the power of holiness, that is clear as a sun-beam written in the scripture, " Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," 2 Cor. vi. 14.

Infer. 2. *How great and wholly supernatural, marvellous and wonderful is that change which regeneration makes upon the souls of men!* It is a change from death to life, Luke xv. 24. " This " my son was dead and is alive again." Regeneration is life from the dead; the most excellent life from the most terrible death: it is the life of God re-inspired into a soul alienated from it by the power of sin, Eph. iv. 18. There are two stupenduous changes made upon the souls of men, which justly challenge highest admiration, *viz.*

1. That from sin to grace.
2. From grace to glory.

The change from grace to glory is acknowledged by all, and that justly, to be a wonderful change for God to take a poor creature out of the society of sinful men; yea, from under the burden of many sinful infirmities, which made him groan from day

Digitized by Google

to day in this world; and in a moment to make him a complete and perfect soul, shining in the beauties of holiness, and filling him, as a vessel of glory, with the unspeakable and unconceivable joys of his presence; to turn his groanings into triumphs, his sighings into songs of praise; this, I say, is marvellous, and yet the former change, from sin to grace, is no way inferior to it, nay, in some respect, beyond it; for the change which glory makes upon the regenerate is but a gradual change, but the change which regeneration makes upon the ungodly is a specifical change. Great and admirable is this work of God; and let it for ever be marvellous in our eyes.

Infer. 3. *If unregenerate souls be dead souls, what a fatal stroke doth death give to the bodies of all unregenerate men?* A soul dead in sin, and a body dead by virtue of the curse for sin, and both soul and body remaining for ever under the power of eternal death, is so full and perfect a misery, as that nothing can be added to make it more miserable: it is the comfort of a Christian, that he can say, when death comes, *Non omnis moriar*, I shall not wholly die; there is a life I live, which death cannot touch. Rom. viii. 13. "The body is dead "because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness." Blessed and holy is he, that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power. As death takes the believer from amidst many sorrows and troubles, and brings him to the vision of God, to the general assembly of all the perfected saints, to a state of complete freedom and full satisfaction; so it drags the unregenerate from all his sensitive delights and comforts, to the place of torment: it buries the dead soul out of the presence of God for ever: it is the king of terrors, a serpent with a deadly sting, to every man that is out of Christ.

Infer. 4. *If every unregenerate soul be a dead soul, how sad is the case of hypocrites and temporary believers, who are twice dead?* These are those cursed trees, of which the apostle Jude speaks, Jude ver. 12. "Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, "twice dead, plucked up by the roots." The apostle alludes unto dying trees; trees that are dying, the first time, in the spring, then they fade, decay, and cast of their leaves, when other trees are fragrant and flourishing: but from this first death they are sometimes recovered, by pruning, dressing, or watering the roots; but if in autumn, they decay again, which is the critical and *climacterical* times of trees, to discover whether their disease be mortal or not; if then they wither and decay the second time, the fault is *ab intra*, the root is rotten, there is no hope

Digitized by Google

of it; the husbandman bestows no more labour about it, except it be to root it up, for fewel to the fire. Just thus stands the case with false and hypocritical professors, who though they were still under the power of spiritual death, yet, in the beginning of their profession, they seemed to be alive; they shewed the world the fragrant leaves of a fair profession, many hopeful buddings, of affection towards spiritual things were seen in them, but, wanting a root of regeneration, they quickly began to wither and cast their untimely fruit. However, by the help of ordinances, or some touzing and awakening providences, they seem to recover themselves again; but all will not do, the fault is *ab intra*, from the want of a good root, and therefore, at last, they who were always *once dead*, for want of a principle of regeneration, are now become *twice dead*, by the withering and decay of their vain profession. Such trees are prepared for the severest flames in hell, Matth. xxiv. 51. their portion is the saddest portion allotted for any of the sons of death. Therefore the apostle Peter tells us, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. "For if, after they have "escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge "of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entang-"led therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them "than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to "have known the way of righteousness, than after they have "known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto "them." Double measures of wrath seem to be prepared for them that die this double death.

Infer. 5. *If this be so, then unregenerate persons deserve the greatest lamentations.* And were this truth heartily believed, we could not but mourn over them, with the most tender compassion, and hearty sorrow. If our husbands, wives, or children are dying a natural death, how are our hearts rent in pieces, with pity and sorrow for them? What cries, tears, and wringing of hands, discover the deep sense we have of their misery! O Christians, is all the love you have for your relations spent upon their bodies? Are their souls of no value in your eyes? Is spiritual death no misery? Doth it not deserve a tear? The Lord open your eyes, and duly affect our hearts with spiritual death, and soul miseries.

Consider, my friends, and let it move your bowels, (if there be bowels of affection in you), whilst they remain spiritually dead, they are useless, and wholly unserviceable unto God in the world, as to any special and acceptable service unto him, 2 Tim. ii. 21, they are incapable of all spiritual comforts from God; they cannot taste the least sweetness in Christ, in duties, or in promises,

Digitized by Google

Rom. viii. 6. they have no beauty in their ſouls, how comely ſoever their bodies are; it is grace, and nothing but grace, that beautifies the inner man, Ezek. xvi. 6, 7. The dead have neither comfort nor beauty in them: they have no hope to be with God in glory; for the life of glory is begun in grace, Phil. i. 6. their graves muſt be ſhortly made, to be buried out of the ſight of God, for ever, in the loweſt hell, the pit digged by juſtice for all that are ſpiritually dead: the dead muſt be buried. Can ſuch conſiderations as theſe draw no pity from your ſouls, nor excite your endeavours for their regeneration? then it is to be feared your ſouls are dead as well as theirs. O pity them, pity them, and pray for them; in this caſe only, prayers for the dead are our duty: who knows, but, at the laſt, God may hear your cries, and you may ſay with comfort, as he did, "This my ſon "was dead, but is alive; was loſt, but is found; and they be-"gan to be merry," Luke. xv. 24.

SERMON XXXII.

The Condemnation of Unbelievers, opened and applied.

1 JOHN iii. 18. ——*But he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

CHRIST having diſcourſed with Nicodemus, in the beginning of this chapter, about the neceſſity of regeneration, proceeds to ſhew, in this following diſcourſe, the reaſon, and ground, why regeneration, and faith, are ſo indiſpenſibly neceſſary, *viz.* becauſe there is no other way to ſet men free from the curſe, and condemnation of the law. The curſe of the law, like the fiery ſerpents in the wilderneſs, hath ſmitten every ſinner with a deadly ſtroke, and ſting, for which there is no cure, but Chriſt lifted up in the goſpel, "as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in "the wilderneſs," ver. 14. Neither doth Chriſt cure any, but thoſe that, believingly, apply him to their own ſouls. The reſult, and concluſion of all, you have in my text; "He that be-"lieveth in him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, "is condemned already," *&c.* In this clauſe, which I have pitched upon, we find theſe three parts;

1. The ſin threatened, *viz.* Unbelief.
2. The puniſhment inflicted, *viz.* Condemnation.

Digitized by Google

3. The immediate relation of the one to the other? "he is "condemned already."

First, Let us take into consideration the sin which is here threatened, *viz. unbelief*; the neglecting, or refusing, of an exalted, and offered Jesus. Unbelief is twofold, *viz.* negative, or positive. *Negative* unbelief, is the sin of the Heathens, who never had the gospel among them, nor the offers of Christ made to them; these cannot believe on him, of whom they have not heard. *Positive* unbelief, is the sin of men and women under the gospel, to whom Christ is actually opened, and offered, by the preaching of the gospel; but they make light of it, and neglect the great salvation: Receive not Christ into their hearts, nor consent to the severe, and self-denying terms upon which he is offered. This is the sin threatened.

Secondly, The punishment inflicted, and that is *condemnation*: a word of deep, and dreadful signification; appearing, in this text, as the hand-writting upon the plaister of the wall unto Belteshazzar, Dan. v. 5. a word, whose deep sense, and emphasis, is fully understood in hell. *Condemnation* is the judgment, or sentence of God, condemning a man to bear the punishment of his eternal wrath for sin; the most terrible of all sentences.

Thirdly, The immediate relation, or respect, this punishment hath to that sin of unbelief. The unbeliever is condemned already, *(i. e.)* he is virtually condemned by the law of God; his *mittimus* is already made for hell; he is condemned, as *a sinner*, by the breach of the first covenant; but that condemnation had never been his ruin, except it had been ratified by the sentence of God, condemning him, as an *unbeliever*, for slighting, and rejecting the grace offered in the second covenant. So that the believer is already, virtually, condemned by both, as he is a sinner, and as he is an unbeliever; as he hath transgressed the law, and as he hath refused the gospel; as he hath contracted sin the moral disease, and refused Christ, the only effectual remedy. He is, virtually, condemned now, and will be, sententially, condemned in the judgment of the great day. Unbelief is his great sin, and condemation is his great misery. Hence the observation will be this:

Doct. *That all unbelievers are presently, and immediately under the just, and dreadful sentence of God's condemnation.* John xii. 48. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my "words, hath one that judgeth him: The word that I "have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John iii. 36. "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see "life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Digitized by Google

Three things are to be opened in the doctrinal part of this point:

1. What unbelief, or the not receiving of Jesus Christ, is.
2. What condemnation, the punishment of this sin, is.
3. Why this punishment unavoidably follows that sin.

First, What the sin of unbelief, or not receiving Christ, is. By unbelief, we are not here to understand the relics, or remains of that sin in the people of God, which is mixed with their imperfect faith; for there is some unbelief still mingled with faith, in the best hearts: He that can say, "Lord, I believe," hath cause enough to cry out, with tears, "help thou my unbelief." However, this doth not bring the soul under condemnation, or into the state of wrath; the word condemns this unbelief in them, but doth not condemn their persons for this unbelief: But the unbelief here spoken of, is the neglecting, or refusing to take Christ, upon the terms of the gospel, and so is exclusive of the saving act, and effects of faith.

First, It is exclusive of the saving act of faith, which (as hath been already declared) is the due receiving of Christ offered in the gospel, consenting to take him upon his own terms. This, the unbeliever will by no means be persuaded to do; he will be persuaded to accept the promises of Christ, but not to accept the person of Christ: He is willing to accept Christ in part, a divided Christ, but not to accept Christ entirely, in all his offices. He will accept the righteousness of Christ, in conjunction with his own righteousness; but he will not accept the righteousness of Christ, as the sole matter of his justification, exclusive of his own righteousness; he is willing to wear the crown of Christ, but cannot be persuaded to bear the cross of Christ. Thus Christ and unbelievers part upon terms; God will come down no lower, and the unbeliever will come up no higher: God will not alter his terms, and the unbeliever will not alter his resolution; and so Christ is refused, salvation neglected, and in effect the unbeliever chuseth rather to be damned, than to comply with the severe terms of self-denial, mortification, and bearing the cross of Christ. Thus it excludes the saving act of faith.

Secondly, 'Tis exclusive of the saving fruits and effects of faith. Faith produces love to God, but the unbeliever doth not truly love him; "But I know you (saith Christ to unbelievers) "that the love of God is not in you," John v. 42. Faith purifies the heart of a believer, but the hearts of unbelievers are full of all impurity. The believer overcomes the world, the

Digitized by Google

world overcomes the unbeliever: Faith makes the croſs of Chriſt ſweet and eaſy to the believer, unbelief makes Chriſt, becauſe of the croſs, bitter and diſtaſteful to the unbeliever. Thus unbelief excludes both the ſaving act and fruits of faith, and conſequently bars the ſoul from the ſaving benefits and privileges of Faith, *viz.* Juſtification, and peace with God.

Secondly, Next let us conſider the puniſhment of this ſin, which is condemnation. Condemnation, in the general, is the ſentence of a judge awarding a mulct, or penalty to be inflicted upon the guilty perſon. There is a twofold condemnation;

1. *Reſpectu culpae*, In reſpect of the fault.
2. *Reſpectu poenae*, In reſpect of the puniſhment.

Firſt, Condemnation, with reſpect to the fault, is the caſting off the perſon as guilty of the crime charged upon him: condemnation, with reſpect to the puniſhment, is the ſentencing of the convicted offender to undergo ſuch a puniſhment for ſuch a fault, to bear a penal for a moral evil. This *forenſic* word, *condemnation*, is here applied unto the caſe of a guilty ſinner caſt at the bar of God, where the fact is clearly proved, and the puniſhment righteouſly awarded. Thou art an unbeliever, for this ſin thou ſhalt die eternally. Condemnation, with reſpect to the fault, ſtands oppoſed to juſtification, Rom. v. 16. Condemnation, with reſpect to the puniſhment, ſtands oppoſed to ſalvation, Mark xvi. 16. More particularly,

Firſt, Condemnation is the ſentence of God; the great and terrible God, the omniſcient, omnipotent, ſupreme, and impartial Judge, at whoſe bar the guilty ſinner ſtands. 'Tis the law of God that condemns him now: he hath one that judgeth him, a great and terrible one too. 'Tis a dreadful thing to be condemned at man's bar; but the courts of human judicature, how awful, and ſolemn ſoever they are, are but trifles to this court of heaven, and conſcience, wherein the unbeliever is arraigned, and condemned.

Secondly, 'Tis the ſentence of God adjudging the unbeliever to eternal death; than which, nothing is more terrible. What is a priſon to hell? What is a ſcaffold, and an ax, to "go ye "curſed into everlaſting fire?" What is a gallows, and a halter, to everlaſting burnings?

Thirdly, Condemnation is the final ſentence of God, the ſupreme judge, from whoſe bar and judgment there lies no appeal for the unbeliever, but execution certainly follows condemnation, Luke xix. 27. If man condemn, God may juſtify and ſave: but if God condemn, no man can ſave or deliever. If the law caſt a man, as a ſinner, the goſpel may ſave him, as a believer:

Digitized by Google

But if the gospel cast him, as an unbeliever, a man that finally rejects Jesus Christ, whom it offers to him, all the world cannot save that man. O then what a dreadful word is condemnation! All the evils, and miseries of this life are nothing to it. Put all afflictions, calamities, sufferings, and miseries of this world into one scale, and this sentence of God into the other, and they will be all lighter than a feather.

Thirdly, In the next place, I shall shew you that this punishment, *viz.* condemnation, must unavoidably follow that sin of unbelief. So many unbelieving persons as be in the world, so many condemned persons there are in the world; and this will appear two ways.

1. By considering what unbelief excludes a man from.

2. By considering what unbelief includes a man under.

First, Let us consider what unbelief excludes a man from; and it will be found, that it excludes him from all that may help, and save him. For,

First, It excludes him from the pardon of sin, John viii. 24. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Now he that dies under the guilt of all his sins, must needs die in a state of wrath, and condemnation for ever. "For the wages of "sin is death," Rom. vi. 23. If a man may be saved without a pardon, then may the unbeliever hope to be saved.

Secondly, Unbelief excludes a man from all the saving benefits that come by the sacrifice, or death of Christ. For if faith be the only instrument that applies, and brings home to the soul the benefits of the blood of Christ, as unquestionably it is; then unbelief must of necessity exclude a man from all those benefits, and consequently leave him in the state of death, and condemnation. Faith is the applying cause, the instrument by which we receive the special saving benefit of the blood of Christ, Rom. v. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Eph. ii. 8. "By grace are ye saved through "faith." So then, if the unbeliever be acquitted and saved, it must be without the benefit of Christ's death and sacrifice, which is utterly impossible.

Thirdly, Unbelief excludes a man from the saving efficacy, and operation of the gospel, by shutting up the heart against it; and crossing the main drift and scope of it; which is to bring up men to the terms of salvation. To perswade them to believe, this is its great design, the scope of all its commands, 1 John iii. 23. Mark i. 14, 15. John xii. 36. It is the scope of all its promises; they are written to encourage men to believe, John vi.

Digitized by Google

35, 37. So then, if the unbeliever escape condemnation, it must be in a way unknown to us by the gospel; yea, contrary to the established order therein. For the unbeliever obeyeth not the great command of the gospel, 1 John iii. 17. Nor is he under any one saving promise of it, Gal. iii. 14, 22.

Fourthly, Unbelief excludes a man from union with Christ, faith being the bond of that union, Eph. iii. 17. The unbeliever therefore may as reasonably expect to be saved without Christ, as to be saved without faith. Thus you see what unbelief excludes a man from.

Secondly, Let us next see what guilt and misery unbelief includes men under; and certainly it will be found to be the greatest guilt and misery in the world: For,

First, It is a sin which reflects the greatest dishonour upon God, 1 John vi. 10. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath "the witness in himself. He that believeth not God, hath made "him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave "of his Son."

Secondly, Unbelief makes a man guilty of the vilest contempt of Christ, and the whole design of redemption managed by him. All the glorious attributes of God were finally manifested in the work of redemption by Christ; therefore the apostle calls him "the wisdom of God, and the power of God," 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. But what doth the careless neglect, and wilful rejection of Christ speak, but the weakness, and folly of that design of redemption by him?

Thirdly, Unbelief includes in it the sorest spiritual judgment that is, or can be inflicted in this world, upon the soul of man: even spiritual blindness, and the fatal darkening of the understanding by Satan, 2 Cor. iv. 4. of which more hereafter.

Fourthly, Unbelief includes a man under the curse, and shuts him up under all the threatnings that are written in the book of God; amongst which, that is an express, and terrible one, Mark xvi. 10. "He that believes not, shall be damned." So that nothing can be more evident than this, that condemnation necessarily follows unbelief. This sin and that punishment, are fastened together with chains of adamant. The uses follow:

Infer. 1. If this be so, then how great a number of persons are, visibly, in the state of condemnation! So many unbelievers, so many condemned men and women. That is a sad complaint of the prophet, Isa. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our report, and "to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Many there be that talk of faith, and many that profess faith; but they only talk of and profess it: There are but few in the world unto whom

Digitized by Google

the arm of the Lord hath been revealed, in the work of faith with power. It is put among the great myſteries and wonders of the world, 1 Tim. iii. 16. That Chriſt is believed on in the world. O what a great and terrible day will the day of Chriſt's coming to judgment be, when ſo many millions of unbelievers ſhall be brought to his tribunal to be ſolemnly ſentenced! They are (as my text ſpeaks) *condemned already;* but then that dreadful ſentence will be ſolemnly pronounced by Jeſus Chriſt, whom they have deſpiſed and rejected: Then ſhall that ſcripture be fulfilled, Luke xix. 27. "Theſe mine enemies that would not "that I ſhould reign over them, bring them hither, and ſlay "them before me."

Infer. 2. Hence be informed how great a mercy the leaſt meaſure of ſaving faith is; for the leaſt meaſure of true faith unites the ſoul to Jeſus Chriſt; and then "there is no condemnation "to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus," Rom. viii. 1. Not one ſentence of God againſt them. So acts xiii. 39. "By him all that "believe are juſtified in all things." The weakeſt believer is as free from condemnation, as the ſtrongeſt; the righteouſneſs of Chriſt comes upon all believers, without any difference. Rom. iii. 22. "Even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of "Chriſt Jeſus unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there "is no difference." It is not imputed, as it is in inherent righteouſneſs; one man hath more holineſs than another: The faith that receives the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, may be very different in degrees of ſtrength; but the received righteouſneſs is equal upon all believers: A piece of gold is as much worth in the hand of a child, as it is in the hand of a man. O the exceeding preciouſneſs of ſaving faith!

Infer. 3. How dreadful a ſin is the ſin of unbelief, which brings men under the condemnation of the great God. No ſin ſtartles leſs, or damns ſurer: It is a ſin that doth not affright the conſcience, as ſome other ſins do, but it kills the ſoul more certainly than any of thoſe ſins could do: For, indeed, other ſins could not damn us, were it not for unbelief, which fixes the guilt of them all upon our perſons. This is the condemnation. Unbelief is the ſin, of ſins; and when the Spirit comes to convince men of ſin he begins with this as the capital ſin, John xvi. 9. But more particularly,

Firſt, Eſtimate the evil of unbelief, from its object. It is the ſlighting, and refuſing of the moſt excellent, and wonderful perſon in heaven or earth: the viſion of Chriſt by faith, is the joy of ſaints upon earth; the viſion of Chriſt above, is the happineſs of ſaints in heaven. It is a deſpiſing of him who is altoge-

Digitized by Google

ther lovely in himself, who hath loved us and given himself for us.

It is a rejecting of the only Mediator betwixt God and man; after the rejecting of whom there remains no sacrifice for sin.

Secondly, Let the evil of unbelief be valued by the offer of Christ to our souls in the gospel: It is one part of the great mystery of godliness, that Christ should be preached to the Gentiles, 1 Tim. iii. 16. That the word of this salvation should be sent to us, Acts xiii. 26. A mercy denied to the fallen angels, and the greatest part of mankind, which aggravates the evil of this sin beyond all imagination. So that in refusing, or neglecting Jesus Christ, is found vile ingratitude, highest contempt of the grace and wisdom of God; and in the event, the loss of the only season, and opportunity of salvation, which is never more to be recovered to all eternity.

Infer. 4. If this be the case of all Unbelievers, it is not to be admired, that souls under the first convictions of their miserable condition, are plunged into such deep distresses of spirit. It is said of them, Acts ii. 27. "That they were pricked at the heart, "and cried out, men and brethren, what shall we do?" And so the jailor, "He came in trembling and astonished, and said, Sirs, "what must I do to be saved?" Certainly, if souls apprehend themselves under the condemnation, and sentence of the great God, all in tears and trembling, their weary days, and restless nights, are not without just cause and reason. Those that never saw their own miserable condition by the light of a clear and full conviction, may wonder to see others so deeply distressed in spirit. They may mis-judge the case, and call it melancholy or madness; but spiritual troubles do not exceed the cause and ground of them; let them be as deep and as great as they will: And, indeed, it is one of the great mysteries of grace and providence; a thing much unknown to men, how such poor souls are supported, from day to day, under such fears and sorrows as are able, in a few hours to break the stoutest spirit in the world. Luther was a man of great natural courage; and yet, when God let in spiritual troubles upon his soul, it is noted of him, *ut nec vox, nec calor, nec sanguis supereſſet*; he had neither voice, nor heat, nor blood appearing in him.

Inf. 5. How groundless and irrational is the mirth and jollity of all carnal and unregenerate men? They feast in their prison, and dance in their fetters. O the madness that is in the hearts of men! If men did but see their *mittimus* made for hell, or believe they are condemned already, it were impossible for them to live at that rate of vanity they do: And is their condition less

Digitized by Google

dangerous, becauſe it is not underſtood? Surely no; but much more dangerous for that. O poor ſinners, you have found out an effectual way to prevent your preſent troubles; it were well if you could find out a way to prevent your eternal miſery: But it is eaſier for a man to ſtifle conviction, than prevent damnation. Your mirth hath a twofold miſchief in it; it prevents repentance, and increaſeth your future torment. O what an hell will your hell be, who drop into it out of all the ſenſitive, and ſinful pleaſures of this world! If ever man may ſay of mirth, that it is mad; and of laughter, what doth it! He may ſay ſo in this caſe.

Infer. 6. Laſtly, what cauſe have they to rejoice, admire, and praiſe the Lord, to eternity, who have a well-grounded confidence, that they are freed from God's condemnation? "O give thanks to the Father, who hath delivered you from "the power of darkneſs, and tranſlated you into the kingdom "of his dear Son," Col. i. 13. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for if you be freed from condemnation, you are out of Satan's power, he hath no more any dominion over you. The power of Satan, over men, comes in by virtue of their condemnation, as the power of the *jaylor*, or *executioner*, over the bodies of condemned priſoners doth, Heb. ii. 14. If you be freed from condemnation, the ſting of death ſhall never touch you; for the ſting of death ſmites the ſouls of men with a deadly ſtroke, only by virtue of God's condemnatory ſentence. 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. "The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law." If you be freed from condemnation now, you ſhall ſtand with comfort, and boldneſs, at the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, in the great day; and verily in this thing is the love of God perfected, 1 John iv. 17. O it is a privilege in which the grace, mercy, and love of God, ſhine forth as clearly as the ſun, when it ſhineth in its full ſtrength. And certainly you will find cauſe to lie at the feet of God, aſtoniſhed, and overwhelmed with the ſenſe of this mercy, when you ſhall find yourſelves free from the condemnation of God, whilſt many others, as good as you were, are ſtill under condemnation. Yea, yourſelves freed, and many of your ſuperiors in the world ſtill under the curſe, 1 Cor. i. 26. Yea, yourſelves freed and others, that ſat under the ſame means of grace, and had the ſame external advantages you had, ſtill in chains, 2 Cor. ii. 16. O brethren! This is a marvellous deliverance; look on it which way you will, your ranſom is paid, and not a penny of it by you; it coſt you nothing to procure your pardon; your pardon is full, and not one ſin excepted out of it that you ever committed. You are freed,

Digitized by Google

and Jesus Christ condemned in your stead, to procure your discharge; your pardon is sealed in his blood, and that for ever; so that you shall never any more come into condemnation. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent "me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condem-"nation, but is passed from death to life," John v. 24.

Let them that are so delivered, spend their days on earth in praise, and chearful obedience; and, when they die, let them not shrink away from death, nor be afraid to take it by the cold hand, it can do them no harm. Yea, let them close their dying lips with, *Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.*

* *

SERMON XXXIII.

Of the Aggravation of the sin, and Punishment of Unbelief under the light of the Gospel.

JOHN iii. 19. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

OUT of the foregoing verse it was fully proved in our last sermon, that all Christless, and unregenerate men, are no better than dead men, being *condemned already.* Our Saviour proceeds in this verse to aggravate the misery of those that refuse, and despise him; yet farther, and to let them know, that those who remain in unbelief, and the state of unregeneracy, must expect some greater, and sorer wrath than other men; not only a simple condemnation, but an aggravated, and peculiar condemnation. "This is the condemnation, that light is "come," *&c.*

In the words, we find these three parts.

1. The aggravation of sin, by the abuse of gospel-light, "Light is come," *&c.*

2. The aggravation of misery, in proportion to that abuse of light, "This is the condemnation."

3. The cause, and occasion, drawing men into this sin and misery, "Because their deeds were evil."

First, We have here the aggravation of sin, by the abuse of gospel-light, "Light is come." By light we are to understand the knowledge, discovery, and manifestation of Christ, and re-

Digitized by Google

demption by him in the gospel. He is the sun of righteousness, that arises in the gospel upon the nations, Mal. iv. 1. When he came in the flesh, then did "the day-spring from on high "visit us," Luke i. 78. And the light may be said to come two ways; either,

First, In the means by which it is conveyed to us; or, *Secondly*, in the efficacy of it upon our minds, when it actually shines in our souls. Light may come among a people in the means, and yet they actually remain in darkness all the while. As it is in nature; the sun may be up and a very glorious morning far advanced, whilst many thousands are drowzing upon their beds, with their curtains drawn about them. Light, in the *means*, we may call *potential light*. Light, in the *mind*, we may call *actual light*. It is but seldom that light comes in the means, and continues long among men, but some light must needs actually shine into their souls also; but this actual light is twofold.

1. Common, and intellectual only, to *conviction*; or,

2. Special, and efficacious light, bringing the soul to Christ, by real *conversion*, called in 1 Cor. iv. 6.——God "shining in-"to the heart."

Wherever light comes, in this last sense, it is impossible that such men should prefer darkness before it: But it may come in the means, yea, it may actually shine into the consciences of men, by those means, and convince them of their sins, and yet men may hate it, and chuse darkness rather than light. And this is the sense of this place, light was come, in the gospel-dispensation among them; yea, it had shined into many of their consciences, galled, and reproved them for sin; but they hated it, and had rather be without such a troublesome inmate. In a word, by the coming of light, we are here to understand a more clear, and open manifestation of Christ by the gospel than ever was made to the world before. For we are not to think that there was no light in the world till Christ came, and the gospel was published in the world by the apostles ministry. For Abraham saw Christ's day, John viii. 56. and all the faithful, before Christ, saw the promises (*i. e.*) their accomplishment in Christ afar off, Heb. xi. 13. For it was with Christ, the Sun of righteousness, as it is with the natural sun, "which illuminates "the hemisphere before it actually rises, or shews its body above "the horizon *;" but when it rises and shews itself, the light

* *Sol nondum conspectus illuminat orbem.*

is much clearer; so it was in this case. The greater, therefore, was their sin, that rebelled against it, and preferred darkness to light; this was their sin, with its fearful aggravation.

Secondly, In a most just proportion to this sin, we have here the aggravated condemnation of them who sinned against such clear gospel-light: "This is the condemnation," this is the judgment of all judgments, the greatest, and most intolerable judgment; a severer sentence of condemnation than ever did pass against any others that sinned in the times of ignorance and darkness; they live and die impenitent, and unregenerate, how few soever the means of salvation have been which they have enjoyed, must be condemned; yea, the Pagan world, who have no more but natural light to help them, will be condemned by that light; but "this is the condemnation," (*i. e.*) such sinning as this is the cause of the greatest condemnation, and sorest punishment, as it is called, Heb. x. 29.

Thirdly, The cause and occasion, drawing men into this sin, and misery, "because their deeds are evil," (*i. e.*) the convincing light of truth put a great deal of vigour, and activity into their consciences which they could not endure. The accusations, and condemnations of conscience are very irksome, and troublesome things to men: To avoid this, they are willing to be ignorant. An enlightened conscience gives an interruption also unto men, in their sinful courses and pleasures; they cannot sin at so easy a rate in the light, as they did in darkness; and this made them hate the light, as a very troublesome thing to them. Thus you see what was the sin, what the punishment, and what the cause of both.

Hence the observation is,

Doct. *That the greater, and clearer the light is, under which the impenitent, and unregenerate, do live in this world; by so much greater, and heavier, will their condemnation and misery be in the world to come.*

Mat. xi. 21, 22. "Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee "Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you; "had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented "long ago in sackcloth and ashes: But I say unto you, it shall "be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, "than for you." Two things require explication, in the doctrinal part of this point, *viz.*

1. How light puts a deeper guilt, and aggravation, into sin.

2. Why sin, so aggravated, makes men liable to greater condemnation.

First, We will inquire into the grounds, and reasons, why

Digitized by Google

greater, and clearer light, greatens and aggravates, proportionably, the sins that are committed under it; and it will appear, that it doth so, upon divers accounts.

First, All light (especially evangelical light) is a great preservative from sin, and an excellent means to prevent it: It is the property of light to inform the judgment, and rectify the mistakes and errors of it: and thereby to give check to the affections, in the pursuit of sinful designs and courses: It is a plain case, that many men would never do as they do, if their understandings were better informed. 1 Cor. ii. 8. "Which none of "the princes of the world knew; for had they known it, they "would not have crucified the Lord of glory:" It was want of light, and better information which drew them under that horrid, and unparallel'd guilt. Our Saviour also supposes, in the place before cited, that if Tyre and Sidon had enjoyed the same light, and means of grace that Chorazin, and Bethsaida did, they would never have been so sinful as they were: light discovers danger, and thereby overawes, and stops men from proceeding farther in those paths, and courses, that will run them into it.

Secondly, Sinning under, and against the light, supposes and involves in it a greater contempt and despite of God's authority, than sinning in ignorance and darkness doth: Every man that breaks the law of God, doth not, in the same degree, despise and slight the authority of the law-maker: But when a man hath light to discover the evil, and the danger of what he doth and yet will dare to do it, what is this, but the treading of God's authority under foot? The casting of his word behind our backs? Wilful sinning is a despiteful sinning against God, Heb. x. 26. it argues a low, and vile esteem of the law of God, which is reverent, and holy; and by so much the more it maketh sin to be exceeding sinful.

Thirdly, Sinning under, and against the light, admits not of those excuses and pleas, to extenuate the offence, which sins of pure ignorance do. Those that live without the sound of the gospel, may say, Lord, we never heard of Christ, and the great redemption wrought by him; if we had, we would never have lived, and acted as we did: and therefore Christ saith, John xv. 22. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not "had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin."

The meaning is, that if the gospel-light had not shined among them, their sin had not been of that deep guilt that now it is: For now it is so foul and heinous, by reason of the light under,

Digitized by Google

and againſt which it is committed, that they have no pretence, or excuſe to extenuate, or mitigate it.

Fourthly, Evangelical light is a very rich favour and mercy of God to men; one of the choiceſt gifts beſtowed upon the nations of the world; and therefore it is ſaid, Pſal. cxlvii. 19, 20. "He ſheweth his word unto Jacob, and his ſtatutes and his "Judgments unto Iſrael: He hath not dealt ſo with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them." Other nations have corn, and wine, gold, and ſilver, abundance of earthly delights, and pleaſures: But they have not a beam of heavenly light ſhining upon them. We may account this mercy ſmall; but God who is beſt able to value the worth of it, accounts it great. Hoſ. viii. 12. "I have written unto them the "great things of my law." Chriſt reckoned Capernaum to be exalted unto heaven by the miniſtry of the goſpel in that place. Now, the greater the mercy is which the light of truth brings with it, by ſo much the more horrid and hainous muſt the abuſing and deſpiſing of it be.

Fifthly, Sinning againſt the light, argues a love to ſin, as ſin; to naked ſin, without any diſguiſe or covert. It is nothing near ſo bad for a man through a miſtake of judgment, when he thinks that to be lawful, which is indeed ſinful; he doth not now cloſe with ſin, as ſin; but he either cloſes with it as his duty, or, at leaſt, his liberty: 'Tis hard for Satan to perſuade many men to embrace a naked ſin; and therefore he cloaths it in the habit of a duty, or liberty, and thereby deceives, and draws men to the commiſſion of it. But if a man have light ſhining into his conſcience, and convincing him that the way, he is in, is the way of ſin, quite contrary to the revealed will of God, ſtripping the ſin naked, before the eye of his conſcience; ſo that he hath no covert, or excuſe, and yet will perſiſt in it; this, I ſay, argues a ſoul to be in love with ſin, as ſin. Now as for a man to love grace, as grace, is a ſolid argument to prove the truth of his grace; ſo, on the contrary, for a man to love ſin, as ſin, doth not only argue him to be in the ſtate of ſin, but to be in the fore front, and amongſt the higheſt rank of ſinners.

Sixthly, The greater, and clearer the light is, under and againſt which men continue in ſin, the more muſt the conſciences of ſuch ſinners be ſuppoſed to be waſted, and violated by ſuch way of ſinning: For this is a ſure rule †, that "the "greateſt violation of conſcience, is the greateſt ſin." Conſci-

† *Maxima violatio conſcientiæ eſt maximum peccatum.*

Digitized by Google

ence is a noble, and tender part of the soul of man; it is in the soul, as the eye in the body, very sensible of the least injury; and a wound in the conscience, is like a blow in the eye: But nothing gives a greater blow to conscience, nothing so much wastes it, and destroys it, as sins against the light do. This puts a plain force upon the conscience, and gives a dreadful stab to that noble power, God's vicegerent in the soul. And thus you see the first thing made good, that light puts deep guilt, and aggravation into sin.

Secondly, In the next place, let us examine why sin, so aggravated by the light, makes men liable to the greater condemnation: For that it doth so, is beyond all debate, or question; else the apostle Peter would not have said of those sinners against light, as he doth, 2 Pet. ii. 21. "that it had been better for them "not to have known the way of righteousness." Nor would Christ have told the inhabitants of Chorazin, or Bethsaida, that it should be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for them. There is a twofold reason of this.

1. *Ex parte Dei*, on God's part.

2. *Ex parte peccatoris*, on the sinner's part.

First, *Ex parte Dei*, on God's part, who is the righteous Judge of the whole earth; and will therefore render unto every man according as his work shall be: For shall not the Judge of the whole earth do right? He will judge the world in righteousness, and righteousness requires that difference be made in the punishment of sinners, according to the different degrees of their sins. Now that there are different degrees of sin, is abundantly clear, from what we have lately discoursed, under the former head; where we have shewed, that the light under which men sin, puts extraordinary aggravations upon their sins, answerable whereunto, will the degrees of punishment be awarded, by the righteous Judge of heaven and earth. The Gentiles, who had no other light but that dim light of nature, will be condemned, for disobeying the law of God written upon their hearts; but yet, the greater wrath is reserved for them who sin, both against the light of nature, and the light of the gospel also: And therefore it is said, Rom. ii. 9. "Tribulation and anguish upon "every soul of man that doth evil; of the Jew first, and also of "the Gentile." Impenitent Jews and Gentiles, will all be condemned, at the bar of God; but with this difference, to the Jew first, *(i. e.)* principally; and especially, because the light, and mercies which he abused, and violated, were far greater than those bestowed upon the Gentiles, "because unto them "were committed the oracles of God:" And God had not

Digitized by Google

dealt with any nation, as with that nation. Indeed, in the rewards of obedience, the ſame reaſon doth not hold; he that came into the vineyard the laſt hour of the day, may be equal, in reward, with him that bare the heat, and burthen of the whole day; becauſe the reward is of grace, and bounty, not of debt, and merit: But it is not ſo here, juſtice obſerves an exact proportion in diſtributing puniſhments, according to the degrees, deſerts, and meaſures of ſin: And therefore it is ſaid concerning Babylon, Rev. xviii. 7. "How much ſhe hath glorified herſelf, "and lived deliciouſly; ſo much torment, and ſorrow give "her."

Secondly, Ex parte peccatoris, upon the account of ſinners; it muſt needs be, that the heavieſt wrath, and moſt intolerable torments, ſhould be the portion of them who have ſinned againſt the cleareſt light, and means of grace: For we find, in the ſcripture account, that a principal, and ſpecial part of the torment of the damned, will ariſe from their own conſciences. Mark ix. 44. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not "quenched." And nothing is more manifeſt than this, that if conſcience be the tormentor of the damned, then ſinners againſt light muſt needs have the greateſt torments. For,

Firſt, The more knowledge any man had in this world, the more was his conſcience violated, and abuſed here, by ſinning againſt it: And O what work will theſe violations, and abuſes, make, for a *tormenting conſcience* in hell! With what rage, and fury, will it then avenge itſelf upon the moſt ſtout, daring and impudent ſinner! The more guilt now, the more rage, and fury then.

Secondly, The more knowledge; or means of knowledge, any man hath enjoyed in this world, ſo much the more matter is prepared, and laid up for conſcience to upbraid him with, in the place of torments? And the upbraidings of conſcience are a ſpecial part of the torments of the damned. O what a peal will conſcience ring in the ears of ſuch ſinners! "Did not I warn "thee of the iſſue of ſuch ſins, undone wretch? How often "did I ſtrive with thee, if it had been poſſible to take thee "off from thy courſe of ſinning, and to eſcape this wrath? Did "not I often cry out, in thy boſom, ſtop thy courſe, ſinner? "Hearken to my counſel, turn, and live; but thou wouldeſt "not hearken to my voice? I forewarned thee of this danger, "but thou ſlighteſt all my warnings; thy luſts were too ſtrong "for my light, and now thou ſeeſt whither thy way tended, "but, alas, too late!"

Thirdly, The more knowledge, or means of knowledge any

Digitized by Google

man hath abuſed, and neglected in this world, ſo many fair opportunities, and great advantages he hath loſt for heaven; and the more opportunities, and advantages, he hath had for heaven, the more intolerable will hell be to that man; as the mercy was great, which was offered by them, ſo the torment will be unſpeakable, that will ariſe from the loſs of them. Sinners, you have now a wide, and open door, many bleſſed opportunities of ſalvation, under the goſpel; it hath put you in a fair way for everlaſting happineſs: Many of you are not far from the kingdom of God; there will be time enough, in hell, to reflect upon this loſs. What think you, will it not be ſad to think there: O how fair was I once for heaven, to have been with God, and among yonder ſaints! My conſcience was once convinced, and my affections melted under the goſpel. I was almoſt perſuaded to be a Chriſtian, indeed, the treaty was almoſt concluded, betwixt Chriſt, and my ſoul; there were but a few points in difference betwixt us; but wretch that I was, at thoſe points I ſtuck, and there the treaty ended to my eternal ruin: I could not deny my luſts, I could not live under the ſtrict yoke of Chriſt's government; but now I muſt live under the inſupportable wrath of the righteous, and terrible God for ever: and this torment will be peculiar to ſuch as periſh under the goſpel. The Heathen, who enjoyed no ſuch means, can therefore have no ſuch reflections; nay, the very devils themſelves, who never had ſuch a plank after their ſhip-wreck, I mean, a mediator in their nature, or ſuch terms of reconciliation offered them, will not reflect upon their loſt opportunities of recovery, as ſuch ſinners muſt, and will. This, therefore, "is the condemnation, "that light is come into the world; but men loved darkneſs, "rather than light."

Infer. 1. *Hence it follows, that neither knowledge, nor the beſt means of knowledge, are in themſelves, ſufficient to ſecure men from wrath to come.* Light in itſelf is a choice mercy, and therefore the means that begat, and increaſed it, muſt be ſo too; but yet it is a mercy liable to the greateſt abuſe, and the abuſe of the beſt mercies, brings forth the greateſt miſeries. Alas! Chriſtians, your duty is but half learnt, when you know it; obedience to light, makes light a bleſſing indeed. John xiii. 17. "If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them." Happineſs is not intailed upon ſimple knowing, but upon doing; upon obedience to our knowledge; otherwiſe, he that increaſeth knowledge, doth but increaſe ſorrow: "For that ſervant "which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, nor "did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes,"

Digitized by Google

Luke xiii. 47. "And to him that knoweth to do good, and doth "it not, to him it is sin." Jam. iv. 17. We are bound with all thankfulness to acknowledge the bounty of heaven to this sinful generation, in furnishing us with so many excellent means of light, beyond many other nations, and generations that are past, but yet we ought to rejoice with trembling, when we consider the abuses of light, in this wanton age, and what a dismal event is like to happen unto many thousands among us. I fear the time is coming, when many among us will wish they had never set foot on English ground, God hath blessed this nation with many famous, burning, and shining lights. It was once said to the honour of this nation *, *that the English ministry was the world's wonder*; and when a man of another nation began to preach methodically, and convincingly, they were wont to say †, *We perceive this man hath been in England:* The greater will our account be for abusing such light, and rebelling against it. The clearer our light is now, the thicker will the mists of darkness be hereafter, if we are thus wanton under it. The devils have more light than we, and therefore the more torment: Of them it is said, Jam. ii. 19. "The devils also believe, and "tremble;" the horror of their consciences is answerable to their illumination, *they tremble*; "the ‡ word signifies the roar "of the sea," or such a murmuring, dreadful noise, as the tempestuous seas use to make when they break themselves against the rocks.

Infer. 2. *If the abuse of light thus aggravates sin and misery, then times of great temptations are like to be times of deep guilt.* Wo to an enlightned, knowing generation, when strong temptations befal them. How do many, in such times, imprison the known truth, to keep themselves out of prison? offer violence to their own consciences, to avoid violence from other hands?

Plato ‖ was convinced of the unity of God, but durst not own his convictions; but said, "It was a truth neither easy to find; "nor safe to own." And even Seneca *†, the renowned moralist, "was forced by temptation to dissemble his convictions;" of

* *Clerus Anglicanus stupor mundi.*

† *Percipimus hunc hominem fuisse in Anglia.*

‡ Φρικωδες φρικ. *est maris agitatio.* Eust.

‖ *Opificem universorum neque invenire facile, neque inventum in vulgus promulgare tutum.*

*† *In animi religione non habeat, sed in actibus fingat.*

Digitized by Google

whom Auguſtine ſaith, "* He worſhipped what himſelf repre-
" hended, and did what himſelf reproved." And even a great Papiſt of later times was heard to ſay, as he was going to maſs, *Eamus ad communem errorem*, Let us go to the common error. O how hard is it to keep conſcience pure and peaceable in days of temptation! Doubtleſs, it is a mercy to many weak and timorous Chriſtians, to be removed by a ſeaſonable death, out of harms way; to be diſbanded by a merciful providence before the heat of the battle. Chriſt and Antichriſt ſeem at this day to be drawing into the field; a fiery trial threatens the profeſſors of this age: but when it comes to a cloſe engagement, indeed we may juſtly tremble, to think how many thouſands will break their way through the convictions of their own conſciences, to ſave their fleſh. Believe it, ſirs, if Chriſt hold you to himſelf by no other tie than the ſlender thread of a ſingle conviction; if he have not intereſt in your hearts and affections, as well as in your underſtandings and conſciences; if you be men of great light, and ſtrong unmortified luſts; if you profeſs Chriſt with your tongues, and worſhip the world with your hearts; a man may ſay of you, without the gift of prophecy, what the prophet ſaid of Hazael, I know what you will do in the day of temptation.

Infer. 3. *If this be ſo, what a ſtrong engagement lieth upon all enlightned perſons to turn heartily to God, and reduce their knowledge into practice and obedience?* The more men know, the more violence they do their own conſciences, in rebelling againſt the light; this is to ſin with an high hand, Num. xv. 30. Believe it, ſirs, you cannot ſin at ſo cheap a rate as others do: knowledge in a wicked man, like high mettle in a blind horſe, doth but the ſooner precipitate him into ruin. You may know much more than others, but if ever you come to heaven, it muſt be in the ſame way of faith and obedience, mortification and ſelf-denial, in which the weakeſt Chriſtian comes thither; whatever knowledge you have, to be ſure you have no wiſdom, if you expect ſalvation upon any other, or eaſier terms than the moſt illiterate Chriſtian finds it. It was a ſad obſervation of the father, *Surgunt indocti, et rapiunt coelum;* the unlearned riſe, and take heaven. What a pity is it, that men of ſuch excellent parts ſhould be enſlaved to their luſts! that ever it ſhould be ſaid, *Sapientes ſapienter deſcendunt in Gehennam;* their learning

* *Colebat quod reprehendebat, agebat quod arguebat, quod culpabat adorabat.*

Digitized by Google

doth but hang in their light, it doth but blind them in spiritual things, and prepareth them for greater misery.

Infer. 4. *Hence also it follows, that the work of conversion is a very difficult work; the soul is scarcely half won to Christ, when Satan is cast out of the understanding by illumination.* The devil hath deeply intrenched himself, and strongly fortified every faculty of the soul against Christ; the understanding, indeed, is the first entrance into the soul, and out of that faculty he is oftentimes cast, by light and conviction, which seems to make a great change upon a man: now he becomes a professor, now he takes up the duties of religion, and passes up and down the world for a convert; but, alas, alas! all the while Satan keeps the fort-royal, the heart and will are in his own possession; and this is a work of more difficulty: the weapons of that warfare must indeed be mighty through God, which do not only cast down imaginations, but bring every thought of the heart into captivity, to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. While the heart stands out, though the understanding be taken in, the soul remains in Satan's possession; it is a greater work, (and we daily find it so), to win one heart, than to convince twenty understandings.

Infer. 5. *Hence also we may learn, what strength and power there is in the lusts of mens hearts, which are able to bear down so strong convictions of the conscience before them.* That is a great truth, though a very sad one, Eccl. viii. 11. "The heart "of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." O how common it is, every day, and in every place, to see men hazarding their souls to satisfy their lusts! Every man, saith the prophet, "turneth his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle." The horse is a very fierce and warlike creature; and when his courage is rouzed by the sounds of trumpets and shouts of armies, he breaks headlong into the ranks of armed men, though death is before him. Such boisterous and headlong lusts are found in many enlightned persons, though their consciences represent damnation before them; onward they will rush, though God be lost, and a precious soul undone for ever.

Infer. 6. To conclude, *As ever you will avoid the deepest guilt, and escape the heaviest condemnation, open your hearts to obey, and practise whatsoever God hath opened your understandings and consciences to receive of his revealed will;* obey the light of the gospel, while you have opportunity to enjoy it: this was the great counsel given by Christ, John xii. 35, 36. "Yet "a little while the light is with you, walk while ye have the "light, lest darkness come upon you." The manifestation of

Digitized by Google

Chriſt in the goſpel, is the light of the world; all the nations of the earth that want this light are benighted; and thoſe upon whom this light is riſen, have but a ſhort time under it: "Yet "a little while the light is with you:" and whatever patience God may exerciſe towards poor, ignorant ſouls, yet commonly he makes ſhort work with the deſpiſers of this light. The light of the goſpel is a ſhining lamp, fed with golden oil; God will not be at the expence of ſuch a light for them that do but trifle with it. The night is coming, when no man can work. There are many ſad ſigns upon us of a ſetting ſun, a night of darkneſs approaching; many burning and ſhining lights are extinguiſhed, and many *put under a buſhel*; your work is great, your time ſhort; this is the only ſpace you have for repentance, Rev. ii. 21. If this opportunity of ſalvation be loſt, it will never come again, Ezek. xxiv. 13. How pathetical was that lamentation which Chriſt made over Jeruſalem, Luke xix. 41, 42. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and "wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt "in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but "now they are hid from thine eyes." Chriſt is threatning thoſe nations with the removal of his goſpel preſence; he hath found but cold entertainment among us: England hath been unkind to Chriſt, many thouſands there are that rebel againſt the light, that ſay unto God, "Depart from us, we deſire not "the knowledge of thy ways." Chriſt will not tarry where he is not welcome; who would, that hath any where elſe to go? Obey the light therefore, leſt God put it out in obſcure darkneſs.

SERMON XXXIV.

The blinding Policies of Satan opened, as the Cauſe of Unbelief, and Forerunner of Deſtruction.

2 COR. iv. 3, 4. *But if our goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, leſt the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt, who is the image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them.*

THE averſations of men from Jeſus Chriſt, their only remedy, is as much to be admired as lamented; one would

Digitized by Google

think the news of deliverance should make the hearts of captives leap for joy, the tidings of a Saviour should transport the heart of a lost sinner. A man would think a little rhetoric might persuade the naked soul of a sinner to put on the rich robes of Christ's righteousness, which will cost him nothing, but acceptance; or the perishing, starving sinner to accept the bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. This is the great design I have managed in this whole discourse; the centre to which all these lines are drawn; many arguments have been used, and many ways attempted to prevail with men to apply and put on Christ, and I am afraid, all too little. I have but laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought; all these discourses are but the beating of the air, and few, if any, will be persuaded to come unto Christ, who is clearly opened, and freely offered in the gospel to them. For alas! while I am reasoning, Satan is blinding their minds with false reasonings, and contrary persuasions; the god of this world turns away the ears, and draws away the hearts of almost the whole world from Christ; "The god of this world hath blinded the "minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious "gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto "them." Satan is a great and jealous prince, and is well aware, that so many of his subjects as shall be brought to see the misery of their condition, will never endure to abide any longer in subjection to him: it is therefore his great policy to put out their eyes, that he may secure their souls; to darken their understandings, that he may keep his interest firm and entire in their wills and affections: and this makes the effectual application of Christ so great a difficulty, that, on the contrary, it is just matter of admiration that any soul is persuaded and prevailed with to quit the service of Satan, and come to Christ. And therefore, in the last place, to discover the great difficulty of conversion, and shew you where it is that all our endeavours are obstructed, so that we can move the design no further, with all our labouring and striving, reasoning and persuading; as also, to mourn over, and bewail the misery of christless and unregenerate souls, with whom we must part, upon the saddest terms; I have chose this scripture, which is of a most awakening nature, if haply the Lord, at last, may persuade any soul to come over to Christ thereby.

These words come into the apostle's discourse, by way of *prolepsis*; he had been speaking, in the former chapter, of the transcendent excellency of the gospel above the law, and, among other respects, he prefers it to the law in point of clearness.

Digitized by Google

The law was an obſcure and cloudy diſpenſation, there was a veil upon the face of Moſes, and the hearts of the people, that they could not ſee to the end of that which is aboliſhed; but under the goſpel we all, with open face, behold, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord. Againſt this diſcourſe, the apoſtle foreſaw, and obviated this objection: if your goſpel be ſo clear, what is the reaſon that many, who live under the miniſtration of it, (and they none of the meaneſt, neither, for wiſdom, and underſtanding) do yet ſee no glory, nor excellency in it? To this he returns, in the words I have read, "If our goſpel be hid, it is "hid to them that are loſt, whoſe eyes the god of this world hath "blinded," &c. *q. d.* It is true, multitudes there are, who ſee no glory in Chriſt, or the goſpel, but the fault is not in either; but in the minds of them that believe not. The ſun ſhines forth in its glory, but the blind ſee no glory in it; the fault is not in the ſun, but in the eye. In the words themſelves we have three parts to conſider:

1. A dreadful, ſpiritual judgment inflicted.
2. The wicked inſtrument by whom it is inflicted.
3. The politic manner in which he doth it.

Firſt, We have here a very dreadful, ſpiritual judgment inflicted upon the ſouls of men, *viz.* the hiding of the goſpel from them: if our goſpel be hid. For theſe words, Εἰ δὲ καὶ κεκάλυμμένον ἐστὶν, are a conceſſion, that ſo it is; a very ſad, but undeniable truth. Many are there who ſee no beauty in Chriſt, nor neceſſity of him; though both are ſo plainly and evidently revealed in our goſpel, "if our goſpel be hid:" It is called our goſpel, not as if St. Paul, and the other preachers of it, were the authors, and inventors of it; but our goſpel, becauſe we are the preachers, and diſpenſers of it. We are put in truſt with the goſpel, and though we preach it, in the demonſtration of the Spirit, and of power, uſing all plainneſs of ſpeech to make men underſtand it; yet it is hid from many, under our miniſtry: it is hid from their underſtandings, they ſee no glory in it; and hid from their hearts, thy ſee no power in it. Our goſpel, notwithſtanding all our endeavours, is a hidden goſpel unto ſome; this is the ſoreſt, and moſt dreadful judgment.

Secondly, We have here an account of that wicked inſtrument by whom this judgment is inflicted, *viz.* Satan, called here (by a *mimeſis*) *the god of this world*; not ſimply and properly, but becauſe he challenges to himſelf the honour of a god, rules over a vaſt empire, and hath multitudes of ſouls, even the greater part of the world, in ſubjection, and blind obedience to his government.

Digitized by Google

Thirdly, Here, alſo, we have an account of the politic manner of this government, how he maintains his dominion among men, and keeps the world in quiet ſubjection to him; namely, by blinding the minds of all them that believe not; putting out the eyes of all his ſubjects, darkening that noble faculty, the mind, or underſtanding; the thinking, conſidering, and reaſoning power of the ſoul, which the philoſophers truly call το ηγεμονικον, the leading, and directing faculty: for it is to the ſoul, what eyes are to the body, and it is therefore called "the "eyes of the underſtanding," Eph. i. 18. Theſe eyes Satan blinds, *(i. e.)* he darkens the mind, and underſtanding, with ignorance, and error; ſo that when men come to ſee, and conſider ſpiritual things, "they ſee, indeed, but perceive not," Iſa. vi. 9, 10. They have ſome general, confuſed notions, but no diſtinct, powerful, and effectual apprehenſions of thoſe things: and this is the way, indeed, none like it, to bar men effectually from Jeſus Chriſt, and hinder the *application of the benefits of redemption* to their ſouls. It is true, the righteous God permits all this to be done by Satan, upon the ſouls of men; but whereſoever he finally prevails thus to blind them, it is, as the text ſpeaks, εν τοις απολλυμενοις, *in them that are loſt*, or appointed of God unto perdition. The elect of God are all blinded for a time, but Chriſt applieth unto them his eye-ſalve; effectually opens the eyes of their underſtandings, and recovers them thereby, out of Satan's power and dominion: but as for thoſe who ſtill continue thus blinded, the ſymptoms and characters of eternal death, appear upon their ſouls; they are a company of loſt men.

Doct. *That the underſtandings of all unbelivers are blinded by Satan's policies, in order to their everlaſting perdition.*

Four things muſt be opened in the doctrinal part of this point.

Firſt, What the blinding of the underſtanding, or hiding of the goſpel from the underſtanding, is.

Secondly, I ſhall demonſtrate, that the underſtandings of many are thus blinded, and the goſpel hidden from them.

Thirdly, I ſhall ſhew what policies Satan uſes to blind the minds of men.

Fourthly, That this blindneſs is the foreſt judgment, and in order to mens everlaſting perdition.

Fifthly, And then apply the whole.

Firſt, We ſhall enquire what the blinding of the mind, or hiding the goſpel from it, is. Two ſorts of men are thus blinded in the world.

Digitized by Google

1. Thoſe that want the means of illumination.

2. Thoſe that have the means, but are denied the bleſſing and efficacy of them.

The former is the caſe of the Pagan world, who are in midnight darkneſs, for want of the goſpel. The latter is the caſe of the Chriſtian world. The greateſt part of them that live within the ſound of the goſpel, being blinded by the god of this world, Iſa. vii. 9, 10. "And he ſaid, Go, and tell this people; "hear ye, indeed, but underſtand not; and ſee ye, indeed, but "perceive not: Make the heart of this people fat, and make "their ears heavy; and ſhut their eyes, leſt they ſee with their "eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their "heart, and convert, and be healed." Thus, when the Sun of righteouſneſs actually aroſe in the world, it is ſaid, John i. 5. "The light ſhined in darkneſs, but the darkneſs comprehended "it not." So we may ſay of all that light which is in the underſtanding of all unbelievers, what Job ſpeaks of the grave, Job x. 22. "That the light there is as darkneſs." But more particularly, to open the nature of this ſpiritual blindneſs, I will ſhew you,

1. What it is not oppoſed unto.

2. What it is oppoſed unto.

1. Let us examine what ſpiritual blindneſs, or the hiding the goſpel from the minds of men, is not oppoſed unto: and we ſhall find,

Firſt, That it is not oppoſed unto natural wiſdom; a man may be of an acute and clear underſtanding; eagle-eyed, to diſcern the myſteries of nature, and yet the goſpel may be hidden from him Who were more ſagacious, and quick-ſighted, in natural things, than the Heathen Philoſophers, renowned for wiſdom in their generation? yet unto them the goſpel was but *fooliſhneſs*, 1 Cor. i. 20, 21. St. Auguſtine confeſſeth, that before his converſion, he was filled with offence, and contempt of the ſimplicity of the goſpel. *Dedignabar eſſe parvulus*, ſaith he, I ſcorned to become a child again. And that great Bradwardine, the profound doctor, who was learned, *uſque ad ſtuporem*, even to a wonder; profeſſed, that when he firſt read Paul's epiſtles, he deſpiſed them, becauſe he found not in them, *metaphyſicum igenium*, thoſe metaphyſical notions which he expected. Upon this account it was, that Chriſt brake forth into that pathetical gratulation of his Father's love to the elect, Mat. xi. 25. "At that time Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid, I thank thee, O "Father, Lord of heaven and earth; becauſe thou haſt hid theſe

Digitized by Google

" things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them un-
" to babes."

Secondly, It is not opposed to all light, and knowledge, in spiritual truths. A man may have a true understanding of the scriptures, give an orthodox exposition of them, and enlighten the minds of others by them; and yet the gospel may be hidden from himself, Mat. vii. 22. "Many will say unto me in that
" day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?" So, Rom. ii. 19. "And art confident that thou thyself art a
" guide of the blind, a light to them that sit in darkness," *&c.* A man may shew others the way to Christ, and salvation, whilst both are hid from himself.

Thirdly, It is not opposed to all kind of influences upon the affections; for, it is possible, the gospel may touch the affections themselves, and cause some sweet motions and raptures in them; and yet be an hidden gospel to the soul, Heb. vi. 5, 9.

But if these three things may consist with spiritual blindness, unto what then is it opposed? To which I answer, that spiritual blindness stands only opposed unto that saving manifestation of Jesus Christ in the gospel, by the Spirit, whereby the soul is regenerated, and effectually changed, by a real conversion unto God: Wherever the gospel thus comes, in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; producing such an effect as this in the soul; it is no longer an hidden gospel to that soul, though such persons do not see clearly all that glory which is revealed by the gospel; though they know but in part, and see darkly, as through a glass; yet the eyes of their understandings are opened, and the things which belong to their peace are not hidden from them.

Secondly, But though this be the happiness of some men, yet it is demonstrable, that the eyes of many are blinded by the God of this world, and the gospel is an hidden gospel from them; for,

First, Many that live under the gospel are so entirely swallowed up in the affairs of this world, that they allow themselves no time to ponder the great concernment of their souls in the world to come; and judge you, whatever the gifts and knowledge of these men are, whether the god of this world hath not blinded their eyes. If it were not so, it were impossible that ever they should thus waste the most precious opportunities of salvation, upon which their everlasting well-being depends, and spend time, at the door of eternity, about trifles which so little concern them. Yet this is the case of the greatest number that go under the Christian name. The earth hath opened her

Digitized by Google

mouth and swallowed up their own time, thoughts, studies, and strength, as it did the bodies of Corah and his *accomplices*. The first, the freest, yea, the whole of their time, is devoted to the service of the world; for even at that very time, when they present their bodies before the Lord, in the duties of his worship, their hearts are wandering after vanities, and "going "after their covetousness," Ezek. xliii. 31. Judge whether the god of this world hath blinded these men or no, who can see so much beauty in the world, but none in Christ, and put an absolute necessity upon the vanities of this world, but none upon their own salvation. If this be not spiritual blindness, what is?

Secondly, The great stillness, and quietness of mens consciences, under the most rouzing, and awakening truths of the gospel, plainly proves that the god of this world hath blinded their eyes. For, did men see, and apprehend the dangerous condition they are in, as the word represents it; nothing in the world would quiet them but Christ. As soon as mens eyes come to be opened, the next enquiry they make, is, "What shall we do to "be saved?" It is not possible, that a man should hang over hell, see Christ, and the hopes of salvation going, and the day of patience ending, and yet be quiet. O! it cannot be, that conscience should let them be quiet in such a case, if it were not blinded and stupified; but whilst the god of this world, "that strong "man armed, keepeth the house, all his goods are in peace," Luke xi. 21. If once your eyes were opened by conviction, a man may then say, be quiet if you can; sit still, and let the hopes, and seasons of salvation, pass quietly away, if you can. Suppose one should come into the congregation, and whisper but such a word as this in your ears, your child is fallen into the fire, and is a dying, since you came from home; will it be in the power of all friends you have, to quiet you, and make you sit still after such an information? much less when a man apprehends his own soul in immediate danger of everlasting burnings.

Thirdly, The strong confidences, and presumptuous hopes men have of salvation, whilst they remain in the state of nature, and unregeneracy, plainly shew their minds to be blinded by the policy of Satan. This presumption is one of those παραλογισμοι, false reasonings, by which Satan deludes the understanding, as the apostle calls them, James i. 22. It is the cunning sophistry of the devil, fathered by self-love, Prov. xxi. 2. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes," and partly

Digitized by Google

by ſelf-ignorance, Rev. iii. 17. "Thou ſaidſt I am rich, and "have need of nothing, and knoweſt not that thou art poor." You have no fears, no doubts, no caſe to propound that concerns your future ſtate; and why ſo? but becauſe you have no ſight; your conſciences are quieted, becauſe your eyes are blinded.

Fourthly, The trifling of men, with the duties of religion, plainly diſcovers the blinding power of Satan upon their minds and underſtandings, elſe they would never play, and dally with the ſerious, and ſolemn ordinances of God, at that rate they do; if their eyes were once opened, they would be in earneſt in prayer, and apply themſelves with the cloſeſt attention of mind to hearing the goſpel. There are two ſorts of thoughts about any ſubject of meditation. Some think at a diſtance, and others think cloſe to the ſubject. Never do thoughts of men come ſo cloſe to Chriſt, to heaven, and to hell, as they do immediately upon their illumination. When John's miniſtry enlightened the peoples minds, it is ſaid, Matth. xi. 12. "From the days of John "the Baptiſt until now, the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth vio-"lence, and the violent take it by force." Surely theſe men were more in good earneſt, that would receive no repulſe, take no denial, but even force themſelves through all difficulties into heaven; and ſo would it be with you. If the god of this world had not blinded your minds, you would never pray with ſo much unconcernedneſs, nor hear with ſo much negligence, and careleſneſs; pray, as if you prayed not, and hear as if you heard not. It is with many of your hearts, as it was with Ariſtotle, who after a quaint oration made before him, was aſked how he liked it; truly, ſaid he, I did not hear it; for I was thinking all the while of another matter.

Fifthly, This alſo is a plain evidence, that the god of this world hath blinded many mens eyes among us, for that they fear not to commit great ſins, to avoid ſmall hazards and troubles, which all the world could never perſuade them to do, if they were not hood-winked by the god of this world. Thoſe that have ſeen ſin, as ſin, in the glaſs of God's law, "will chuſe as "Moſes did, to ſuffer any affliction with the people of God, ra-"ther than enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſea-"ſon," Heb. xi. 25. Thoſe that have ſeen, and felt the evil of ſin in the deep troubles of their ſpirits for it, will account all reproaches, all loſſes, all ſufferings from men, to be but as nothing to the burthen of ſin.

Sixthly, The pride, and ſelf-conceitedneſs of many thouſands, who profeſs Chriſtianity, plainly ſhew their minds to be blinded

Digitized by Google

by the *sophistry of Satan*, and that they do not understand themselves, and the woful state of their own souls. Those that see God in the clearest light, abhor themselves in the deepest humility, Isa. vi. 5. John xliii. 5. If ever the Lord had effectually opened your eyes, by a clear discovery of your state by nature, and the course of your life, under the efficacy and influence of continual temptations, and corruptions, how would your plumes fall? None in the world would rate you lower, than you yourselves would. By all which it appears, that multitudes are blinded by the god of this world.

Thirdly, In the third place, we are to consider, what policies Satan useth to blind the minds of them that believe not, and we shall find there are three sorts of policies practised by the god of this world upon the minds and understandings of men, which he darkens, by

1. Hindering the reception of gospel-light,
2. Obstructing the efficacy of it when received.
3. Making misapplication of it to other purposes.

It is a great policy in Satan, to blind the understandings of men, by hindering, and preventing the reception of gospel-light, which he doth especially these five ways;

First, By tempting the dispensers of the gospel to darken the truths thereof, in the delivering of them, to shoot over the heads of their hearers, in lofty language, and terms of art, so that common understandings can give no account, when the sermon is done, what a preacher would have; but, however, commend him for a good scholar, and an excellent orator. I make no doubt but the devil is very busy with ministers in their studies, tempting them, by the pride of their own hearts, to gratify his design herein; he teaches them how to paint the glass, that he might keep out the light.

I acknowledge, a proper, grave, and comely stile, befits the lips of *Christ's ambassadors*; they would not be rude, and careless in their language, or method. But this affectation of great swelling words of vanity, is but too like the proud Gnostics, whom the apostle is supposed to tax for this evil, Jude, ver. 16. "This is to darken counsel, by words without "knowledge," Job xxxi. 2. To amuse, and bemist poor ignorant souls, and nullify the design of preaching; for every thing is accounted so far good, as it is good to the end it is ordained for. A sword, that hath an hilt of gold, set thick with diamonds, is no good sword, if it hath no edge to cut, or want a good back to follow home the stroke. O that the ministers

Digitized by Google

of Chriſt would chuſe rather * ſound, than great words, ſuch as are apt to pierce the heart, rather than ſuch as tickle the fancy; and let people beware of furthering the deſign of Satan againſt their own ſouls, in putting a temptation upon their miniſters, by deſpiſing plain preaching. The more popular, plain, and intelligible our diſcourſes are, ſo much the more probable they are to be ſucceſsful; that is the moſt excellent oratory, that perſuades men to Chriſt.

Secondly, Satan hinders the acceſs of light to the underſtandings of men, by employing their minds about impertinent things, while they are attending upon the ordinances of God; thus he tempted them in Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. "And they come unto "thee as the people cometh, and they ſit before thee, as my "people; and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; "for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart "goeth after their covetouſneſs. And lo! thou art unto them "as a very lovely ſong of one that hath a pleaſant voice." The modulation of the prophet's voice was very pleaſing to their ears, but mean while their fancies, and thoughts were wandring after their luſts, their hearts were full of earthly projects.

Thirdly, Satan hinders the acceſs of light to the underſtandings of men, by raiſing objections, and picking quarrels with the word, on purpoſe to ſhake its authority, and hinder the aſſent of the underſtanding to it, and ſo the word makes no more impreſſion than a fable, or a *romance* would do. And never did this deſign of Satan obtain more than in this atheiſtical age, wherein the main pillars and foundation of religion are ſhaken in the minds of multitudes. The devil hath perſuaded many, that the goſpel is but a cunningly deviſed fable; *fabula Chriſti*, as that blaſpheming pope called it; that miniſters muſt ſay ſomething to get a living. That heaven and hell are but fancies, or at moſt, things of great uncertainty, and doubtful credit. This being once obtained, the door of the ſoul is ſhut againſt truth. And this deſign of Satan hath proſpered the more in this generation, by the corrupt doctrines of ſeducing ſpirits, "Which "have overthrown the faith of ſome." 2 Tim. ii. 18. And partly from the ſcandalous lives of looſe and vain profeſſors, the goſpel hath been brought into contempt; but eſpecially by Satan's artificial improvement of the corrupt natures of men, in an age wherein conſcience hath been ſo much debauched, and Atheiſm thereby ſpread as a gangrene in the body politic.

* They who ſpeak in a popular, plain, and ſimple manner, are the beſt inſtructors of the people. *Bucholtz.*

Digitized by Google

Fourthly, Satan hinders the access of light, by helping erroneous minds to draw false conclusions, and perverse inferences from the great and precious truths of the gospel; and thereby bringing them under prejudice and contempt: Thus he assists the errors of mens minds about the doctrine of *election*; when he either persuades them, that it is an unreasonable doctrine, and not worthy of credit, that God should chuse some, and refuse others every way as good as those he hath chosen; or if there be any certainty in that doctrine, then men may throw the reins upon the neck of their lusts, and live at what rate they list. For if God have chosen them to salvation, their wickedness shall not hinder it; and if he have appointed them unto wrath, their diligence and self-denial cannot prevent it.

Thus the doctrine of free grace is by the like sophistry of Satan turned into lasciviousness. If grace abound, men may sin the more freely; and the shortness of our time upon earth, which in its own nature awakens all men to diligence, is, by the subtilty of Satan, turned to a quite contrary purpose, "Let "us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Fifthly, Satan darkens the minds of men, and shuts them up against the light, by blowing them up with pride, and self-conceitedness, persuading them that they know all these things already, and causing them to contemn the most weighty and precious truths of God, as trite and vulgar notions. The word cannot be received without meekness, and humility of mind, Jam. i. 21. Psal. xxv. 8, 9. and pride is the nurse of ignorance, 1 Tim. vi. 4. 1 Cor. viii. 7. The devil is aware of this, and therefore blows up the pride, and conceitedness of mens hearts, all that he can: And this temptation of his generally prevails wherever it meets with a knowing head, matched with a graceless, and unsanctified heart. And thus we see by what wiles and policies, Satan keeps out the light, and prevents the access of it to the minds of men.

But if he miss his design here, and truth gets into the mind, Then

Secondly, He labours to obstruct the efficacy, and operation of the light; and, though it do shine into the understanding, yet it shall be imprisoned there; and send down no converting influences upon the will, and affections: And this design he promotes, and manages divers ways.

First, By hastening to quench convictions betimes, and nip them in the bud. Satan knows how dangerous a thing it is, and destructive to his interest, to suffer convictions to continue long; and therefore it is said of him, Mat. xiii. 19. When any

Digitized by Google

" one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it " not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which " was sown in his heart." Satan is compared in this scripture to the fowls in the air, which pick up the seed before it take any root in the earth. The devil is very jealous of this, and therefore labours all he can to destroy the word before it comes to operate upon the heart; which he doth sometimes by the cares of the world, and sometimes by vain companions, who prove mere quench coals unto the beginning convictions. One sinner destroyeth much good.

Secondly, No sooner doth the god of this world observe the light of truth begin to operate upon the heart, but he obstructeth that design by *procrastinations* and delays, which delude and baffle convinced souls; he persuades them if they will alter their course, it will be time enough hereafter, when such encumbrances and troubles, in the world, are over; if he prevail here, 'tis a thousand to one but the work miscarries. Jam. i. 13, 14. If the hearer of the word be not a doer (*i. e.*) a present doer, while the impressions of it are fresh upon the soul, *he doth but deceive himself*. For it is with the heart, as it is with melted wax, if the seal be clapped to it presently, it will receive a fair impression; but if it be let alone, but for a little while, you can make none at all; it was therefore David's great care and wisdom to set about the work of religion under the first *impetus*, or vigorous motion of his heart and affections. Psal. cxix. 60. " I " made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Multitudes of souls have perished by these delays. It is a temptation incident to all that are under beginning convictions, especially young persons, whom the devil persuades that it were no better than madness in them to abridge, and deny themselves so much delight, and pleasure, and steep their youthful thoughts in such a melancholy subject as religion is.

Thirdly, If all this will not do, but convictions still continue to get ground in the conscience, then he endeavours, to scare, and fright them out of their convictions, by representing to them the inward terrors, troubles, and despairs into which they are about to plunge themselves, and that henceforth they must never expect a pleasant day, or comfortable hour. Thus doth the God of this world blind the minds of them that believe not, both by hindering the access of light to the mind, and the influence of it upon the heart.

Thirdly, There is yet one policy of Satan to keep souls in darkness. and that is, by the misapplication of truth; persuading them, that whatsoever they read, or hear of the misery,

Digitized by Google

and danger of chriſtleſs, and unregenerate perſons, doth not in the leaſt touch or concern them, but the more notorious and prophane part of the world; and by this policy he blinds the minds of all civil and moral perſons. Thus the "Phariſees "truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed o- "thers." And ſo the Laodiceans thought themſelves *rich, and encreaſed with goods;* this is, in a very ſafe and good condition *. Now there are divers things notably improved by Satan's policy, in order to theſe miſapplications of truth. As,

Firſt, The freedom of their lives from the moſt groſs pollutions of the world. Mat. xix. 20. "All theſe things have I "kept from my youth up." A civil, ſober courſe of life is a moſt effectual blind before the eyes of many a man's conſcience.

Secondly, It is the policy of Satan to prevent convictions by conviction: I mean effectual convictions, by convictions, that have been ineffectual, and are now vaniſhed away. Thus the troubles that ſome perſons have been under, muſt paſs for their converſion, though the temper of their heart be the ſame it was: Their ineffectual troubles are made uſe of by the devil to blind them in the true knowledge, and apprehenſion of their condition. For theſe men and women can ſpeak of the troubles they have had for ſin, and the many tears they have ſhed for it; whereby thorough conviction is effectually prevented.

Thirdly, Gifts, and knowledge are improved by the policy of Satan, againſt the true knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and our own eſtate by nature. As conviction, is improved by Satan's policy againſt conviction, ſo is knowledge againſt knowledge. This was the caſe of them in Rom. ii. 17, 18. "Thou art "called a Jew, and reſteſt in the law, and makeſt thy boaſt of "God, and knoweſt his will, and approveſt the things that are "excellent; being inſtructed out of the law, and art confident "that thou thyſelf art a guide to the blind," *&c.* And this is the temptation, and deluſion of knowing perſons, who are ſo far from being blind in their own account, that they account themſelves the guides of the blind: Yet who blinder than ſuch men?

Fourthly, External reformation is improved by the policy of Satan againſt true ſpiritual reformation, and paſſes current up and down the world for converſion; though it ſerves only to ſtrengthen Satan's intereſt in the ſoul, Matth. xii. 44. and for want of a real change of heart, doth but encreaſe their ſin and miſery, 2 Pet. ii. 20. This is the generation that is pure in their own eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their filthineſs.

* See my Touchſtone of Sincerity upon *Rev.* iii. 17, 18.

Digitized by Google

The *cleanneſs* of their hands blinds them in diſcovering the *foulneſs* of their hearts.

Fifthly, The policy of Satan improves diligence in ſome duties, againſt the convictions of other duties. The external duties of religion, as hearing, praying, faſting, againſt the great duties of repenting and believing. This was their caſe, Iſa. lviii. 2, 3. "Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways, "as a nation that did righteouſneſs, and forſook not the ordi- "nances of their God. They aſk of me the ordinances of ju- "ſtice, they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore "have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not? Wherefore "have we afflicted our ſouls, and thou takeſt no knowledge?" Thus duty is improved againſt duty, the externals againſt the internals of religion, and multitudes are blinded this way.

Sixthly, The policy of Satan improves zeal againſt zeal; and thereby blinds a great part of the world: he allows men to be zealous againſt a falſe religion, if thereby he may prevent them from being zealous in the true religion. He diverts their zeal againſt their own ſins, by ſpending it againſt other mens. Thus Paul was once blinded by his own zeal for the law, Acts xxii. 3. And many men, at this day, ſatisfy themſelves in their own zeal againſt the corruptions of God's worſhip, and the ſuperſtitions of others, who never felt the power of true religion upon their own hearts; a dangerous blind of Satan.

Seventhly, The policy of Satan improves the eſteem and reſpect men have from the people of God, againſt their great duty and intereſt to become ſuch themſelves, Rev. iii. 1. "Thou "haſt a name that thou liveſt, but thou art dead." It is enough to many men that they obtain acceptation among the ſaints, though they be none of that number; the good opinion of others, begets and confirms their good opinion of themſelves.

Eightly, The policy of Satan improves ſoundneſs of judgment, againſt ſoundneſs of heart. An orthodox head, againſt an orthodox heart and life; dogmatical faith, againſt juſtifying faith. This was the caſe of them before-mentioned, Rom. ii. 18, 19. Men ſatisfy themſelves, that they have a ſound underſtanding, though, at the ſame time, they have a very rotten heart. It is enough for them that their heads are regular, though their hearts and lives be very irregular.

Ninthly, The policy of Satan improves the bleſſings of God, againſt the bleſſings of God, blinding us by the bleſſings of providence, ſo as not to diſcern the want of ſpiritual bleſſings; perſuading men that the ſmiles of providence, in their proſperity, ſucceſs, and thriving deſigns in the world, are good evide-

Digitized by Google

ces of the love of God to their souls, not at all discerning how the prosperity of fools deceives them, and that riches are often given to the hurt of the owners thereof.

Tenthly, The policy of Satan improves comforts against comfort, false and ungrounded comforts under the word, against the real grounds of comfort lying in the soul's interest in Christ. Thus many men finding a great deal of comfort in the promises, are so blinded thereby, as never to look after union with Christ, the only solid ground of all true comfort, Heb. vi. 5, 9.

And thus you see, how the God of this world blindeth the minds of them that believe not, and how the gospel is hid to them that are lost.

* *

SERMON XXXV.

2 COR. iv. 3, 4. *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

THE words have been opened, and this point observed:

Doct. *That the understandings of all unbelievers are blinded by Satan's policies, in order to their everlasting perdition.*

We have shewn already what the blinding the mind, or hiding of the gospel from it, is; it hath also been demonstrated that the gospel is hid, and the minds of many blinded under it; you have also seen what policies Satan uses to blind the minds of men, even in the clearest light of the gospel. It remains now that I open to you the dreadful nature of this judgment of God upon the souls of men, and then make application of the whole.

There are many judgments of God inflicted upon the souls, and bodies of men, in this world; but none of them are so dreadful as those spiritual judgments are, which God inflicts immediately upon the soul: and among spiritual judgments, few or none are of a more dreadful nature, and consequence, than this of spiritual blindness; which will apppear by considering,

First, The subject of this judgment, which is the soul, and

Digitized by Google

the principal power of the ſoul, which is the mind, and underſtanding faculty; the ſoul is the moſt precious and invaluable part of man, and the mind is the ſuperior and moſt noble power of the ſoul; it is to the ſoul what the eye is to the body, the directive faculty. The bodily eye is a curious, tender, and moſt precious part of the body. When we would expreſs the value of a thing, we ſay, we prize it as our eyes. The loſs of the eyes is a ſore loſs, we loſe a great part of the comfort of this world by it. Yet ſuch an affliction (ſpeaking comparatively) is but a trifle to this. If our bodily eyes be blinded, we cannot ſee the ſun; but if our ſpiritual eye be blinded, we cannot ſee God, we wander in the paths of ſin, 1 John ii. 11. We are led blindfold to hell by Satan, as the Syrians were into Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 19, 20. And then our eyes, like theirs, will be opened to ſee our miſery, when it is too late. "The light of the "body is the eye, (ſaith Chriſt). If therefore thine eye be ſin"gle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light; but if thine eye "be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore "the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that dark"neſs?" Mat. vi. 22, 23. By the eye he means the practical judgment, the underſtanding faculty, which is the ſeat for principles, the common treaſury of rules of practice, according unto which a man's life is formed, and his way directed. If therefore that power of the ſoul be darkened, how great muſt that darkneſs be! For now the blind lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch. The blind judgment miſ-guides the blind affections, and both fall into hell. O what a ſad thing is it, that the devil ſhould lead that, that leads thee! That he ſhould ſit at the helm, and ſteer thy courſe to damnation! The blinding of this noble faculty precipitates the ſoul into the moſt dangerous courſes; perſecution, by this means, ſeems to be true zeal for God, John xvi. 2. "They that perſecute you, ſhall think "that they do God ſervice. Paul once thought verily with him"ſelf, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name "of Jeſus of Nazareth," Acts xxvi. 9. *i. e.* He thought he had pleaſed God, when he was impriſoning and perſecutiug his people, as many do at this day; it will make a man to ſin conſcientiouſly, which is a very dangerous way of ſinning, and difficult to be reclaimed.

Secondly, It is a dreadful judgment, if we conſider the object about which the underſtanding is blinded, which is Jeſus Chriſt, and union with him; regeneration, and the nature and neceſſity thereof. For this blindneſs is not univerſal, but reſpective and particular. A man may have abundance of light and knowledge

Digitized by Google

in things natural and moral; but ſpiritual things are hidden from his eyes. Yea, a man may know ſpiritual things in a natural way, which encreaſeth his blindneſs; but he cannot diſcern them ſpiritually; this is a ſore judgment, and greatly to be bewailed. "Thou haſt hid theſe things, (ſaid Chriſt) from "the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes," Mat. xi. 25. Learned, and knowing men are ignorant of thoſe things, which very babes in Chriſt underſtand. They are prudent in the management of earthly affairs; but to ſave their own ſouls they have no knowledge. They are able, with Berengarius, to diſpute *de omni ſcibili*, of every thing inveſtigable by the light of nature; yea, to open the ſcripture ſolidly, and defend the doctrines and truths of Chriſt againſt his adverſaries ſucceſsfully; and yet blinded in the great myſtery of regeneration, *Blindneſs in part*, (ſaith the apoſtle) *is happened unto Iſrael;* and that indeed was the principal part of knowledge, *viz.* the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, we ſee farther than they. The literal knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt ſhines clearly in our underſtanding. We are only blinded about thoſe things which ſhould give us ſaving intereſt in him, about the effectual application of Chriſt to our own ſouls.

Thirdly, The dreadful nature of this ſpiritual blindneſs farther appears from the conſideration of the ſeaſon in which it befals men, which is the very time of God's patience, and the only opportunity they have for ſalvation; after theſe opportunities are over, their eyes will be opened to ſee their miſery, but alas, too late. Upon this account Chriſt ſhed thoſe tears over Jeruſalem, Luke xix. 42. "O that thou hadſt known, at "leaſt in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but "now they are hid from thine eyes." Now the ſeaſon of grace is paſt and gone; opportunities are the golden ſpots of time, and there is much time in a ſhort opportunity, as there are many pieces of ſilver in one piece of gold. Time ſignifies nothing when opportunities are gone; to be blinded in the very ſeaſon of ſalvation, is the judgment of all judgments, the greateſt miſery incident to man; to have our eyes opened when the ſeaſons of ſalvation are paſt, is but an aggravation of miſery: there is a twofold opening of men's eyes to ſee their danger, *viz.*

1. Graciouſly to prevent danger.
2. Judicially to aggravate miſery.

They whoſe eyes are not opened graciouſly in this world, to ſee their diſeaſe, and remedy in Chriſt, ſhall have their eyes opened judicially in the world to come, to ſee their diſeaſe with-

Digitized by Google

out any remedy. If God open them now, it is by way of prevention; if they be not opened till then, it will produce desperation.

Fourthly, The horrible nature of this judgment farther appears from the exceeding difficulty of curing it, especially in men of excellent natural endowments and accomplishments, John. ix. 40, 41. "And some of the Pharisees which were with "him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: "but now ye say, We see: therefore your sin remaineth," *q. d.* the pride and conceitedness of your hearts adds obstinacy and incurableness to your blindness; these are "the blind people that "have eyes;" Isa. xliii. 8. *In seeing they see not.* The conviction of such men is next to an impossibility.

Fifthly, The design and end of this blindness under the gospel is most dreadful *; so saith my text, "The god of this "world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image "of God, should shine unto them." Answerable whereunto are those words, Isa. vi. 10. "Make the heart of this people fat, and "make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with "their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their "hearts, and convert, and be healed." So that it is plain, this blinding is a *praeludium* to damnation, as the covering of Haman's face was to his destruction. When the Lord hath no purpose of grace and mercy to a man's soul, then to bring about the damnation of that man by a righteous permission; many occasions of blindness befal him, which Satan improves effectually unto his eternal ruin: among which fatal occasions, blind guides and scandalous professors are none of the least; they shall be fitted with ministers suitably to their humours, who shall speak smooth things: *If a man walk in the spirit and falshood, (i. e.* by an ἐν δίκῃ ψεύσει, ——the spirit of falsehood), *do lie, saying, I will prophesy to thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people:* and the slips and falls of professors shall do the devil not a little service in this his fatal design; Matth. xviii. 7. "Wo to the world because of offences." This shall blind them, and harden them to purpose. Thus you see what a dreadful judgment this is, a stroke of God upon the soul,

* It is a sign of God's displeasure, when men understand not their faults, lest repentance follow. *Cypr. Ep.* 2. But to be smitten with blindness of mind, so as neither to know nor lament their faults, is a higher evidence of the displeasure of an angry God. *Cypr.*

Digitized by Google

which cuts off all the preſent comforts of Chriſt and religion from it, takes away the bridle of reſtraint from ſin, and makes way for the final ruin of the ſoul. A far greater judgment it is than the greateſt calamity or affliction which can befal us in this world. If our names ſuffer by the greateſt reproaches, our bodies by the moſt painful diſeaſes, our eſtates by the greateſt loſſes; if God ſtrike every comfort we have in this world dead by affliction: all this is nothing, compared with this blinding judgment of God upon the ſoul; for they may come from the tender love of God to us, Heb. xii. 6. but this is the effect of his wrath; they may cleanſe ſin, Iſa. xxvii. 9. but this increaſes it; they often prove occaſions of converſion, Job xxxvi. 8, 9. but this is the great obſtruction to it. In a word, they only wound the fleſh, and that with a curable wound; but this ſtabs the ſoul, and that with a mortal wound.

Firſt uſe, of information.

Infer. 1. If this be the caſe of the unbelieving world, to be ſo blinded by the god of this world; *How little ſhould we value the cenſures and ſlanders of this blind world?* Certainly they ſhould move no other affection but pity in our ſouls: if their eyes were opened, their mouths would be ſhut; they would never traduce religion, and the ſincere profeſſion of it, as they do, if Satan had not blinded their minds: they ſpeak evil of the things they know not; their reproaches, which they let fly ſo freely, are but ſo many arrows ſhot by the blind man's bow, which only ſtick in our cloaths, and can do us no hurt, except we thruſt them onward by our own diſcontent, to the wounding of our ſpirits. "* I could almoſt be proud upon it, ſaid "Luther, that I have got an ill name among the worſt of men." Beware, Chriſtians, that you give them no occaſion to blaſpheme the name of your God, and then never trouble yourſelves, however they uſe your names. If they tread it in the dirt now, God, (as one ſpeaks), will take it up, waſh off all the dirt, and deliver it you again clear and ſhining. Should ſuch men ſpeak well of us, we might juſtly ſuſpect ourſelves of ſome iniquity which adminiſters to them the occaſions of it.

Infer. 2. *How abſurd and dangerous muſt it be for Chriſtians to follow the examples of the blind world?* Let the blind follow the blind, but let not thoſe whom God hath enlightned do ſo. Chriſtians, never let thoſe lead you, who are led blindfold by

* *Superbus fio, quod video nomen peſſimum mihi creſcere.* Luther. *Gratias ago Deo meo, quod dignus ſum quem mundus oderit.* Hieron.

Digitized by Google

the devils themſelves. The holineſs and heavenlineſs of Chriſtians was wont to ſet the world a wondering that they would not run with them into the ſame exceſs of riot, 1 Pet iv. 4. But ſure, ſince God hath opened your eyes, and ſhewed you the dangerous courſes they walk in, it would be the greateſt wonder of all, if you ſhould be the companions of ſuch men, and tread in the ſteps of their examples. Chriſtian, as humble and lowly thoughts as thou haſt of thyſelf, yet I would have thee underſtand thyſelf to be too good to be the aſſociate of ſuch men. *Diſcamus ſanctam ſuperbiam, et ſciamus nos eſſe illies meliores.* If they will walk with you in the way of duty and holineſs, let them come and welcome: receive them with both arms, and be glad of their company; but beware you walk not in their paths, leſt they be a ſnare unto you. Did they ſee the end of their way, they would never walk in it themſelves; why then will you walk with them who do ſee it?

Infer. 3. If this be ſo, *Let Chriſtians be exact and circumſpect in their walking, leſt they lay a ſtumbling-block before the blind.* It is a great ſin to do ſo in a proper ſenſe, Lev. xix. 14. "Thou "ſhalt not put a ſtumbling block before the blind." And a far greater to do it in a metaphorical ſenſe, Rom. xiv. 13. It is the expreſs will of God, "that no man put a ſtumbling-block, "or an occaſion to fall in his brother's way." It is an argument of little regard to the honour of Chriſt, or the ſouls of men, ſo to do. O profeſſors, look to your ſteps; the devil deſires to make uſe of you for ſuch purpoſes. The ſins of thouſands of others, who make no profeſſion of godlineſs, will never ſo fit his purpoſe for the blinding of thoſe mens eyes, as the leaſt ſlip or failing of yours will do. It is the living bird that makes the beſt ſtale to draw others into the net: the groſſeſt wickedneſs of profane ſinners paſſeth away in ſilence, but all the neighbourhood ſhall ring with your miſcarriages. "A righte-"ous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled "fountain and a corrupt ſpring," Prov. xxv. 26. The ſcandalous falls of good men are like a bag of poiſon caſt by Satan into the ſpring from whence the whole town is ſupplied with water. You little know what miſchief you do, and how many blind ſinners may fall into hell by your occaſion.

Infer. 4. *How dangerous a thing is zeal in a wicked man?* It is like a ſharp ſword in a blind man's hand, or like high mettle in a blind horſe. How much hath the church of God ſuffered upon this account, and doth ſuffer at this day: The world hath ever been full of ſuch blind and bluſtering zeal, which, like a hurricane, overturns all that ſtands in its way: yea, as we

Digitized by Google

noted before, it makes a man a kind of conscientious persecutor. I confess it is better for the persecutor himself to do it ignorantly, because ignorance leaves him in a capacity for mercy, and sets him a degree lower than the malicious enlightned persecutor, 1 Tim. i. 13. else it were the dreadful case described in Heb. x. But yet, as it is John xvi. 2. these are the fierce and dreadful enemies of the church of God. Such a man was Paul, a devout persecutor, and such persecution God afterward suffered to befal himself, Acts xiii. 50. "But the Jews "stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief "men of that city; and raised persecution against Paul and "Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts." An erroneous conscience binds, as well as an informed conscience; and wherever God gives such men opportunity to vent the spleen and rage of their hearts upon his people, they will be sure to do it to purpose. With other men Gamaliel's counsel may have some influence, and they may be afraid lest they be found fighters against God; but blind zeal spurs on, and saith, as Jehu did, "Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts." O blind sinners, be sure of your mark before you discharge your arrows. If you shoot at a wicked man, as you suppose him, and God finds one of his dear children wounded or destroyed, what account will you give of that fact to God when you shall come before his judgment-seat?

Second use, of exhortation.

This point is very improveable by way of exhortation. Both,

1. Unto those who are blinded by the god of this world.

2. To those that are enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, by the true God.

First, To those who are still blinded by the god of this world, to whom the Lord hath not given unto this day eyes to see their misery in themselves, or their remedy in Christ, so as to make an effectual application of him to their own souls. To all such my counsel is,

1. To get a sense of your own blindness.

2. To seek out for a cure, whilst yet it may be had.

First, Labour to get a deep sense of the misery of such a condition; for till you be awakened by conviction, you can never be healed. O that you did but know the true difference betwixt common and saving light; the want of this keeps you in darkness: you think because you know the same things that the most unsanctified man doth, that therefore there is no difference betwixt his knowledge and yours; and are therefore ready to say to them, as Job to his friends; "Lo, mine eye hath

Digitized by Google

" ſeen all this, mine ear hath heard, and underſtood it: what " ye know, the ſame do I know alſo; I am not inferior unto " you," Job xiii. 1, 2. But O that you would be convinced that your knowledge vaſtly differs from the knowledge of believers. Though you know the ſame things that they do, it is a knowledge of another kind and nature. You know ſpiritual things in another way, merely by the light of reaſon, aſſiſted, and improved by the common light of the goſpel; they know the ſame things by ſpiritual illumination, and in an experimental way. 1 John ii. 20. " Ye have an unction from the holy " One, and ye know all things." Their knowledge is practical, yours is idle. They are working out their ſalvation by that light which God hath given them, Pſal. cxi. 10. Their knowledge of God, and Chriſt, produces the fruits of faith, obedience, and mortification, and heavenly-mindedneſs in them: it hath no ſuch fruits in you; whatever light there be in your underſtandings, it makes no alteration at all upon your hearts. The light brings them to heaven, John xvii. 3. Yours ſhall be blown out by death, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. and yourſelves left in the miſts of eternal darkneſs; except your eyes be opened ſeaſonably by the anointing of the Holy Ghoſt. Conviction is a great part of your cure.

Secondly, Labour to get a remedy for this dangerous diſeaſe of your minds: " Awake to righteouſneſs, and ſin not, for ſome " have not the knowledge of God: I ſpeak this to your ſhame," 1 Cor. xv. 34. Theſe things ſpeak encouragement to you, though it be a ſore judgment that lies upon you, and very difficult to be removed: yet remember Jeſus Chriſt is commiſſioned by God the Father, to open the blind eyes, Iſa. xlii. 6, 7. and this excellent phyſician beſpeaks you for his patients, Rev. iii. 18. " Anoint thine eyes, (ſaith he) with eye-ſalve that thou " mayeſt ſee." Yea, the moſt enlightened Chriſtians were once as dark and blind, in ſpiritual things, as you are, and Chriſt hath cured them, Eph. v. 8. " Once were you darkneſs, now " are ye light in the Lord." Attend therefore upon the ordinances of the goſpel diligently; that is God's enlightening inſtrument, by which he couches thoſe cataracts which blind the eyes of mens underſtandings, Acts xxvi. 28. And if ever you will have your eyes opened, allow yourſelves time to ponder, and conſider what you hear. The duty of meditation is a very enlightening duty: above all, cry to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as that poor man did, " Lord, that mine eyes may be opened, that " I may receive my ſight." Say, Lord, this is my diſeaſe, and danger, that in ſeeing I ſee not. Others ſee natural things in a

Digitized by Google

ſpiritual way, whilſt I ſee ſpiritual things only in a natural way: Their light is operative upon their hearts, mine is but an idle impractical notion of religion, which brings forth no fruit of holineſs. Their knowledge ſets their hands a work in duties of obedience; mine only ſets my tongue a work in diſcourſes of thoſe things which my heart never felt. Lord, open mine eyes, and make me to ſee out of this obſcurity: All the light that is in me is but darkneſs. O Lord, enlighten my darkneſs, enlighten mine eyes, leſt I ſleep the ſleep of death.

Secondly, Let it be a word of counſel, and exhortation to ſuch as once were blind, but do now ſee.

Firſt, I beſeech you, bleſs God for the leaſt degree of ſpiritual illumination. "Truly light is ſweet, and it is a pleaſant "thing for the eyes to behold the ſun," Eccleſ. xi. 7. But oh, how ſweet is ſpiritual light! and what a pleaſant thing to behold the ſun of righteouſneſs! Bleſſed are your eyes, for they ſee God hath brought you out of darkneſs into marvellous light. And marvellous indeed it muſt needs be, when you conſider how many wiſe and prudent men are under the power of ſpiritual darkneſs, whilſt ſuch babes as you are enlightened, Mat. xi. 25. It greatly affected the heart of Chriſt, O let it affect yours alſo.

Secondly, Labour to get a clearer ſight of ſpiritual things every day. For all ſpiritual light is encreaſing light, "which "ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. O! if a little ſpiritual light be ſo comfortable, what would more be? The wiſdom of God is *a manifold wiſdom*, Eph. iii. 10. The beſt of us ſee but little of it. Labour therefore to know ſpiritual things more *extenſively*, and more experimentally, Phil. iii. 8, 9. Be ſtill increaſing in the knowledge of God.

Thirdly, Walk as men whoſe eyes are opened. "Once ye "were in darkneſs, now are ye light in the Lord; walk as chil-"dren of the light," Eph. v. 8. elſe your light will but aggravate your ſin. Remember how it diſpleaſed God, that Solomon's heart was turned from the Lord God of *Iſrael who appeared to him twice*, 1 Kings xi. 9. Remember how angry God was with the Heathens for abuſing the dim common light of nature, Rom. i. 21. How much more evil is it in you to abuſe the moſt precious light that ſhineth in this world? And what miſchievous effects the abuſe of your light will have upon this blind world? It was a ſmart rebuke given once by an Atheiſt to a good man, who being aſked by him, how he could ſatisfy his

Digitized by Google

conſcience to live as he did? Nay rather ſaid the Atheiſt, I wonder how you can ſatisfy yourſelf to live as you do; for did I believe as you do, that there is ſuch a Chriſt, and ſuch a glory as you believe there is, I would pray, and live at another rate than you do.

The Concluſion.

And now, reader, after all my diſcourſes of the method of Chriſt in purchaſing the great ſalvation for us, and the way of the Spirit in applying it, and making it effectual to God's elect; thou haſt two wonders before thine eyes, either of which may aſtoniſh thy ſoul, in the conſideration of them, *viz.*

1. This admirable grace of God in preparing } this great
2. The deſperate wickedneſs of man in rejecting } Salvation.

Firſt, Behold the riches of the goodneſs, and mercy of God in preparing ſuch a remedy as this for loſt man. This is that which is juſtly called, "The great myſtery of godlineſs," 1 Tim. iii. 16. that myſtery which the *prophets* enquired diligently after, yea, which the "angels deſired to look into," 1 Pet. i. 10, 12. In this glorious myſtery of redemption that, πολυποικιλος σοφια, manifold wiſdom of God, or that wiſdom which hath ſuch curious, and admirable variety in it, is illuſtriouſly diſplayed, Eph. iv. 10. Yea, the contrivance of our redemption, this way, is the moſt glorious diſplay of divine *love* that ever was made, or can be made, in this world to the children of men; for ſo the apoſtle will be underſtood, when he ſaith, Rom. v. 8. Συνιστησι την ἑαυτου αγαπην,——God hath ſet forth, or preſented his love to man in the moſt engaging manner, in a way that commends it beyond all compare, to the acceptation of men. "This is a faithful ſaying, "and worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the "world to ſave ſinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. It might be juſtly expected, that when this glorious myſtery ſhould come to be publiſhed by the goſpel in the ears of ſinners, all eyes ſhould be withdrawn from all other objects, and fixed with admiration upon Chriſt; all hearts ſhould be raviſhed with theſe glad tidings; and every man preſſing to Chriſt with the greateſt zeal and diligence. But behold, inſtead thereof,

Secondly, The deſperate wickedneſs of the world, in rejecting the only remedy prepared for them. This was long ſince foretold by the prophet, Iſa. liii. 3. "He is deſpiſed and rejected of "men, * a man of ſorrows, acquainted with grief; and we "hid our faces from him; he was deſpiſed, and we eſteemed "him not:" His poor and mean appearance, which ſhould en-

* אושים דוד *deſitio virorum.*

Digitized by Google

dear him beyond all conſiderations to the ſouls of men (ſince it was for their ſakes, that he emptied himſelf of all his glory) yet this lays him under contempt, he is looked on as the very off-caſt of men †, when his own love to man had emptied him of all his riches, the wickedneſs of men loaded him with contempt, and as it was propheſied of him, ſo it was, and, at this day is ſadly verified all the world over; for,

Firſt, The Pagan world hath no knowledge of him, they are loſt in darkneſs. "God hath ſuffered them to walk in their "own ways," Acts xiv. 16.

Secondly, The Mahometans which overſpread ſo great a part of the world reject him, and inſtead of the bleſſed goſpel, which they hiſs at with abhorrence, embrace the blaſphemous and ridiculous Alcoran, which they confidently affirm to have come down from God immediately in that *laylatto Hanzili* (as they call it) the night of demiſſion, calling all Chriſtians *Cafirouna*, (*i. e.*) Infidels.

Thirdly, The Jews reject him with abhorrence, and ſpit at his very name, and being blind-folded by the devil, they call Jeſus *Anathema*, 1 Cor. xii. 3. And in a blind zeal for Moſes, blaſpheme him as an impoſtor. "He came to his own, and his "own received him not," John i. 11.

Fourthly, The far greater part of the Chriſtianized world reject him ‡; thoſe that are called after his name, will not ſubmit to his government. The *nobles* of the world think themſelves diſhonoured by ſubmitting their necks to his yoke. The *ſenſualiſts* of the world will not deny their luſts, or forſake their pleaſures, for all the treaſures of righteouſneſs, life and peace, which his blood hath purchaſed. *Worldlings* of the earth prefer the dirt and dung of the world before him; and few there be among them that profeſs Chriſtianity, who love the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity. The only reaſon why they are called Chriſtians is, becauſe by the advantageous caſt of providence, they were born and educated in a nation where Chriſtianity is profeſ-

† *Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in ſe,*
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit :-----
Juvenal. Sat. III, v. 152.
Want is the ſcorn of ev'ry wealthy fool;
And wit in rags is turn'd to ridicule.

‡ To put on a profeſſion of Chriſt's name, and not to walk in Chriſt's way, what is it but prevaricating with that divine name? *Cyp. de Zelo.*

Digitized by Google

ſed, and eſtabliſhed by the laws of the country; and if the wind ſhould turn, and the public authority think fit to eſtabliſh another religion, they can ſhift their ſail, and ſteer a contrary courſe.

But now, reader, let me tell thee, that if ever God ſend forth theſe two grim *ſerjeants*, his law, and thine own conſcience, to arreſt thee for thy ſins, if thou find thyſelf dragged away by them towards that priſon from whence none return, that are once clapt up therein, and that in this unſpeakable diſtreſs Jeſus Chriſt manifeſt himſelf to thy ſoul, and open thy heart to receive him, and become thy ſurety with God, pay all thy debts, and cancel all thy obligations, thou wilt love him at another rate than others do; his blood will run deeper in thine eyes than it doth in the ſhallow apprehenſions of the world; he will be *altogether lovely*, and thou wilt account all things but dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of Jeſus Chriſt thy Lord. To work thy heart to this frame, theſe things are written, which the Lord proſper upon thy ſoul, by the bleſſing of his good Spirit upon them.

Bleſſed be God for Jeſus Chriſt.

Digitized by Google

PNEUMATOLOGIA.

A TREATISE OF THE SOUL OF MAN.

The EPISLTE DEDICATORY.

To the much honoured, his dear kinſman, Mr. JOHN FLAVEL, and Mr. EDWARD CRISPE, of London, Merchants; and the reſt of my worthy friends in London, RATCLIFFE, SHADWELL, and LYME-HOUSE, grace, mercy, and peace.

Dear Friends,

"AMONG all the creatures in this lower world, none "deſerves to be ſtiled *great*, but *man*; and in *man* "nothing is found worthy of that epithet, but his "*ſoul* *."

The ſtudy, and knowledge of his *ſoul* was, therefore, always reckoned a rich, and neceſſary improvement of time. All ages have magnified theſe two words, "*Know thyſelf*, as an *oracle* "deſcending from heaven †."

"No knowledge, ſaith Bernard ‡, is better than that where-"by we know ourſelves; leave other matters therefore, and "ſearch thyſelf; run through thyſelf, make a ſtand in thy-"ſelf; let thy thoughts, as it were, circulate, begin and end "in thyſelf." Strain not thy thoughts in vain about other things, thyſelf being neglected.

The ſtudy and knowledge of *Jeſus Chriſt* muſt ſtill be allowed to be the moſt excellent and neceſſary: But yet the worth,

* *Nihil in terra magnum præter hominem, nihil in homine præter mentem.* Favorin.

† ——*E cælo deſcendit, γνωθι σεαυτον.* Juvenal. Sat. 11. v. 27.

‡ *Nulla ſcientia melior illa, qua homo novit ſeipſum; relinque ergo cætera, et teipſum diſcute: per te curre, in te conſiſte; a te incipiat cogitatio tua, et in te finiatur.*

Digitized by Google

and necessity of *Christ* is unknown to men, till the value, wants, and dangers of their own *souls* be first discovered to them.

The disaffectedness, and aversation of men to the study of their own souls, is the more to be admired; not only because of the weight and necessity of it, but the alluring pleasure, and sweetness that is found therein. What ‖ Cardan speaks, is experimentally felt by many, "That scarce any thing is more "pleasant and delectable to the soul of man, than to know "what he is, what he may, and shall be; and what those di-"vine and supreme things are, which he is to enjoy after death, "and the vicissitudes of this present world." For we are creatures conscious to ourselves of an immortal nature, and that we have something about us which must overlive this mortal flesh, and therefore is ever and anon some way or other hinting, and intimating to us its expectations of, and designation for a better life than that it now lives in the body, and that we shall not cease to *be*, when we cease to *breathe*.

And certainly, my friends, discourses of the soul, and its immortality; of *heaven*, and of *hell*, the next, and only receptacles of unbodied spirits, were never more seasonable, and necessary than in this atheistical age of the world, wherein all serious piety, and thoughts of immortality are ridiculed, and hissed out of the company of many: As if those old condemned Heretics, the Θνητοψυχιται, who asserted the corruptibility, and mortality of the soul as well as body, had been again revived in our days.

And as the *Atheism* of some, so the *tepidity*, and unconcerned carelessness of the most, needs and calls for such potent remedies, as discourses of this kind do plentifully afford. I dare appeal to your charitable judgments, whether the conversations and discourses of the *many*, do indeed look like a serious *pursuit* of heaven, and a *flight* from hell?

Long have my thoughts bended towards this great and excellent *subject*, and many earnest desires I have had, (as I believe all thinking persons must needs have) to know what I shall be when I breathe not. But when I had engaged my meditations about it, two great rubs opposed the farther progress of my thoughts therein: Namely,

I. The difficulty of the subject I had chosen: And

II. The distractions of the times in which I was to write upon it.

‖ *Quid jucundius quam scire quid simus, quid fuerimus, quid erimus, et cum his etiam divina atque suprema illa post obitum mundique vicissitudines.*

Digitized by Google

I. As for the subject, such is the subtility and sublimity of its nature, and such the knotty controversies in which it is involved, that it much better deserves that *inscription*, than *Minerva*'s temple at *Saum* did, * "*Never did any mortal reveal me plainly.*"

"It is but little that the most clear, and sharp-sighted do discern of their own souls, now in the state of *composition*; and what can we positively, and distinctly know of the life they live in the state of separation? The darkness in which these things are involved doth greatly exercise, even the greatest wits, and frequently elude and frustrate the most generous attempts †." Many great *scholars*, whose natural and acquired abilities singularly furnished and qualified them to make a clearer discovery, have laboured in this field, *usque adsudorem et pallorem*, even to sweat and paleness, and done little more but intangle themselves, and the subject more than before; this cannot but discourage new attempts.

And yet, without some knowledge of the *hability*, and subjective capacity of our souls to enjoy the good of the world to come, even in a state of absence from the body, a principal relief must be cut off from them, under the great, and manifold trials they are to encounter in this evil world.

As for myself, I assure you, I am deeply sensible of the inequality of my shoulders to this burden; and have often thought (since I undertook it) of that grave and necessary caution of the poet ‡, to weild and poise the burden as *porters* use to do, before I undertook it. Zuinglius blamed Carolostadius (as some may do me) for undertaking the controversy of that age; because, saith he, *Non habet satis humerorum*; his shoulders are too weak for it.

And yet I know mens labours prosper not, according to the art and elegancy of the composure, but according to the divine

* Τον εμον πιπλον ουδεις πωποτε απεκαλυψεν.

† *Animam præsentem mentis acie vix, aut ne vix quidem assequimur; sed qualis sit futura, quomodo indagabimus? Laborant hic maxima ingenia, et caligo conatus etiam generosos non raro eludit.* Jos. Stern. de morte, cap. 20.

‡ *Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, æquam,*
Viribus: et versate diu, quid ferre recusent,
Quid valeant humeri—— Horat. de arte poet. l. 37.
Examine well, ye writers, weigh with care
What suits your genius, what your strength can bear;
For when a well-proportion'd theme you chuse,
Nor words nor method will their aid refuse:

Digitized by Google

bleſſing which pleaſeth to accompany them. Ruffinus tells us of a learend *philoſopher* at the *Council* of *Nice*, who ſtoutly defended his *theſis* againſt the greateſt wits, and ſcholars there, and yet was at laſt fairly vanquiſhed by a man of no extraordinary parts: of which conqueſt the *philoſopher* gave this candid, and ingenuous account; *Againſt words* (ſaid he) *I oppoſed words; and what was ſpoken, I overthrew by the art of ſpeaking: But when, inſtead of words, power came out of the mouth of the ſpeaker, words could no longer withſtand truth; nor man oppoſe the power of God.*

O that my weak endeavours might proſper, under the influence of the like ſpirit, upon the hearts of them that ſhall read this inartificial, but well-meant diſcourſe.

I am little concerned about the contempts and cenſures of faſtidious readers. I have reſolved to ſay nothing that exceeds ſobriety, nor to provoke any man, except my diſſent from his unproved dictates muſt be his provocation.

Perhaps there are ſome doubts, and difficulties relating to this ſubject, which will never fully be ſolved till we come to heaven. For man, by the fall, being leſs than himſelf, doth not underſtand himſelf, nor will ever perfectly do ſo, until he be fully reſtored to himſelf; which will not be whilſt he dwells in a body of ſin and death. And yet it is to me paſt doubt, that this, as well as other ſubjects, might have been much more cleared than it is, if inſtead of the proud contendings of maſterly wits for victory, all had humbly, and peaceably applied themſelves to the impartial ſearch of truth.

Truth, like an orient pearl in the bottom of a river, would have diſcovered itſelf by its native luſtre, and radiancy, had not the feet of Heathen *philoſophers*, cunning Atheiſts, and daring ſchool *divines*, diſturbed and fouled the ſtream.

II. And as the difficulties of the ſubject are many, ſo many have been the interruptions and avocations I have met with, whilſt it was under my hand: Which I mention for no other end but to procure a more favourable cenſure from you, if it appears leſs exact than you expected to find it. Such as it is, I do with much reſpect and affection, tender to your hands, humbly requeſting the bleſſing of the Spirit may accompany it to your hearts. If you will but allow yourſelves to think cloſe to the matter before you, I doubt not but you may find ſomewhat in it apt, both to inform your minds, and quicken your affections. I know you have a multiplicity of buſineſs under your hands, but yet I hope your great concern makes all others daily to give place; and that how clamorous, and importunate ſoever the af-

Digitized by Google

fairs of this world be, you both can, and do, find time to sit alone, and bethink yourselves of a much more important business you have to do.

My friends, we are borderers upon eternity, we live upon the confines of the spiritual and immaterial world: we must shortly be associate with bodiless beings, and shall have, after a few days are past, no more concerns for meat, drink, and sleep, buying and selling, habitations and relations, than the angels of God now have. Besides, we live here in a state of trial: Man, (as Scaliger fitly calls him), is *utriusque mundi nexus*, One in whom both worlds do meet; his body participates of the lower, his soul of the upper world; hence it is, that he finds such tugging and pulling this way and that way, upward and downward; both worlds, as it were, contending for this invaluable prize, the precious soul. All Christ's ordinances are instituted, and his officers ordained for no other use or end, but the salvation of souls. Books are valuable, according to their conducibility to this end: how rich a reward of my labours shall I account it, if this treatise of the soul may but promote the sanctification and salvation of any reader's soul.

To your hands I first tender it: it becomes your property, not only as a debt of justice, the fulfilling of a promise made you long since, upon your joint and earnest desires for the publication of it; but, as an acknowledgement of the many favours I have received from you: To one of you I stand obliged in the bond of relation, and under the sense of many kindnesses, beyond whatever such a degree of relation can be supposed to exact.

You have here a succinct account of the nature, faculties and original of the soul of man, as also of its infusion into the body by God, without intitling himself to the guilt and sin resulting from that their union.

You will also find the breath of your nostrils to be the *nexus*, tie, or bond, which holds our souls and bodies in personal union; and that, whilst the due crasis and temperament of the body remains, and breath continues, your souls hang, as by a weak and slender thread, over the state of a vast eternity in heaven or in hell; which will inform you both of the value of your breath, and the best way of improving it, whilst you enjoy it.

The immortality of the soul is here asserted, proved, and vindicated from the most considerable objections; so that it will evidently appear to you, by this discourse, you do not cease to *be*, when you cease to *breathe*: and, seeing they will overlive all

Digitized by Google

temporal enjoyments, they muſt neceſſarily periſh as to all their joys, comforts, and hopes, (which is all the death that can be incident to an immortal ſpirit), if they be not in the proper ſeaſon ſecured and provided of that never periſhing food of ſouls, God in Chriſt, their portion for ever.

Here you will find the grounds and reaſons of that ſtrong inclination, which you all feel them to have to your bodies, and the neceſſity, notwithſtanding that, of their divorce and ſeparation from their beloved bodies; and that it would manifeſtly be to their prejudice, if it ſhould be otherwiſe: and to overcome the unreaſonable averſations of believers, and to bring them to a more becoming cheerful ſubmiſſion to the laws of death, whenſoever the writ of ejection ſhall be ſerved upon them; you will here find a repreſentation of that bleſſed life, comely order, and moſt delightful imployment of the incorporeal people inhabiting the city of God; wherein, beſide thoſe ſweet meditations, which are proper to feaſt your hungry affections, you will meet with divers unuſual, though not vain or unuſeful, queſtions ſtated and reſolved, which will be a grateful entertainment to your inquiſitive and ſearching minds.

It is poſſible they may be cenſured by ſome as undeterminable and unprofitable curioſities; but as I hate a preſumptuous intruſion into unrevealed ſecrets, ſo I think it is a weakneſs to be diſcouraged in the ſearch of truth, ſo far as it is fit to trace it, by ſuch damping and cauſeleſs cenſures. Nor am I ſenſible I have in any thing tranſgreſſed the bounds of Chriſtian ſobriety, to gratify the palate of a nice and delicate reader.

I have alſo here ſet before the reader an idea, or repreſentation of the ſtate and caſe of damned ſouls, that, if it be the will of God, a ſeaſonable diſcovery of hell may be the means of ſome men's recovery out of the danger of it; and cloſed up the whole with a demonſtration of the invaluable preciouſneſs of ſouls, and the ſeveral dangerous ſnares and artifices of Satan, their profeſſed enemy, to deſtroy and caſt them away for ever.

This is the deſign and general ſcope of the whole, and of the principal parts of this treatiſe. And, O that God would grant me my hearts deſire, on your behalf, in the peruſal of it! Even that it may prove a ſanctified inſtrument in his hand, both to prepare you for, and bring you in love with the unbodied life, to make you look with pleaſure into your graves, and die by conſent of will, as well as neceſſity of nature. I remember Dr. Stoughton, in a ſermon preached before king James, relates a ſtrange ſtory of a little child in a ſhipwreck, faſt aſleep upon its mother's lap, as ſhe ſat upon a piece of the wreck amidſt the

Digitized by Google

waves; the child being awaked with the noiſe, aſked the mother what thoſe things were? She told it, They were drowning waves to ſwallow them up. The child, with a pretty ſmiling countenance, begg'd a ſtroke from its mother to beat away thoſe naughty waves, and chide them as if they had been its play-mates. Death will ſhortly ſhipwreck your bodies; your ſouls will ſit upon your lips ready to expire, as they upon the wreck ready to go down. Would it not be a comfortable and moſt becoming frame of mind, to ſit there with as little dread, as this little one did among the terrible waves? Surely, if our faith had but firſt united us with Chriſt, and then looſed our hearts off from this enchanting and enſnaring world, we might make a fair ſtep towards this moſt deſireable temper; but unbelief and earthly-mindedneſs make us loth to venture.

I bluſh to think, what bold adventures thoſe men made, who, upon the contemplation of the properties of a deſpicable ſtone, firſt adventured quite out of ſight of land, under its conduct and direction, and ſecurely truſted both their lives and eſtates to it, when all the eyes of heaven were veiled from them, amidſt the dark waters, and thick clouds of the ſky, when I either ſtart, or at leaſt give an unwilling ſhrug, when I think of adventuring out of ſight of this world, under the more ſure and ſteady direction and conduct of faith and the promiſes. To cure theſe evils, in my own and the reader's heart, theſe things are written, and in much reſpect, and love tendered to your hands, as a teſtimony of my gratitude, and deep ſenſe of the many obligations you have put me under. That the bleſſing of the Spirit may accompany theſe diſcourſes to your ſouls, afford you ſome aſſiſtance in your laſt and difficult work, of putting them off at death with a becoming chearfulneſs, ſaying in that hour, Can I not ſee God till this fleſh be laid aſide in the grave? muſt I die before I can live like myſelf? then die my body, and go to thy duſt, that I may be with Chriſt. With this deſign, and with theſe hearty wiſhes, dear and honoured couſin, and worthy friends, I put theſe diſcourſes into your hands, and remain,

Your moſt obliged

kinſman and ſervant,

JOHN FLAVEL.

Digitized by Google

THE PREFACE.

AMONG many other largeſſes and rich endowments, beſtowed by the Creator's bounty upon the *ſoul of man*, the * *ſentiments* and impreſſions of the world to come, and the ability of *reflexion and ſelf-intuition*, are peculiar, invaluable, and heavenly gifts. By the former, we have a very great evidence of our own immortality, and deſiguation for nobler employments and enjoyments than this embodied ſtate admits. And by the latter, we may diſcern the agreeableneſs of our hearts, and therein the validity of our title to that expected bleſſedneſs.

But theſe heavenly gifts are neglected and abuſed all the world over. Degenerate ſouls are every where fallen into ſo deep an oblivion of their excellent original, ſpiritual and immortal nature, and alliance to the Father of ſpirits; that (to uſe the upbraiding expreſſion of a great † philoſopher) "they ſeem "to be buried in their bodies, as ſo many ſilly worms that lurk "in their holes, and are loth to peep forth, and look abroad."

So powerfully do the cares and pleaſures of this world charm all, (except a ſmall remnant of regenerate ſouls), that nothing but ſome ſmart ſtroke of calamity, or terrible meſſengers of death can ſtartle them; (and even thoſe are not always able to do it), and when they do, all the effect is but a tranſient glance at another, and an unwilling ſhrug to leave this world, and ſo to ſleep again. And thus the impreſſions and ſentiments of the world to come (which are the natural growth and offſpring of the ſoul) are either ſtifled and ſuppreſt, as in Atheiſts; or born down by impetuous maſterly luſts, as in Senſualiſts.

And for its ſelf-reflecting and conſidering power, it ſeems in many to be a power received in vain. It is with moſt ſouls as it is with the eye, which ſees not itſelf, though it ſees all other objects. There be thoſe that have almoſt finiſhed the courſe of a long life, (wherein a great part of their time hath lain upon their hands, as a cheap and uſeleſs commodity, which they knew not

* We have demonſtrated from the common conſent of all nations and people, ſince the creation of the world, eſpecially from the conſent of the good and learned, that the human ſoul is incorruptible and immortal; and that therefore it ſurvives the corrupted body, that it may be for ever either rewarded for good actions, or puniſhed for bad actions. *Zanch. on the immortality of the ſoul.*

† Η δε δικη ψυχη καθαρευουσα τε σωματος ως ερημον νησον ως φωλεον φευγει τ φωλιον, &c. Max. Tyr. Diſſ. 41.

Digitized by Google

what to do with) who yet never ſpent one ſolemn entire hour in diſcourſe with their own ſouls ‡. What ſerious heart doth not melt into compaſſion over the deluded multitude, who are mocked with dreams, and perpetually buſied about trifles? Who are (after ſo many fruſtrated attempts, both of their own, and all paſt ages) eagerly purſuing the fleeting ſhadows, who torture and rack their brains to find out the natures and qualities of birds, beaſts, and plants; indeed any thing rather than their own ſouls, which are certainly the moſt excellent creatures that inhabit this world. They know the true value and worth of other things, but are not able to eſtimate the dignity of that high-born ſpirit which is within them. A ſpirit which (without the addition of any more natural faculties or powers, if thoſe it hath be but ſanctified and devoted to God) is capable of the higheſt perfections and fruitions, even complete conformity to God, and the ſatisfying viſions of God throughout eternity. They herd themſelves with beaſts, who are capable of an equality with angels. O what compaſſionate tears muſt ſuch a conſideration as this draw from the eyes of all that underſtand the worth of ſouls!

As for me, it hath been my ſin, and is now the matter of my ſorrow, that whilſt myriads of ſouls (of no higher original than mine) are ſome of them beholding the higheſt Majeſty in heaven, and others giving all diligence to make ſure their ſalvation on earth; I was carried away ſo many years in the courſe of this world (like a drop with the current of the tide) wholly forgetting my beſt ſelf, my invaluable ſoul; whilſt I prodigally waſted the ſtores of my time and thoughts upon vanities, that long ſince paſſed away as the waters which are remembered no more ‖. It ſhall be no ſhame to me to confeſs this folly, ſince the matter of my confeſſion ſhall go to the glory of my God. I ſtudied to know many other things, but I knew not myſelf. It was with me as with a ſervant to whom the maſter commited two things, *viz.* the *child*, and the *child's cloaths*; the ſervant is very careful of the cloaths, bruſhes and waſhes, ſtarches and irons

‡ *Ita Dei eſt iſta vita mortalis, ubi homo vanitati ſimilis factus eſt; et dieſt ejus velut umbra præterunt.* Aug. de Civ. lib. 21. c. 24.

‖ Saints after their hearts are renewed by repentance, are not aſhamed to acknowledge their ignominious faults, to the glory of God. For nothing is loſt to us that redounds to his praiſe, who pardoning our ſins, transfers us from miſery to happineſs. *Brightman on Cant. p.* 12.

Digitized by Google

them, and keeps them safe and clean, but the child is forgotten and lost. My body which is but the garment of my soul, I kept and nourished with excessive care, but my soul was long forgotten, and had been lost for ever, as others daily are, had not God rouzed it, by the convictions of his Spirit, out of that deep oblivion and deadly slumber.

When the God that formed it, out of free grace to the work of his own hands, had thus recovered it to a sense of its own worth and danger, my next work was to get it united with Christ, and thereby secured from the wrath to come; which I found to be a work difficult to effect, (if it be yet effected), and a work of time to clear, though but to the degree of good hope through grace.

And since the hopes and evidences of salvation began to spring up in my soul, and settle the state thereof, I found these three great words, *viz. Christ, soul,* and *eternity,* to have a far different, and more awful sound in my ear, than ever they used to have. I looked on them from that time, as things of the greatest certainty, and most awful solemnity. These things have laid some weight upon my thoughts, and I felt, at certain seasons, a strong inclination to sequester myself from all other studies, and spend my last days, and most fixed meditations upon these three great and weighty subjects.

I know the subject matter of my studies and enquiries (be it never so weighty) doth not therefore make my meditations and discourse upon it great and weighty: nor am I such a vain *opinionator,* as to imagine my discourses every way suitable to the dignity of such subjects; no, no, the more I think and study about them, the more I discern the indistinctness, darkness, crudity, and confusion of my own conceptions, and expression of such great and transcendent things as those: but, *In magnis voluisse sat est,* I resolved to do what I could: and accordingly some years past I finished and published, in two parts, the *Doctrine of Christ;* and by the acceptation and success the Lord gave that, he hath encouraged me to go on in this second part of my work, how unequal soever my shoulders are to the burden of it.

The *nature, original, immortality,* and *capacity* of mine own soul, for the present lodged in and related to this vile body, destined to corruption; together with its *existence, employment, perfection, converse with God,* and other *spirits,* both of its own, and of a superior rank and order, when it shall (as I know it shortly must) *put off this its tabernacle;* these things have a long time been the matters of my limited desires to un-

Digitized by Google

derſtand, ſo far as I could ſee the pillar of fire (God in his word) enlightening my way to the knowledge of them. Yea, ſuch is the value I have for them, that I have given them the next place in my eſteem, to the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and my intereſt in him.

God hath formed me, as he hath other men, a *proſpecting creature*. I feel myſelf yet uncentered, and ſhort of that ſtate of reſt and ſatisfaction to which my ſoul, in its natural and ſpiritual capacity, hath a deſignation. I find that I am in a continual motion towards my everlaſting abode, and the expence of my time; and many infirmities tell me that I am not far from it: by all which I am ſtrongly prompted to look forward, and acquaint my ſelf as much as I can, with my next place and employment. I look with a greedy and inquiſitive eye that way.

Yet would I not be guilty of an unwarrantable curioſity in ſearching into revealed things; how willing ſoever I am to put my head by faith into the world above, and to know the things which Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed and prepared for me, and all the reſt that are waiting for his appearance and kingdom. I feel my curioſity checked and repreſſed by that elegant *paronomaſia*, Rom. xii. 3. Μη υπερφρονειν παρ ο δει φρονειν, αλλα φρονειν εις το σωφρονειν, In all things I would be wiſe unto ſobriety. I groan under the effects of Adam's itching ambition to *know*, and would not by repeating his ſin, encreaſe my own miſery; nor yet would I be ſcared, by his example, into the contrary evil of neglecting the means God hath afforded me, to know all that I can of his revealed will.

* The helps philoſophy affords in ſome parts of this diſcourſe, are too great to be deſpiſed, and too ſmall to be admired. I confeſs I read the definitions of the ſoul given by the antient philoſophers, with a compaſſionate ſmile. When Thales calls it *a nature without repoſe*; Aſclepiades, *an exercitation of ſenſe*; Heſiod, *a thing compoſed of earth and water*; Parmenides, *a thing compoſed of earth and fire*; Galen ſaith it is *heat*; Hippocrates, *a ſpirit diffuſed through the body*; Plato, *a ſelf-moving ſubſtance*; Ariſtotle calls it *Entelechia, that by which the body is moved*: If my opinion ſhould be aſked, which of all theſe definitions I like beſt, I ſhould give the ſame anſwer which Theocritus gave an ill poet, repeating many of his verſes, and ask-

* For to whom is the truth known with certainty without God? or God without Chriſt? or Chriſt explorated without the Spirit? or the Spirit vouchſafed without faith? *Tertullian on the ſoul.*

Digitized by Google

ing which he liked beſt; *Thoſe* (ſaid he) *which you have omitted.* Or if they muſt have the garland as the prize they have ſhot for, let them have it upon the ſame reaſon that was once given to him that always ſhot wide. *Difficilius eſt toties non attingere*, Becauſe it was the greateſt difficulty to aim ſo often at the mark, and never come near it. One word of God gives me more light than a thouſand ſuch laborious trifles. As Caeſar was beſt able to write his own *commentaries*, ſo God only can give the beſt account of his own creature, on which he hath impreſſed his own image.

Modern philoſophers, aſſiſted by the divine oracles, muſt needs come cloſer to the mark, and give us a far better account of the nature of the ſoul. Yet I have endeavoured not to cloud this ſubject with their controverſies, or abſtruſe notions; remembring what a ſmart, but deſerved check, Tertullian gives thoſe, *Qui Platonicum et Ariſtotelicum Chriſtianiſmum producunt Chriſtianis.* Words are but the ſervants of matter, I value them as merchants do their ſhips, not by the gilded head and ſtern, the neatneſs of their mould, or curious flags and ſtreamers, but by the ſoundneſs of their bottom, largeneſs of their capacity, and richneſs of their cargo and loading. The quality of *this* ſubject neceſſitates, in many places, the uſe of ſcholaſtic terms, which will be obſcure to the vulgar reader: but apt and proper words muſt not be rejected for their obſcurity, except plainer words could be found that fit the ſubject as well, and are as fully expreſſive of the matter. The unneceſſary I have avoided, and the reſt explained as I could.

The principal fruits I eſpecially aim at, both to my own and the reader's ſoul, are, That whilſt we contemplate the freedom, pleaſure, and ſatisfaction of that ſpiritual, incorporeal people, who dwell in the region of light and joy, and are hereby forming to ourſelves a true ſcriptural idea of the bleſſed ſtate of thoſe diſembodied ſpirits, with whom we are to ſerve, and converſe in the temple-worſhip in heaven; and come more explicitly and diſtinctly to underſtand the conſtitution, order, and delightful employments of thoſe our everlaſting aſſociates; we may anſwerably feel the ſound and inordinate love of this animal life ſubacted and wrought down; the frightful vizard of death drop off, and a more pleaſing aſpect appear; that no upright ſoul that ſhall read theſe diſcourſes may henceforth be convulſed at the name of death, but chearfully aſpire, and with a pleaſant expectation wait for the bleſſed ſeaſon of its tranſportation to that bleſſed aſſembly. It is certainly our ignorance of the life of heaven, that makes us dote as we do upon the preſent life. There

Digitized by Google

is a gloom, a thick mist overspreading the next life, and hiding, even from the eyes of believers, the glory that is there. We send forth our thoughts to penetrate this cloud, but they return to us without the desired success. We reinforce them with a sally of new and more vigorous thoughts, but still they come back in confusion and disappointment, as to any perfect account they can bring us from thence; though the oftner and closer we think, still the more we grow up into acquaintance with these excellent things.

Another benefit I pray for, and expect from these labours, is, that by describing the horrid estate of those souls which go the other way, and shewing to the living the dismal condition of souls departed in their unregenerate state; some may be awakened to a seasonable and effectual consideration of their wretched condition, whilst they yet continue under the means and among the instruments of their salvation.

Whatever the fruit of this discourse shall be to others, I have cause to bless God for the advantage it hath already given me. I begin to find more than ever I have done, in the separate state of sanctified souls, all that is capable of attracting an intellectual nature; and if God will but fix my mind upon this state, and cause my pleased thoughts about it to settle into a steddy frame and temper, I hope I shall daily more and more depreciate and despise this common way of existence in a corporeal prison; and when the blessed season of my departure is at hand, I shall take a chearful farewel of the greater and lesser elementary world, to which my soul hath been confined, and have an abundant entrance through the broad gate of assurance, unto the blessed, unbodied inhabitants of the world to come.

Digitized by Google

A TREATISE OF THE SOUL OF MAN.

GEN. ii. 7. *And the Lord God formed man out of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life; and man became a living ſoul.*

"THREE things (ſaith * Athanaſius) are unknown to "men according to their eſſence, *viz. God, angels*, and "the *ſouls* of men." Of the *nature* of the divine and high-born ſoul, we may ſay, as the learned † Whitaker doth of the way of its infection by *original ſin*, "it is eaſier fought than "underſtood, and better underſtood than explicated:" And for its *original*, the moſt ſagacious and renowned for wiſdom amongſt the ‡ ancient *philoſophers* underſtood nothing of it. It is ſaid of ‖ Democritus, that "there is nothing in the "whole workmanſhip of nature of which he did not write;" and in a more lofty and ſwelling *hyperbole*, they ſtile their eagle-ey'd Ariſtotle, "the rule, yea, and miracle of nature; learning "itſelf, the very ſun of knowledge:" yet both theſe are not only ſaid, but proved by Lactantius to be learned ideots. How have the ſchools of Epicurus, and Ariſtotle, the Carteſians, and other ſects of *philoſophers*, abuſed and troubled the world with a kind of *philoſophical enthuſiaſm*, and a great many ridiculous

* *Tria ſunt quæ ſecundum eſſentiam hominibus ſunt ἀγνωστα, καὶ ἀορίστα, Deus, angelus, et anima hominis.* Ath. in Tract. de deſin.

† *Quæri facilius eſt quam intelligitur, et melius intelligitur quam explicatur.*

‡ Plato doubted, Ariſtotle denied, and Galen derided the doctrine of the world's creation.

‖ *Nihil eſt in toto opificio naturæ, de quo non ſcripſit Democritus.* And for Ariſtotle, they ſtiled him, *Regula naturæ, Naturæ miraculum, ipſa eruditio, ſol ſcientiarum, Antiſtes literarum et ſapientiæ.* Lactantius, lib. iii, cap. 17, 18.

Digitized by Google

fancies about the original of the soul of man! and when all is done, three words of God, by the pen of his inspired Moses *, enlightens us more than all their subtile notions of the accidental concretion of atoms, their *materia subtilis*, and *anima mundi*, and the rest of their unintelligible fancies could ever do.

The account Moses gives us in this context, of the origin of the world, and of man the epitome of it, is full of sense, reason, congruity, and clearness; and such as renders all the essays of all the Heathen philosophers to be vain, inevident, self-repugnant, and inexplicable theories.

The inspired penman gives us, in this context, a compendious narrative of the world's creation, relating more generally the rude, inform, and indigested chaos; and then more particularly the specificating, and diversifying of the various beautiful beings, thence educed by the motion of the Spirit of God upon the face of the waters.

When the first matter was strictly created out of nothing, "the Spirit (as Moses excellently expresseth it, chap. i. 2.) † "hovered, or moved over it as a bird over eggs, and, as it were, "by way of incubation, cherishing and influencing it," did thereby draw forth all the creatures into their several forms, and distinct particular natures, wherein we now, with delight and admiration, behold them.

In this manner and order was the stately fabric of the world produced, and erected; but, as yet, it remained as a fair, and well furnished house without an inhabitant. God had employed infinite wisdom and power about it, and engraven his name, upon the meanest creature in it; but there was no creature yet made (except angels, the inhabitants of another city) to read the name, and celebrate the name of the Almighty Creator.

He therefore thought the world imperfect till there was a creature made that could contemplate, praise, and worship the Maker of it: for this very use and purpose was man created, that he might not only see, but consider the things he saw; discourse, and rationally collect out of them the things he saw not; and both praise, and love the Maker for, and in them all.

* Philosophy seeks or searches after truth, but theology finds it. *Jo. Picus Miran.*

† רוחת אלהים מרחפת על פני המים *Motus, commotus, agitatus fuit; non simplicem motum denotat, sed ejusmodi quam Columba peragit, cum ovis ad excludendum pullos incubat.* Rab. Sol.

Digitized by Google

The palaces of princes are not beautified and adorned, to the intent men should pay the respects and honours to the walls, but to shew the grandeur and magnificence of the king, to whose person their honour is due, as ‡ Athenagoras in his excellent apology for the Christians, speaks. The world is a glorious and magnificent pile, raised designedly to exhibit the wisdom and power of its Creator to the reasonable creature man, that from him God might receive the glory of all his other works. Of this creature man, the master-piece of all the visible world, (and therefore crowned king over it the first moment he was made, Psal. viii. 5.) Moses in the next place, gives us the account, both of his original, whence he came, and of his dignity, what he is. "The Lord God formed man out "of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the "breath of life; and man became a living soul." Where we find,

The original { I. Of the body / II. Of the soul } of man.

I. The original of the body of man: "Formed out of the dust "of the ground." "Dust was its original matter: of dust was "it made, and into dust it must be resolved, Gen. iii. 19. The "consideration is humbling, and serves to tame the pride of "man ‖", who is apt to dote upon his own beauty. Man's body was not made of heavenly matter, as the radiant sun, and sparkling stars: no, nor yet of the most precious and orient earthly matter; God did not melt down the pure and splendid gold and silver, or powder the precious pearls, and sparkling diamonds; but he formed it of the vile and despicable dust.

We find that the sprinkling of dust upon new writing prevents many a foul blot: I am sure, the sprinkling of our originary dust upon our minds by serious consideration, is the way to prevent many a proud boast.

However, the baseness of the matter, and coarseness of the stuff, serves to set off the admirable skill of the most wise and

‡ This world is indeed most beautiful, yet it is not the world itself that is to be adored, but that great Artificer its Creator: even as your subjects, when applying to you for what they need, do not act so foolish a part as to overlook you their lords and princes, omitting all the honour due to you, and confining their regards to the magnificence of your palaces; but, on the contrary, viewing the fine structure of your palaces only by the by, they revere and honour yourselves before and above all things else. *Athen. Apol.*

‖ עפר מן האדמה *Pulverem tenuissimam ad dorsandam superficiam.* Fagius.

Digitized by Google

powerful Architect, who out of such mean, despicable materials, has fashioned so exact and elegant a piece. "The Lord God "formed man out of the dust."

"*The Lord God.*] The name of God is here set down at full "‡, to set forth the dignity of man," the subject matter wrought upon, as some conceive.

Formed.] Fashioned, or curiously moulded, and figured it †. The *Hebrew verb*, primarily signifies "to press, compress, or "squeeze together; and by a *metalepsis*, by pressing and com-"pressing, to mould or fashion, as the potter doth his clay." The Psalmist useth another word to express the artificial elegancy of the body of man, Psal. cxxxix. 15, 16. רקמתי *acupictus sum*, I am embroidered, painted, or flourished, as with a needle. We render it, *curiously wrought*. Whatsoever beauty and comely proportion God hath bestowed by creation upon it, "it is "all answerable to that excellent *idea*, or model ‖ before "conceived in his mind and purpose." All this care, and cost was bestowed upon the body of man, which, when all is done, is but the case in which that estimable jewel, the soul, was to be lodged. This therefore I must lay aside and come to the more noble subject,

II. *The soul of man*: about which we have before us four things to ponder in this text, *viz.*

(1.) The nature, and property,
(2.) The descent, and original,
(3.) The manner of infusion,
(4.) The *nexus*, or bond that unites,

} the soul of man.

(1.) The nature and property of it, a *living soul*. The word נפש, as also the Chaldee *Naphsha*; and the Greek ψυχη, have one and the same *etymology*, all signifying to breathe, or respire; not that the breath is the soul, but denoting the manner of its infusion by the breath of God, and the means of its continuation in the body, by the breath of our nostrils. God's breath infused it, and our breath continues its union with the body. It signifies here the rational soul; and the *Hebrew* word נבש, *a soul*, hath a very near affinity with the word שמים, the heavens; and indeed there is a nearer affinity be-

‡ יהוה אלהים *Dominus Deus. Nomen Dei hic plenum est, propter hominis dignitatem.* Nachm.

‖ *Pressit* יצר *Compressit, et per Metalepsin, premendo et comprimendo formavit.*

† *Imaginem mente divina conceptam, quasi manu format.* Fagius.

Digitized by Google

wixt the things, *viz.* soul and heaven, than there is betwixt the names.

The epithet חי which we translate *living*, the *Arabic* renders *a rational soul*; and indeed, none but a rational, deserves the name of a living soul; for all other forms or souls, which are of an earthly extract, do both depend on, and die with the matter out of which thy were educed; but this being of another nature, a spiritual and substantial being, is therefore rightly stiled, *a living soul.*

The *Chaldee* renders it, *a speaking soul.* And indeed, it deserves a remark, that the ability of speech is conferred on no other soul but man's. Other creatures have apt and excellent organs; birds can modulate the air, and form it into sweet delicious notes, and charming sounds; but no creature, except man, whose soul is of an heavenly nature and extraction, can articulate the sound, and form it into words, by which the notions and sentiments of one soul are in a noble, apt, and expeditious manner conveyed to the understanding of another soul. And indeed, what should any other creature do with the faculty or power of speech, without a principle of reason to guide and govern it? It is sufficient to them, that they discern each others meaning by dumb signs, much after the manner that we traded at first with the Indians: but speech is proper only to the rational, or living soul; however, we render it a living, a rational, or a speaking soul, it distinguishes the soul of man from all other souls.

(2.) We find here the best account that was ever given of the origin of the soul of man, or whence it came, and from whom it derives its being. O, what a dust and pudder have the disputes and contests of philosophers raised about this matter! which is cleared in a few words in this scripture; * "God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became "a living soul: which plainly speaks it to be the immediate effect of God's creating power. Not a result from the matter; no, no, results flow *e sinu materiae*, out of the bosom of matter; but this comes *ex halitu divino*, from the inspiration of God. That wich is born of the flesh, is flesh; but this is a spirit descending from the Father of spirits, God formed it, but not out of any pre-existent matter, whether celestial or terrestrial;

* He breathed the breath of life into man, to shew that man's soul is from an external cause by creation, and that at the same time, in being created, it is infused into the body. *Pol. Synops. on the place.*

Digitized by Google

much less out of himself, as the † Stoicks speak; but out of nothing. An high-born creature it is, but no particle of the Deity. The indivisible and immutable essence of God is utterly repugnant to such notions; and therefore they speak not strictly and warily enough, that are bold to call it a ray or emanation from God.

A spirit it is, and flows by way of creation, immediately from the Father of spirits; but yet it is a spirit of another inferior rank and order.

(3.) We have also the account of the way and manner of its infusion into the body, *viz.* by the same breath of God which gave it its being. It is therefore a rational, scriptural, and justifiable expression of St. Augustine, *Creando infunditur, et infundendo creatur*; it is infused in creating, and created in infusing; though Dr. Brown ‡ too slightingly calls it a mere *rhetorical antimetathesis*. Some of the fathers, as Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian, were of opinion, That the Son of God assumed a human shape at this time, in which afterwards he often appeared to the fathers, as a prelude to his true and real incarnation; and took dust or clay in his hands, out of which he formed the body of man, according to the pattern of that body in which he appeared: and that being done, he afterward, by breathing, infused the soul into it. But I rather think it is an *anthropopathy*, or usual figure in speech, by which the Spirit of God stoops to the imbecility of our understandings. "He breathed into his "nostrils the breath of life;" Hebrew, *lifes*. But this plural word חיים notes rather the twofold life of man, in this world, and in that to come; or, "the several faculties and powers be- "longing to one and the same soul, *viz.* the intellective, sensitive, "and vegetative offices thereof; than that there are more souls "than one, essentially differing, in one and the same man; for "that, (as § Aquinas truly saith), is impossible." We cannot trace the way of the spirit, or tell in what manner it was united with this clod of earth. But it is enough, that he who formed it, did also unite or marry it to the body. This is clear, not

† The Stoicks, saith Simplicius, call the soul Μερος η μελος του Θεου, *i. e.* a particle or member of the Deity; and Seneca calls it, God dwelling in the human body, which comes near to Θεος εν σαρκι φαινομενος, *i. e.* God manifested in the flesh.

‡ *Religio Medici*, Sect. 36.

§ *Impossibile est in uno homine esse plures animas per essentiam differentes; sed una tantum est anima, quæ vegetativæ et sensitivæ et intellectivæ, officiis fungitur.* Aquin. 12. Q. 26. art. 2.

Digitized by Google

by way of natural resultancy from the body, but by way of inspiration from the Lord; not from the warm bosom of the matter, but from the breath of its Maker.

4. *Lastly*, We have here the *nexus*, *copula*, the tie or band by which it is united with the body of man, *viz. The breath of his* (*i. e.* of man) *nostrils*. It is a most astonishing mystery, to see heaven and earth married together in one person; the dust of the ground, and an immortal spirit clasping each other with such dear embraces, and tender love; such a noble and divine guest to take up its residence within the mean walls of flesh and blood. Alas, how little affinity, and yet what dear affection is found betwixt them!

Now, that which so sweetly links these two different natures together, and holds them in union, is nothing else but the breath of our nostrils, as the text speaks: it came in with the breath; whilst breath stays with us, it cannot go from us; and as soon as the breath departs, it departs also. All the rich elixirs and cordials in the world cannot persuade it to stay one minute after the breath is gone. One puff of breath will carry away the wisest, holiest, and most desirable soul that ever dwelt in flesh and blood. When our breath is corrupt, our days are extinct, Job xvii. 1. "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and re-" turn to their dust," Psal. cxiv. 19.

Out of the text thus opened, arise two doctrinal propositions, which I shall insist upon, *viz.*

Doct. 1. *That the soul of man is of divine original, created and inspired immediately by the Lord.*

Doct. 2. *That the souls and bodies of men are link'd, or knit together, by the feeble band of the breath of their nostrils.*

In the prosecution of these two propositions, many things will come to our hands, of great use in religion; which I shall labour to lay as clearly and orderly in the reader's understanding, and press as warmly upon his heart as I can. And first,

Doct. 1. *That the soul of man is of divine original, created and inspired immediately by the Lord.*

In this first proposition, two things are to be distinctly pondered, *viz.*

1. The nature
2. The original } of the soul.

Or, what it is, and from whence it came.

The nature of the soul.

I. The first thing which arrest our thoughts, and requires their attention and exercise, is the *nature of the soul*, or what kind of being it is;

Digitized by Google

Those that are most curiously inquisitive into all other beings, and put nature upon the rack to make her confess her secrets, are in the mean time found shamefully slight and negligent in the study of themselves. Few there are that can prevail with themselves to sit down and think close to such questions as these. *What manner of being is this soul of mine? whence came it? why was it infused into this body? and where must it abide, when death hath dislodged it out of this frail tabernacle?* There is a natural aversation in man to such exercises of thought as these, although in the whole universe of beings in this lower world, a more noble creature is not to be found *.

The soul is the most wonderful and astonishing piece of divine workmanship; it is no *hyperbole* to call it the breath of God, the beauty of men, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils. One soul is of more value than all the bodies in the world.

The nature of it is so spiritual and sublime, that it cannot be perfectly known by the most acute and penetrating understanding, assisted in the search by all the aids philosophy can contribute.

It is not my design in this discourse to treat of the several faculties and powers of the soul, or to give you the rise, natures, or numbers of its affections and passions: but I shall confine my discourse to its general nature and original. And seeing "none can so well discover the nature of it, as he who is "the author of it," as Tertullian † speaks, I therefore justly expect the best light from his words, though I will not neglect any other aid he is pleased elsewhere to afford.

‡ The soul is variously denominated from its several powers

* Therefore they who at any time have disputed concerning the soul, must be reckoned to have disputed not of a vain thing, that has nothing but a name, but about a very weighty subject, of the greatest moment, than which nothing under heaven is more excellent. *Zanch. on the soul.*

† *Si quid de anima certandum est, ad Dei regulas dirigat: certè nullum alium potiorem animæ demonstrationem, quam Auctorem.* Tertul. de anima, *&c.*

‡ As it quickens the body, it is called *anima, i. e.* the life; as it exerts acts of the will, it is called *animus, i. e.* power of volition; as it is the subject of knowledge, it is called the mind; when it recollects, it is called the memory; when it judges right, it is called reason; as it produces breathing, it is called spirit. *Isidor. Etym.* v. 5.

Digitized by Google

and offices, as the sea from the several shores it washes. I will not spend time about the several names by which it is known to us in scripture, but give you that description of it, with which my understanding is most satisfied, which take thus:

The soul of man is a vital, spiritual, and immortal substance, endowed with an understanding, will, and various affections; created with an inclination to the body, and infused thereinto by the Lord. The description of the soul.

In this description we have the two general parts into which I distributed this discourse: *viz.* its general nature, and divine original. The nature of the soul is expressed to us in these following terms.

I. *It is a substance.*

That is to say, not a *quality*, or an *accident* inhering in another being, or subject; as whiteness doth in the snow: but a being by * itself. Qualities and accidents have no existence of their own, but require another being, or subject to their existence; but the soul of man is a substantial being of itself, which will evidently appear upon the following grounds.

(1.) Because it is, in a strict and proper sense, created by God. "He formeth, or createth the spirit in man," Zech. xii. 1. To him we are advised to "commit it, as to a faithful "Creator," 1 Pet. iv. 19. The substantial nature of the soul is implied in the very notion of its creation; "for whatsoever "is created, is a *substance*, an *ens per se* †. Accidents are not "said to be created, but con-created;" the crasis of humours, and results of matter, are not substances created, but things rising in a natural way from created substances. They flow from, and, as to their essence, depend upon pre-existent matter; but the soul was created out of nothing, and infused into the body after it was formed and organized; which evidenceth its substantial nature.

(2.) This evidenceth the soul to be a substance; that it can, and doth exist, and subsist by itself alone, when separated from the body by death, Luke xxiii. 43. "To day shalt thou, (*i. e.* "thy soul) be with me in paradise;" and Mat. x. 20. "Fear "not them that kill the body but cannot kill the soul." Were

* The soul is a being by itself, *i. e.* it does not exist in any object, as a part or form of it, depending on it, as to its being. *Colleg. Conimb. in lib.* 11.

† *Quicquid a Deo proprie creatum est; accidentia enim non dicuntur creari, sed concreari.* Polani Synt. p. 319.

Digitized by Google

the soul but an accident, a quality, or a result, he that kills the body, must needs kill the soul too; as he that casts a snow-ball into the fire, must needs destroy the whiteness with the snow. Accidents fail and perish with their subjects: but seeing it is plain in these and many other scriptures, the soul doth not fail with the body; nothing can be more plain and evident, than that it is of a substantial nature.

When the Spaniards came first among the poor Indians, they thought the horse and his rider to be one creature; as many ignorant ones think the soul and body of man to be nothing but breath and body: whereas indeed they are two distinct creatures, as vastly different in their natures as the rider and his horse, or the bird and his cage. While the man is on horseback, he moves according to the motion of the horse; and whilst the bird is incaged, he eats and drinks, and sleeps, and hops and sings in his cage. But if the horse fail, and die under his rider, or the cage be broken, the man can go on his own feet, and the bird enjoy himself as well, yea, better in the open fields and woods, than in the cage: neither depend, as to being, or action, on the horse or cage.

(3.) Both scripture and philosophy consent in this, that the soul is the chief, most noble, and principal part of man, from which the whole man is, and ought to be denominated. So Gen xlvi. 26. "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt," *i. e.* all the persons; as the Latins say, *tot capita*, so many heads or persons. The apostle, in 2 Cor. v. 8. seems to exclude the body from the notion of personality, when he saith, *We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord:* That *we*, a term of personality, is there given to the soul, exclusively of the body, for the body cannot be absent from itself: But *we*, that is, the souls of believers, may be both absent from it, and present with Christ.

To this we may add, 2 Cor. iv. 16. where the soul is called the *man*, and the *inner man* too, the body being but the external face, or shadow of the man. And to this *philosophers* agree. The best *philosophers* are so far from thinking that the body is the substantial part of man, and the soul a thing dependent on it; that contrarily they affirm, that the body depends upon the soul; ‖ and that it is the soul that conserves and sustains it;

‖ The soul preserves and sustains the animated body, but when it leaves the body, the nature of an animated body subsists no more: the soul exists not in the body, as in a place, seeing it cannot be circum

and that the body is in the soul, rather than the soul in the body, and that which is seen not the man, but that is the man which is invisible, that the body might be killed and the man not hurt; meaning the soul, which only deserves the name of man. Now if it be the chief part of man, and that which is only worthy the name of a man, and from which therefore the whole is, and ought to be denominated a man; if it be so far from depending on the body, or being contained within the body, that the body rather depends on it, and is in it, then surely the soul must be, what we describe it to be, a substantial *being*.

(4.) It is past all controversy, that the soul is a *substance*, because it is the subject of properties, affections and habits; which is the very strict and formal notion of a substance. All the affections and passions of hope, desire, love, delight, fear, sorrow, and the rest, are all rooted in it, and springing out of it; and for habits, arts and sciences *, it is the soul in which they are lodged and seated. Having once gotten a promptitude to act, either by some strong, or by some frequently repeated acting, they abide in the soul, even when the acts are intromitted, as in sleep a navigator, scribe or musician, are really artists, when they are neither sailing, and writing or playing; because the habits still remain in their minds, as is evident in this, that when they awake, they can perform their several works, without learning the rules of their art anew.

II. *The soul is a vital substance*, i. e.

A substance which hath an essential principle of life in itself: a living, active being. A *living* soul, saith Moses in the text; and hereby it is distinguished from, and opposed to matter or body. The soul moves itself and the body too; it hath a self-moving virtue or power in itself; whereas the matter, or body is wholly passive, and is moved and acted, not by itself, but by this vital spirit. Jam. ii. 26. "The body without the spirit is "dead." It acts not at all, but as it is acted by this invisible spirit. This is so plain that it admits of sensible proof and demonstration. Take mere matter, and compound or divide it, alter

circumscribed by place. The whole soul pervades the whole body; nor is there any part of it, in which it is not present: for it is not contained in the body, but rather itself contains the body; neither is it in the body, as in a vessel or bottle, but rather the body is in it. *Nyss. on the soul. b.* 2. *c.* 11. *ux* ἔστιν Ἄνθρωπος τὸ ὁρώμενον, *i. e.* That which is seen, is not the Man, but every man's soul is himself.

* The soul is the subject and seat of all the virtues and vices, arts and sciences. *Buchan. loc. com. p.* 86.

Digitized by Google

it, and change it how you will, you can never make it see, feel, hear, or act vitally without a quickning and actuating soul: Yet we must still remember, that this active principle, the soul, though it hath this vital power in itself, it hath it not from itself, but in a constant receptive dependance upon God, the first cause, both of its being and power.

III. *It is a spiritual substance.*

All substances are not gross material, visible and palpable substances; but there are spiritual, and immaterial, as well as corporeal substances, discernible by sight or touch. To deny this were to turn a downright Sadducee, and to deny the existence of angels and spirits, Acts xxiii. 8. The word *substance*, as it is applied to the soul of man, puzzles, and confounds, the dark understandings of some, that know not what to make of an immaterial substance, whereas in this place it is no more than *substare accidentibus* *, *(i. e.)* to be a subject in which properties, affections, and habits are seated and subjected. This is a spiritual substance, and is frequently in scripture called a pirit; "Into thy hands I commit my spirit," Luke. xxiii. 46. "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," Acts vii. 59. and so frequently all over the scriptures. And the spirituality of its nature appears, (1.) By its descent, in a peculiar way, from the Father of spirits. (2.) In that it rejoiceth in the essential properties of a spirit. (3.) That at death it returns to that great Spirit who was its efficient and former.

(1.) It descends, in a peculiar way, from the father of spirits, as hath been shewn in the opening of this text: God stiles himself its Father, Heb. xii. 9. its former, Zech. xii. 1. 'Tis true, he giveth to all living things ζωην και πνοην, life and breath, Acts xvii. 25. Other souls are from him, as well as the rational soul; but in a far different way and manner. They flow not immediately from him by creation, as this doth. It is said, Gen. i. 24, 27. "Let the earth bring forth the living creature "after its kind;" but "God created man in his own image:" Which seems plainly to make a specified difference betwixt the reasonable, and all other souls.

(2.) It rejoiceth in the essential properties of a spirit: For it is an incorporeal substance, as spirits are. It hath not *partes extra partes*, extension of parts; nor is it divisible, as the body is. It hath no dimensions, and figures as matter hath; but is

* A substance in this use of the word, is that which depends not, in respect of its being, upon any fellow creature as accidents and qualities do, whose being is by having their in-being in another fellow-creature as their subject; but this being, *the soul*, exists in itself.

Digitized by Google

a most pure, invisible, and (as the acute and judicious Dr. More expresseth it) indiscernible substance. It hath the principle of life, and motion in itself, or rather, it is such a principle itself, and is not moved as the dull, and sluggish matter is, *per aliud*, by another. Its efficacy is great, though it be unseen, and not liable to the test of our touch, as no spiritual substances are. "A spirit (saith Christ) hath not flesh and bones," Luke xxiv. 39. We both grant and feel, that the soul hath a love, and inclination to the body, (which indeed is no more than it is necessary it should have) yet can we no more infer its corporiety from that love to the body, than we can infer the corporiety of angels from their affection, and benevolent love to men. It is a spirit of a nature vastly different from the body in which it is immersed. *There is* (saith a learned author *) *no greater mystery in nature, than the union betwixt soul and body: That a mind and spirit should be so tied and linked to a clod of clay, that while that remains in a due temper, it cannot by any art or power free itself!--- What so much a kin are a mind and a piece of earth, a clod and a thought, that they shall be thus affixed to one another?*

Certainly, the heavenly pure bodies do not differ so much from a dunghil, as the soul and body differ: They differ but as more pure and less pure matter; but these, as material, and immaterial. If we consider wherein consists the being of a body, and wherein that of a soul, and then compare them, the matter will be clear.

We cannot come to an apprehension of their beings, but by considering their primary passions and properties, whereby they make discovery of themselves. The first, and primary affection of a body † (as is rightly observed) is that extension of parts whereof it is compounded, and a capacity of division, upon which, as upon the fundamental mode, the particular dimensions (that is, the figures) and the local motion do depend.

Again, for the being of our souls, if we reflect upon ourselves, we shall find that all our knowledge of them resolves into this, that we are beings conscious to ourselves of several kinds of cogitations; that by our outward senses we apprehend bodily things present; and by our imagination we apprehend things absent; and that we oft recover into our apprehension things past and gone, and, upon our perception of things, we find ourselves variously affected.

Let these two properties of a soul and body be compared, and upon the first view of a considering mind it will appear, that

* Mr. How's Fun. Serm. p. 9, 10.

† Philosophical Essay, p. 2. § 2. p. 39.

Digitized by Google

divisibility is not apprehension, or judgment, or desire, or discourse: That to cut a body into several parts, or put it into several shapes, or bring it to several motions, or mix it after several ways, will never bring it to apprehend, or desire. No man can think the combining of fires, and air, and water, and earth, should make the lump of it to know or comprehend what is done to it, or by it. We see manifestly, that upon the division of the body, the soul remains entire and undivided. It is not the loss of a leg, or arm, or eye, that can maim the understanding, or the will, or cut off the affections.

Nay, it pervades the body it dwells in, and is whole in the whole, and in every part, which it could never do if it were material. Yea, it comprehends in its understanding, the body or matter in which it is lodged; and more than that, it can, and doth from conceptions of pure spiritual and immaterial beings, which have no dimensions or figures; all which shews it to be no corporeal, but a spiritual, and immaterial substance.

Understand it negatively, that the soul is not in the parts of the body per partes, *part in one part, and part in another, seeing it is indivisible, and hath no parts.*

(3.) As it derives its being from *the Father of spirits*, in a peculiar way, and rejoiceth in its spiritual properties: So at death it returns to *that great Spirit* from whence it came. It is not annihilated, or resolved into soft air, or sucked up again by the element of fire, or catched back again into the soul of the world, as some have dreamed; but it returns to God who gave it, to give an account of itself to him, and receive its judgment from him. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit "shall return to God who gave it," Eccl. xii. 7. Each part of man to its like, dust to dust, and spirit to spirit. Not that the soul is resolved into God, as the body is into earth; but as God created it a rational spirit, conscious to itself of moral good and evil, so when it hath finished its time in the body, it must appear before the God of the spirits of all flesh, its arbiter and final judge.

By all which we see, that as it is elevated too high on the one hand, when it is made a *particle of God himself*; not only the creature, but a part of God, ‡ as Plutarch, and ‖ Philo Judæus,

‡ *Anima autem mentis particeps facta, non solum Dei opus est, verum etiam pars; neque ab eo, sed de eo et ex facta.* Plut. de Qu. Platon.

‖ *Quomodo credibile videtur tam exiguam mentem humanam mem-*

and others have term'd it; (spirit it is, but of another and inferior kind:) So it is degraded too low, when it is affirmed to be matter, though the purest, finest, and most subtile in nature; which approacheth nearest to the nature of spirit. A spirit it is, as much as an angel is a spirit, though it be a spirit of another *species*. This is the name it is known by throughout the scriptures. In a word, it is void of mixture and composition; there are no jarring qualities, compound element, or divisible parts in the soul, as there are in bodies; but it is pure, simple, invisible, and indivisible substance, which proves its spirituality, and brings us to the fourth particular, *viz.*

IV. *It is an immortal substance.*

The simplicity, and spirituality of its nature, of which I spake before, plainly shews us, that it is in its very nature, designed for immortality; for such a being, or substance as this, hath none of the seeds of corruption, and death in its nature, as all material, and compounded beings have. It hath nothing within it tending to dissolution: No jarring elements, no contrary qualities are found in spirits, as there are in other creatures of a mixed nature. Physicians, and Philosophers have disputed, and contended eagerly about the true causes of natural death; " * and whilst they have been contending about the way, they " have come to the end." The ingress of the soul is obscure, and its egress not clear. But this seems to be the thing in which they generally centre, that the expence, and destruction of the † natural moisture, or radical balsam, as others call it, which is as the oil that maintains natural heat, or the bridle that restrains that flame of life from departing (as others express it;) this is the cause of natural death: Others ‡ assign the unequal re-

membranula cerebri, aut corde, haud amplis spaciis inclusam; totam cœli mundique magnitudinem capere, nisi illius divinæ salicisque animæ particula esset indivisibilis? Philo.

* *Litigamus de via, interim ad terminum rapimur.*

† Δει γαρ λαβειν οτι το ζωον ισχει φυσει υγρον και θερμον, και τοζην τουτου. Το δ' ληρας ψυχρον, και ξηρον και το τηθηκος φαινεται λαμβανειν. *i. e.* For we must understand, that the animal hath a natural moisture and heat; which makes it to live. But old age drying up that moisture, and changing that heat into coldness, occasions death. All this is very plain. *Aristotle, on long and short life.*

‡ *Tum flammat et micat calidum nativum corporis nostri in humido primigenio, ejus humidi substantia consumitur, non aliter quam in lampade ileum a flamma exhauritur.* Heurnius Aphor. 1. *Tam diu durat vigor vitæ, quam diu stat caladium nativum,*

Digitized by Google

paration of the parts of the body, as the cause of death. But be it one or another, 'tis evident the soul, which consists neither of contrariant qualities, nor of dissimilar parts, must be above the reach and stroke of death. For if the soul die, it must be either from some seeds, and principles of death, and corruption within itself, or by some destructive power without itself. In itself you see there is no seed, or principle of death; and if it be destroyed by a power without itself, it must be either by the stroke of some creature, or from the hand of God that first formed and created it: But the hand, and power of no creature can destroy it; the creatures power reaches no further than the body, Mat. x. 28. "They cannot kill the soul." And tho' the almighty power of God, that created it out of nothing, can as easily reduce it to nothing; yet he will never do so. For besides the designation for eternity, which is discernible in its very nature (as before was observed) and which speaks the intention of God to perpetuate his threatnings of eternal wrath, and promises of everlasting life, respectively made to the souls of men, as they shall be found in Christ, or out of Christ, puts it beyond all doubt that they shall never die; as will be more fully evidenced in the following discourse.

Well then, I hope so far our way is clear, in the search of the nature of the soul, that it is a *substance*, a *spiritual* substance, and being so, it is also an *immortal substance*. No doubt remains with me as to either of these. Let us then proceed to the consideration of its faculties, and powers, by which it may be yet more fully known, and we shall find that,

It is a vital, spiritual, and immortal substance, endued with an understanding.

This is the noble leading faculty of the soul: We are not distinguished from *brutes* by our senses, but by our *understanding*. As grace sets one man above another, so understanding sets the meanest man above the best of brutes. Strange and wonder-

tivum, donec ad mortem fuerit deventum. Et quantum à calido et humido receditur, tantus ad mortem fit accessus. J. Bapt. Montan. *Ortus nostri primordio, caloris et humoris nativi habent summum complementum, &c.* Fernelius liber de spir. et cal. *Vergente ætate, inæqualis admodum fit reparatio, aliæ partes reparantur satis feliciter, sed aliæ ægre, et in pejus. Ut ab eo tempore corpora humana subiri incipiunt tormentum illud* Mezentii, *ut viva in amplex mortuorum immoriantur,* Verulam. in additu Hist. vit. et mort.

Digitized by Google

ful things are performed by the natural instinct, and sagacity of beasts; but yet what is said of one, is true of them all, "God "hath not imparted understanding to them," Job xxxix. 17. This is a jewel which adorns none but rational creatures, men and angels.

What the understanding is.

It is a faculty of the reasonable soul, by which a man apprehends, and judgeth all intelligible things.

The *object* of it is *every being*, so far as it is true in itself, and apprehensible by man. It hath a two-fold use in the life of man, *viz.*

(1.) To distinguish truth from error and falshood. By this candle of the Lord, lighted up in the soul of man, he may discern betwixt duty and sin, good and evil: It is the eye of the soul, by which it seeth the way in which we should go, and the dangerous precipices that are on either side. It is the soul's *taster*, and discerns wholsom food from baneful poison, Job xii. 11. "Doth not the ear (*i. e.* the understanding by the *ear*) try "words, as the mouth tasteth meat?" It brings all things as it were, in the lump before it, and then sorts them, and orderly ranks them into their proper *classes* of *lawful* and *unlawful*, necessary and indifferent, *expedient*, and *inexpedient*, that the soul may not be damnified by mistaking one for another. And this judgment of discretion every man must be allowed for himself. No man is obliged to shut the eyes of his own understanding, and follow another man blindfold.

(2.) *To direct* and guide us in our practice. This faculty is by *philosophers* rightly called τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, *the leading faculty*: because the will follows its practical dictates. It sits at the helm, and guides the course of the soul; not impelling, or rigorously enforcing its dictates upon the will; for the will cannot be so imposed upon; but by giving it a directive light, or pointing, as it were, with its finger, what it ought to chuse, and what to refuse.

To this faculty belong two other excellent, and wonderful powers of the soul, *viz.*

1. Thoughts. | 2. Conscience.

1. The power or ability of cogitation: "* *Thoughts* are pro-
"perly the actings and agitations of the
What a thought is. "mind, or any actual operation of the un-
"derstanding." They are the musings of

* Διανοια, *cogitatio est mentis agitatio* Pascor. *vel actio mentis.* Zanch.

Digitized by Google

the mind, which are acted in the speculative part of the understanding. " It is observable that the † Hebrew word שוח *suach*, " which is used for meditation, or thinking signifies both to " think and to speak in the mind." When the understanding, or mind resolves, and meditates the things that come into it, that very meditation is an inward speaking, or hidden word in the heart, Deut. xv. 9. " Beware lest there be a thought in thy " wicked heart," as some render it: In the Hebrew it is לבבך דבר עם " a word in thy heart." So Mat. ix. 3, 4. εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, " they spake within themselves," *i. e.* " they thought in " their hearts." The objects presented to the mind are the companions with whom our hearts talk and converse.

Thoughts are the figments and creatures of the mind: They are formed within it, in multitudes innumerable. The power of cogitation is in the mind, yea, in the spirit of the mind.

" ‡ The fancy indeed, whilst the soul is embodied, ordina- " rily and for the most part presents the appearances and like- " nesses of things to the mind;" but yet it can form thoughts of things which the fancy can present no image of, as when ‖ the soul thinks of God, or of itself. This power of cogitation goes with the soul, and is rooted in it when it is separated from the body; and by it we speak to God, and converse with *angels*, and other spirits in the unboded state, as will be more fully opened in the process of this discourse.

2. The *conscience* belongs also to this faculty; for it being the judgment of a man upon himself, with respect, or relation to the judgment of God, it must needs belong to the understanding part, or faculty. " *Thoughts* are formed in the *specu-* " *lative*, but * *conscience* belongs to the practical understand- " ing." It is a very high and awful power; it is *solo Deo minor*, and rides (as Joseph did) in the second chariot; the next and immediate officer under God. He saith of conscience, with

What conscience is.

† שוח *cum puncto siniſtro, locutus eſt ore, aut corde: et* διαλογίζομαι, *eſt fermocinari intra ſe,* (i. e.) *apud ſe in animis ſuis.* Mat. xxi. 25.

‡ *Phantaſia menti offert phantaſmata.* Picol.

‖ When we think of God, saith *Max. Tyr. Diſſ.* 1. we must think of nothing material, μητε μεγεθος, μητε χρωμα, μητε αλλο τι ὑλης παθος, *i. e.* Neither magnitude nor colour, nor any other property of matter.

* *Judicium appello conſcientiam, ut ad intellectum eam pertinere oſtendam.* Ames.

Digitized by Google

respect to every man, as he once said of Moses, with respect to Pharaoh, "See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh," Exod. vii. 1. The voice of conscience is the voice of God; for it is his vicegerent and representative. *What it binds on earth, is bound in heaven: and what it looseth on earth, is loosed in heaven.* It observes, records, and bears witness of all our actions; and acquits and condemns, as in the name of God, for them. Its consolations are most sweet, and its condemnations most terrible: so terrible, that some have chosen death, which is the king of terrors, rather than to endure the scorching heat of their own consciences. The greatest deference, and obedience is due to its command, and a man had better * endure any rack or torture in the world, than incur the torments of it. It accompanies us as our shadow, wherever we go; and when all others forsake us, (as at death they will) conscience is then with us, and is then never more active and vigorous than at that time. Nor doth it forsake us after death; but where the soul goes, it goes, and will be its companion in the other world for ever. How glad would the damned be if they might but have left their consciences behind them, when they went hence! But, as † Bernard rightly says, "It is both witness, judge, tormentor, and prison;" it accuseth, judgeth, punisheth, and condemneth.

And thus briefly of the understanding, which hath many offices, and as many names from those offices.

It is sometimes called *wit, reason, understanding, opinion, wisdom, judgment.* And why we bestow so many names upon one and the same faculty, the learned *author* of that small, but excellent ‡ tract *de anima,* gives this true and ingenious account.

The wit, *the pupil of the soul's clear eye,*
And in man's world the only shining star.
Looks in the mirror of the fantasy,
Where all the gatherings of the senses are;
And after by discoursing to and fro,
Anticipating and comparing things,

* What deaths would I not chuse? What punishment would I not undergo? Yea, into what vault of hell would I not rather chuse to be thrown, than to witness against my conscience?

† *Ipsa judicat, ipsa imperat, ipsa observat, ipsa torter, ipsa carcer.* Bern. lib. de Consc. cap. 9.

‡ *Nosce teipsum,* p. 48, 49.

Digitized by Google

She doth all universal natures know,
And all effects *into their* causes *brings.*

When she rates things, and moves from ground to ground,
The name of reason *she obtains by this:*
But when by reason she the truth hath found,
And standeth fixed, she understanding *is.*
When her assent she lightly doth incline
To either part, she is opinion *light:*
But when she doth by principles define
A certain truth, she hath true judgment's *sight.*

And as from senses, reason's work doth spring.
So many reasons understanding gain;
And many understandings knowledge bring,
And by much knowledge wisdom we obtain.

VI. God hath endued the soul of man not only with an *understanding* to discern, and direct, but also a *will* to govern, moderate, and overrule the actions of life. 6. *Endued with a will.*

The will is a faculty of the rational soul, whereby a man either chuseth, or refuseth the things which the understanding discerns and knows. *What the will is.*

This is a very high, and noble power of the soul. The understanding seems to bear the same relation to the will, as a grave counsellor doth to a great *prince*. It glories in two excellencies, *viz.*

1. Liberty.
2. Dominion.

1. It hath a freedom and liberty; it cannot be compelled and forced: Coaction is repugnant to its very nature *. In this it differs from the understanding, that the understanding is wrought upon *necessarily*, but the will acts *spontaneously*. This liberty of the will respects the choice, or refusal of the means for attaining those ends it prosecutes, according as it finds them more or less conducible thereunto. The liberty of the will must be understood to be in things natural, which are within its own proper sphere, not in things *supernatural*. It can move, or not move the *body*, as it pleases, but it cannot move towards *Christ*, in the way of faith, as it pleaseth; it can open, or shut the hand,

* Ελευθερα εξεστιν αυτο πραγματος. *i. e.* It hath a free liberty of action. *Zeno.*

Digitized by Google

or eye, at its pleasure, but not the heart. True indeed, it is not compelled, or forced to turn to God, by supernatural grace, but, in a way suitable to its nature, it is determined, and drawn to Christ, Psal. cx. 3. It is drawn by a mighty power, and yet runs freely; Cant. i. 4. "Draw me, and I will run after thee."

Efficacious grace, and victorious delight, is a thing very different from compulsive force. "Pelagius (as a late ‡ author "speaks) at first gave all to nature, acknowledged no necessity "of divine grace; but when this proud doctrine found little "countenance, he called nature by the name of grace; and "when that deceit was discovered, he acknowledged no other "grace but outward instruction, or the benefit of external re- "velation, to discourse, and put men in mind of their duty. "Being yet driven farther, he acknowledged the grace of par- "don; and before a man could do any thing acceptably, there "was a necessity of the remission of sin, and then he might "obey God perfectly. But that not sufficing, he acknowledged "another grace, *viz.* the example of Christ, which doth both "secure our rule and encourage our practice. And last of all, "his followers owned some kind of internal grace, but they "made that to consist in some illumination of the understand- "ing, or moral persuasion, by probable arguments, to excite "the will, and this not absolutely necessary, but only for fa- "ciliation, as an horse to a journey, which otherwise a man "might go a foot. Others grant the secret influences of God's "grace, but make the will of man a co-ordinate cause with "God, namely, that God doth propound the object, hold forth "inducing considerations; give some remote power and assist- "ance; but still there is an indifferency in the will of man, to "accept or refuse, as liketh him best." Thus have they been forced to quit and change their ground; but still the pride of nature will not let men see the necessity of divine, efficacious influences upon the will, and the consistency thereof with natural liberty.

(2.) Its dignity in its *dominion*, as well as in its liberty. The will hath an *empire*, and sceptre belonging to it; yea, a double empire, for it rules.

Imperium { 1. Despoticum. } 1. Over the body, *imperio despotico*, by way of absolute command.
{ 2. Politicum. } 2. Over the other powers and passions of the soul, *imperio politico*, by way of *suasion*,

‡ Dr. Manton in Psal. cxix. v. 36.

Digitized by Google

(1.) The will, like an absolute sovereign *, reigns over the body (*i. e.*) its external members by way of absolute command. It saith, as the *centurion* did, I am in authority, and God hath put the many members of the body in subjection to me; I say to one, move, and it moves; to another, stop, and it stops; and to a third do this, and it doth it. The obsequious members of the body, like so many servants, have their eyes waiting on the imperial commands of the will, and it is admirable to behold with what dispatch, and speed they execute its commands, as if their obedient motions were rather concomitant, than subsequent acts to the will's mandates. Let it but command to have the windows of the body open or shut, and it is done in a moment, in the twink of an eye; and so for the rest of the external senses and members, they pay it most ready obedience. Yet when I say, the will hath a *despotical*, and absolute sovereignty over the members, it must be understood with a double limitation. *First*, They are only at its beck for use and service; it can use them whilst well and rightly disposed; but it cannot perpetuate them, or restore them when indisposed. If the soul will the health, and life of the body never so intensely and vehemently, it cannot keep off death one moment the longer from it. And, *Secondly*, Its sovereignty no way intrenches upon, nor interferes with the dominion of providence over the members of the body, and the various motions of them. God hath reserved a sovereign, *negative voice* to himself, whatever decrees the will passes. Jeroboam stretches out his hand against the man of God to smite him; but God puts a *remora* in the very instant to the loco-motive faculty, that though he would never so fain, he could not pull in his hand again to him, 1 Kings xiii. 4. The will commands the service of the tongue, and chargeth it to deliver faithfully such or such words, in which, it may be, the ruin of good men may be imported; and when it comes to do its office, the tongue falters; and contrary to the command of the will, drops some word that discovers and defeats the design of the will, according to that in Job xii. 20. "He removeth away the speech of the trusty." This is its despotical and sovereign power over the external members of the body.

* Man acts not by necessity of nature, but freely, namely in a rational way, that is by way of command; this command requires the final determination of the practical understanding, and while the efficacy of the command stands, the will is moved freely. *Camel. de Volun.* p. 50.

Digitized by Google

(2.) It hath a *political* power over the faculties and passions of the soul, not by way of absolute command, but by way of *suasion* and *insinuation*. Thus it can oft times persuade the understanding, and thoughts to lay by this or that subject, and apply themselves to the study of another. It can bridle, and restrain the affections and passions, but yet it hath no absolute command over the inner, as it hath over the outward man. Its weakness and inability to govern the inner man appears in two things, more especially remarkable, *viz.* 1. It cannot with all its power and skill command, and fetch off the thoughts from some subjects, which are set on, at some times, with extraordinary weight upon the soul. However, the thoughts may obsequiously follow its beck at some times, yea, for the most part; yet they are cases, and seasons, in which its authority, and persuasions cannot disengage one thought.

As (1.) When God hath to do with the soul, in the work of conversion, when he convinceth of sin and danger, and sets a man's evils in order before his eyes: These are terrible representations, and fain would the carnal will disengage the thoughts from such sad subjects, and strives by all manner of persuasions, and diversions, so to do; but all to no purpose, Psal. li. 3. "My sin is ever before me." The thoughts are fixed, and there is no removing of them. It may give them a little interruption, but they return with the more impetuous violence. And instead of gaining them off, they at last, or rather God by them gains over the will also.

(2.) When Satan hath to do with the soul, in the way of *temptation*, and hellish *suggestion*: Look, as the carnal will opposed itself to the thoughts in the former case to no purpose; so that the sanctified will opposes itself to them in this case, oft-times with as little effect or success, as he that oppoſeth his weak breath to the strong current of a mighty river. Well were it, if the sanctified will were now the master of the fantasy, and could controul the thoughts of the heart; but, like a made horse, the *fancy* takes the bit in its teeth, and runs whither it pleaseth; the will cannot govern it. Think quite another way, saith the *will*; turn thy thoughts to other things; but notwithstanding, the soul turneth a deaf ear to its counsels. 2. It cannot quiet and compose a raging conscience, and reduce it at its pleasure to rest and peace. This is the peculiar work of God. He only that stills the stormy seas, can quiet the distressed and tempestuous soul. The impotence of the will, in this case, is known to all that have been in those deeps of trouble. And this is the misery of the *devil* and the *damned*,

Digitized by Google

that though they would never so fain, yet they cannot get rid of those tormenting impressions made upon them by their own trembling and condemning consciences. There would not be so many pale, sweating, affrighted consciences on earth, and in hell, if the will had any command or power over them.

Tam frigida mens est
Criminibus; tacita sudant præcordia culpa.

It is an horrible sight to see such a trembling upon all the members, such a cold sweat upon the panting bosom of a self-condemned, and wrath-presaging soul, in which it can, by no means relieve or help itself. These things are exempt from the liberty, and dominion of the will of man; but notwithstanding these exemptions, it is a noble faculty, and hath a vastly extended empire in the soul of man; it is the door of the soul, at which the Spirit of God knocks for entrance. When this is won, the soul is won to Christ; and if this stand out in rebellion against him, he is barred out of the soul, and can have no saving union with it. The truth of grace is to be judged and discerned by its compliance with his call, and the measure of grace to be estimated by the degree of its subjection to his will.

VII. The soul of man is not only indued with an *understanding* and *will*, but also with *various affections* and *passions*, which are of great use and service to it, and speak the excellency of its nature. They are originally designed, and appointed for the happiness of man, in the promoting and securing its chiefest good, to which purpose they have a natural aptitude: for the true happiness and rest of the soul not being in itself, nor in any other creature, but in God, the soul must necessarily move out of itself, and beyond all other created beings, to find and enjoy its true felicity in him. The soul considered at a distance from God, its true rest and happiness, is furnished and provided with *desire* and *hope* to carry it on, and quicken its motion towards him. These are the arms it is to stretch out towards him, in a state of absence from him. And seeing it is to meet with many obstacles, enemies, and difficulties, in its course, which hinder its motion, and hazard its fruition of him, God hath planted in it, fear, grief, indignation, jealousy, anger, *&c.* to grapple with, and break through those intercurrent difficulties and hazards †.

7. *Furnished with various affections and passions.*

† *Passio animæ nihil aliud est quam motus appetivæ virtutis pro-*

Digitized by Google

By these weapons in the hands of grace, it conflicts with that which opposes its passages to God, as the apostle expresseth that holy fret and passion of the Corinthians, and what a fume their souls were in by the gracious motion of the irrascible appetite; 2 Cor. vii. 11. "For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort; what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge?" Much like the raging and struggling of waters, which are interrupted in their course by some dam or obstacle which they strive to bear down, and sweep away before them.

But the soul considered in full union with and fruition of God, its supreme happiness, is accordingly furnished with affections of love, delight, and joy; whereby it rests in him, and enjoys its proper blessedness in his presence for ever. Yea, even in this life, these affections are in an imperfect degree exercised upon God, according to the prelibations and enjoyments it hath of him by faith, in its way to heaven. In a word,

The true uses, and most excellent ends for which these affections and passions are bestowed upon the soul of man, are to qualify it, and make it a fit subject to be wrought upon in a moral way of persuasions and allurements, in order to its union with Christ, (for by the affections, as Mr. Fenner rightly observes, the soul becomes marriageable, or capable of being espoused to him;) and being so, then to assist it in the prosecution of its full enjoyment in heaven, as we heard but now.

But, alas, how are they corrupted and inverted by sin! The concupiscible appetite greedily fastens upon the creature, not upon God; and the irrascible appetite is turned against holiness, not sin. But I must insist no farther on this subject here, it deserves an entire treatise by itself.

8. *And an inclination and love to the body.*

VIII. The soul of man hath, in the very frame and nature of it, an inclination to the body. There is in it a certain *pondus* or inclination which naturally bends or sways it towards matter, or a body. There are three different natures found in living creatures, *viz.*

1. The brutal.
2. The angelical.

prosecutione boni, vel fuga mali. i. e. A passion of the soul is nothing else but the motion of desire in seeking good, and shunning evil.

Digitized by Google

3. The human.

(1.) The soul of a *brute* is wholly confined to, and dependent on the matter or body with which it is united. It is dependent on it, both *in esse et in operari*, in its being and working; it is but a material form, which arises from, and perisheth with the body. "The soul of a brute, (saith a great person *) is no "other than a fluid bodily substance, the more lively, and refin-"ed part of the blood (called spirit) quick in motion, and from "the arteries by the branches of the *carotides* carried to the "brain; and from thence conveyed to the nerves and muscles, "move the whole frame and mass of the body; and receiving "only certain weak impressions from the senses, and of short "continuance, hindered and obstructed of its work and moti-"on, vanishes into the soft air."

(2.) An angel is a spirit free from a body, and created without an appetite or inclination to be embodied. The Stoics call the angels κοινας ψυχικας, souly substances; and the *Peripatetics*, *formas abstractas*, abstract forms. They are spirits free from the fetters and clogs of the body.

"† An angel is a perfect soul, and an human soul is an im-"perfect angel." Yet angels have no such rooted disaffection to, and abhorrence of a body, but they have assumed, and can, in a ready obedience to their Lord's commands, and delight to serve him, assume bodies, for a time, to converse with men in them, *i. e.* aerial bodies in the figure and shape of human bodies. So we read, Gen. xviii. 2. *three men i. e.* angels in human shape and appearance, stood by Abraham, and talked with him; and at Christ's sepulchre, Luke xxiv. "There appeared two men in "shining garments." But they abide in these bodies, as we do in an inn, for a night, or short season; they dwell not in them as our souls in those houses of flesh, which we cannot put on and off at pleasure as they do; but as we walk in our garments, which we can put off without pain.

(3.) The human soul is neither wholly tied to the body, as the brutal soul is; nor created without inclination to a body, as angels are; but loves and inclines to it, though it can both live and act without it, when it is parted from it at death. The proof of this assertion, and the reasons why God created it with such an inclination, will, in their proper place, be more fully spo-

* Lord Chief Justice Hale, in his treatise *de anima*, p. 56.

† *Angelus est anima perfecta, et anima est angelus imperfectus*, Bell. de ascen. mentis.

Digitized by Google

ken to, in the following discourse. All that I shall add is, That in this, as well as in some other respects, our souls are made *a little lower than the angels*; but when they are uncloathed of the body, and have received it again, in a new edition, a spiritual body, then they shall be ἰσαγγελοι, equal unto angels, in the way and manner of life and action.

Thus I have, as briefly as I can, dispatched the first thing propounded, *viz.* the nature of the soul, in the explication of these seven particulars: it is a substance, a vital, spiritual, and immortal substance, a substance endued with understanding, will, affections, and an inclination to the body. And now we are come to the

II. Branch, viz. *Its original and infusion.*

I. As to its original, I have described it to be immediately from God, in the way of creation: an honour done to no other living creature except angels. The world hath been troubled with a great many extravagant, and wild notions about the original of the soul of man; a (certain mark and argument of its apostacy from God.) "‡ Solinus writes of one, who by "a wound in the hinder part of his head, fell into such a degree of ignorance and oblivion, that he forgot his own name, "and could not tell whether he had any name at all." But oh! what a stunning blow did man receive by the fall, that he should forget the very Author of his being, and rather claim alliance, and derive the being of his soul from any thing than God; though it bears the very marks and characters of its divine Author and Father upon it! The principal errors about the origin of the soul (for that wild notion of Epicurus hath been laid so flat by the pens of many learned men, that it is a vanity to strike one blow more at it) may be reduced to these three heads.

(1.) Some affirm it to be by way of ‖ *traduction*, or natural generation from the parents to the child. This opinion is very ancient; Tertullian, and divers of the Western Fathers, closed with it, as judging it the best expedient to solve the difficulties of the soul's taint and defilement with original sin.

‡ *Solinus refert de quodam, quod accepto vulnere in occipitio, ad tantam devenit ignorantiam, ut nesciret se habuisse nomen.* Augustodun. de Philosoph. Mundi, lib. iv. c. 24.

‖ *Datur agens physicum quod aliud esse non potest quam parens: qui ei seminis animam e materiæ sinu eliciat. i. e.* There is a physical agent which can be no other than the parent, who produces the soul of seed from the bosom of matter.

Digitized by Google

But antiquity is no passport for errors. The grey hairs of opinion, as one well notes, are then honourable, when they are found in the way of truth. Doctor Brown * tells us, "He "should rather incline to the creation, than the traduction of "the soul, though either opinion, (saith he,) will consist "well enough with religion, did not one objection haunt "him, and this is a conclusion from the equivocal and "monstrous productions by unnatural copulation, as of a man "and beast: for, if the soul of man, (saith he,) be not transmitted and transfused in the seed, why are not these productions merely beasts, but have also an impression and tincture "of reason in as high a measure, as it can evidence itself in those "improper organs?".

Which way the doctor's judgment had inclined in this controversy, had been of no great consideration to the determination of it; though it is a pity we should lose his consent and company, for the sake of such a beastly objection as this, which haunts his mind: for, if there be any such creatures that seem to have a tincture of reason, it is but a tincture, and a seeming, not a real tincture neither, which many other brutes have.

The doctor is too well acquainted with philosophy, and a man of too much reason to allow himself to think that such a production, as he speaks of, hath two natures and essential forms in one body, as of a man and a horse. He knows that every entity hath but one special essence, and can have no more, except he will place one and the same thing under diverse species in the predicament of substance. And as there cannot be two distinct forms, so neither can there be a mixion of them in the *Centaur* or monstrous birth: for, *ex duobus entibus per se, non fit unum ens per se.* But he confesseth this *objection* was bred among the weeds and tares of his own brain, (a rank soil no doubt) and I am pretty confident he had weeded it out in his latter years; for I find this notion of the *Centaurs*, (that is, half horses, half man), but into its proper place among his vulgar errors, B. 1. chap. 4. And so I suppose that rub being out of the way, he returned again to us.

(2.) A second opinion was, That they were procreated by angels: and that which gave the ground, such as it is, to this opinion or fancy, is the similitude or resemblance which is found betwixt angels and the souls of men. But this fancy needs not any industry to overthrow it; for though it be certain there is a

* *Religio Medici*, Sect. 36.

Digitized by Google

similitude and resemblance † betwixt angels and souls, both being immaterial and spiritual substances, yet angels neither propagate by generation, nor is it in their power to create the least fly or worm in the world, much less the soul of man, the highest, and noblest, and most excellent being. Great power they have, but no creating power, that is God's incommunicable property; and procreate our souls they did not, for though they are spirits, yet spirits of another species.

The coetaneous creation of souls rejected.

(3.) A third sort there are, who deny that souls are created substances, and proceeded from God; but affirm withal, that he created them *simul, et semel*, together and at once, as the angels were, and not one by one, as men are born into the world. "Of this opinion was Plato; who thought "all human souls to be created together before their bodies, "and placed in some glorious and suitable mansions, as the stars; "till, at last, growing weary of heavenly, and falling in love "with earthly things, for a punishment of that crime, they "were cast into bodies, as into so many prisons ‡." Origen sucked in this notion of the pre-existence of souls: and upon this supposition it was that Porphyry tells us, in the life of Plotinus, he blushed as often as he thought of his being in a body, as a man that lived in reputation and honour, blushes when he is lodged in a prison. The ground on which the Stoics bottomed their opinion was, the great dignity and excellency of the soul, which inclined them to think they had never been degraded and abased, as they are by dwelling in such vile bodies, but for their faults; and that it was for some former sins of theirs, that they slid down into gross matter, and were caught into a vital union with it; whereas, had they not sinned, they had lived in celestial and splendid habitations, more suitable to their dignity.

But this is a pure creature of fancy; for, (1.) No soul in the world is conscious to itself, of such a pre-existence, nor can

† That is perfect, which produces some other thing like itself: but substances that are immaterial, are far more perfect than those which are material; therefore, if these last make others like in kind to themselves, much more must angels be able to procreate, some other incorporeal substance of an inferior nature, namely, the human soul. *D. Dionys. c. 4. de divinis nominibus.*

‡ *Plato in Timæo finxit Deum omnes animas humanas ante corpora simul creasse, et incomparibus stellis constituisse: tum eas cœlestium rerum tædio, et terrenarum amore captas, ut tanti sceleris pœnas luerent, in corpora tanquam in carcerem conjectas.*

Digitized by Google

remember when it was owner of any other habitation than that it now dwells in. (2.) Nor doth the scripture give us the least hint of any such thing. Some indeed would catch hold of that expression, Gen. ii. 2. "God rested the seventh day from all the "works which he had made:" and it is true, he did so, the work of creation was finished and sealed up, as to any new species or kind of creatures to be created; no other sort of souls will be created, than that which was at first: but yet God still creates individual souls, *(My Father worketh hitherto, and I work)*, of the same kind and nature with Adam's soul. And, (3.) For their detrusion into these bodies as a punishment of their sins in the former state; if we speak of sin in *individuals*, or particular persons, the scripture mentions none, either original or actual, defiling any soul in any other way but by its union with the body. Pre-existence therefore is but a dream.

But to me it is clear, that the soul receives not its beginning by traduction or generation; for that which is generable, is also corruptible; but the spiritual immortal soul, (as it hath been proved to be), is not subject to corruption. Nor is it imaginable how a soul should be produced out of matter, which is not endued with reason: or, how a bodily substance can impart that to another, which it hath not in itself. If it be said, the soul of the child proceeds from the soul of the parents, that cannot be; for spiritual substances are impartible, and nothing can be discinded from them. "* And it is absurd to think the soul of "Adam should spring from one original, and the souls of his "offspring from another, whilst both his and theirs are of one "and the same nature and species." To all which let me add, That as this assertion of their creation is most reasonable, so it is most scriptural. It is reasonable to think and say, "† That "no active power can act beyond, or above the proper sphere "of its activity and ability." But if the soul be elicited out of the power of matter, here would be an effect produced abundantly more noble and excellent than its cause. And as it is most reasonable, so it is most scriptural. To this purpose diverse testimonies of scripture are cited and produced by our divines, amongst which we may single out these four, which are of special remark and use; Heb. xii. 9, "Furthermore, we had

* *Absurdum est aliunde esse animam nostram, aliunde animam Adæ: cum omnes sunt ejusdem speciei.* Zanch.

† *Nulla virtus activa agit ultra suum genus, sed anima intellectiva excedit totum genus, corporeæ naturæ, cum sit substantia spiritualis, &c.* Conimbr.

Digitized by Google

" fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them " reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to [the " Father of spirits,] and live?" Here God is called the Father of spirits, or of souls, and that in an emphatical *antithesis*, or contradistinction to our natural fathers, who are called the fathers of our flesh, or bodies only. The true scope and sense of this text, is, with great judgment and clearness, given us by that learned and judicious divine, Mr. Pemble ‡, in these words: " [Nothing is more plain and emphatical than this antithesis; " We receive our flesh and body from our parents, but our " souls from God: if then we patiently bear the chastisements " of our parents, who are the authors of the vilest part, and " have the least right or power over us; with how much more " equal a mind should we bear his chastisements, who hath the " supreme right to us, as he is the Father and only giver of that " which is most excellent in us, *viz.* our souls or spirits?]" Here it appears evident, that our souls flow not to us in the material channel of fleshly generation or descent, as our bodies do, but immediatly from God, their proper Father, in the way of creation. Yet he begets them not out of his own essence or substance, as Christ, his natural Son, is begotten, but, ἐκ μὴ ὄντων, out of nothing that had been before, as Theodoret well expresseth it. Agreeable hereunto is that place also in Zech. xii. 1. " The Lord which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth " the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man " within him:" " ‖ Where the forming of the spirit, or soul " of man, is associated with these two other glorious effects of " God's creating power, namely, the expansion of the heavens, " and laying the foundations of the earth;" all three are here equally assumed by the Lord, as his remarkable and glorious works of creation. He that created the one, did as much create the other.

Now the two former we find frequently instanced in scripture, as the effects of his creating power, or works implying the

‡ Pemble de origine animae, *p.* 56. *Nihil apertius et* συμφατικοτέρῳ *ista Antithesi, cranem corpusque a parentibus, animas a Deo accipimus; quod si vilioris partis authores, et qui in nos minus juris habent, patienter castigantes ferimus; quanto æquiore animo feremus eum qui supremum in nos jus obtinet, utpote partis, quæ in nobis est præstantissima, unicus Dator Conditorque.*

‖ *Testimonium satis clarum, quo docemur, pari passu hæc tria ambulare; expansionem cœli, fundationem terræ, et formationem animæ rationalis.*

Digitized by Google

Almighty Power of God; and therefore are presented as strong props to our faith, when it is weak and staggering, for want of visible matter of encouragement, Isa. xl. 22. and xlii. 5. Jer. x. 12. Job ix. 8. Psal. civ. 2. *q. d.* Are my people in captivity, and their faith nonplus'd, and at a loss, because there is nothing in sight that hath a tendency to their deliverance, no prepared matter for their salvation? Why let them consider who it was that created the heavens, and the earth, yea, and their souls also, which are so perplex'd with doubts, out of nothing; the same God that did this, can also create deliverance for his people, though there be no pre-existent matter to work it out of.

Add to this that excellent place of * Solomon, in Eccl. xii. 7. "Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was: and the "spirit to God who gave it." Where he shews us what becomes of man, and how each part, of which he consists, is bestowed, and disposed of after his dissolution by death. And thus he states it: The two constitutive parts of a man are a soul and a body: these two parts have two distinct originals: the body, as to its material cause, is dust; the soul, in its nature, is a spirit, and as to its origin, it proceedeth from the Father of spirits; it is his own creature, in an immediate way. *He gave it:* he gave it the being it hath by creation, and gave it to us, *i. e.* to our bodies by inspiration. Now *qualis Genesis, talis Analysis:* When death dissolves the union which is betwixt them, each part returns to that from whence it came, dust to dust, and the spirit to God that gave it. The body is expressed by its material cause, dust; the soul only by its efficient cause; as the gift of God; because it had no material cause at all, nor was made out of any pre-existent matter, as the body was. And therefore Solomon here speaks of God, as if he had only to do with the soul, leaving the body to its material and instrumental causes; with whom he concurs by a general influence. It is God, not man alone, or God by man, that hath given us these bodies; but it is not man, but God alone, who hath given us these souls. He therefore passeth by the body, and

* Solomon resolves both the parts of man into their first principles; as therefore he resolves the body into the dust, whence it was taken; so also, if the soul had been made of an heavenly substance, or, (as Plato says), of the soul of the world, Solomon would have resolved the soul into it; but when he says simply of the soul, that it returns to God who gave it, he teaches us, That it was created of nothing, into which it could not be resolved. *Zanch.*

Digitized by Google

speaks of the soul as the gift of God; because that part of man, and that only, flows immediately from God, and, at death, returns to him that gave it. All these expressions, *The Father of spirits*, the *former of the spirit of man*, the *giver of the spirit*; how agreeably are they to each other, and all of them to the point under hand, that the soul flows from God by immediate creation? You see it hath no principle out of which, according to the order of nature, it did arise, as the body had; and therefore it hath no principle into which, according to the order of nature, it can be returned, as the body hath; but returns to God, its efficient cause: if reconciled, to a Father, not only by creation, but adoption; if unreconciled, as a creature guilty of unnatural rebellion against the God that formed it, to be judged.

II. God created and infused it into the body, with an inherent inclination and affection to it. The † nature of the soul and body is vastly different, there is no affinity or similitude betwixt them: but it is in this case, as in that of marriage. Two persons of vastly different educations, constitutions, and inclinations, coming under God's ordinance, into the nearest relation to each other, find their affections knit and endeared by their relation to a degree beyond that which results from the union of blood: So it is here. Whence this affection arises, in what acts it is discovered, and for what reason implanted, will be at large discovered in a distinct branch of the following discourse, to which it is assigned. Mean while, I find myself concerned to vindicate what hath been here asserted from the arguments which are urged against the immediate creation and infusion of the soul, and in the defence of the opinion of its traduction from the parents. To conceal, or dissemble these arguments and objections, would be but a betraying of the truth I have here asserted, and give occasion for some jealousy, that they are unanswerable. To come then to an issue; and first,

Object. 1. It is urged, that it is manifest in itself, and generally yielded, that the souls of all other creatures come by generation, and therefore it is probable that human souls flow in the same channel also.

† The body is necessary to the soul, which is the perfection of the organical body, for it is not a separate form, *i. e.* a form properly so called, therefore it requires matter, in so much that the soul, when separate from the body, still retains its relation and inclination to it, which is followed with the resurrection of the body. *Cameron prælect. in Mat. p.* 124.

Digitized by Google

Solut. There is a specific difference betwixt rational souls, and the souls of all other creatures, and therefore no force at all in the consequence. A material form may rise out of matter; but a spiritual, rational being (as the soul of man is) cannot so rise, being much more noble and excellent than matter is.

What animal is there in the world, out of whose soul the acts of reason spring, and flow, as they do out of human souls? Are they capable of inventing, (or which is much less) of learning the arts and sciences? Can they correct their senses, and demonstrate a star to be far greater than the whole earth, which to the eye seems no bigger than the rowel of a spur? Do they foreknow the positions, and combinations of the planets, and the eclipses of the sun and moon many years before they suffer them? And if they cannot perform these acts of reason, as it is sure they cannot, how much less can they know, fear, love, or delight in God, and long for the enjoyment of him! These things do plainly evince human souls to be of another *species*, and therefore of a higher original than the souls of brutes. If all have one common nature and original, why are they not all capable of performing the same rational, and religious acts?

Obj. 2. But though it should be granted, that the soul of the first man was by immediate creation and inspiration from God; yet it follows not, that the souls of all his posterity must be so too. God might create him with a power of begetting other souls after his own image. The first tree was created with its seed in itself to propagate its kind, and so might the first man.

Sol. 1. Trees, animals, and such-like, were not created immediately out of nothing, as the soul of man was; but the earth was the pre-existent matter out of which they were produced by the word of God's blessing and power; but man's soul was immediately breathed into him by God, and had no pre-existent matter at all: And besides, all human souls being of one *species*, have therefore one and the same original: The soul of the poorest child is of equal dignity with the soul of Adam. And if we consult Job xxxiii. 4. we shall find Elihu giving us there the same account, and almost in the same words, of the original of his soul that Moses in my text gives us of the original of Adam's soul: "The Spirit of God hath formed me, and the "breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

Sol. 2. But it is evident, souls spring not from the parent, as one plant, or animal doth from another; for they have their seed in themselves, apt and proper to produce their kind; but the seed of souls is not to be found in man: It is not to be found

Digitized by Google

in his body; for then (as was said before) a spiritual and nobler essence must be produced out of a material and baser matter, *(i. e.)* the matter must give to the soul that which it hath not in itself, nor is it to be found in its soul; for the soul being a pure, simple, and invisible being, can suffer nothing to be descinded from it, towards the production of another soul. A spirit, as the soul is, *substantia simplex et impartibilis;* an uncompounded, and indiscerpible, or impartible being. Nor can it spring partly from the body, and partly from the soul, as from con-causes; for then it should be partly corporeal, and partly incorporeal, as its causes are. "So that there is no matter, "seed, or principle of souls found in man; and to be sure (as * "Baronius strongly argues) he cannot produce a soul without "pre-existent matter; for that were to make him omnipotent, "and assign a creating power to a creature." Besides, that which is generable, is also corruptible, as we see trees, animals, *&c.* which are produced that way, to be; but the soul is not corruptible, as hath in part been already proved, and more fully, in the following discourse. So that Adam's soul, and the souls of his posterity spring not from each other, but all from God by creation.

Obj. 3. If the soul be created and infused immediately by God, either it comes out of his hands pure, or impure; if pure, how comes it to be defiled and tainted with sin? If impure, how do we free God from being the author of sin?

Sol. If the question be, whether souls be pure or impure, as soon as they are united with their bodies? The answer is, they are impure, and tainted as soon as united: For the union constitutes a child of Adam, and consequently a sinful impure creature. But if it respect the condition and state in which God created them, I answer with Baronius †. "They are created "neither morally pure, nor impure; they receive neither puri- "ty nor impurity from him, but only their naked essence, and "the natural powers and properties flowing therefrom." He inspires not any impurity into them; for he cannot be the au-

* *Pater neque producit animam filii ex aliqua re præ-existente; neque producit eam ex nulla re præ existente: hoc enim est creare; ergo nullo modo eam producit.* Baronii differt. secunda de Origine Animae, p. 120.

† *Animæ nostræ a Deo creante neque accipunt puritatem, seu justitiam; neq; impuritatem et propensionem ad malum: Sed tantum essentiam spiritualem, et proprietates ab essentia dimanantes.* Baroni exercit. p. 103.

Digitized by Google

thor of sin, who is the revenger of it. Nor doth he create them in their original purity and rectitude; for the sin of Adam lost that, and God justly withholds it from his posterity. Who wonders (saith ‡ one) to see the children, the palaces, and gardens of traitors to droop and decay, and the arms of his house, and the badge of his nobility, to be defaced and reversed? That which is abused by man to the dishonour of God, may justly be destroyed (I add in this case, or *with-held*) by God to the detriment of man. Adam voluntarily and actually deprived himself, and meritoriously deprived all his posterity of that original righteousness and purity in which he was created. As an *holy* God, he cannot inspire any impurity, and as a just and *righteous* God, he may, and doth with-hold, or create them void and destitute of that holiness, and righteousness, which was once their happiness and glory.

Obj. 4. But how come they then to be defiled and tainted with original sin? It is confessed God did not impure them, and the body cannot; for its being matter, cannot act upon a spirit; yea, of itself it is a dead lump, and cannot act at all.

Sol. What if this be one of those mysteries reserved for the world to come, about which we cannot in this state solve every difficulty that may be moved? Must we therefore deny its divine original? What if I cannot understand some mysteries, or answer some questions about the *hypostatical union* of the two natures, in the wonderful person of our *Emmanuel*? Must I therefore question whether he be Θεανθρωπος, God-man? We must remain ignorant of some things about our souls, till we come into the condition of the spirits of just men made perfect ‖. Mean time, I think it much more our concernment to study how we may get sin out of our souls, than to puzzle our brains to find how it came into them.

But that the *objector* may not take this for an handsome slide, or go by to this great objection, I return to it, in a few particulars.

(1.) That I think not original sin follows either part singly; it comes in neither by the soul alone, nor by the body alone, apart from the soul; but upon the union and conjunction of both in one person. 'Tis the union of these two which constitutes a

‡ Jenkins on Jude, Vol. 1. p. 5, 9.

‖ Man since the fall, being less than himself, understands not himself; nor will he fully, till he be fully restored to himself in glory. *Norton's Orth. Evang. p.* 237.

Digitized by Google

child of Adam, and as such only we are capable of being infected with his sin.

(2.) * And whereas it is so confidently asserted in the objection, that sin cannot come into the soul by, or from the body, because it being matter, cannot act upon a spirit: I say, this is *gratis dictum*, easily spoken, but difficultly proved. Cannot the body act upon, or influence the soul? Pray then how comes it to pass that so many souls become foolish, forgetful, injudicious, *&c.* by their union with ill-disposed bodies? Nothing is more sensible, plain and evident, than that there is a reciprocal communication betwixt the soul and body. The body doth as really (though we know not how) affect the soul with its dispositions, as the soul influences it with life and motion. The more excellent any form is, the more intimate is its union and conjunction with the matter. The soul of man hath therefore a more intimate and perfect union with the body, than light hath with the air; which is made, by some, the best emblem, and similitude to shadow forth this union. But the union betwixt them is too intimate to be conceived by the help of any such similitudes. That this infection is by way of *physical agency*, as a rusty scabbard infects and defiles a bright sword, when sheathed therein; I will not confidently affirm as some do. It may be by way of *natural concomitancy*, as Estius will have it; or to speak, as Dr. Reynolds (modestly, and as becomes men that are conscious of darkness and weakness) by way of ineffable resultancy and emanation.

(3.) Upon the whole, original sin consists in two things. *viz.*

1. In the privation of that original rectitude which ought to be in us.
2. In that habitual concupiscence which carrieth nature to inordinate motions.

This privation and inordinate inclination, make up that original corruption, the rise whereof we are searching for: And to bring us as near as we can come, without a daring intrusion

* The soul (say some) in the moment of its creation and infusion by God, being united with the body by the plastic and formative virtue of the parental seed: the parent may be truly said to generate the man, though he do not produce the form: Because proper generation consists in the union, and not in the production of parts. So that original sin is not propagated from body to body, nor yet from soul to soul, but from man to man.

Digitized by Google

into unrevealed secrets, our solid *divines* proceed by these steps, in answering this objection.

(1.) If it be demanded how it comes to pass that an *infant* becomes guilty of Adam's sin; The answer is, because he is a child of Adam by natural generation.

(2.) But why is he deprived of that original rectitude in which Adam was created? They answer, because Adam lost it by his sin, and therefore could not transmit what he had lost to his posterity.

(3.) But how comes he to be inclined to that which is evil? Their answer is, because he wants that original rectitude: For whosoever wants original rectitude, naturally inclines to that which is evil. And so the propension of nature, to that which is evil, seems to be, by way of concomitancy, with the defect or want of original righteousness.

And thus I have given some account of the nature and original of the soul of man: though alas! my dim eyes see but little of its excellency and glory. Yet, by what hath been said, it appears the master-piece of all God's work of creation, in this lower world.

But because I suspect the description I have given of it will be obscure and cloudy to vulgar readers, of a plain and low capacity, by reason of divers *philosophical* terms which I have been forced to make use of; and reckoning myself, a debtor to the weak and unlearned, as well as others, I will endeavour to strip this description of the soul, for their sakes, out of those artificial terms which darken it to them, and present it once more in the most plain and intelligible *epitome* I am capable to give it in; that so the weaker understanding may be able to form a true notion of the nature, and original of the soul, in this manner.

The soul a substance.

This soul of mine is a true and real being; not a fancy, conceit, a very nothing. It hath a proper and true being in itself, whether I conceit it or not. Nor indeed can I conceive of it, but by it. It is not such a thing as whiteness is in snow, a mere accident, which depends upon the snow in which it is, for the being it hath, and must perish as soon as the snow is dissolved: My soul doth not so much depend upon my body, or any other fellow-creature for its being; but is as truly a substance as my body is, though not of so gross and material a kind and nature. My soul can, and will subsist and remain what it is, when my body is separated from it; but my body cannot subsist and remain what it now is, when my soul is separated from it: So that

Digitized by Google

I find my soul to be the most substantial and noble part of me; it is not my body, but my soul which makes me a man. And if this depart, all the rest of me is but a dead log, a lump of inanimate clay, a heap of vile dust and corruption. From this independent subsistence it hath in itself, and the dependence its properties and affections have upon it, I truly apprehend and call it a *substance*.

But a spiritual substance.

But yet, when I call it a substance, I must not conceive of it as a gross material, palpable substance, such as my body is, which I can see and feel: No, there are *spiritual substances* as well as gross, visible, *material substances*. An angel is a spiritual *substance*, a real creature, and yet imperceptible by my sight or touch, such a substance is my soul. Spiritual substances are as real, and much more excellent than bodily substances are. I can neither see, hear, nor feel it, but I both see, hear, and feel by it.

A vital substance.

My soul is also a vital substance. It is a principle of life to my body: It hath a life in itself, and quickens my body therewith. My soul is the spring of all the actions and motions of life which I perform. It hath been an error taken in from my childhood, that sense is performed in the outward organ, or members of my body; as touching in the hand, seeing in the eye, hearing in the ear, *&c.* in them, I say, and not only by them, as if nothing were required to make sense, but an *object* and an *organ*. No, no, it is not my eye that seeth, nor my ear that heareth, nor my hand that toucheth, but my soul, in and by them, performs all this. Let but an *apoplex* hinder the operations of my soul in the brain, and of how little use are my eyes, ears, hands or feet to me? My life is originally in my soul, and secondarily by way of communication in my body. So that I find my soul to be a *vital*, as well as a *spiritual substance*.

An immortal substance.

And being both a vital and spiritual substance, I must needs conclude it to be an immortal substance. For in such a pure, spiritual nature, as my soul is, there can be found no seeds or principles of death. Where there is no composition, there will be no dissolution. My body indeed having so many jarring humours, mixed elements, and contrary qualities in it, must needs fall and die at last: but my soul was formed for immortality, by the simplicity and spirituality of its nature. No sword can pierce it from without, nor opposition can destroy it from within; man cannot, and God will not.

Digitized by Google

And being an immortal spirit, fitted and framed to live for ever, I find that God hath, answerably, endued and furnished it with an *understanding*, *will*, and *affections*, whereby it is capable of being wrought upon by the Spirit, in the way of grace and sanctification, in this world, in order to the enjoyment of God, its chief happiness, in the world to come.

Endued with understanding, will, and affections.

By this its *understanding*, I am distinguished from, and advanced above all other creatures in this world. I can apprehend, distinguish, and judge of all other intelligible beings. By my *understanding* I discern truth from falshood, good from evil; it shews me what is fit for me to chuse, and what to refuse.

To this faculty or power of *understanding*, my thoughts and conscience do belong; the former to my *speculative*, the latter to my *practical understanding*. My thoughts are all formed in my mind or understanding in innumerable multitudes and variety. By it I can think of things present, or absent; visible, or invisible; of God, or myself; of this world, or the world to come.

To my *understanding* also belongs my *conscience*, a noble, divine, and awful power: By which I summon and judge myself, as at a solemn *tribunal*; bind and loose, condemn and acquit myself and actions, but still with an eye and respect to the judgment of God. Hence are my best comforts, and worst terrors.

This *understanding* of mine is the director and guide of my *will*, as the *counsellor*; and my will is as the *prince*: It freely chuseth and refuseth, as my understanding directs and suggests to it. The members of my body, and the passions of my soul, are under its dominion: The former are under its absolute command, the latter under its suasions and insinuations, though not absolutely, yet always with effect and success.

And both my *understanding* and *will*, I find to have great influence upon my *affections*.

These passions and *affections* of my soul are of great use and dignity. I find them as manifold, as there are considerations of good and evil. They are the strong and sensible motions of my soul, according to my apprehensions of good and evil. By them my soul is capable of union with the highest good. By love and delight I am capable of enjoying God, and resting in him, as the centre of my soul. This noble *understanding*,

Digitized by Google

thoughts, conscience, will, passions, and *affections,* are the principal faculties, acts, and powers of this my high and heaven-born soul. And being thus richly endowed and furnished,

Created and infused with an inclination to the body.

I find it could never rise out of matter, or come into my body by way of generation; the souls of brutes, that rise that way, are destitute of understanding, reason, conscience, and such other excellent faculties, and powers, as I find in my own soul. They cannot know, or love, or delight in God, or set their affections on things spiritual, invisible, and eternal, as my soul is capable to do; it was therefore created and infused immediately into this body of mine by the Father of spirits, and that with a strong inclination, and tender affection to my flesh, without which it would be remiss and careless in performing its several duties and offices to it, during the time of its abode therein.

Fearfully and wonderfully, therefore, am I made, and designed for nobler ends and uses, than for a few days to eat, and drink, and sleep, and talk, and die. My soul is of more value than ten thousand worlds. *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

U S E.

From the several parts and branches of this description of the soul, we may gather the choice fruits which naturally grow upon them, in the following *inferences* and deductions of truth and duty. For we may say of them all, what the *historian* doth of Palestine, that there is *nihil infructuosum, nihil sterile,* no branch or shrub is barren, or unfruitful. Let us then search it branch by branch: and,

1. *The soul is a substantial being.*

Infer. 1. From the substantial nature of the soul, which we have proved to be a being distinct from the body, and subsisting by itself, we are informed, *That great is the difference betwixt the death of a man, and the death of all other creatures in the world.* Their souls depend on, and perish with their bodies; but ours neither result from them, nor perish with them *. My body is not a body, when my soul hath forsaken it; but my soul will remain a soul, when this body is crumbled into dust. Men may live like beasts, a mere sensual

* So great a prerogative manifestly proves that the soul, which is the governing part, is not material and mortal, but of a superior and more excellent nature, greatly different from the condition of other souls. *Conimb. Disp. on separate souls, p.* 584.

Digitized by Google

life; yea, in some sense, they may die like beasts, a stupid death; but in this there will be found a vast difference: Death kills both parts of the beasts, destroys the matter and form; it toucheth only one part of man; it destroyeth the body, and only *dislodgeth* the soul, but cannot *destroy* it.

In some things Solomon shews the agreement betwixt our death and theirs, Eccles. iii. 19, 20, 21. "That which befal-"leth the sons of men, befalleth the beasts; even one thing "befalleth them: As the one dieth, so dieth the other; all go "to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." We breathe the same common air they breath; we feel the same pains of death they feel; our bodies are resolved into the same earth theirs are. Oh! but in this is the difference, *The spirit of man goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast goeth downward to the earth.* Their spirits go two ways at their dissolution; the one to the earth, and the other to God that gave it; as he speaks, chap. xii. 7. Though our resolution and expiration have some agreement, yet great is the odds in the consequences of death to the one and the other. They have no pleasures nor pains besides those they enjoy or feel now; but so have we, and those eternal, or unspeakable too. The soul of man, like the bird in the shell, is still growing or ripening in sin or grace, till at last the shell breaks by death, and the soul flies away to the place it is prepared for, and where it must abide for ever. The body, which is but its shell, perisheth; but the soul lives when it is fallen away †.

How doth this consideration expose and aggravate the folly and madness of this sensual world, who herd themselves with beasts, though they have souls so near a kin to angels! The princes and nobles of the world abhor to associate themselves with *mechanics* in their shops, or to take a place among the sottish rabble upon an ale-bench; they know and keep their distance and *decorum*, as still carrying with them a sense of honour, and abhorring to act beneath it: But we equalize our high and noble souls in the manner of life with the beasts that perish. Our tables differ little from the *crib* at which they feed; or our houses from the *stalls* and *stables* in which they lie down to rest, in respect of any divine worship, or heavenly communication that is to be heard there. Happy had it been for such men (if

† They grow up together, and are again separated, and both return to whence they came; The earth downward, and the spirit upward. *Epicha.*

Digitized by Google

so they live and die) that their souls had been of no higher extraction, or larger capacity, or longer duration than that of a beast: For then, as their comforts, so also their miseries had ended at death. And such they will one day wish they had been.

A separate soul immediately capable of blessedness.

Infer. 2. The soul of man being a substance, and not depending in its being on the body, or any other fellow-creature, *There can be no reason, on the soul's account, why its blessedness should be delayed till the resurrection of the body.*

It is a great mistake (and it is well it is so) that the soul is capable only of social glory, or a blessedness in partnership with the body; and that it can neither exert its own powers, nor enjoy its own happiness, in the absence of the body. The opinion of a sleeping interval took its rise from this error (as it is usual for one mistake to beget another); they conceived the soul to be so dependent on the body, at least in all its operations, that when death rends it from the body, it must needs be left in a swoon, or sleep, unable to exert its proper powers, or enjoy that felicity which we ascribe to it in its state of separation.

But certainly its substantial nature being considered, it will be found, that what perfection soever the body receives from the soul, and how necessary soever its dependance upon it is *, the soul receives not its perfection from the body, nor doth it necessarily depend on it, in its principal operations; but it can live and act out of a body as well as in it. Yea, I doubt not but it enjoys itself in a much more sweet, and perfect liberty than ever it did, or could, whilst it was clogged and fettered with a body of flesh. "Doubtless, (saith † Tertullian) when it "is separated, and as it were strained by death, it comes out "of darkness into its own pure, perfect light, and quickly finds "itself a substantial being, able to act freely in that light." Before the eyes of the dead body are closed, I doubt not, but the believing soul, with open eyes, beholdeth the face of Jesus

* The rational soul receives no perfection from matter, which it could not receive without it. *Conimbr. disp. 2. art. 3.*

† *Procul dubio cum vi mortis exprimitur de concretione carnis, et ipsa expressione colatur, certo de oppanso corpore erumpit in apertum, ad meram et puram, et suam lucem, statim semetipsam in expeditione substantiæ recognoscit, ut de somno emergens ab imaginibus ad veritates.* Tertul. in lib. de Anima.

Digitized by Google

Christ, Luke xxiii. 43. Philip. i. 23. But this will also be further spoken to hereafter.

Inser. 3. The souls of men being created immediately out of nothing, and not seminally traduced; it follows, *That all souls by nature are of equal value and dignity; one soul is not more excellent, honourable, or precious than another; but all by nature equally precious.*

The soul of the poorest beggar that cries at the door for a crust, is, in its own nature, of equal dignity and value with the soul of the most glorious monarch that sits upon the throne. And this appears to be so,

1. Because all souls flow out of one and the same fountain, *viz.* the creating power of God. They were not made of better or worse, finer or coarser matter, but ἐκ μὴ ὄντων, out of nothing at all. The same Almighty Power was put forth to the forming of one, as of another. *All souls are mine*, saith he that created them, Ezek. xviii. 4. the soul of the child as well as of the father; the soul of the *beggar* as well as of the *king*; those that had no pre-existent matter, but received their beings from the same efficient cause, must needs be equal in their original nature and value. The bodies of men, which are formed out of matter, do greatly differ from one another; some are moulded (as we say) *e meliori luto*, out of better and finer clay; some are more exact, elegant, vigorous and beautiful than others; but souls having no matter of which they consist, are not so differenced.

2. All souls are created with a capacity of enjoying the infinite and blessed God. They need no other powers, faculties, or capacities than they are by nature endued with (if these be but sanctified and devoted to God) to make them equally happy and blessed with them that are now before the throne of God in heaven, and with unspeakable delight and joy behold his blessed face. We pass through the fields, and take up an egg which lies under a clod, and see nothing in it but a little squalid matter; yea, but in that egg is seminally and potentially contained such a melodious lark as it may be at the same time we see mounting heavenward, and singing delicious notes above. So 'tis here, those poor despised souls, that are now lodged in crazy, despicable bodies on the earth, have, in their natures, a capacity for the same employments and enjoyments with those in heaven. They have no higher original than these have, and these have the same capacity and ability with them. They are beings improvable by grace, to the highest perfections attainable by any creature. If thou be never so mean, base, and despicable a creature, in

Digitized by Google

other respects, yet hast thou a soul, which hath the same alliance to the Father of spirits, the same capacity to enjoy him in glory, that the most excellent and renowned saints ever had.

3. All souls are rated and valued in God's book, and account, at one and the same price; and therefore, by nature are of equal worth and dignity. Under the law, the rich and the poor were to give the same ransom, Exod. xxx. 15. "The rich shall not "give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel." The redemption of souls, by the blood of Christ, costs one and the same price. The poorest and the most despised soul that believes in Jesus, is as much indebted to him for the ransom of his soul, as the greatest and most illustrious person in the world. Moses, Abraham, Paul, *&c.* did not cost Christ any thing more than poor Lazarus, or the meanest among all the saints did. "The righteousness of Christ is unto all, and upon all that be-"lieve, and there is no difference," Rom. iii. 22.

But yet we must not understand this *parity* of human souls universally, or in all respects. Tho' being of one *species* or common nature, they are all equal, and those of them that are purchased by the blood of Christ are all purchased at one rate; yet there are divers other respects and considerations, wherein there are remarkable differences betwixt soul, and soul. As, (1.) Some souls are much better lodged and accommodated in their bodies than others are, though none dwell at perfect rest and ease. God hath lodged some souls in strong, vigorous, comely bodies; others in feeble, crazy, deformed, and uncomfortable ones. The historian saith of Galba, *Anima Galbae male habitat;* the soul of Galba dwelt in an ill body. And a much better man than Galba was as ill accommodated. John wishes in behalf of his beloved Gaius, that his body might but prosper as his soul did, epistle iii. ver. 2. Timothy had his often infirmities. Indeed the world is full of instances and examples of this kind. ‡ If some souls had the advantages of such bodies as others have, who make little or very bad use of them; oh, what service would they do for God! (2.) There is a remarkable difference also betwixt soul, and soul, in respect of natural gifts and abilities of mind. Some have great advantages above others in this respect. The natural spirits and organs of the body being more brisk and apt, the soul is more vegete, vigorous, and able to exert itself in its functions and operations. How clear,

‡ Tostatus bishop of Abulum had so strong and firm a constitution to endure severe studies, that he is said *ænea intestina habuisse*, to have had a body of brass.

Digitized by Google

nimble, and firm, are the apprehensions, fancies, and memories of some souls beyond others! What a prodigy of memory, fancy, and judgment, was father Paul the Venetian! and Suarez, of whom Strada saith, "Such was the strength of his parts, "that he had all St. Augustine's works (the most copious and "various of all the fathers) as it were by heart, *so that I have "seen him*, saith he *, *readily pointing with the finger to any place "or page he disputed of.*" Our Dr Reynolds excelled this way, to the astonishment of all that knew him, so that he was a *living library*, a third *university*. But above all, the character given by Vives of Budaeus is amazing, *That there was nothing written in* Greek *or* Latin *which he had not turned over and examined; that both languages were alike to him, speaking either with more facility than he did the* French, *his mother tongue; and all by the penetrating force of his own natural parts, without a tutor;* "*so "that* † France *never brought forth a man of sharper wit, more "piercing judgment, exact diligence, and greater learning, nor, "in his time,* Italy *itself.*" Foelix et foecundum ingenium, quod in se uno invenit, et doctorem, et discipulum! *A happy and fruitful wit, which in itself found both a master and a scholar!* And yet Pasquier relates what is much more admirable of a young man, who came to *Paris* in the 20th year of his age, and in the year 1445, which shewed himself so excellent and exact in all the arts, sciences, and languages, that if a man of an ordinary good wit, and sound constitution, should live an hundred years, and during that time study incessantly, without eating, drinking, sleeping, or any recreation, he could hardly attain to that perfection. (3.) And yet a far greater difference is made betwixt one soul and another, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit of God. This makes yet a greater disparity; for it alters and new-molds the frame and temper of the soul, and restores the lost image of God to it; by reason whereof the *righteous* is truly said to be "more "excellent than his neighbour," Prov. xii. 26. This ennobles the soul, and stamps the highest dignity and glory upon it, that it is capable of in this world. It is true, it hath naturally an excellency and perpetuity in it above other beings; as *cedar* hath not only a beauty and fragrancy, but a soundness and durability far beyond other trees of the wood: but when it comes under the

* *Satim quo loco quaque pagina diffenerit, ea super re expedite docentem, ab digito commonstratem sæpe vidimus.*

† *Quo viro Gallia, acutiore ingenio, acriore judicio, exactiore diligentia, majore eruditione, nullam unquam produxit: hoc vero ætate nec Italia quidem.* Lud. Viv. in 17 cap. de Civ. Dei.

Digitized by Google

sanctification of the Spirit, then it is a *cedar* over-laid with gold. (4.) Lastly, a wonderful difference will be made betwixt one soul and another, by the judgment of God in the great day. Some will be blessed, and others cursed souls, Matth. xxv. 46. some received into glory, others shut out into everlasting misery; Matth. viii. 11, 12. "Many shall come from the East, and "West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, "in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom "shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping "and gnashing of teeth." And that which will be the sting and aggravation of the difference which will then be made, will be this parity and equality in the nature and capacity of every soul: by reason whereof they, that perish, will find they were as naturally capable of blessedness, as those that enjoy it; and that it was their own inexcusable *negligence* and *obstinacy* that were their ruin.

Infer. 4. If God be the immediate Creator, and former of the soul of man, *Then sin must needs involve the most unnatural evil in it, as it is an horrid violation of the very law of nature.*

III. *The soul a created substance.* No title can be so full, so absolute, as that which creation gives. How clear is this in the light of reason? If God created my soul, then my soul had once no being at all: that it had still remained nothing, had not the pleasure of its Creator chosen and called it into the being it hath, out of the millions of mere possible beings: for as there are millions of possible beings, which yet are nothing; so there are millions of possible beings, which never shall be at all. So that since the pleasure, and power of God was the only fountain of my being, he needs must be the rightful owner of it. What can be more his own, than that whose very being flowed merely from him, and which had never been at all, had he not called it out of nothing?

And seeing the same pleasure of God, which gave it a being, gave it also a reasonable being, capable of, and fitted for moral government, by laws, which other inferior natures are incapable of; it must needs follow that he is the supreme governor, as well as the rightful owner of this soul.

Moreover, it is plain that he who gave my soul its being, and such a being, gave it also all the good it ever had, hath, or shall have; and that it neither is, nor hath any thing but what is purely from him: and therefore he must needs be my most bountiful benefactor, as well as absolute owner, and supreme governor. There is not a soul which he hath created but stands bound to him, in all these ties and titles. Now for such

Digitized by Google

a creature to turn rebellioufly upon its abfolute Owner, whofe only, and wholly it is; upon its fupreme Governor, to whom it owes entire and abfolute obedience; upon its bountiful benefactor, from whom it hath received all, and every mercy it ever had, or hath; to violate his laws, flight his fovereignty, defpife his goodnefs, contemn his threatnings, pierce his very heart with grief, darken the glory of all his attributes, confederate with Satan his malicious enemy; and ftrike, as far as a creature can ftrike, at his very being (for in a fenfe, *Omne peccatum eft Decidium*, every fin ftrikes at the life and very exiftence of God): Bluſh, O heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid! O curfed fin, the evil of all evils, which no epithet can match; no name worfe than its own can be invented, *ſinful ſin*. This is as if fome venomous branch fhould drop poifon upon the root that bears it. Love and gratitude to benefactors, is an indelible principle engraven by nature upon the hearts of all men. It teacheth children to love and honour their parents, who yet are but mere inftruments of their being. O how juft muft their perdition be, who caſting off the very bonds of nature, turn again with enmity againſt that God, in whom they both live, and move, and have their being! O think, and think again, on what an * holy man once faid; What a fad charge will this be againſt many a man at the great day, when God fhall fay, Hadſt thou been made a dog, I never had had fo much diſhonour as I have had? It is pity God fhould not have honour from the meaneſt creature that ever he made, from every pile of graſs in the field, or ſtone in the ſtreet; much more that he fhould not have glory from a ſoul more precious and excellent than all the other works of his hands. Surely it is better for us, our ſouls had ſtill remained only in the number of poſſible beings, and had never had an actual exiſtence in the ſecond rank of beings, but a very little lower than the angels; than that we ſhould be ſtill diſhonouring God by them. O that he ſhould be put to levy his glory from us paſſively; that it ſhould be with us as it was with Nebuchadnezzar, from whom God had more glory when he was driven out amongſt the beaſts of the field, than when he ſat on the throne. In like manner, his glory will riſe paſſively from us, when driven out among devils, and not actively and voluntarily, as from the ſaints.

Infer. 5. If God create and inſpire the reaſonable ſoul immediately, *This ſhould inſtruct and incite all Chriſtian parents to*

* Mr. Burrough's Excellency of the ſoul of man, *p.* 232.

Digitized by Google

pray earnestly for their children, not only when they are born into the world, but when they are at first conceived in the womb.

It is of great concernment both to us and our children, not only to receive them from the womb, with bodies perfectly and comely fashioned; but also with such souls inspired into them, whereby they may glorify God to all eternity. It is natural to parents to desire to have their children full and perfect in all their bodily members; and it would be a grievous affliction to see them come into the world defective, monstrous, and misshapen births; should a leg, an arm, an eye be wanting, such a defect would make their lives miserable, and the parents uncomfortable. But how few are concerned with what soul they are born into the world? "Good God, (saith ‡ Musculus), "how few shall we find, who are equally solicitous to have such "children as may live piously and honestly, as they are to leave "them inheritances upon which they may live splendidly and "bravely?" It pleaseth us to see our own image stamped upon their bodies; but, O! how few pray, even whilst they are in the womb, that their souls may, in due time, bear the image of the heavenly, and not animate and use the members of their bodies, as weapons of unrighteousess against the God that formed them?

Certainly, except they be quickened with such souls, as may in this world be united with Christ, better had it been for them that they had perished in the womb, whilst they were pure *embryo's* and had never come into the number and account of men and women; for such *embryo's* go for nothing in the world, having only rudiments and rough draughts of bodies, never animated and informed by a reasonable soul, Job iii. 11, 12. But as soon as such a soul enters into them, though for never so little a time, it entails eternity upon them. We also know that as soon as ever God breathes, or infuses their souls into them, sin presently enters, and death by sin, and that by us, as the instruments of conveying it to them: which should have the efficacy of a mighty argument with us to lay our prayers and tears for mercy in the very foundation of that union.

Think on this particularly, you that are mothers of children, when you find the fruit of the womb quickened within you, that you then bear a creature within you of more value than

‡ *Bone Deus! quam paucos reperias qui tam soliciti quomodo pie et honeste vivam filii, quam curant ut amplam relinquant illis hæreditatem qua post obitum illorum splendide et otiose declientur?* Musculus in 8 Gen.

Digitized by Google

all this visible world; a creature, upon whom, from that very moment, an eternity of happiness or misery is entailed; and therefore it concerns you to travail as in pain for their souls, before you feel the sorrows and pangs of travail for their bodies. O what a pity is it, that a part of yourselves should eternally perish! that so rare and excellent a creature as that you bear, should be cast away for ever, for want of a new creation superadded to that it hath already! O let your cries and prayers for them, anticipate your kisses and embraces of them. If you be faithful and successful herein, then happy is the womb that bears them; if not, happy had it been for them, that the knees had prevented them, and the breasts they have sucked. O! ye cannot begin your suits for mercy too early for them, nor continue them to long, though your prayers measure all the time betwixt their conception and their death.

Infer. 6. Moreover, if God hath created our souls vital substances, to animate and act those bodies, *How indispensably necessary is it that such a principle of spiritual life, do quicken and govern that soul which quickens and governs our bodies and all the members of them?* Otherwise, *though in a natural sense we have living souls, yet they are dead whilst they live.*

IV. A vital substance.

The apostle, in 1 Cor. xv. 45, 46., compares the animal life we live, by the union of our souls and bodies, with the spiritual life we live, by the union of our souls with Jesus Christ. And so it is written, (*viz.* in my text), "The first man Adam "was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening "Spirit." He opposes the animal to the spiritual life, and the two Adams, from whom they come; and shews, in both respects, the excellency of the spiritual above the animal life; not in point of *priority*, for that which is natural is before that which is spiritual, (and it must be so, because the natural soul is the recipient subject of the Spirit's quickening and sanctifying operations); but in point of dignity and real excellency. To how little purpose, or rather to what a dismal and miserable purpose are we made living souls, except the Lord from heaven, by his quickening power, make us spiritual and holy souls? The natural soul rules and uses the body, as an * artificer doth his tools: and except the Lord renew it by grace, Satan will rule that which rules thee, and so all thy members will be instruments of

* The body bears resemblance to an organ, the soul to an artist. *Iren. b.* 2.

Digitized by Google

iniquity to fight against God. "The actions performed by "our bodies, are justly reputed and reckoned by God to the "soul †," because the soul is the spring of all its motions, the fountain of its life and operations. What it doth by the body, its instrument, is, as if it were done immediately by itself; for without the soul it can do nothing.

V. A spiritual substance.

Infer. 7. Moreover, from the immaterial and spiritual nature of the soul, we are informed, *That communion with God, and the enjoyment of him, are the true and proper intentions and purposes for which the soul of man was created.*

Such a nature as this, is not fitted to live upon gross, material, and perishing things, as the body doth. The food of every creature is agreeable to its nature; one cannot subsist upon that what another doth: as we see among the several sorts of animals, what is food to one, is none to another. In the same plant is found a root which is food for swine, a stalk which is food for sheep, a flower which feeds the bee, a seed on which the bird lives: the sheep cannot live upon the root, as the swine doth; nor the bird upon the flower, as the bee doth: but every one feeds upon the different parts of the plant, which are agreeable to its nature. So it is here, our bodies being of an earthly, material nature, can live upon things earthly and material, as most agreeable to them; they can relish and suck out the sweetness of these things; but the soul can find nothing in them suitable to its nature and appetite; it must have spiritual food, or perish. It were therefore too brutish and unworthy of a man that understood the nature of his own soul, to chear it up with the stores of earthly provision made for it, as he did, Luke xii. 20. "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast "much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, "drink, and be merry." Alas! the soul can no more eat, drink, and be merry with carnal things, than the body can with spiritual and immaterial things: it cannot feed upon bread that perisheth, it can relish no more in the best and daintiest fare of an earthly growth, than the white of an egg: but bring it to a reconciled God in Christ, to the covenant of grace, and the sweet promises of the gospel; set before it the joys, comforts and earnests of the Spirit; and if it be a sanctified renewed soul, it can make a rich feast upon these. These make it a feast of

† *Omnia quocunque fecerit corpus, sive bonum, sive malum, animæ reputantur.* Origen in Job.

Digitized by Google

fat things, full of marrow, as it is expressed, Isa. xxv. 6. Spiritual things are proper food for spiritual and immaterial souls.

Infer. 8. The spiritual nature of the soul farther informs us, *That no acceptable service can be performed to God, except the soul be employed and engaged therein.* VI. A spiritual substance.

The body hath its part and share in God's worship, as well as the soul; but its part is inconsiderable, in comparison; Prov. xxiii. 26. "My son give me thy heart," *i. e.* thy soul, thy spirit. The holy and religious acts of the soul are suitable to the nature of the object of worship: John iv. 24. "God is a Spirit, and "they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in "truth." Spirits only can have communion with that great Spirit. They were made spirits for that very end, that they might be capable of converse with the Father of Spirits. "They that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in "truth;" that is, with inward love, fear, delight, and desires of soul, that is, to worship him in our spirits; and *in truth, i. e.* according to the rule of his word which prescribes our duty. *Spirit* respects the inward power; *truth* the outward form. The former strikes at hypocrisy, the latter at superstition and idolatry: the one opposes the inventions of our heads, the other the looseness and formality of our hearts.

No doubt but the service of the body is due to God, and expected by him: for both the souls and bodies of his people are bought with a price, and therefore he expects we glorify him with our souls and bodies, which are his: but the service of the body is not accepted of him, otherwise than it is animated and enlivened by an obedient soul, and both sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Separate from these, bodily exercise profits nothing, 1 Tim. iv. 8. What pleasure can God take in the fruits and evidences of mens hypocrisy? Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

Holy Paul appeals to God in this matter; Rom. i. 9. "God "is my witness (saith he) whom I serve with my spirit;" *q. d.* I serve God in my spirit, and he knows that I do so. I dare appeal to him who searches my heart, that it is not idle and unconcerned in his service. The Lord humble us, the best of us, for our careless, dead, gadding, and vain spirits, even when we are engaged in his solemn services. Oh that we were once so spiritual, to follow every excursion from his service with a groan, and retract every wandering thought with a deep sigh! Alas, a cold and wandering spirit in duty is the disease of most men, and the very temper and constitution of unsanctified ones. It is a weighty and excellent expression of the Jews, in their Eucho-

Digitized by Google

logium or prayer-book, "* Wherewithal shall I come before "his face, unless it be with my spirit? For man hath nothing "more precious to present to God than his soul." Indeed it is the best man hath: thy heart is thy *totum posse*: it is all that thou art able to present to him. If thou cast thy soul into thy duty, thou dost as the poor widow did, cast in all that thou hast: and in such an offering the great God takes more pleasure than in all the external, costly, pompous ceremonies, adorned temples, and external devotions in the world. It is a remarkable and astonishing expression of his own in this case, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth "is my footstool: Where is the house that ye built me? and "where is the place of my rest? For all these things have "mine hands made, and all these things have been, saith the "Lord; but unto this man will I look, even to him that is poor, "and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word;" *q. d.* Think not to please me with magnificent temples, and adorned altars; if I had pleasure in such things, heaven is a more glorious throne than any you can build me; and yet I have more delight in a poor contrite spirit, that trembles with an holy awe and reverence at my word, than I have in heaven or earth, or all the works of my hands in either. Oh! if there had been more trembling at his word, there had not been such trembling as now there is, under fears of the loss and removal of it. Some can superstitiously reverence and kiss the sacred dust of the sanctuary, as they call it, and express a great deal of zeal for the externals of religion, but little consider how small the interest of these things is in religion, and how little God looks at, or regards them.

Infer. 9. *How much more are the spirits of men sunk by sin, below the dignity and excellency of their nature?*

Our souls are spirits by nature, yet have they naturally no delight in things spiritual: they decline that which is homogeneal and suitable to spirits, and relish nothing but what is carnal and unsuitable to them. How are its affections inverted and misplaced by sin! That noble, spiritual, heaven-born creature the soul, whose element and centre God alone should be, is now fallen into a deep oblivion both of God and itself, and wholly spends its strength in the pursuit of sensual and earthly enjoyments, and becomes a mere drudge and slave to the body. Car-

* פֶּ֣ן־גִּבְּיֹ֣אם כרוחיכי אדוליאש נבבר מנפשר חכמה אקרם h, e. *Qua re potius præveniam faciem cujus, nisi spiritu meo? nihil enim est homini precio sius anima sua.*

Digitized by Google

nal things now measure out and govern its delights and hopes, its fears and sorrows. Oh! how unseemly is it, to behold such a high-born spirit lacqueying up and down the world in the service of the perishing flesh. "Their heart (saith the prophet) "goeth after their covetousness," Ezek. xxxiii. 31. as a servant at the beck or nod of his master.

Oh, how many are there to be found in every place who melt down the precious affections and strength of their souls, in sensitive brutish pleasures and delights? James v. 5. "Ye "have lived in pleasures upon earth," as the fish in the waters, or rather as the eel in the mud; never once lifting up a thought or desire to the spiritual and eternal pleasures that are at God's right hand.

Our creation did not set us so low; we are made capable of better and higher things.

God did not inspire such a noble, excellent, spiritual soul into us, merely to salt our bodies, or carry them up and down this world for a few years, to gaze at the vanities of it. It was a great saying of an Heathen, "I am greater, and born to great-"er things, than that I should be a slave to my body †." We have a spirit about us, that might better understand its original, and know it is not so base a being, as its daily employments speak it to be. The Lord raise our apprehensions to a due value of the dignity of our own souls, that we may turn from these sordid employments with a generous disdain, and set our affections on what is agreeable to, and worthy of an high-born spirit.

Infer. 10. Is the soul of man a vital, spiritual, and *immortal substance? Then it is no wonder, that we find the resentments and impressions of the world to come, naturally engraven upon the souls of men all the world over.* These impressions and sentiments of another life after this, do as naturally and necessarily spring out of an *immortal nature*, as branches spring out of the body of a tree, or feathers out of the body of a bird. So fairly and firmly are the characters and impressions of the life to come sealed upon the immortal spirits of all men, that no man can offer violence to this truth, but he must also do violence to his own soul, and unman himself by the denial of it, who feels not a chearineſs to spring from his absolving, and an horror from his accusing conscience? neither of which could rise from any other principle than this. We are

VII. *The soul an immortal substance.*

† *Major sum, et ad majora natus, quam ut corporis mei sim mancipium.* Seneca.

Digitized by Google

beings conscious to ourselves of a future state, and that our souls do not vanish when our breath doth; that we cease not to be, when we cease to breath.

And this is common to the most barbarous and savage Heathens: "They shew (saith the apostle) the work of the law "written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing them "witness, and their thoughts in the mean time accusing, or "else excusing one another." By the work of the law, understand the sum and substance of the ten commandments, comprising the duties to be done, and the sins to be avoided. This work of the law is said to be written upon the hearts of the Gentiles, who had no external written law; upon their hearts it was written, though many of them gave themselves over to all uncleanness; and they shewed or gave evidence and proof, that there was such a law written upon their hearts. They shewed it two ways: (1.) Some of them shewed it in their temperance, righteousness, and moral honesty, wherein they excelled many of us, who have far greater advantages and obligations. (2.) In the efficacy of their consciences; which, as it cleared and comforted them for things well done; so it witnessed against them, yea, judged and condemned them for things ill done. And these evidences of a law written on the heart are to be found, wherever men are to be found. Their ignorance and barbarity cannot stifle these sentiments, and impressions of a future state, and a just tribunal to which all must come. And the universality of it plainly evinces, that it springs not out of education, but the very nature of an immortal soul.

Let none say that these universal impressions are but the effects of an universal *tradition*, which have been, time out of mind, spread among the nations of the world: for as no such universal tradition can be proved; so if it could, the very propension that is found in the minds of all men living, to embrace and close with the proposals of a life to come, will evince the agreeableness of them to the nature of an immortal soul. Yea, the natural closing of the soul with these proposals, will amount to an evidence of the reality and existence of those invisible things. For as the natural senses, and their organs, prove that there are colours, sounds, savours, and juices; as well as, or rather because there are eyes, ears, *&c.* naturally fitted to close with, and receive them; so it is here, if the soul naturally looks beyond the line of time, to things eternal, and cannot bound and confine its thoughts and expectations within the too narrow limits of present things, surely there is such a future state, as well as souls made apprehensive of it, and propense to close

Digitized by Google

with the discoveries thereof. So natural are the notions of a future state to the souls of men, that those who have set themselves designedly to banish them, and struggled hard to suppress them, as things irksome and grievous to them, giving interruption to their sensual lusts and pleasures; yet still these apprehensions have returned upon them, and gotten a just victory over all their objections and prejudices; they follow them wheresoever they go; they can no more flee from them, than from themselves; whereby they evidence themselves to be natural and indelible things.

VIII. *Endued with understanding, will, and affections.*

Infer. 11. Hath God endued the soul of man with understanding, will, and affections, whereby it is made capable of knowing, loving, and enjoying God? *It is then no wonder to find the malice and envy of Satan engaged against man, more than any other creature, and against the soul of man, rather than any thing else in man.*

It grates that Spirit of envy, to see the soul of man adorning and preparing, by sanctification, to fill that place in glory from which he fell irrecoverably. It cut Haman to the very heart, to see the honour that was done to Mordecai; much more doth it grate and gall Satan, to see what Jesus Christ hath purchased, and designed for the souls of men. Other creatures being naturally incapable of this happiness, do therefore escape his fury; but men shall be sure to feel it, as far as he can reach them; 1 Pet. v. 8. "Your adversary the devil, goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." *He walks to and fro;* that speaks his diligence; *seeking whom he may devour;* that speaks his design; his restlessness in doing mischief, is all the rest and relief he hath in his own torments. It is a mark of pure and perfect malice, to endeavour to destroy, though he knows he shall never be successful in his attempts. We read of many bodies possessed by him; but he never takes up his quarters in the body of any but with design to mischief the soul. No room but the best in the house will satisfy him; no blood so sweet to him as soul-blood. If he raise persecution against the bodies of men, it is to destroy their souls: holiness is that he hates, and happiness is the object of his envy: the soul being the subject of both, is therefore pursued by him as his prey.

Infer. 12. Upon the consideration, both of its excellent nature, and divine original, it follows, *That the corruption and defacing of such an excellent creature by sin, deserves to be lamented,*

Digitized by Google

and greatly bewailed; and the recovery of it, by sanctification, to be studied, and diligently prosecuted, as the great concern of all men.

What a beautiful and blessed creature was the soul of man at first, whilst it stood in its integrity? His mind was bright, clear, and apprehensive of the law and will of God: His will chearfully complied therewith; his sensitive appetite and inferior powers stood in an obedient subordination. God made man upright, Eccles. vii. 29. יָשָׁר streight, and equal, bending to neither extreme. The law of God was fairly engraven upon the table of his heart. Principles of holiness and righteousness were inlayed in the frame of his mind, fitting him for an exact and punctual discharge of his duties both to God and man. This was the soundness of his constitution, the healthful temper of his inner man, whereby it became the very region of light, peace, purity, and pleasure. For think how serene, lightsome, and placid the state of the soul must be, in which there was no obliquity, not a jar with the divine will; but joy and peace continually transfused through all its faculties!

But sin hath defaced its beauty, razed out the divine image which was its glory, and stamped the image of Satan upon it; turned all its noble powers and faculties against the author and fountain of its being. Surely if all the posterity of Adam, from the beginning to the end of the world, should do nothing else but weep and sigh for the sin and misery of the fall, it could not be sufficiently deplored: Other sins, like single bullets, kill particular persons; but Adam's sin, like a chain-shot, mowed down all mankind at once. It murdered himself *actually*, all his posterity *virtually*, and Christ himself *occasionally*. Oh! what a black train of doleful consequents attend this sin! It hath darkned the bright eye of the soul's understanding, 1 Cor. ii. 14. made its complying and obedient will stubborn and rebellious, Job v. 40. rendered his tender heart obdurate and senseless, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. filled its serene and peaceful conscience with guilt and terror, Tit. i. 15. The consideration of these things is very humbling, and should cause those that glory in their high and illustrious descents, to wrap their silver star in Cypress, and cover all their glory with a mourning veil. But this is but one part of their duty.

How should this consideration provoke us to apply ourselves with the most serious diligence, to recover our lost beauty and dignity, in the way of sanctification! This is the great, and most proper use of the fall, as Musculus excellently speaks; *ut*

Digitized by Google

gratiam Christo eo subnixius ambiamus, to inflame our desires the more vehemently after grace.

Sanctification restores the beauty of the soul, which sin defaced, Eph. iv. 25. Col. iii. 10. Yea, it restores it with this advantage, that it shall never be lost again; holiness is the beauty of God impress'd upon the soul, and the impression is everlasting. Other beauty is but a fading flower: Time will plough deep furrows upon the fairest faces, but this will be fresh to eternity.

All moral virtues, homilitical qualities, which adorn and beautify nature, and make it attractive and lovely in the eyes of men, are but separable accidents, which discinds and crops off like a sweet flower from the stalk, Job. iv. 21. "Doth not their "excellency that is in them go away?" But sanctification is inseparable, and will ascend with the soul into heaven. Oh! that God would set the glass of the law before us, that we may see what defiled souls we have by nature, that we might come by faith to Jesus Christ, who cometh to us by water and by blood, 1 John v. 6.

Infer. 13. To conclude. Upon the consideration of the whole matter before us, if this excellent creature the soul receive both its being and excellencies from God; *Then he that formed it must needs have the full, and only right to possess and use it, and is therefore most injuriously kept out of the possession of it by unsanctified and disobedient persons.*

The soul of man is a building of God; he hath laid out the treasures of his wisdom, power, and goodness in this noble structure; he built it for an habitation for himself to dwell in; and indeed such noble rooms as the understanding, will, and affections, are too good for any other to inhabit. But sin hath set open the gates of this hallowed temple, let in the abomination which maketh desolate. All the doors of the soul are barred, and chained up against Christ, by ignorance and infidelity; he seeks for admission into the soul which he made, but findeth none. A forcible entry he will not make; but expects when the will shall bring him the keys of the soul, as to its rightful owner. So he expresseth himself to us in Rev. iii. 20. "Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my "voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup "with him, and he with me." His *standing at the door*, denotes his earnest desire and patient waiting, in the use of all those means that are introductive of Jesus Christ into the souls of men. His *knocking*, signifies the various essays he makes by

Digitized by Google

ordinances and providences externally, and the convictions and persuasions of his spirit, and the consciences of sinners internally: Every call of the word, and every conviction of conscience is a call, a knock from heaven, at the door of the soul, for admission of Christ into it. By *the soul's hearing his voice, and opening the door*, understand its approbation, and consent to the motion and offer of God. By Christ's *coming in*, is meant his uniting that soul unto himself that opens to him. And as his *coming in* denotes union, so his supping with the soul, and the soul with him, denotes his sweet communion; imperfect here, compleat and full in heaven.

O the admirable condescensions of God to poor sinners! The God that formed you with a word, and can as easily ruin you with a frown, yet waits at the gates of your souls for admission into them. There be many souls within the sound of this complaint, that have kept God out of his own right all their days. They have shut out Jesus Christ, and delivered up their souls to Satan: If he but knock by a slight temptation, the door is presently opened; but Jesus Christ may wait in vain upon them from sabbath to sabbath, and from year to year: But the longest day of his patience hath an end; and there is a refusal of grace, after which no more tenders of mercy shall ever be made.

What say you, Souls? Will you at last open the door to Jesus Christ, or will you still exclude him? If you will open to him, he will not come empty-handed, he will bring a feast with him, such a feast as you never tasted any thing like it in your lives: But, if you will not open to him, then I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you have once barred the doors of your soul against him, whose pleasure and power gave them their very beings; against him, who is their sovereign Lord, and rightful owner: And consequently this act of yours must stop your mouths, and deprive you of all pleas and apologies when you shall knock hereafter at the door of mercy, and God shall ever shut it up against you, according to his just, but dreadful threatnings, Mat. vii. 22. Prov. i. 24, 25. And thus much of the divine original, and excellent nature of the soul of man.

Having taken a view of this excellent creature the soul, in opening the former proposition; we come next to the consideration of its union with the body, in this second proposition.

Digitized by Google

Doct. II. *That the souls and bodies of men are knit together, by the feeble band of the breath in their nostrils.*

"There is (saith a learned * man) no greater mystery in nature, than the union betwixt the soul and body; that a mind "and spirit should be so tied and linked with a clod of clay, that "while that remains in a due temper, it cannot by any art or "power free itself. It can by an act of the will move an hand, "or a foot, or the whole body, but cannot move from it one inch. "If it move hither, or thither, or, by a leap upward do ascend "a little, the body still follows it; it cannot shake or throw it "off. We cannot take ourselves out; by any allowable means "we cannot; nor by any at all (that are at least, within mere "human power) as long as the temperament lasts. While that "remains, we cannot go; if that fail, we cannot stay; tho' "there be so many open avenues (could we suppose any mate-"rial bounds to them in, or exclude a spirit) we cannot go "out or in at pleasure. A wonderful thing! and I wonder "we no more wonder at our own make and frames in this respect. "——What so much a-kin are a mind and a peace of earth, "a clod and a thought, that they should be thus affixed to one "another?"

My design here is to shew by what ligament, tie, or bond it hath pleased the great and wise Creator, to affix and link these, so different parts of man together: And this Moses in the text tells us, is no other but the breath of his nostrils.

The breath and soul of man are two distinct things. His breath is not his soul, nor his soul his breath, but the *nexus* or bond that couples and unites his soul and body in a personal union. The body hath no life in itself, but its life results from its union with the soul, Jam. ii. 26. This union is maintained by the breath of our nostrils, which upon that account is here called the *breath of life. Breath is an act of life, proceeding from the souls union with its body, and ending with the dissolution of it.* Life is continued by its *respiration*, and ended by its *expiration*. Whilst we live, and whilst breath is in our bodies, are terms *synonimous*. *What breath is.*

That little quantity of air, which we thus breathe in, and out at our nostrils, is more to us, than all the three regions of air, which fill up the vast space between earth and heaven. It is, in a sense, our life.

For this use and office of respiration, the *lungs* were formed

* Mr. How in a funeral Sermon, p. 9, 10.

Digitized by Google

and placed where they are, not without the most wise counsel and direction of God. They are that organ in the † Body, which, by the help of that *artery* called *arteria trachea*, leading to them as a channel, for the passage of air from the mouth and nostrils, the air is transmitted to, and ventilated by them for the refreshment of the ‡ heart, and exhaling the fumes thereof.

What the lungs are.

The heart hath continual need of such a vent and refreshment; and therefore the lungs, like a pair of bellows, must be kept continually going. No longer than breath is going, is the heart a dying; that which stops the one, suffocates the other.

And here we may, with admiration, contemplate the wonders by which our lives are continued. These lungs are the most frail and tender part of the body, and kept in continual motion and agitation; yet are made serviceable for seventy or eighty years together, which is the wonder of providence. Were a piece of brass, iron or steel, kept in continual and incessant use, it would not endure half the time. In a word, the ‖ heart that noble part of the body, is the *shop* wherein the *spirits* are laboured and prepared, which therefore is in continual motion and heat; and so needs continual cooling and refreshing. We can live no longer than it labours, it can labour no longer than it is refreshed and cooled by respiration.

God hath therefore prepared the lungs for this service; which being of a thin, porous, and spungy substance, can easily be

† The lungs are the instrument of breathing and respiration; to the lungs there lead a pipe, which is called the wind-pipe, formed for two uses, *&c.*

‡ The heart is moved by a twofold motion, namely, that of its contraction, and dilatation, whereby its innate heat is mitigated and cooled by means of the air suck'd in. *Alsted. Theol. Nat. p.* 614.

‖ Because the heart is the fountain of life, and the laborious forge where the animal spirits are framed; so that being in the posture of a pendulum, it is agitated by a perpetual motion; by which means it is vehemently heated, even to so great a degree, that, unless that heat was moderated by respiration, of necessity it would happen, that both the natural heat and moisture would be destroyed by the excessive heat of the heart. The lungs are nothing else but a certain kind of natural bellows, which by being dilated, draw in the air and transmit it to the heart, so that the heart, though always hot, is cooled by the air; which air, after being warmed within the recesses of the heart, is again sent out from the heart into the lungs, which by contracting themselves, emit it again by expiration. *Keckerm. Phys. p.* 560-70.

Digitized by Google

dilated and contracted. By dilating themselves, they attract and suck in the air into themselves; first duly to prepare and temper it, and then communicate it to the heart for its refreshment; which being quickly heated in the heart, is again breathed out by the lungs, by contracting themselves again. This double motion of inspiration and expiration, we call respiration; and this respiration is the bond that holds our souls and bodies together.

And indeed, this is but a feeble bond, a very slender and weak thread, which holds our souls and bodies in union. What more *volatile*, *evanid* and *uncertain*, than a puff of breath? The nostrils are the outer door of the body, our breath is continually in our nostrils; and how soon may that depart, which is day and night at the door, as if it were still taking leave of us? Our breath is always going; and what is still going, will be gone at last. How small a difference is there betwixt respiration and expiration, a breathing and a breathless lump of clay? Breath cannot continue long, and life cannot stay a moment behind it, Psal. civ. 29. "Thou takest away their breath, "they die, and return to their dust." Life is breath given, and death is breath taken away. The breath of man is like a written sentence, in which there are divers comma's, or short pauses, after which speedily follows a full stop, and there's an end of it.

Some conceive Solomon points at the continual motion of the lungs, in that figurative and elegant description of the death of man, * Eccles. xii. 6. "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or "the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the "fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern." "The "double motion of the lungs he seems here to compare to the "double motion of the buckets in a well; the turn of the wheel "sends one down, and draws the other up." But as we use to say proverbially, The bucket or pitcher that goes so often to the cistern or well, is broken at last: So much we say of these, they will fail at last. One sitting by the bed-side of a dying person, sighed out this compassionate expression, *Ah! quid fumus?* His sick friend hearing it, replyed *Pulvis et umbra fumus*, dust, a shadow, a puff of wind. The wind without us is fickle and inconstant to a proverb, and so is that within us

* The lungs are like the pulleys of a cistern, for as the pulley first lets down the buckes into the well, then raises it again, in like manner, the lungs by a perpetual motion attract and expel the air. *Alsted. Theol. nat. p.* 623.

Digitized by Google

too. Many grudge at the shortness of life; but considering the feebleness of this bond, we have more cause to wonder at the slowness of death. For let us seriously consider the frailty of our breath, on a double account, *viz.*

1. In respect of our breathing instruments.

2. Or of breath-stopping accidents.

1. Great is the frailty of our breathing instruments. What is flesh but weakness? even the most solid and substantial; it is as fading grass, Isa. xl. 6. "But our † lungs are the most lax, "spungy, and tender of all flesh, if that which is so airy, light, "and spumous, deserves the name of flesh." And as it is the most frail of all flesh, so it is in continual motion, labouring night and day, without rest or intermission; and that which wants alternate rest cannot be durable. We see motion wears out the wheels of the watch, though made of brass; but our *Strength* (as Job speaks) *is not the strength* of stones; *nor our bones* (the most solid, much less our lungs the most frail and feeble parts) *of brass*. Beside,

2. There are a multitude of breath-stooping accidents, which may, and daily do beat the last breath out of mens nostrils, before any decay of nature cause it to expire.

Many mortal diseases are incident to these frail and tender parts. Phthisics, interenations, ulcers, easily bar the passage of our breath there; yea, and slighter accidents, which immediately touch not that part, are sufficient to stop our breath, and dislodge our souls. A *fly*, a *gnat*, the stone of a *raisin*, a *crumb* of bread, have often done it. There is not a *pore* in the body, but is a door large enough to let in death, nor a creature so despicably small, but is strong enough (if God commissionate it) to serve a writ of ejection upon the soul: The multitudes of diseases are so many lighted candles put to this slender thread of our breath, besides the infinite diversity of external accidents, by which multitudes daily perish. So that there are as great and astonishing wonders in our preservation, as in our creation.

Infer. 1. *How admirable then is the mystery of providence in the daily continuation of the breath of our nostrils?*

That our breath is yet in our nostrils is only from hence, that he who breathed it into them at first is our life, and the length of our days, as it is Deut. xxx. 20. It is because our breath is in his hand, Dan. v. 23. not in our own, nor in our enemies hands. Till he take it away, none shall be able to do it; Psal. civ. 29.

† The substance of the lungs is a lax spungy airy kind of flesh, and like the coagulated from blood. *Alsted, Theol. nat. p.* 623.

Digitized by Google

" Thou takeſt away their breath, they die, and return to their " duſt."

It is neither food, nor phyſic, but God in and by them, that " holdeth our ſouls in life," Pſal. lxvi. 9. We hang every moment of our life over the grave, and the gulph of eternity, by this ſlender thread of our breath: But it cannot break, how feeble ſoever it be, till the time appointed be fully come. If it be not extinguiſhed and ſuffocated, as others daily are, it is becauſe he puts none of theſe diſeaſes upon us, as it is Exod. xv. 26. or if he do, yet he is *Jehovah Rophe*, the Lord that healeth us, as it follows in that text.

We live in the midſt of cruel enemies, yea, " among them " that breathe out cruelty," as the pſalmiſt complaineth, Pſal. xxvii. 12. Such breath would quickly ſuffocate ours, did not he, in whoſe hand ours is, wonderfully prevent it. Oh what cauſe have we to employ, and ſpend that breath in his praiſe, who works ſo many daily wonders to ſecure it!

Infer. 2. Is it but a puff of feeble breath which holds our ſouls and bodies in union? *Then every man is deeply concerned to make all haſte, to take all poſſible care and pains to ſecure a better, and more durable habitation for his ſoul in heaven, whilſt yet it ſojourns in this frail tabernacle of the body.*

The time is at hand, when all theſe comely and active bodies ſhall be ſo many breathleſs carcaſes, no more capable of any uſe or ſervice for our ſouls than the ſeats you ſit on, or the dead bodies that lie under your feet. Your breath is yet in your noſtrils, and all the means and ſeaſons of ſalvation will expire with it; and then it will be as impoſſible for the beſt miniſter in the world to help your ſouls, as for the ableſt Phyſician to recover your bodies. As phyſic comes too late for the one, ſo counſels and perſuaſions for the other.

Three Things are worth thinking on in this matter.

1. That you are not without the hopes and poſſibilities of ſalvation, whilſt the breath of life is in your noſtrils. A mercy, (how lightly ſoever you value it) that would raviſh with joy thoſe miſerable ſouls that have already ſhot the gulf of eternity, and turn the ſhrieks and groans of the damned unto joyful ſhouts and acclamations of praiſe. Poor wretch, conſider what thou readeſt; that thy ſoul is not yet in Chriſt, is thy greateſt miſery; but that yet it may be in Chriſt, is an unſpeakable mercy; though thy ſalvation be not yet ſecured, yet what a mercy is it that it is not deſperate?

2. When this uncertain breath is once expired, the laſt hope

Digitized by Google

of every unregenerate person is gone for ever: It is as impossible to recover hope, as it is to recover your departed breath, or recal the day that is past. When the breath is gone, the *compositum* is dissolved; we cease to be what we now are, and our life is as water spilt on the ground, which shall not be gathered up till the resurrection. Our life is carried like a precious liquor in a brittle glass, which death breaks to pieces. The spirit is immediately presented to God, and fixed in its unalterable state, Heb. ix. 27. All means of salvation now cease for ever; no *ambassadors* of peace are sent to the dead; no more calls or strivings of the spirit: no more space for repentance. O! what an inconceivable weight hath God hanged on a puff of breath!

3. And since matters stand thus, it is to be admired what shift men make to quiet themselves in so dangerous a state as most souls live in; quiet and unconcerned, and yet but one puff of breath betwixt them and hell! O the stupifying and besotting nature of sin! O the efficacy and power of spiritual delusions! Are our lives such a throng and hurry of business, that we have no time to go alone and think where we are, and where we shortly must be? What shall I say? If bodily concerns be so weighty, and the matters of eternity such trifles; if meat and drink, and trade and children, be such great things, and Christ, and the soul, and heaven, hell and the world to come, such little things in your eyes, you will not be long in that opinion, I dare assure you.

Infer. 3. *Is the tie so weak betwixt our souls and bodies? How close and near then do all our souls confine and border upon eternity?*

There is no more but a puff of breath, a blast of wind betwixt this world and that to come. A very short step betwixt time and eternity: There is a breath which will be our last breath: respiration must, and will terminate in expiration: The dead are the *inhabitants*, and the living are *borderers* upon the invisible world. This consideration deserves a dwelling place in the hearts of all men, whether,

I. Regenerate, or

II. Unregenerate.

I. Regenerate souls should ponder this with pleasure. O it is transporting to think how small a matter is betwixt them and their complete salvation. No sooner is your breath gone, but the full desire of your hearts is come; every breath you draw, draws you a degree nearer to your perfect happiness; Rom. xiii. 11. "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed;" therefore, both your chearfulness, and diligence should be greater

Digitized by Google

than when you were * in the infancy of your faith. You have run through a considerable part of your Christian course and race, and are now come nearer the goal and prize of eternal life. O despond not, loiter not now at last, who were so fervent and zealous in the beginning.

It is transporting to think how near you approach the region of light and joy. O that you would distinctly consider,

1. Where you lately were.
2. Where now you are.
3. Where shortly you shall be.

1. You that are now so near salvation, were lately very near unto damnation, there was but a puff of breath betwixt you and hell. How many nights did you sleep securely in the state of nature and unregeneracy? How quietly did you rest upon the brink of hell, not once imagining the danger you were in? Had any of those sicknesses you then suffered, been suffered by God, like a candle, to burn asunder this slender thread of life, which was so near them, you had been as miserable, and as hopeless, as those that now are roaring in the lowest hell. I have heard of one that rid over a dangerous bridge in the night, who, upon the review of the place next day, fell into a swoon, when he was sensible of that danger which the darkness of the night hid from him. O reader, shall not an escape from hell affect thee, as much as such an escape would do?

2. It is no less marvellous to consider where you now are; you that were afar off are now made nigh, Eph. ii. 13, You that were not beloved, are now beloved, Rom. ix. 25. You were in the state of death and condemnation. You are now passed from death to life, by your free justification, 1 John iii. 14. Your union with Christ hath set you free from condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Die you must though Christ be in you, but there is no hazard, or hurt in your death. The stopping of your breath can put no stop to your happiness, it will hasten, not hinder it: If the pale horse come for you, heaven, not hell will now follow him; your sins are pardoned, the covenant of your salvation sealed. Death is disarmed of its fatal sting; and what then should hinder you from a like triumph, even upon your death-bed with that, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death, where is thy "sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

* He says this, because the faithful had been when they first believed more diligent and chearful in good works, but afterwards grew cold, or turned lukewarm. *Estius on the place.*

Digitized by Google

3. And yet you have more room for joy, whilst you consider where you must, and shall shortly be. You are now *in Christ*, but in a few days you shall be *with Christ* as well as in him; it is well now, but it will be better e'er long. Your sin is now fully *pardoned*, but not fully *purged* out of your souls. Your *persons* are freed from guilt, but your *hearts* are not either freed from filth or grief: But in a little time you shall be absolutely and eternally freed from both. Your present condition is in heaven, compared with your former, and your future state will be in heaven indeed, compared with your present. "The "path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more "and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18.

II. But on the other side, what meditation can be more startling and amazing to all the unregenerate, and christless world? Ponder it, thou poor christless, and unsanctified soul. Get thee out of the noise and clamour of this world, which makes such a continual din in thine ears, and consider how thou hangest over the mouth of hell itself, by the feeble threed which is spun every moment out of thy nostrils; as soon as that gives way, thou art gone for ever. What shift do you make to quiet your fears, and eat, drink, and labour with any pleasure? It is storied of Dionysius the tyrant, that when Damocles would have flattered him into a conceit of the perfection of his happiness, as he was an absolute sovereign prince, and could do what he pleased with others, as his vassals; Dionysius, to confute his fancy, caused him to be placed at a table richly furnished, and attended with the most curious music, but just over his head hanged a sharp and heavy sword by one single hair; which when Damocles saw, no meat would go down with him, but he earnestly begged for a discharge from that place. This is the lively emblem of the condition, thou unregenerate man.

There are *three* things in thy state, sadly opposed to the former state last described.

1. The state you were born in, was bad.
2. The state you are now in, is worse.
3. The state you shall shortly be in, if you thus continue, will be unspeakably worst of all.

1. The state you were born in, was a sad state; you were born in sin, Psal. li. 5. and under wrath, Eph. ii. 3. The womb of nature cast you forth into this world, defiled and condemned creatures.

2. The state you are in now, is much worse than that you were born in: for what have you been doing ever since you were born, but treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath?

Digitized by Google

Rom. ii. 5. For every sand of time which run out of the glass of God's patience towards you, a drop of wrath hath been running into the vials of his indignation against you. Oh! what a treasure of sin and wrath then, is laid up in so many years as you have lived in sin! Every sin committed, every mercy abused, every call of God neglected, and slighted, adds still more and more to this treasure.

3. It will be much worse shortly than it is now, except preventing, renewing grace step in betwixt you and that wrath, into which you are hastning so fast. It is sad to be under the *sentence* of condemnation, but unspeakably worse to be under *the execution* of that sentence. To be a *Christless* man is lamentable, but to be a *hopeless* man is more lamentable. For though you be now without Christ, yet whilst the breath of life is in your nostrils, you are not absolutely without hope: But when once that breath is gone, all the world cannot save or help you. Your last breath and your last hope expire together. Though you be under God's damning sentence, yet that sentence, through the riches of forbearance, is not executed, but as soon as you die, all that wrath which hanged over your heads, so many years, in the black clouds of God's threatenings, will pour down in a furious storm upon you, which will never break up whilst God is God. Oh! think, and think again, and let your thoughts think close to this sad and solemn subject, there is but a breath betwixt you and hell.

Infer. 4. *Doth God maintain your life by breath? Let not that breath destroy your life, which God gave to preserve it.*

No man can live without breath; and yet some might live longer than they do, if their breath were better employed. "Some men's throats have been cut by their own tongues," as the * Arabian proverb intimates. Life and death (saith Solomon) are in the power of the tongue. Critics observe, that a *word* and a *plague* grow upon the same root in the Hebrew tongue. It is certain, that some mens breath hath been baneful poison, both to themselves and others. It was a word that cut off the life of Adonijah, 1 Kings ii. 23. and thousands, since his day, have died upon the point of the same weapon. It is therefore wholesome advice that is given us, Psal. xxxiv. 12. "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, "that he may see good; keep thy tongue from evil, and thy "lips from speaking guile."

* *Cave, ne feriat lingua tua collum tuum.* Scal. Arab. Prov. Cent. 1.

Digitized by Google

And the more evil the times are, the stricter guard we should keep upon our lips. "It is an evil time, the prudent will keep "silence," Amos v. 13. When wicked men watch to make a man an *offender for a word*, as it is, Isa. xxix. 20, 21. it behoves us to be upon our watch, that we offend not with our lips. It is good to keep, what is not save to trust. David was a deaf and dumb man, when in the company of wicked men, Psal. xxxviii. 13. he thought silence then to be his prudence. It is better they should *call* you fools, than *find* you so.

Infer. 5. *Employ not that breath to the dishonour of God, which was first given, and is still graciously maintained by him for your comfort and good.*

It were better you had never breathed at all, than to spend your breath in profane oaths, or foolish and idle chat, whereby, at once, you wound the name of God, draw guilt upon your own souls, and help on the ruin of others. That is a startling text, Mat. xii. 36. "But I say unto you, that every idle word "that men shall speak, they shall give an acount thereof in the "day of judgment."

To give an account, is here, by a *metalepsis* of the antecedent for the consequent, put for punishment in hell-fire, without an intervening change of heart, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

And there is more evil in this abuse of our breath, than we can easily discern, especially upon two accounts; (1.) Because it is a sin most frequently committed, and seldom repented of. The intercourse betwixt the heart and tongue is quick, and the sense of the evil as easily and quickly passeth away. (2.) Because the poisonous, and malignant influence thereof abides and continues long after: our words may mischief others, not only a long time after they are spoken, but a long time after the tongue that spake them is turned to dust. How many years may a foolish, or filthy word, a prophane scoff, an atheistical expression, stick in the minds of them that heard them, after the speaker's death: A word spoken is *physically* transient, and passed away with the breath that delivered it; but *morally*, it is permanent: For as to its moral efficacy, no more is required, but its objective existence in the minds and thoughts of them that once heard it: And, upon that very ground, Suarez argues for a general judgment, after men have past at death their particular judgment; because (saith he) long after that, abundance of good and evil will be done in this world by the dead, in the persons of others that over-live them. For look, as it was said of Abel, that being dead, he yet speaketh; so it may be said of Julian,

Digitized by Google

Porphyry, and multitudes of scoffing Atheists, that being dead they yet speak. Oh therefore get a sanctified heart to season your breath, that it may minister grace to the hearers.

Infer. 6. *Let your breath promote the spiritual life of others, as well as maintain the natural life in yourselves.*

Though the maintaining of your natural life be one end why God gave you breath, yet it is not the only, or principal end of it. Your breath must be food to others, as well as life to you: Prov. x. 21. "The lips of the righteous feed many." It will be comfortable to resign that breath to God at death, which hath been instrumental to his glory in this life. It was no low encomium Christ gave of the church, when he said, Cant. iv. 11. "Thy lips, oh my spouse, drop as the honey-comb, honey "and milk are under thy tongue." Sweet, wholsome, and pleasant words, drop from her lips. They drop (saith Christ) *as the honey-comb.* Some drops ever and anon fall actually, and others hang, at the same time, prepared and ready to fall. Such a prepared and habitual disposition should every Christian continually have. Your words may stick upon mens hearts to their edification and salvation, when you are in your graves. Your tongues may now sow that precious seed, which may spring up to the praise of God, though you may not live to reap the comfort of it in this world, John iv. 36, 37. 'Tis a rich expence of your breath, to bring but one soul to God, and yet God hath used the breath of one, as his instrument, to save, edify, and comfort the souls of thousands, Prov. xi. 30. "The "fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth "souls is wise." The good Lord make all his people wise in this.

Surely, whether we consider the invaluable worth and preciousness of souls, the benefits you have had from the breath of others yourselves, the innate property of grace, where-ever it is, to diffuse and communicate itself, how short a time you have to breathe, and how comfortable it will be, when you breathe your last, to remember how it hath been employed for God, all this should open your lips, to counsel, reprove, and comfort others, as often as opportunity is ministred.

Did Christ spend his blood for our souls, and shall not we spend our breath for them! Oh! let our lips dispense knowledge. If you will not spend your breath for God, how will you spend your blood for him? If you will not speak for him, I doubt you will not die for him. Away with a sullen reservedness, away with unprofitable chat; all subjects of discourse are not fit for a Christian's lips. 'Tis a grave admonition God once

Digitized by Google

gave his people by the pen of a faithful * minister. "You may "rue (saith he) the opportunities you have lost. Here lay a "poor wretch with one foot in hell, would he not have started "back, if he had had light to discover his danger? Well, you "are now together, something you must say; the same breath "would serve for a compassionate admonition, as for a com- "placent impertinency, which will redound to neither of your "advantages. You part, the man dies, and in the midst of "hell cries out against you, one word of yours might have "saved me; you had me in your reach, you might have told "me my danger; you forbore, I hardened; the Lord reward "your negligence."

Infer. 7. If breath be the tie betwixt soul and body, *How are we concerned to improve, and draw forth the precious breath of ministers and Christians, whilst it is yet in their nostrils?*

The breath of many ministers is judiciously stopt already, their breath serves to little other use than to preserve their own lives; it will be stopt ere long by death, and then those excellent treasures of gifts and graces, wherewith they are richly furnished, will be gone out of your reach, never to be further useful to your souls. You should do by them therefore (as one aptly speaks) as scholars do by some choice book they have borrowed, and must return in a few days to the owner: They diligently read it night and day, and carefully transcribe the most useful and excellent notes they can find in it, that they may make them their own, when the book is called out of their hands.

But alas! we rather divert, than draw forth these excellencies that are in them. You may yet converse with them, and greatly benefit yourselves by these converses; but (as one speaks) by the stream of your impertinent talk that season is neglected: Afterwards you see your lack of your knowledge, but then the instrument is removed. How must it gall an awakened Jew, to think what discourse he had with Jesus Christ! *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar? Why do not thy disciples fast?* Oh! had I nothing else to enquire of the Lord Jesus? Would it not have been more pertinent to have asked, What shall I do to be saved? But he is gone, and I dead in my sins. How many persons have we sent away, that had a word of wisdom in their hearts, having only learnt from them what a clock it is, what weather, or what news; forgetting to ask our own hearts, what is all this to us? and to enquire of them things worthy

* Mr. West.

Digitized by Google

of their wisdom and experience. "Wherefore is there a price "in the hand of a fool, seeing he hath no heart to it?" Prov. xvii. 16. The expence of one minute's breath in season, may, if God concur with it, be to you the ground of breathing forth praises to God to all eternity.

Infer. 8. Are souls and bodies tacked together by so frail a thing as a puff of breath? *How vain and groundless then are all those pleasures men take in their carnal projects and designs in this world?*

We lay the plot and design of our future earthly felicity in our own thoughts; we mould and contrive a design for a long and pleasant life. The model for raising an estate is already formed in our thoughts, and we have not patience to defer our pleasure till the accomplishment of it, but presently draw a train of pleasing consequents from this *chimera*, and our thoughts can stoop to nothing less than sitting down all the remainder of our days in the very lap of delight and pleasure; forgetting that our breath is all the while in our nostrils, and may expire the next moment: and if it do, the structure of all our expectations and projects comes to nothing in the same moment. "His breath "goeth forth, he returneth to his dust: And in that very day "his thoughts perish," Psal. cxlvi. 4. The whole frame of his thoughts falls instantly abroad, by drawing out this one pin, his breath. 'Tis good with all our earthly designs to mingle the serious thoughts of the dominion of providence, and our own frailty; James iv. 15. "If the Lord will, and we live."

'Tis become a common observation, that as soon as men have accomplished their earthly designs, and begin to hug and bless themselves in their own acquisitions, a sudden and unexpected period is put to their lives and pleasures, as you may see Luke xii. 19, 20. Dan. iv. 30.

Oh then drive moderately; you will be at the end of all these things sooner than you imagine. We need not victual a ship to cross the channel, as they do that are bound to the Indies. "What is your life? It is even a vapour, which appear-"eth for a little while, and then vanisheth away," James iv. 14. In one moment the projects of many years are overturned for ever.

Infer. 9. Is it but a puff of breath that holds men in life? *Then build not too much hope and confidence upon any man.*

Build not too high upon so feeble a foundation. "Cease ye "from man (saith the prophet) whose breath is in his nostrils; "for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. ii. 22. There are

Digitized by Google

two things that ſhould deter us from dependance upon any man, *viz.* his falſeneſs and his frailty. Grace in a great meaſure may cure the firſt, but not the laſt. The beſt of men muſt die, as well as the worſt, Rom. viii. 10. 'tis a vanity therefore to rely upon any man. It was the ſaying of a philoſopher when he heard how merchants loſt great eſtates at ſea in a moment, *Non amo felicitatem e funibus pendentem;* I love not that happineſs (ſaith he) which hangs upon a rope. But all the happineſs of many men hangs upon a far weaker thing than a rope, even the periſhing breath of a creature.

Let not parents raiſe their hopes too high, or lean too hard upon their children. Say not of thy child, as Lamech did of Noah, "This ſon ſhall comfort us," Gen. v. 29. The world is full of the lamentings and bitter cries of diſappointed parents. Let not the wife depend too much on her huſband, as if her earthly comforts were ſecured in him againſt all danger. God is often provoked to ſtop our friend's breath, that thereby he may ſtop our way to ſin, 1 Tim. v. 5. The truſt, and dependance of a ſoul, is too weighty to be hang'd upon ſuch a weak, and rotten pin, as the breath of a creature.

Infer. 10. To conclude; if this frail breath be all that differenceth the living from the dead, *then fear not man whoſe breath is in his noſtrils.* There is as little ground for our fear of man, as there is for our truſt in man. As death, in a moment, can make the beſt man uſeleſs, and put him out of a capacity to do us any good; ſo it can in a moment, make the worſt man harmleſs, and put him out of a capacity to do us any injury. Indeed, if the breath of our enemies were in their power, and ours at their mercy, there would be juſt cauſe to tremble at them; but they are neither maſters of their own, or ours. "Who art "thou, that thou ſhouldeſt be afraid of a man, that ſhall die?" ſaid God to Jacob, Iſa. li. 12. The breath of the mightieſt is no better ſecured than of the meaneſt, nor never in more danger to be ſtopt than when they breathe out threatnings againſt the upright.

Julian's breath was ſoon ſtopt after he threatned to root out the Galileans. Queen Mary reſigned her breath, at the very time when ſhe had filled the priſons with many of Chriſt's ſheep, and deſigned them for the ſlaughter. Read Iſa. xvii. 12. and ſee what muſhrooms we are afraid of. The beſt way to continue your relations, and friends, to your comfort, is to give God and not them, your dependance; and the beſt way to ſecure yourſelves againſt the rage of enemies, is to give God your fear,

Digitized by Google

and not them. And thus much of the nature of the soul, and its tie with the body.

REVEL. vi. 9, 10, 11.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

HAVING, from the former text, spoken of the nature of the soul, and the tie betwixt it and the body; I shall, from this scripture, evince the *immortality of the soul*, which is a chief part of its excellency and glory; and in this scripture it hath a firm foundation.

This book of the *Revelation* completes and seals up the whole sacred canon, Rev. xxii. 18. It also comprehends all the great and signal events of providence, relating either to the Christian church, or to its antichristian enemies in the several periods of time, to the end of the world; chap. i. 19. All which the Spirit of God discovers to us in the opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of the seven vials.

The first *five seals* express the state of the church under the bloody, persecuting, Heathen emperors.

SEAL I.

The first seal opened, ver. 2. gives the church a very encouraging and comfortable prospect of the victories, successes, and triumphs of Christ, notwithstanding the rage, subtlety and power of all its enemies. He shall ride on conquering, and to conquer, and his arrows shall be sharp in the hearts of his enemies, whereby the people shall fall under him. And this chearing prospect was no more than was needful: For,

SEAL II.

The second seal opened, ver. 3, 4. represents the first bloody persecution of the church under Nero, whom Tertullian calls

Digitized by Google

* *Dedicator damnationis nostrae:* he that first condemned Christians to the slaughter. And the persecution under him is set forth by the type of a *red horse*, and a great sword in the hand of him that rode thereon. His cruelty is by Paul compared to the *mouth of a lion*, 2 Tim. iv. 17. Paul, Peter, Bartholomew, Barnabas, Mark, are all said to die by his cruel hand; and so fierce was his rage against the Christians, that at that time, as † Eusebius saith, "a man might see cities lie full of dead bodies, the old and young, men and women, cast out naked, "without any reverence of persons or sex, in the open street." And when the day failed, Christians, (saith ‡ Tacitus) were burnt in the night, instead of torches, to give them light in the streets.

SEAL III.

The third seal opened, ver. 5, 6. sets forth the calamities which should befal the church by famine; yet not so much a literal, as a figurative famine, as a grave and learned commentator ‖ expounds it, like that mentioned, Amos viii. 11, 12. which fell out under Maximus and Trajan; the former directing the persecution, especially against ministers, in which many bright lamps were extinguished; the latter expressly condemned all Christian meetings and assemblies by a law. The type by which this persecution was set forth, is a *black horse*. A gloomy and dismal day it was indeed to the poor saints, when they eat the bread of their souls, as it were, by weight; for he that sat on him had a pair of ballances in his hand. Then did John hear this sad voice, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three "measures of barley for a penny." The quantity was but the ordinary allowance to keep a man alive for a day, and a Roman penny was the ordinary wages given for a day's work to a labourer. The meaning is, that, in those days, all the spiritual food men should get to keep their souls alive from day to day, with all their travel and labour, should be but sufficient for that end.

SEAL IV.

The fourth seal opened, ver. 7, 8. represents a much more sad and doleful state of the church; for under it are found all the former sufferings, with some new kinds of trouble superadded. Under this seal, Death rides upon the *pale horse*, and

* Tertul. Apol. c. 5.

† *Adeo ut videret repletas humanis corporibus civitates, jacentes mortuos, simul cum parvulis senes, fœminarumque absque ulla sexus reverentia, in publico rejecta cadavera.*

‡ Taciti l. xv. Annal. ‖ Durham on the place.

Digitized by Google

Hell, or the Grave, follows him. It is conceived to point at the persecution under Diocletian, when the church was mowed down as a meadow.

Seal V.

The fifth seal is opened in my text, under which the Lord Jesus represents to his servant John, the state and condition of those precious souls which had been torn and separated from their bodies, by the bloody hands of tyrants, for his name's sake, under all the former persecutions. The design whereof is, to support and encourage all that were to come after in the same bloody path. *I saw under the altar*, &c. In which we have an account,

1. Of what John saw.
2. Of what he heard.

1. We have an account of what he saw: "I saw the souls of "them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testi-"mony which they held."

Souls, in this place, are not put for the blood, or the dead carcasses of the saints who were slain, as some have groundlessly imagined; but are to be understood properly and strictly, for those * spiritual and immortal substances, which once had a vital union with their bodies, but were now separated from them by a violent death; yet still retained a love and inclination to them, even in the state of separation; and are therefore here brought in complaining of the shedding of their blood, and destruction of their bodies.

These souls (even of all that died for Christ, from Abel to that time) John saw, that is, † *in spirit*; for these immaterial substances are not perceptible by the gross external senses. He had the privilege and favour of a spiritual representation of them, being therein extraordinarily assisted, as Paul was when his soul was wrapt into the third heaven, and heard things unutterable, 2 Cor. xii. 2. God gave him a transient visible representation of those holy souls, and that *under the altar*: he means not any material *altar*, as that at *Jerusalem* was; but as the holy place figured heaven, so the *altar* figured Jesus Christ, Heb. xiii. 10. And most aptly Christ is represented to John in this figure, and

* Εἶδον τας ψυχας. i. e. *I saw the souls*; here the word *soul* is taken for the immortal spirit of man, as in Matth. x. 28. in which sense John here says, that he saw the souls, &c. *Marlorat on the place.*

† Souls divested of bodies are invisible to corporeal eyes; therefore John saw them in the Spirit. *Pareus on the place.*

Digitized by Google

souls of the martyrs at the foot or basis of this altar; thereby to inform us,

(1.) That however men look upon the death of those persons, and though they kill their names by slanders, as well as their persons by the sword; yet, in God's account, they die as sacrifices, and their blood is no other than a drink-offering poured out to God, which he highly prizeth, and graciously accepteth. Suitable whereunto Paul's expression is, Phil. ii. 17.

(2.) That the value and acceptation their death and bloodshed hath with God, is through Christ, and upon his account; for it is the altar which sanctifieth the gift, Mat. xxiii. 19 And,

(3.) It informs us, that these holy souls, now in a state of separation from their bodies, were very near to Jesus Christ in heaven. They lay, as it were, at his foot.

Once more, they are here described to us by the cause of their sufferings and death in this world; and that was, "for the word "of God, and for the testimony which they held;" *i. e.* They died in defence of the truths, or will of God revealed in his word, against the corruptions, oppositions, and innovations of men. As one of the martyrs, that held up the Bible at the stake, said, This is it that hath brought me hither. They died not as malefactors, but as witnesses. They gave a threefold testimony to the truth; a lip-testimony, a life-testimony, and a blood-testimony; whilst the hypocrite gives but one, and many Christians but two. Thus we have an account of what John saw.

2. Next he tells us what he heard; and that was,

(1.) A vehement cry from those souls to God.

(2.) A gracious answer from God to them.

(1.) The cry which they uttered with a loud voice was this, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our "blood on them that dwell on the earth?" A cry like that from the blood of Abel. Yet let it be remembred,

1. This cry doth not imply these holy souls to be in a restless state, or to want true satisfaction and repose out of the body; nor yet,

2. That they carried with them to heaven any malevolent or revengeful disposition: that which is principally signified by this cry, is their vehement desire after the abolition of the kingdom of Satan, and the completion and consummation of Christ's kingdom in this world; that those his enemies, which oppose his kingdom, by slaying his saints, may be made his footstool: which is the same thing Christ waits for in glory, Heb. x. 13.

(2.) Here we find God's gracious answer to the cry of these souls, in which he speaks satisfaction to them two ways:

Digitized by Google

1. By somewhat given them for present.

2. By somewhat promised them hereafter.

1. That which he gives them in hand; "White robes were "given to every one of them." It is generally agreed, that these white robes given them, denote heavenly glory, the same which is promised to all sincere and faithful ones, who preserve themselves pure from the corruptions, and defilements of the world, Rev iii. 4. And it is as much as if God should have said to them, Although the time be not come to satisfy your desires, in the final ruin and overthrow of Satan's tyrannical kingdom in the world, and Christ's consummate conquest of all his enemies, yet it shall be well with you in the mean time; you shall *walk with me in white, and enjoy your glory in heaven.*

2. And this is not all; but the very things they cry for shall be given them also after a little season; *q. d.* wait but a little while, till the rest that are to follow, in the same suffering path, be got through the red sea of martyrdom, as you are, and then you shall see the foot of Christ upon the necks of all his enemies, and justice shall fully avenge the precious, innocent blood of all the saints, which in all ages hath been shed for my sake; from the blood of Abel, to the last that shall ever suffer for righteousness sake in the world. From all which, this conclusion is most fair and obvious;

Doct. *That the souls of men perish not with their bodies, but do certainly over-live them, and subsist in a state of separation from them.* Mat. x. 28. "Fear not them that kill the "body, but are not able to kill the soul."

The bodies of these martyrs of Jesus were destroyed by divers sorts of torments, but their souls were out of the reach of all those cruel engines; they were in safety under the altar, and in glory, cloathed with their white robes, when their bodies, they lately inhabited on earth, were turned to ashes, and torn to pieces by wild beasts.

The point I am to discourse from this scripture, is the immortality of the soul. For the better understanding whereof, let it be noted that there is a twofold immortality.

I. Simple, and absolute in its own nature.

II. Derived, dependent, and from the pleasure of God.

In the former sense, God only hath immortality, as the apostle speaks, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Our souls have it as a gift from him. He that created our souls out of nothing, can, if he please, reduce them to nothing again; but he hath bestowed immortality upon them, and produced them in a nature suitable to that his appointment, fitted for an everlasting life. So that though

Digitized by Google

God by his absolute power can, yet he never will annihilate them, but they shall, and must live for ever in endless blessedness or misery; death must destroy these mortal bodies, but it cannot destroy our souls. And the certainty of this assertion is grounded upon these reasons, and will be cleared by these following arguments.

Arg. 1. The first argument for proof of the soul's immortality, may be taken from the simplicity, spirituality, and uncompoundedness of its nature; it is a pure, simple, unmixed being. * Death is the dissolution of things compounded; where therefore no composition or mixture is found, no death or dissolution can follow.

Death is the great divider, but it is of things that are divisible. The more simple, pure, and refined any material thing is, by so much the more permanent and durable it is found to be. The nearer it approacheth to the nature of spirits, the farther it is removed from the power of death: but that which is not material, or mixed at all, is wholly exempt from the stroke and power of death. It is from the contrariant qualities, and jarring humours, in mixed bodies, that they come under the law and power of dissolution. Matter, and mixture, are the doors at which death enters naturally upon the creatures.

But the soul of man is a simple, spiritual, immaterial, and unmixed being, not compounded of matter and form, as other creatures are, but void of matter, and altogether spiritual; as may appear in the vast capacity of its understanding faculty, which cannot be straitned by receiving multitudes of truths into it. It need not empty itself of what it had received before, to make way for more truth; nor doth it find itself clogged or burdened by the greatest multitudes or varieties of truths; but the more it knows, the more it still desires to know. Its capacity and appetite are found to enlarge themselves, according to the increase of knowledge. So that, to speak, as the matter is, If the knowledge of all arts, sciences, and mysteries of nature, could be gathered into the mind of one man, yet that mind would thirst, and even burn with desire after more knowledge, and find more room for it than it did when it first sipt, and relished the sweetness of truth. Knowledge, as knowledge, never burdens or cloys the mind; but like fire increases and enlarges, as it finds more matter to work upon. Now this could never be, if the soul were a material being. Take the

* Death is a separation, dissolving, or tearing asunder of parts that had been joined by some union. *Tullius.*

Digitized by Google

largest vessel, and you shall find that the more you pour into it, the less room is still left for more; and when it is full, you cannot pour in one drop more, except you let out what was in it before *. But the soul is no such vessel, it can retain all it had, and be still receptive of more; so that nothing can fill it, and satisfy it, but that which is infinite and perfect.

The natural appetite after food is sometimes sharp and eager, but then there is a stint and measure, beyond which it craves not; but the appetite of the mind is more eager and unlimited; it never saith till it come to rest in God, it is enough †, because the faculty which produceth it, is more active, spiritual, and immaterial. All matter has its limits, bounds, and just measures, beyond which it cannot be extended. But the soul is boundless, and its appetitions infinite; it rests not, but in the spiritual and infinite Being, God alone being its adequated object, and able to satisfy its desires; which plainly proves it to be a spiritual, immaterial, and simple being. And being so, two things necessarily follow therefrom.

1. That it is void of any principle of corruption in itself.

2. That it is not liable to any stroke of death, by any adverse power without itself.

1. It cannot be liable to death, from any seeds or principles of corruption within itself; for where there is no composition, there is no dissolution: the spirituality, and simplicity of the soul admits of no corruption.

2. Nor is it liable to death, by any adverse power without itself; no sword can touch it, no instrument of death can reach it: it is above the reach of all adversaries, Matth. x. 28. "Fear not "them that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul." The bounds and limits of creature-power are here fixed by Jesus Christ, beyond which they cannot go. They can wound, torment, and destroy the body, when God permits them: but the soul is out of their reach: a sword can no more hurt or wound it, than it can wound or hurt the light; and consequently it is, and must needs be of an immortal nature.

Object. But there seems to be a decay upon our souls in our old age, and decays argue and imply corruption, and are so many steps and tendencies towards the death and dissolution there-

* *Intus existens prohibet alienum.* i. e. What is already within, refuses access to what is without.

† *Appetitus finis est infinitus.* There is no end of desiring, till we come at the desired end, which is God.

Digitized by Google

of. The experience of the whole world shews us how the apprehensions, judgments, wit, and memory of old men fail, even to that degree, that they become children again, in respect of the abilities of their minds: their souls only serving, as it were, to salt their bodies, and keep them from putrefaction for a few longer.

Sol. It is a great mistake, there is not the least decay upon the soul, no time makes any change upon the essence of the soul: all the alteration that is made, is upon the organs and instruments of the body, which decay in time, and become inapt and unserviceable to the soul.

The soul, like an expert skilful musician, is as able as ever it was, but the body, its instrument, is out of tune: and the ablest artist can make no pleasing melody upon an instrument whose strings are broken, or so relaxed that they cannot be screwed up to their due height.

Let Hippocrates, the prince of physicians, decide this matter for us. "The soul (saith he) cannot be changed or altered as "to its essence, by the access of meat or drink, or any other "thing whatsoever; but all the alterations that are made, must "be referred either to the spirits with which it mixeth itself, "or to the vessels and organs through which it streameth ‡." So that this proves not its corruptibility, and being neither corruptible in itself nor vulnerable by any creature without itself; nor seeing man cannot, and God will not destroy it, the conclusion is strongly inferred, *That therefore it is immortal.*

ARGUMENT II.

The immortality of the souls of men may be concluded from the promises of everlasting blessedness, and the threatnings of everlasting miseries, respectively made in the scriptures of truth, to the godly and ungodly, after this life; which promises and threatnings had been altogether vain and delusory, if our souls perish with our bodies.

1. God has made many everlasting promises of blessedness, yea, he hath established an everlasting covenant betwixt himself and the souls of the righteous, promising to be their God for ever, and to bestow endless blessedness upon them in the world to come. Such a promise is that, John viii. 28. "I give unto

‡ *Anima nostra quoad essentiam mutari non potest, aut alterari, sive cibi, sive potus, sive cujuscunque rei alterius accessu: referenda est enim omnium alterationum causa, aut ad Spiritus, quibus se immiscet, aut ad vasa, sive organa quæ permeat.* Hippocrat. lib. de diæta.

Digitized by Google

"them eternal life, and they shall never perish." And John iv. 14. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, "shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall "be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." And again, John xi. 26. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in "me, shall never die." And once more, Rom. ii. 7. "To "them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory "and honour, and immortality, eternal life;" with multitudes more of like nature.

Now if these be no vain and delusory promises, (as to be sure they are not, being the words of the true and faithful God) then those souls to whom they are made, must live for ever: for if the subject of the promises fail, consequently the performance of the promises must fail too. For how shall they be made good, when those to whom they are made, are perished?

Let it not be objected here, That the bodies of believers are concerned in the promises as well as their souls, and yet their bodies perish notwithstanding.

For we say, though their bodies die, yet they shall live again, and enjoy the fruit of the promises in eternal glory; and whilst their bodies lie in the grave, their souls are with God, enjoying the covenanted blessedness in heaven, Rom. viii. 10, 11. and so the covenant-bond is not loosed betwixt them and God, by death, which it must needs be, in case the soul perish when the body doth. And upon this hypothesis, that argument of Christ is built, Matth. xxii. 32. proving the resurrection from the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; "I am the "God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Ja-"cob: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," *q. d.* If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, be perished in soul as well as in body, how then is God their God; what is become of the promise and covenant-relation? for if one correlate fail, the relation necessarily fails with it. If God be their God, then certainly they are in being; "for God is not the God of the dead," *i. e.* of those that are utterly perished. Therefore it must needs be, that though their bodies be naturally dead, yet their souls still live; and their bodies must live again at the resurrection by virtue of the same promise.

On the contrary, many threatnings of eternal misery, after this life, are found in the scriptures of truth, against ungodly and wicked persons. Such is that in 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. "The "Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to "render vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey

Digitized by Google

" not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished " with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, " and the glory of his power." And speaking of the torments of the damned, Christ thus expresseth the misery of such wretched souls in hell, Mark ix. 44. " Where their worm dieth not, and " the fire is not quenched." But how shall the wicked be punished with everlasting destruction, if their souls have not an everlasting duration? or how can it be said, *Their worm (viz.* the remorse and anguish of their conscience) *dieth not*, if their souls die? Punishment can endure no longer than its subject endureth. If the being of the soul cease, its pains and punishments must have an end.

You see then, there are everlasting promises, and threatenings to be fulfilled, both upon the godly and ungodly, " He that " believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life, and he that believ- " eth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abid- " eth on him," John iii. 36. The believer shall never see spiritual death, *viz.* the separation of his soul from God; and the unbeliever shall never see life, *viz.* the blessed fruition of God; but the wrath of God shall abide on him. If wrath must abide on him, he must abide also as the wretched subject thereof, which is another argument of the immortality of souls.

ARGUMENT III.

The immortality of the soul is a truth asserted and attested by the universal consent of all nations and ages of the world. " We give much (said ‖ Seneca) to the presumption of all men," and that justly; for it would be hard to think that an error should obtain the general consent of mankind, or that God would suffer all the world, in all ages of it, to bow down under an universal deception.

This doctrine sticks close to the nature of man; it springs up easily, and without force from his conscience. It hath been allowed as an unquestionable thing, not only among Christians, who have the oracles of God to teach and confirm this doctrine, but among Heathens also, who had no other light, but that of nature, to guide them into the knowledge and belief of it. Learned Zanchius * cites out of Cicero an excellent passage to

‖ *Multum dare solemus præsumptioni omnium hominum: cum de animæ æternitate disserimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.* Senec. Ep. 17.

* *In omni re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est: eoque instar millæ demonstrationum calis consensio apud bonos esse debet.* Zanchius de immortalitate animarum, p. 644.

Digitized by Google

this purpose. " *In every thing*, saith he, *the consent of all na-* " *tions is to be accounted the law of nature;* and therefore, " with all good men, it should be instead of a thousand demon- " strations; and to resist it, (as he there adds), what is it, but " to resist the voice of God?" and how much more, when, with his consent, the word of God doth also consent? As for the consent of nations, in this point, the learned author last mentioned, hath industriously gathered many great and famous testimonies from the ancient Chaldeans, Grecians, Pythagoreans, Stoics, Platonists, &c. which evidently shew they made no doubt of the immortality of their souls. How plain is that of Phocylides? ψυχη δε αθανατος και αγηρως ζη δια παντος. Speaking of the soul, in opposition to the body, which must be resolved into dust, he saith, " But for the soul, that is immortal, and " never grows old, but lives for ever." And Trismegistus, the famous and celebrated philosopher †, gives this account of man, " That he consists of two parts, being mortal in respect of his " body, but immortal in respect of his soul, which is his best " and principal part." Plato ‡ not only asserts the immortality of the souls of men, but disputes for it; and, among other arguments, he urges this: " That if it were not so, " wicked men would certainly have the advantage of righteous " and good men, who, after they have committed all manner " of evils, should suffer none." But what speak I of philosophers? the most barbarous nations in the world constantly believe it ‖. The Turks acknowledge it in their Alcoran; and though they grosly mistake the nature of heaven, in fancying it to be a paradise of sensual pleasures, as well as the way thither, by their impostor Mahomet; yet it is plain they believe the soul's immortality, and that it lives in pain or pleasure after this life.

The very savage and illiterate Indians are so fully perswaded of the soul's immortality, that wives cast themselves chearfully

† Ανθρωπος διπλους, δια το σωμα θνητος, αθανατος δ δια ψυχην, των γενικων ανθρωπων.

‡ Ει μεν γαρ, &c. *Si enim mors dissolutio esset utriusque (corporis sc. et animæ) lucrum foret malis cum moriuntur.* Plato in Epist.

‖ Why do I speak of the Turks, Tartars, Muscovites, Indians, Persians, and all other nations which are at this day barbarous? None is so barbarous and wicked, but he is convinced, that, after death, there are places in which souls are either punished for their bad actions, or rewarded and blest with delights for their good actions. *Zanch.*

Digitized by Google

into the flames to attend the souls of their husbands; and subjects, to attend the souls of their kings into the other world.

Two things are objected against this argument.

1. That some particular persons have denied this doctrine, as Epicurus, &c. and by argument maintained the contrary.

To which I answer, That though they have done so, yet, (1.) This no way shakes the argument from the consent of nations, because some few persons have denied it: we truly say, the earth is spherical, though there be many hills and risings in it. If Democritus put out his own eyes, must we therefore say all the world is blind?

(2.) It is worth thinking on, whether they that have questioned the immortality of the soul, have not rather made it the matter of their option and desire, than of their faith and persuasion. We distinguish Atheists into three classes, such as are so in *practice*, in *desire*, or in *judgment*; but of the former sorts there may be found multitudes, to one that is so in his settled judgment. If you think it strange that any man should wish his soul to be mortal, Hierocles * gives us the true reason of it: "A wicked man (saith he) is afraid of his Judge; and therefore wishes his soul and body may perish together by death, rather than that it should come to God's tribunal."

Object. 2. Nor can the strength of the argument be eluded by saying, "All this may be but an universal tradition," one nation receiving it from another.

Sol. For as this is neither true in itself, nor possible to be made good, so if it were, it would not invalidate the argument: for if it were not a truth agreeable to the light of nature, and so easily received by all men upon the proposal of it, it were impossible that all the nations in the world should embrace it so readily, and hold it so tenaciously as they do.

Argument IV.

The immortality of the soul may be evinced from the everlasting habits which are subjected, and inherent in it. If these habits abide for ever, certainly so must the souls in which they are planted.

The souls of good men are the good ground, in which the seed of grace is sown by the Spirit, Mat. xiii. 23. *i. e.* the subjects in which gracious properties and affections do inhere and dwell, (which is the formal notion of a substance) and these implanted graces are everlasting things. So John iv. 14. "It shall

* Ο κακος αθανατον ειναι την αυτε ψυχην θελει, μη υπομενων τιμωρηθηναι και φθαρτον εκει διαγειν. *Hieroc.*

Digitized by Google

" be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life," *i. e.* the graces of the Spirit shall be in believers, permanent habits, fixed principles, which shall never decay. And therefore that seed of grace, which is cast into their souls at their regeneration, is in 1 Pet. i. 23. called " incorruptible seed, which liv- " eth and abideth for ever :" and it is incorruptible, not only considered abstractly, in its own simple nature, but concretely, as it is in the sanctified soul, its subject: for it is said, 1 John iii. 9. " The seed of God remaineth in him." It abideth for ever in the soul. If then these two things be clear to us, *viz.*

1. That the habits of grace be everlasting;
2. That they are inseparable from sanctified souls;

It must needs follow, That the soul, their subject, is so too, an everlasting and immortal soul. And how plainly do both these propositions lie before us in the scriptures? As for the immortal and indeterminable nature of saving grace, it is plain to him that considers, not only what the fore-cited scriptures speak about it, calling it *incorruptible seed, a well of water springing up into everlasting life;* but add to these, what is said of these divine qualities, in 2 Pet. i. 4. where they are called the *divine nature;* and Eph. iv. 18. *the life of God,* noting the perpetuity of these principles in believers, as well as their resemblance of God in holiness, who are endowed with them.

I know it is a great question among divines, *An gratia in renatis sit natura et essentia sua interminabilis?* Whether these principles of grace in the regenerate, be everlasting and interminable, in their own nature and essence? For my own part, I think that God only is naturally, essentially, and absolutely interminable and immortal. But these gracious habits, planted by him in the soul, are so by virtue of God's appointment, promise, and covenant. And sure it is, that by reason hereof they are interminate, which is enough for my purpose, if they be not essentially interminable. Though grace be but a creature, and therefore hath a *posse mori,* yet it is a creature begotten by the Word, and Spirit of God, which live and abide for ever, and a creature within the promise and covenant of God, by reason whereof it can never actually die.

And then as for the inseparableness of these graces from the souls in whom they are planted, how clear is this from John ii. 27. where sanctifying grace is compared to an unction, and this unction is said to abide in them? And 1 John iii. 9. it is called the seed of God, which remaineth in the soul. All our natural and moral excellencies and endowments go away when we die; Job iv. 21. " Doth not their excellency that is in them

Digitized by Google

"go away?" Men may outlive their acquired gifts, but not their supernatural graces. These stick by the soul, as Ruth to Naomi, and where it goes they go too: so that when the soul is dislodged by death, all its graces ascend up with it into glory; it carries away all its faith, love, delight in God, all its comfortable experiences, and fruits of communion with God, along with it to heaven. For death is so far from divesting the soul of its graces, that it perfects in a moment all that was defective in them; 1 Cor. xiii. 10. "When that which is perfect shall "come, then that which is in part shall be done away," as the twilight is done away when the sun is up, and at its zenith. So then, grace never dieth, and this never-dying grace is inseparable from its subject; by which it is plain to him that considers, that as graces, so souls abide for ever.

Object. But this only proves the immortality of regenerate souls.

Sol. It doth so. But then consider, as there be gracious habits in the regenerate that never die, so there are vicious habits in the unregenerate that can never be separated from them in the world to come. Hence John viii. 24. they are said to "die "in their sins;" and Job xx. 11. "Their iniquities lie down "with them in the dust;" and Ezek. xxiv. 13. "They shall "never be purged." Remarkable is that place, Rev. xxii. 11. "Let him that is filthy, be filthy still." And if guilt sticks so fast, and sin be so deeply engraven in impenitent souls, they also must remain for ever, to bear the punishment of them.

Argument V.

The immortality of the soul of man may be evinced from the dignity of man above all other creatures, (angels only excepted) and his dominion over them all.

In this, the scriptures are clear, that man is the master-piece of all God's other works; Psal. viii. 5, 6. "For thou hast made "him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with "glory and honour. Thou hast made him to have dominion "over the works of thy hand, thou hast put all things under "his feet." Other creatures were made for his service, and he is crowned king over them all. One man is of more worth than all the inferior creatures.

But wherein is his dignity and excellency above all other creatures, if not in respect of the capacity and immortality of his soul? Sure it can be found no where else; for as to the body, many of the creatures excel man in the perfections of sense, greatness of strength, agility of members, *&c.*

Nos aper auditu praecellit, aranea tactu,
Vultur odoratu, lynx visu, simia gustu.

Digitized by Google

And for beauty, *Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies of the field.* The beasts and fowls enjoy more pleasure, and live divested of all those cares and cumbers which perplex and wear out the lives of men. It cannot be, in respect of bodily perfections or pleasures, that man excels other creatures.

If you say, He excels them all in respect of that noble endowment of reason, which is peculiar to man, and his singular excellency above them all.

It is true, this is his glory: but if you deprive the reasonable soul of immortality, you despoil it of all, both of its glory and comfort, and put the reasonable into a worse condition than the unreasonable and brutish creatures. For if the soul may die with the body, and man perish as the beast, happier is the life of the beast, which is perplexed with no cares nor fears about futurities; our reason serves to little other purpose but to be an engine of torture, a mere rack to our souls.

Certainly, the privilege of man doth not consist in reason, as abstracted from immortality. But in this it properly consists, that he enjoys not only a reasonable, but also rejoiceth in an immortal soul, which shall overlive the world, and subsist separate from the body, and abide for ever, when all other souls, being but a material form, perish with that matter on which they depend. This is the proper dignity of man, above the beast that perisheth; and to deprive him of immortality, and leave him his reason, is but to leave him a more miserable and wretched creature than any that God hath put under his feet. For man is a prospecting creature, and raiseth up to himself vast hopes and fears from the world to come: by these he is restrained from the sensual pleasures, which other creatures freely enjoy, and exercised with ten thousand cares, which they are unacquainted with; and to fail at last of all his hopes and expectations of happiness, in the world to come, is to fall many degrees lower than the lowest creature shall fall; even so much lower as his expectations and hopes had lifted him higher.

Argument VI.

The souls of men must be immortal, or else the desires of immortality are planted in their souls in vain.

That there are desires of immortality found in the hearts of all men, is a truth too evident to be denied or doubted *. Man

* I beseech men, for God's sake, that if at any time there arise in them a desire, or a wish that others should speak well of them rather

Digitized by Google

cannot bound and terminate his desires within the narrow limits of this world, and the time that measures it. Nothing that can be measured by time is commensurate to the desires of man's soul. No motto better suits it than this, *Non est mortale quod opto;* I seek for that which will not die, Rom. ii. 7. And his great relief against death lies in this, *Non omnis moriar*; That he shall not totally perish. Yea, we find in all men, even in those that seem to be most drowned, and lost in the love and delights of this present world, a natural desire to continue their names and memories to posterity after death. Hence it is said, Psal. xlix. 11. "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall "continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; "they call their lands after their own names."

And hence is the desire of children, which is, as one saith, *nodosa aeternitas*, a knotty eternity; when our threed is spun out and cut off, their threed is knit to it; and so we dream of a continued succession in our name and family.

Absalom had no children to continue his memory; to supply which defect, he reared up a pillar, 2 Sam. xviii. 18. Now it cannot be imagined that God should plant the desire of immortality in those souls, that are incapable of it; not yet can we give a rational account how these apprehensions of immortality should come into the souls of men, except they themselves be of an immortal nature. For, either these notions and apprehensions of immortality are impressed upon our souls by God, or do naturally spring out of the souls of men: If God impress them, those impressions are made in vain, if there be no such thing as immortality to be enjoyed; and if they spring and rise naturally out of our souls, that is a sufficient evidence of their immortality. For we can no more conceive, and form to ourselves, ideas and notions of immortality, if our souls be mortal, than the brutes which are void of reason, can form to themselves notions and conceptions of rationality. So then the very apprehensions and desires that are found in mens hearts of immortality, do plainly speak them to be of an immortal nature *.

than evil after their death, then at that time they would seriously consider whether these motions are not from some spirit, to continue a spirit after it leaves its earthly habitation, rather than from an earthly spirit, a vapour, which cannot act, or imagine, or desire, or fear things beyond its continuance. *Hale de anima, p.* 72.

* It forms conceptions of things spiritual and abstract from matter, and discerns objects which have no dimensions, figure, colour, or affection of matter. If the soul itself is the fountain or idea of of

Digitized by Google

ARGUMENT VII.

Moreover, the account given us in scripture of the return of several souls into their own bodies again after death, and real separation from them, shews us that the soul subsists, and lives in a separate state after death, and perisheth not by the stroke of death: For if it were annihilated or destroyed by death, the same soul could never be restored again to the same body. A dead body may indeed be acted by an assisting form, which may move and carry it from place to place: So the devil hath acted the dead bodies of many; but they cannot be said to live again by their own souls, after a real separation by death, unless those souls overlived the bodies they forsook at death, and had their abode in another place and state. You have divers unquestionable examples of the souls return into the body, recorded in scripture: As that of the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings iv. 18, 19, 20, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. That of the ruler's daughter, Mat. ix. 18, 23, 24, 25. That of the widows son, Luke vii. 12, 13, 14, 15. And that of Lazarus, John xi. 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45. "These are no other † but the "very same souls, their own souls which returned to them a-"gain; which, as Chrysostom well observes, is a great proof "of their immortality, against them that think the soul is anni-"hilated after the death of the body."

It is true, the scripture gives us no account of any sense, or apprehension they retained after their re-union of the place or state they were in, during their separation. There seemed to be a perfect ἀμνησία, forgetfulness of all that they saw or felt in the state of separation. And indeed it was necessary it should be so, that our faith might be built rather upon the sure promises of God, than such reports and narratives of them that came to us from the dead, Luke xvi. 31. And if we believe not the word, neither would we believe *if one came from the dead.*

ARGUMENT VIII.

Moreover, *Eighthly*, The supposition of the soul's perishing with the body, is subversive of the Christian religion in the principal doctrines and duties thereof: take away the immortality of

immortality, it must be immortal; because what is momentary, cannot form an idea of an immortal nature, for the soul which is void of reason cannot form a conception of rationality. *Stern on death, p.* 198.

† *Non aliam, sed ipsam priorem animam corpori mortuo restitutam esse, contra eos qui putaverunt et hodie putant animam post mortem corporis nihil esse.*

Digitized by Google

the soul, and all religion falls to the ground. I will instance in,

1. The doctrines
2. The duties

} of religion.

First, It overthrows the main principles and doctrines of the Christian religion, upon which both our faith and comfort is founded; and consequently, it undoes, and ruins us, as to all solid hope and true joy. The doctrines or principles it overthrows, are, among many other, such as follow.

1. It nullifies and makes void the great design and end of God's eternal election. The scriptures tells us, That from all eternity God hath chosen a certain number in Christ Jesus, to eternal life, and to the means by which they shall attain it, out of his mere good pleasure, and for the praise of his grace. This was (1.) an eternal act of God, Eph. i. 4. long before we had our being, Rom. ix. 11. (2.) This choice of God, or his purpose to save some, is immutable, 2 Tim. ii. 19. James i. 17. (3.) This choice he made in Christ, Eph. i. 4. Not that Christ is the cause of God's chusing us: For we were not elected because we were, but that we might be in Christ. Christ was ordained to be the *Medium* of the execution of this decree. And all the mercies which were purposed, and ordained for us, were to be purchased by the blood of Christ. He was not the *cause* of the decree, but the purchaser of the mercies decreed for us. (4.) This choice was of a certain number of persons, who are all known to God, 2 Tim. ii. 19. and all given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, John xvii. 2, 6. So that no elect person can be a reprobate, no reprobate an elect person. (5.) This number was chosen to salvation, 1 Thes. v. 9. No less did God design for them than glory and happiness, and that for ever. (6.) The same persons that are appointed to salvation as the end, are also appointed to sanctification as the way and means by which they shall attain that end, 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14. (7.) The impulsive cause of this choice was the mere good pleasure of his will, 2 Tim. i. 9. Rom. ix. 15, 16. Eph. i. 9. (8.) The end of all this is, the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i. 5, 6. to make a glorious manifestation of the riches of his grace for ever. This is the account the scripture gives us of God's eternal choice.

But if our souls be mortal, and perish with our bodies, all this is a mistake, and we are imposed upon, and our understandings are abused by this doctrine: For to what purpose are all these decrees and contrivances of God from everlasting, if our souls perish with our bodies? Certainly, if it be so, he loses all the

Digitized by Google

thoughts and counsels of his heart about us; and that counsel of his will, which is so much celebrated in the scriptures, and admired by his people, comes to nought. For this is evident to every man's consideration, that if the soul (which is the object about which all those counsels and thoughts of God were employed and laid out) fail in its being, all those thoughts and counsels that have been employed about it, and spent on it, must necessarily fail and come to nothing with it. The thoughts of his heart cannot stand fast, as it is said, Psal. xxxiii. 11. if the soul slide, about which they are conversant. In that day the elect soul perisheth, the eternal consultations and purposes of God's heart perish with it. Keckerman tells us, that "* Albertus Magnus, with abundance of art, and the study of thirty "years, made a vocal statue in the form of a man. It was a rare "contrivance, and much admired; the cunning Artist had so "framed it, that by wheels and other *machines* placed within it, "it could pronounce words articularly." Aquinas being surprized to hear the statue speak, was affrighted at it, and brake it all to pieces; upon which Albertus told him he had at one blow destroyed the work of thirty years. Such a blow would the death of the soul give to the counsels and thoughts, not of man, but of God, not of thirty years, but from everlasting.

If the souls of men perish at death, either God never did appoint any souls to salvation, as the scriptures testify he did, 1 Thes. v. 9. or else the foundation of God stands not sure, as his word tells us it doth, 2 Tim. ii. 19. So then this supposition overturns the eternal decrees and counsels of God, which is the first thing.

2. It overthrows the covenant of redemption betwixt the Father and the Son, before this world was made. There was a federal transaction betwixt the Father and the Son from eternity, about our salvation, 2 Tim. i. 9. Zech. vi. 13. In that covenant Christ engaged to redeem the elect by his blood; and the Father promised him a reward of those his sufferings, Isa. liii. 12. Accordingly he hath poured out his soul to death for them, finished the work, John xvii. 4. and is now in heaven, expecting the full reward and fruits of his sufferings, which consist not in his own personal glory, which he there enjoys, but in the completeness and fulness of his mystical body, John xvii. 24.

* *Albertus Magnus statuam hominis construxit, quæ cum libramentis quibusdam, rotis atque aliis machinis intra latentibus peritissime compositis, linguam quadam ratione et disciplina moventibus, articulata verba pronunciaret.*

Digitized by Google

But certainly, if our souls perish with our bodies, Christ would be greatly disappointed: Nor can that promise be ever made good to him; Isa. liii. 11. "He shall see of the travail of his soul and "be satisfied." He hath done his work, but where is his reward? See how this supposition strikes at the justice of God, and wounds his faithfulness in his covenant with his Son. He hath as much comfort and reward from the travail of his soul, as a mother that is delivered after many sharp pangs of a child that dies almost as soon born.

3. It overthrows the doctrines of *Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension,* and *intercession* in heaven for us. And these are the main pillars both of our faith and comfort. Take away these, and take away our lives too, for these are the springs of all joy and comfort to the people of God, Rom. viii. 34.

His *incarnation* was necessary to capacitate him for his mediatorial work: It was not only a part of it, but such a part, without which he could discharge no other part of it. This was the wonder of men and angels, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A God incarnate is the world's wonder; no condescension like this, Phil. ii. 6, 7.

The *death* of Christ hath the nature and respect of a ransom, or equivalent price laid down to the justice of God for our redemption, Matth. xx. 28. Acts xx. 28. It brought our souls from under the curse, and purchased for them everlasting blessedness, Gal. iv. 4, 5.

The *resurrection* of Christ from the dead hath the nature both of a testimony of his finishing the work of our redemption, and the Father's full satisfaction therein, John vi. 10. and of a principle of our resurrection to eternal life, 1 Cor. xv. 20.

The *ascension* of Christ into heaven was in the capacity and relation of a fore-runner, Heb. vi. 20. it was to prepare places for the redeemed, who were to come after him to glory in their several generations, John xiv. 2, 3.

The *intercession* of Christ in heaven, is for the security of our purchased inheritance to us, and to prevent any new breaches which might be made by our sins, whereby it might be forfeited, and we divested of it again, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

All these jointly make up the foundation of our faith, and hope of glory: But if our souls perish, or be annihilated at death, our faith, hope, and comforts, are all delusions, vain dreams, which do but amuse our fond imaginations. For,

(1.) It was not worth so great a stoop and abasement of the blessed God, as he submited to in his incarnation, when he

Digitized by Google

appeared in flesh, yea, in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. and made himself of no reputation, Phil. ii. 7. An act that is, and ever will be admired by men and angels: I say, it was not worth so great a miracle as this, to procure for us the vanishing comfort of a few years, and that short-lived comfort no other than a deluding dream, or mocking phantasm: For seeing it consists in hope and expectation from the world to come, as the scriptures every where speak, 1 Thes. v. 8. and 2 Cor. iii. 12. Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. if there be no such enjoyments for us there (as most certainly there are not, if our souls perish) it is but a vanity, a thing of nought, that was the errand upon which the Son of God came from the Father's bosom, to procure for us.

(2.) And for what, think you, was the blood of God upon the cross? What was so vast and inconceivable a treasure expended to purchase? What! the flattering and vain hopes of a few years, of which we may say, as it was said of the Roman consulship, *unius anni volaticum gaudium*; the fugitive joy of a year: Yea, not only short-lived and vain hopes in themselves, but such for the sake whereof we abridge ourselves of the pleasures and desires of the flesh, 1 John iii. 3. and submit ourselves to the greatest sufferings in the world, Rom. viii. 18. For the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain, *&c.* Acts xxviii. 20. Was this the purchase of his blood? Was this it for which he sweat, and groaned, and bled, and died? Was that precious blood no more worth than such a trifle as this?

(3.) To what purpose did Christ rise again from the dead? Was it not to be the *first-fruits of them that sleep?* Did he not rise as the common head of believers, to give us assurance we shall not perish, and be utterly lost in the grave? Col. i. 18. But if our souls perish at death, there can be no resurrection; and if none, then Christ died and rose in vain, *we are yet in our sins*, and all those absurdities are unavoidable, with which the apostle loads this supposition, 1 Cor. xv. 13, *&c.*

(4.) And to as little purpose was his triumphant ascension into heaven, if we can have no benefit by it. The professed end of his ascension was "to prepare a place for us," John xiv. 2. But to what purpose are those mansions in the heavens prepared, if the inhabitants for whom they are prepared be utterly lost? And why is he called the *forerunner*, if there be none to follow him? as surely there are not, if our souls perish with our bodies. Those heavenly mansions, that city prepared by God, must stand void for ever if this be so.

(5.) To conclude; in vain is the intercession of Christ in

Digitized by Google

heaven for us, if this be so. They that shall never come thither, have no business there to be transacted by their advocate for them. So that the whole *doctrine of redemption by Christ* is utterly subverted by this one supposition.

4. As it subverts the *doctrine of redemption by Christ*, and all the hopes and comforts we build thereon, so it utterly destroys all the works of the spirit, upon the hearts of believers, and makes them vanish into nothing.

There are divers acts and offices of the Spirit of God about, and upon our souls; I will only single out three, *viz.* his *sanctifying*, *sealing*, and *comforting work*: all things of great weight with believers.

(1.) His *sanctifying work*, whereby he alters the frames and tempers of our souls, 2 Cor. v. 17. "Old things are passed away, "behold all things are become new."

The declared and direct end of this work of the Spirit upon our souls, is to attemper and dispose them for heaven, Col. i. 12. For seeing "nothing that is unclean can enter into the holy place," Rev. xxi. 27. "and without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. it is necessary that all those that have this hope in them, should expect to be partakers of their hopes in the way of purification, 1 John iii. 3. And this is the ground upon which the people of God do mortify their lusts, and take so much pains with their own hearts, Mat. xviii. 8. counting it better (as their Lord tells them) "to enter into life halt or maimed, than having "two eyes or hands to be cast into hell." But to what purpose is all this self-denial, all these heart-searchings, heart-humblings, cries, and tears, upon the account of sin, and for an heart suited to the will of God, if there be no such life to be enjoyed *with God, after this animal life is finished?*

Object. If you say there is a present advantage resulting to us in this world, from our abstinence and self-denial; we have the truer and longer enjoyment of our comforts on earth by it: debauchery and licentiousness do not only flat the appetite, and debase and alloy the comforts of this world, but cut short our lives by the exorbitances and abuses of them.

Solut. Though there be a truth in this worth our noting, yet (1.) morality could have done all this without sanctification; there was no need for the pouring out of the spirit, for so low an use and purpose as this. (2.) And therefore as the wisdom of God would be censured and impeached, in sending his Spirit for an end which could as well be attained without it; so the veracity of God must needs be affronted by it, who, as you heard

Digitized by Google

before, hath declared our salvation to be the end of our sanctification.

(2.) His *sealing*, *witnessing*, and *assuring* work. We have a full account in the scriptures, of these offices and works of the spirit, and some spiritual sense and feeling of them upon our own hearts, which are too good assurances that there are such things as his bearing witness with our spirit, Rom. viii. 16. "his sealing us to the day of redemption," Eph. iv. 30. "his "earnests given into our hearts," 2 Cor. i. 22. All which acts, and works of the spirit have a direct and clear aspect upon the life to come, and the happiness of our souls in the full enjoyment of God to eternity; for it is to that life we are now sealed; and of the full sum of that glory, that these are the pledges and earnests. But if our souls perish by death, these witnesses of the spirit are delusions, and his earnests are given us but in jest.

(3.) His *comforting work* is a sweet fruit and effect sensibly felt and tasted by believers in this world. He is from this office stiled the *Comforter*, John xvi. 7. *signatur, et eminenter:* He so comforts, as none other doth, or can. And what is the matter of his comforts, but the blessedness to come, the joys of the coming world? John xvi. 13. "Eye hath not seen," *&c.*

Upon the account of these unseen things, he enableth believers to glory in tribulation, Rom. v. 4, to despise present things, whether the smiles or the frowns of the world, Heb. xi. 24. and ver. 26. But if the being of our souls fail at death, these are but the fantastic joys of men in a dream, and the experiences of all God's people are found but so many fond conceits, and gross mistakes.

5. This supposition overthrows the doctrine of the resurrection, which is the consolation of Christians. We believe, according to the scripture, that after death hath divorced our souls and bodies for a time, they shall meet again, and be re-united, and that the joy at their re-union will be to all that are in Christ, greater than the sorrows they felt at parting. This seems not incredible to us, whatever natural improbabilities and carnal reasons may be against it, Acts xxvi. 8. and that because the almighty power, which is able to subdue all things to himself, undertakes this task, Phil. iii. 21.

We believe this very same numerical body shall rise again, Job xxi. 27. by the return of the same soul into it, which now dwelleth in it; and that we shall be the same persons that now we are: the remunerative justice of God requiring it to be so.

Digitized by Google

We believe the souls of the righteous shall be much better accommodated, and have a more comfortable habitation in their bodies than now they have, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. seeing they shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 22. and that then we shall live after the manner of angels, Luke xx. 36. without the necessities of this animal life. These are the things we look for according to promise; and this expectation is our great relief against (1.) The fears of death, 1 Cor. xv. 55. (2.) Against the death of our friends and relations, 1 Thes. iv. 14. (3.) Against all the pressures and afflictions of this life, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

But if the being of our souls fail at death, all hopes and comforts from the resurrection fail with it; for it is not imaginable that the body should rise till it be revived, nor how it should be revived, but by the re-union of the soul with it: and if it be not the same soul that now inhabits it, we cannot be the same persons in the resurrection we are now; and consequently, this supposition subverts not only the doctrine of the resurrection, but,

6. It overthrows also the faith of the judgment to come. For if the soul perish, the body cannot rise; or if it rise by a new created soul, the person raised is another, and not the same that lived and died in this world; and consequently, the rewards and punishments to be bestowed and awarded to all men in that day, cannot be just and equal: for we believe, according to the scriptures, that,

(1.) The actions which men perform in this life, are not transient, but are filed to their account in the world to come; Gal. vi. 7. "here we sow, and there we reap." Actions done in this world are two ways considerable, *viz.* physically, or morally; in the first consideration they are transient, in the last, permanent and everlasting. A word is spoken, or an act done, in a moment, but though it be past and gone, and perhaps by us quite forgotten, God registers it in his book, in order to the day of account.

(2.) We believe that God hath appointed a day in which all men shall appear before his judgment-seat, to give an account of all they have done in the body, whether it be good or evil, 2 Cor. v. 10.

(3.) And that in order hereunto, the very same persons shall be restored by the resurrection, and appear before God, the very same bodies and souls, which did good or evil in this world: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Justice requires that the rewards and punishments be then distributed to the

Digitized by Google

same persons that did good or evil in this world: which strongly infers the immortality of the soul, and that it certainly overlives the body, and must come back from the respective places of their abode, to be again united to them, in order to their great account.

By all which you see the clearest proof of the soul's immortality, and how the contrary supposition overthrows our faith, duties, and comforts. Yet notwithstanding all this, how apt are we to suspect this doctrine, and remain still dissatisfied and doubting about it, when all is said? Which comes to pass partly from the subtlety of Satan, who knows he can never persuade men to live the life of beasts, till he first persuade them to think they shall die as the beasts do. (2.) And partly from the influence of sense, and reason upon us, whereby we do too much suffer ourselves to be swayed, and imposed upon in matters of the greatest moment in religion. For these being proper arbiters, and judges, in other matters within their sphere, they are arrogant, and we easy enough to admit them to be arbiters also in things that are quite above them. Hence come such plausible objections as these:

Object. 1. The soul seems to vanish and die, when it leaves the body: for when it hath struggled as long as it can keep its possession in the body, and, at last, is forced to depart, we can perceive nothing but a puff of breath, which immediately vanishes into air, and is lost.

Solut. We can perceive, therefore it is nothing but what we do and can perceive, *viz.* a puff of vanishing breath. By this argument, the being of the soul in the body is as questionable, as after its departure out of the body; for we cannot discern it by sight in the body: yea, by this argument, we may as well deny the existence of God and angels, as of the soul; for it is a spiritual and invisible being, as they are; our gross senses are incapable of discerning spirits, which are immaterial, and invisible substances.

Object. 2. But you allow the soul to have a rise and beginning, it is not eternal *a parte ante*; and it is certain, whatever had a beginning, must have an end.

Solut. Every thing which had a beginning may have an end, and what once was nothing, may by the power that created it, be reduced to nothing again. But though we allow it may be so, by the absolute power of God, we deny the consequence, that therefore it shall, and must be so. Angels had a beginning, but shall never have an end. And indeed, their immortality,

Digitized by Google

as well as ours, flows not ſo much from the nature of either, as from the will and pleaſure of God, who hath appointed them to be ſo. He can, but never will, annihilate them.

Object. 3. But the ſoul depends upon matter in all its operations, nothing is in the underſtanding which was not firſt in the ſenſes; it uſeth the natural ſpirits, as its ſervants and tools, in all its operations, and therefore how can it either ſubſiſt or act in a ſtate of ſeparation?

Solut. 1. The hypotheſis is not only uncertain, but certainly falſe. There are acts performed by the ſoul, even whilſt it is in the body, wherein it makes no uſe at all of the body. Such are the acts of ſelf-intuition, and ſelf-reflection: and what will you ſay of its acts, in raptures and extaſies, ſuch as that of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2. and John, Rev. xxi. 10. what uſe did their ſouls make of the bodily ſenſes or natural ſpirits then?

Solut. 2. And though in its ordinary actions in this life, it doth uſe the body as its tool or inſtrument in working, doth it thence follow that it can neither ſubſiſt or act ſeparate from them in the other world? Whilſt a man is on horſe-back in his journey, he uſeth the help and ſervice of his horſe, and is moved according to the motion of his horſe; but doth it thence follow, he cannot ſtand nor walk alone, when diſmounted at his journey's end? We know angels both live and act, without the miniſtry of bodies, and our ſouls are ſpiritual ſubſtances as well as they.

Object. 4. But many ſcriptures ſeem to favour the total ceſſation of the ſoul's actions, if not of its being alſo, after ſeparation, as that in 2 Sam. xiv. 14. We muſt needs die, and are as water ſpilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up; and Pſal. lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12. with Iſa. xxxviii. 18, 19. The dead cannot praiſe thee.

Solut. Theſe words of the woman of Tekoah are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but reſpectively: and the meaning is, that the ſoul is in the body as ſome precious liquor in a brittle glaſs, which being broken by death, the ſoul is irrecoverably gone, as the water ſpilt on the ground, which by no human power or art of man can be recovered again. All the means in the world cannot fetch it back into the body again. She ſpeaks not of the reſurrection, or what ſhall be done in the world to come, by the Almighty Power of God, but of what is impoſſible to be done in this world by all the ſkill and power of man.

And for the expreſſions of Heman and Hezekiah, they only reſpect, and relate unto thoſe ſervices their ſouls were now imployed about for the praiſe of God, with reſpect to the conver-

Digitized by Google

sion or edification of others, as Psal. xxx. 8, 9. or at most, to that mediate service and worship, which they give God, in and by their attendance upon his ordinances in this world, and not of that immediate service, and praise, that is performed and given him in heaven by the spirits of just men made perfect; such was the sweetness they had found in these ordinances and duties, that they express themselves as loth to leave them.

The same answer solves also the objections grounded upon other mistaken scriptures, as that of Psal. lxxviii. 39. where man is called a wind, that passeth away, and cometh not again. It is only expressive of the frailty and vanity of the present animal life we live in this world, to which we shall return no more after death; it denies not life to departed souls, but the end of this animal life at death: the life we live in the other world, is of a different nature.

Infer. 1. Is the soul immortal? Then *it is impossible for souls to find full rest and contentment in any enjoyments on this side heaven.* All temporary things are inadequate, and therefore unsatisfying to our souls. What gives the soul rest and satisfaction, must be as durable as the soul is; for if we could possibly find in this world a condition and state of things most agreeable in all other respects to our desires and wishes, yet if the soul be conscious to itself, that it shall, and must over-live and leave them all behind it, it can never reach true contentment, in the greatest affluence and confluence of them. Man being an immortal, is therefore a prospecting creature, and can never be satisfied with this, that it is well with him at present, except he can be satisfied that it shall be so for ever. The thoughts of leaving our delightful and pleasant enjoyments, imbitters them all to us whilst we have them. All outward things are in *fluxu continuo*, passing away as the waters, 1 Cor. vii. 31. Riches are uncertain, 1 Tim. vi. 17. "They fly away as an eagle to-"wards heaven, and with wings of their own making," Prov. xxiii. 5. *(i. e.)* As the feathers that enable a bird to fly from us, grow out of his own substance, so doth that vanity that carries away all earthly enjoyments. This alone will spoil all contentment.

Infer. 2. *Then see the ground and reason of Satan's envy and enmity against the soul, and his restless designs and endeavours to destroy it.* It grates that spirit of envy, to find himself, who is by nature immortal, sunk everlastingly and irrecoverably into misery, and the souls of men appointed to fill up those vacant places in heaven from which the angels fell. No creature but man is envied by Satan, and the soul of man much more than

Digitized by Google

his body: it is true, he afflicts the bodies of men when God permits him, but he ever aims at the soul when he wounds the body. Heb. x. 37. This roaring lion is continually going about, "seeking whom he may devour," 1 Pet. v. 8. It is the precious soul he hunts after; that is the *Morsus diaboli*, the bit he gapes for, as the wolf tears the fleece to come at the flesh. All the pleasure those miserable creatures find, is the success of their temptations upon the souls of men. It is a kind of delight to them to plunge souls into the same condemnation and misery with themselves. This is the trade they have been driving ever since their fall. By destroying souls, he at once exercises his revenge against God, and his envy against man, which is all the relief his miserable condition allows him.

Infer. 3. Do the souls of men out-live their bodies? *Then it is the height of madness and spiritual infatuation, to destroy the soul for the body's sake;* to cast away an immortal soul for the gratification of perishing flesh; to ruin the precious soul for ever, for the pleasures of sin which are but for a moment: yet this is the madness of millions of men. They will drown their own souls in everlasting perdition, to procure unnecessary things for the body, 1 Tim. vi. 9. "They that will be rich," &c. Every cheat and circumvention in dealing, every lie, every act of oppression, is a wound given the immortal soul, for the procuring some accommodations to the body.

O what soul-undoing bargains do some make with the devil! Some sell their souls out-right for the gratification of their lusts, 1 Kings xxi. 20. Many pawn their souls to Satan in a conditional bargain, so do all that venture upon sin, upon a presumption of pardon and repentance. The devil is a great trader for souls, he hath all sorts of commodities to suit all mens humours that will deal with him. He hath profits for the covetous, honours for the ambitious, pleasures for the voluptuous: but a soul is the price at which he sells them; only he will be content to sell at a day, and not require present pay; so that it be paid on a death-bed, in a dying hour, he is satisfied. But oh! what an undoing bargain do sinners make, to part with a treasure for a trifle! Mat. xvi. 26. the precious soul for ever, "for "the pleasures of sin, which are but for season!" Heb. xi. 25.

Prov. xx. 17. Prov. xxiii. 31, 32. Job xx. 12, 13. Jam. i. 15.

We are charmed with the present pleasure and sweetness there is in sin; but how bitter will the after-fruits thereof be! See the texts in the margin: you will say hereafter as Jonathan did, 1 Sam. xiv. 31. "I tasted but a little honey, and "I must die."

Digitized by Google

Infer. 4. *Then the exposing of the body to danger, yea, to certain destruction, for the preservation of the soul, is the dictate of spiritual wisdom, and that which every Christian is bound to chuse and practise, when both interests come in full opposition,* Heb. xi. 35. Dan. iii. 28. Rev. xii. 11. No promises of preferment, no threats of torments, have been able to prevail with the people of God to give the least wound, or do the least wrong to their own souls. When Secundus was commanded to deliver his bible, he answered, *Christianus sum, non traditor:* I am a Christian, I will not deliver it: then they desired him to deliver *aliquam exvolam*, a chip, a straw, any thing that came to his hand in lieu of it: he refused to redeem his life by delivering the least trifle on that account to save it.

That is a great word of our Lord's, Luke ix. 24. "He that "will save his life, shall lose it: and he that loseth it for my sake "shall find it." Christians, this is your duty and wisdom, and must be your resolution and practice in the day of temptation, to yield your bodies to preserve your souls, as we offer our arm to defend the head. Oh! better thy body had never been given thee, than that it should be a snare to thy soul, and the instrument of casting it away for ever. Oh! how dear are some persons like to pay for their tenderness and indulgence to the flesh, when the hour of temptation shall come! mortify your irregular affections to the body, and never hazard your precious immortal souls for their sakes. It is the character of an hypocrite to chuse sin rather than affliction, Job xxxvi. 21. But if ever thou hast been in the deeps of spiritual troubles for sin, if God have opened thine eyes to see the evil of sin, the immense weight and value of thy soul, and of eternity, "Thou wilt "not count thy life dear to thee, to finish thy course with joy," Acts xx. 24.

Inference 5. If the soul be an immortal being, that shall have no end, *Then it is the great concern of all men to strive to the utmost for the salvation of their souls, whatever become of all lesser temporary interests in this world,* Luke xiii. 24. There is a gate, *i. e.* an introductive means of life and salvation: This gate is strait, *i. e.* there are a world of difficulties to be encountered in the way of salvation: but he that values and loves his never-dying soul, must, and will be diligent and constant in the use of all those means that have a tendency to salvation, be they never so difficult or unpleasant to flesh and blood. There be difficulties from within ourselves, such as mortification, self-denial, contempt of the world, parting with all at the call of Christ; and difficulties from without, the re-

Digitized by Google

proaches, persecutions, and sufferings for Christ, which would not be so great as they are, were it not for our unmortified lusts within; but be they what they will, we are bound to strive through them all, for the salvation of our precious and immortal souls.

(1.) For it is the greatest concernment of the soul, yea, of our own souls; we are bound to do much for the saving of another's soul, 2 Tim. ii. 10. much more for our own; this is our darling, Psal. xxii. our only one.

(2.) Others have done and suffered much for the saving of their souls; and are not ours, or ought they not to be, as dear to us, as the souls of any others have been to them? Matth. xxi. 32.

(3.) The utmost diligence is little enough to save them. Do all that you can do, and suffer all that you can suffer, and deny yourselves as deeply as ever any did, yet you shall find all this little enough to secure them, 1 Pet. iv. 18. The righteous themselves are scarcely saved, 1 Cor. ix. 24.

(4.) The time to strive for salvation is very short and uncertain, Luke xiii. 25. John xii. 35. It will be to no purpose, when the seasons and opportunities of salvation are once over. There is no striving in hell, a death-pang of despair hath seized them, hope is extinguished, and endeavours fail.

(5.) Doth not reason dictate and direct you to do now, whilst you are in the way, as you will wish you had done, and repent with rage, and self-indignation, because you did it not, when you come to the end, and behold the final issues of things? Suppose but thyself now either, (1.) Upon a death-bed, launching into eternity; (2.) Or at the bar of Christ; (3.) Or in view of heaven; (4.) Or in the sight and hearing of the damned: what think you? will you not then wish, Oh! that I had spent every moment in the world that could possibly be redeemed from the pure necessities of life, in prayer, in hearing, in striving for salvation. From a prospect of this it was, that one spent many hours daily on his knees to the macerating of his body; and being admonished of the danger of health, and advised to relax, he answered, *I must die, I must die.*

Objection 1. Do not say, you have many incumbrances, and other employments in the world: for (1.) "One thing is neces-"sary," Luke x. 42. Those are conveniences, but this is of absolute necessity. (2.) They will thrive the better for this, Mat. vi. 33. "Seek this, and they shall be added." (3.) Do but *redeem the time* that can be redeemed to this purpose; let not so much precious time run waste as daily doth.

Digitized by Google

Objection 2. Say not, no man can save his soul by his own striving, and therefore it is to little purpose; for "it is not of him "that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that shew-"eth mercy," Rom. ix. 16.

True, this in itself cannot save you; but what then? must we oppose those things which God hath subordinated? Bring this home to your natural or civil actions, eating, drinking, ploughing, or sowing, and see how the consequence will look.

Objection 3. Say not, it is a mercenary doctrine, and disparages free grace; for, are not all the enjoyments and comforts of this life confessedly from free grace, though God hath dispensed them to you in the way of your diligence and industry.

Objection 4. To conclude; Say not, the difficulties of salvation are insuperable; it is so hard to watch every motion of the heart, to deny every lust, to resist a suitable temptation, to suffer the *loss of all for Christ*, that there is no hope for overcoming them.

For (1.) God can, and doth make difficult things easy to his people, who work in the strength of Christ, Phil. iv. 13. (2.) These same difficulties are before all others that are before you, yet it discourageth not them, Phil. iii. 11. Others strive to the uttermost. There are extremes found in this matter: some work for salvation, as an hireling for his wages, so the Papists; these disparage grace, and cry up works. Others cry down obedience as legal, as the Antinomians, and cry up grace to the disparagement of duties. Avoid both these, and see that you strive: But (1.) Think not heaven to be the price of your striving, Rom. iv. 3. (2.) Strive, but not for a spurt; let this care and diligence run throughout your lives; whilst you are living, be you still striving: your souls are worth it; and infinitely more than all this amounts to.

Infer. 6. Doth the soul out-live the body, and abide for ever? *Then it is a great evil and folly to be excessively careful for the mortal body, and neglective of the immortal inhabitant.* In a too much indulged body, there ever dwells a too much neglected soul.

The body is but a *vile thing*, Phil. iii. 21. the soul *more valuable than the whole world*, Matth. xvi. 26. To spend time, care, and pains for a vile body, whilst little or no regard is had to the precious immortal soul, is an unwarrantable folly and madness. *To have a clear and washed body, and a soul all filth*, (as one speaks) *a body neatly cloathed and dressed, with a soul all naked and unready; a body fed, and a soul starved; a body full*

Digitized by Google

of the creature, and a soul empty of Christ; these are poor souls indeed. We smile at little children, who in a kind of laborious idleness take a great deal of pains to make and trim their babies, or build their little houses of sticks and straws: And what are they but children of a bigger size, that keep such ado about the body, a house of clay, a weak pile, that must perish in a few days. It is admirable, and very convictive of most Christians, what we read in a Heathen. "I confess (saith * Seneca) there is "a love to the body implanted in us all; we have the tutelage "and charge of it; we may be kind and indulgent to it, but "must not serve it; but he that serves it, is a servant to many "cares, fears, and passions. Let us have a diligent care of it; "yet so as when reason requires, when our dignity or faith re-"quires it, we commit it to the fire."

It is true, the body is beloved of the soul, and God requires, that it moderately care for the necessities and conveniences of it; but to be fond, indulgent, and constantly solicitous about it, is both the sin and snare of the soul. One of the fathers being invited to dine with a lady, and waiting some hours till she was dressed, and fit to come down; when he saw her, he fell a weeping; and being demanded why he wept, *Oh!* saith he, *I am troubled that you should spend so many hours this morning in pinning and trimming your body, when I have not spent half the time in praying, repenting, and caring for my own soul.* Two things a master commits to his servant's care, (saith one) the child, and the child's cloaths: It will be but a poor excuse for the servant to say, at his master's return, Sir, here are all the child's cloaths neat and clean, but the child is lost. Much so will be the account that many will give to God of their souls, and bodies, at the great day, *Lord, here is my body, I was very careful for it, I neglected nothing that belonged to its content and welfare: But for my soul, that is lost and cast away for ever, I took little care and thought about it.* It is remarkable what the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 12. We owe nothing to the flesh, we are not in its debt, we have given it all, more than all

* *Fateor insitam esse nobis corporis nostri charitatem. Fateor nos hujus gerere tutelam, nec ego indulgendum illi, serviendum nego. Multis enim serviet qui corpori serviet, qui pro illo nimium timet, qui ad illud omnia refert; hujus nos nimius amor timoribus inquietat, solicitudinibus onerat, contumeliis objicit: honestum ei vile est cui corpus nimis charum est: agatur ejus diligentissime cura: ita tamen ut cum exiget ratio, cum dignitas, cum fides, mittendum in ignem sit.* Senec. Ep. 14. p. 545.

Digitized by Google

that belongs to it: But we owe many an hour, many a care, many a deep thought to our souls, which we have defrauded it of for the vile body's sake. You have robbed your souls to pay your flesh. This is madness.

Infer. 7. *How great a blessing is the gospel, which brings life and immortality to light, the most desirable mercies to immortal souls!* This is the great benefit we receive by it, as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. i. 10. "Christ hath abolished death, and brought "life and immortality to light by the gospel." Life and immortality by a ὑ διὰ δυοιν, is put for immortal life, the thing which all immortal souls desire and long for. These desires are found in souls that enjoy not the gospel-light; for, as I said before, they naturally spring out of the very nature of all immortal souls: But how and where it is to be obtained, that is a secret for which we are entirely beholden to the gospel-discovery. It lay hid in the womb of God's purpose, till by the light of gospel-revelation it was made manifest. But now all men may see what are the gracious thoughts and purposes of God concerning men, and what that is he hath designed for their immortal souls, even an immortal life; and this life is to be obtained by Christ, than which no tidings can be more welcome, sweet or acceptable to us.

Oh therefore study the Gospel. "This is life eternal, to "know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou "hast sent," John xvii. 3. And see that you prize the gospel above all earthly treasures. *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.* You have two inestimable benefits and blessings by it. (1.) It manifests and reveals eternal life to you, which you could never have come to the knowledge of any other way; those that are without it, are groping or feeling after God in the dark, Acts xvii. 27. Poor souls are conscious to themselves, that there is a just and terrible God, and that their sins offend and provoke him; but how to atone the offended Deity they know not, Micah vi. 6, 7. But the way of reconciliation and life is clearly discovered to us by the gospel. (2.) As it manifests and reveals eternal life to us, so it frames and moulds our hearts, as God's sanctifying instrument, for the enjoyment of it. It is not only the instrument of revelation, but of salvation, the word of life, as well as the word of light, Phil. ii. 16. It can open your hearts, as well as your eyes, and is therefore to be entertained as that which is the first rank of blessings, a peerless and inestimable blessing.

Infer. 8. If our souls be immortal, *certainly our enemies are*

Digitized by Google

not so formidable as we are apt, by our sinful fears, to represent them. They may, when God permits them, destroy your bodies, they cannot touch or destroy your souls, Mat. x. 28. As to your bodies, no enemy can touch them till there be leave and permission given them by God, Job i. 10. The bodies of the saints, as well as their souls, are within the line or hedge of Divine Providence: They are securely fenced, sometimes mediately by the ministry of angels, Psal. xxxiv. 7. and sometimes immediately by his own hand and power, Zech. ii. 5. As to their souls, whatever power enemies may have upon them, (when divine permission opens a gap in the hedge of providence for them) yet they cannot reach their souls to hurt them, or destroy them, but by their own consent. They can destroy our perishing flesh, it is obnoxious to their malice and rage; they cannot reach home to the soul: No sword can cut asunder the band of union between them and Christ; they would be dreadful enemies indeed if they could do so. Why then do we tremble and fear at this rate, as if soul and body were at their mercy, and in their power and hand? The souls of those *martyrs* were in safety under the *altar* in heaven, they were cloathed with *white robes*, when their bodies were given to be meat to the fowls of heaven, and beasts of the earth. The devil drives but a poor trade by the persecution of the saints; he tears the *nest*, but the *bird* escapes; he cracks the *shell*, but loseth the *kernel*. Two things make a powerful defensative against our fears: (1.) That all our enemies are in the hand of providence. (2.) That all providences are steered by that promise, Rom. viii. 28.

Infer. 9. If souls be immortal, *Then there must needs be a vast difference betwixt the aspects and influences of death upon the godly and ungodly.*

Oh! if souls would but seriously consider what an alteration death will make upon their condition, for evil or for good, how useful would such meditations be to them! (1.) They must be disseized and turned out of these houses of clay, and live in a state of separation from them; of this there is an inevitable necessity, Eccl. viii. 8. It is vain to say, I am not ready; ready or unready, they must depart when their lease is out. It is as vain to say, I am not willing; for willing or unwilling, they must be gone; there is no hanging back, and begging, *Lord, let death take another at this time, and spare me;* for no man dies by a proxy. (2.) The time of our souls departure is at hand, 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. Job. xvi. 22. The most firm and well built body can stand but a few days; but our ruinous tabernacles give

Digitized by Google

our souls warning, that the day of their departure is at hand. The lamp of life is almost burnt down, the glass of time is almost run; yet a few, a very few days and nights more, and then time, nights and days shall be no more. (3.) When that most certain and near-approaching time is come, wonderful alterations will be made on the state of all souls, godly, and ungodly.

(1.) A marvellous alteration will then be made on the souls of the godly. For, (1.) No sooner is the dividing stroke given by death, and the parting pull over, but they shall find themselves in the arms of angels, mounting them through the upper regions in a few moments, far above all the aspectable heavens, Luke xvi. 22. The airy region is, indeed, the place where devils inhabit, and have their haunts and walks; but angels are the saints convoy through Satan's territories, from the arms of mourning friends, into the welcome arms of officious and benevolent angels. (2.) From the sight and converses of men, to the sight of God, Christ, and the general assembly of blessed and sinless spirits. The soul takes its leave of all men at death, Isa. xxxviii. 11. Farewel vain world, with all the mixed and imperfect comforts of it, and welcome the more sweet, suitable, and satisfying company of Father, Son, and Spirit, holy angels, and perfected saints, Heb. xii. 23. (3.) From the bondage of corruption, to perfect liberty, and everlasting freedom; so much is implied, Heb. xii. 23. "The spirits of just men made perfect." (4.) From all fears, doubtings, and questionings of our conditions, and anxious debates of our title to Christ, to the clearest, fullest, and most satisfying assurance; for what a man sees, how can he doubt of it? (5.) From all burdens of affliction, inward and outward, under which we have groaned all our days, to everlasting rest and ease, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3. Oh what a blessed change to the righteous must this be!

(2.) A marvellous change will also be then made upon the souls of the ungodly, who shall then part from (1.) All their comforts and pleasant enjoyments in the world; for here they had their consolation; Luke xvi. 25. here was all their portion, Psal. xvii. 14. and, in a moment, find themselves arrested and seized by Satan, as God's goaler, hurrying them away to the prison of hell, 1 Pet. iii. 19. "there to be reserved to the judg-"ment of the great day," Jude 6. (2.) From under the means of grace, life, and salvation, to a state perfectly void of all means, instruments, and opportunities of salvation, John ix. 4. Eccl. ix. 10. never to hear the joyful sound of preaching or praying any more; never to hear the wooing voice of the blessed bridegroom, saying, Come unto me, come unto me, any more.

Digitized by Google

(3.) From all their vain, ungrounded, presumptuous hopes of heaven, into absolute and final desperation of mercy. The very sinews and nerves of hope are cut by death, Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." These are the great and astonishing alterations that will be made upon our souls, after they part with the bodies which they now inhabit. Oh that we, who cannot but be conscious to ourselves that we must over live our bodies, were more thoughtful of the condition they must enter into, after that separation which is at hand.

Infer. 10. If our souls be immortal, *then death is neither to be feared by them in heaven, nor hoped for them in hell.* The being of souls never fails, whether they be in a state of blessedness or of misery. "In glory they are ever with the Lord." 1 Thes. iv. 17. There shall be no death there, Rev. xxi. 4. And in hell, though they shall wish for death, yet death shall flee from them *. Though there be no fears of annihilation in heaven, yet there may be many wishes for it in hell, but to no purpose; there never will be an end put, either to their being, or to their torments. In this respect no other creatures are capable of the misery that wicked men are capable of: When they die, there is the end of all their misery; but it is not so with men. Better therefore had it been for them, if God had created them in the basest, and lowest order and rank of creatures; a dog, a toad, a worm, is better than a man in endless misery, ever dying, and never dead. *And so much of the souls immortality.*

* *

EPH. v. 29. *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.*

HAVING given some account of the nature and immortality of the soul, we next come, from this text, to discourse of its *love and inclination to the body*, with which it is united. The scope of the apostle is, to press Christians to the exact discharge of those relative duties they owe to each other; particularly, he here urgeth the mutual duties of husbands and wives, ver. 22. wives to an obedient subjection, husbands to a tender love of their wives. This exhortation he enforceth from the

* O death thou art sweet to those to whom thou wast formerly bitter: They desire thee alone, who did hate thee alone. *August.*

Digitized by Google

intimate union, which, by the ordinance of God, is betwixt them, they being now one flesh. And this union he illustrates by comparing it with,

1. The mystical union of Christ and the church.

2. The natural union of the soul and body.

And from both these, as excellent examples and patterns, he, with great strength of argument, urgeth the duty of love; ver. 28. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he "that loveth his wife, loveth himself." Self love is naturally implanted in all men, and it is the rule by which we measure out and dispense our love to others.——"Thou shalt love thy "neighbour as thyself."

This self-love he opens in this place, by,

(1.) The universality of it.

(2.) The effects that evidence it.

1. The universality of it. *No man ever yet hated his own flesh.* By *flesh*, understand the body by an usual *metonymy* of a part for the whole, called flesh. By *hating* it, understand a simple hatred, or hatred itself. It is usual for men to hate the deformities and diseases of their own bodies, and upon that account to deal with the members of their own bodies as if they hated them; hence it is, they willingly stretch forth a gangrened leg or arm to be cut off, for the preservation of the rest: but this is not a simple hatred of a man's self, but rather an argument of the strength of the soul's love to the body, that it will be content to endure so much pain and anguish for its sake. And if the soul be at any time weary of, and willing to part, not with a single member only, but with the whole body, and loaths its union with it any longer, yet it hates it and loaths it not simply in, and for itself, but because it is so filled with diseases all over, and loads the soul daily with so much grief, that how well soever the soul loves it in itself, yet upon such sad terms and conditions it would not be tied to it. This was Job's case, Job x. 1. "My soul is weary of my life;" yet not simply of his life, but of such a life, in pain and trouble. Except it be in such respects and cases, *no man*, saith he, *ever yet hated his own flesh; i. e.* no man in his right mind, and in the exercise of his reason and sense; for we must except distracted and delirious men, who know not what they do, as also men under the terrors of conscience, when God suffers it to rage in extremity, as Spira and others, who would have been glad with their own hands to have cut the threed that tied their miserable souls to their bodies, supposing that way, and by that change, to find

Digitized by Google

some relief. Either of these cases forces men to act beside the stated rule of nature and reason.

2. This love of the soul to the body is further discovered by the effects which evidence it, *viz.* its nourishing and cherishing the body, ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει. These two comprize the necessaries for the body, *viz.* food and raiment. The first signifies to nourish with proper food; the latter to warm by cloathing, as the word θάλπειν is rendered, James ii. 16. to which the Hebrew word חם answers, Job xxxi. 20. The care and provision of these things for the body evidences the soul's love to it.

Doct. *That the souls of men are strongly inclined, and tenderly affected, towards the bodies in which they now dwell.*

The soul's love to the body is so strong, natural, and inseparable, that it is made the rule and measure by which we dispense and proportion our love to others, Matth. xix. 19. "Thou "shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And the apostle, Gal. v. 14. tells us, That the whole law, *i. e.* the second table of the law, is fulfilled, or summed up in this precept, "Thou "shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The meaning is not, that all and every one who is our neighbour, must be equally near to us as our own bodies; but it intends, (1.) The sincerity of our love to others, which must be without dissimulation, for we dissemble not in self-love. (2.) That we be as careful to avoid injuring others, as we would ourselves, Matth. vii. 12. To do by others, or measure to them, as we would have done or measured unto us: for which rule, Severus the Heathen emperor, honoured Christ and Christianity, and caused it to be written in capital letters of gold. (3.) That we take direction from this principle of self-love, to measure out our care, love, and respects to others, according to the different degrees of nearness in which we stand to them. As, (1.) The wife of our bosom, to whom, by this rule, is due our first care and love, as in the text. (2.) Our children and family, 1 Tim. v. 8. (3.) To all in general, whether we have any bond of natural relation upon them or no; but especially those to whom we are spiritually related, as Gal. vi. 10. And indeed, as every Christian hath a right to our love and care above other men, so in some cases, we are to exceed this rule of self-love, by a transcendent act of self-denial for them, 1 John iii. 16. And Paul went higher than that, in a glorious excess of charity to the community or body of God's people, preferring their salvation not only to his own body, but to his soul also, Rom. ix. 3. But to these extraordinary cases we are seldom called; and if we be, the gospel furnisheth us with an higher rule

Digitized by Google

than self-love, John xiii. 34. But by this principle of self-love, in all ordinary cases, we must proportion and dispense our love to all others; by which you see what a deep-rooted and fixed principle in nature self-love is, how universal and permanent a lone this is, which else were not fit to be made the measure of our love to all others.

Two things will deserve our consideration in the doctrinal part of this point.

First, Wherein the soul evidenceth its love to the body.

Secondly, What are the grounds and fundamental causes or reasons of its love to it; and then apply it.

First, Wherein the soul evidenceth its love to the body, and that it doth in divers respects.

1. In its cares for the things needful to the body, as the text speaks, in nourishing and cherishing it, *i. e.* taking care for food and raiment for it. This care is universal, it is implanted in the most savage and barbarous people; and is generally so excessive and exorbitant, that though it never needs a spur, yet most times, and with most men, it doth need a curb; and therefore Christ, in Matth. vi. 32. shews how those cares torture and distract the nations of the world, warns them against the like excesses, and propounds a rule to them for the allay and mitigation of them, ver. 25, 26, 27. So doth the apostle also, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. To speak as the matter is, most souls are over-heated with their cares, and eager pursuit after the concerns of the body. They pant after the dust of the earth. They pierce themselves through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. vi. 10. They are cumbered like Martha with much serving. It is a perfect drudge and slave to the body, bestowing all its time, strength, and studies about the body: for one soul that puts the question to itself, "What shall I do to be saved?" a thousand are to be found that mind nothing more, but, "What "shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I and "mine be cloathed?" I do not say, that these are proofs of the soul's regular love to the body; no, they differ from it, as a fever does from natural heat. This is a doating fondness upon the body. He truly loves his body, that moderately and ordinately cares for what is necessary for it, and can keep it under, 1 Cor. ix. 27. and deny its whinning appetite, when indulgence is prejudicial to the soul, or warms its lusts. Believers themselves find it hard to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon their affections in this matter. It is not every man that hath attained Agur's cool temper, Prov. xxx. 8. that can slack his

Digitized by Google

pace and drive moderately, where the interests of the body are concerned: the best souls are too warm, the generality in raging heats, which distract their minds, as that word, Matth. vi. 25. μη μεριμνατε, signifies. If the body were not exceeding dear to the soul, it would never torture itself, day and night, with such anxious cares about it.

2. The soul discovers its esteem and value for the body in all the fears it hath about it. Did not the soul love it exceedingly, it would never be affrighted for it, and on its account, so much and so often as it is. What a panic fear do the dangers of the body cast the soul into? Isa. vii. 2. When the body is in danger, the soul is in distraction, the soul is in fears and tremblings about it: these fears flow from the souls tender love and affection to the body; if it did not love it so intensely, it would never afflict and torment itself at that rate it doth about it: Satan, the professed enemy of our souls, being throughly acquainted with those fears which flow from the fountain of love to the body, politicly improves them in the way of temptation, to the utter ruin of some, and the great hazard of other souls; he edges and sharpens his temptations upon us this way; he puts our bodies into danger, that he may thereby endanger our souls; he reckons, if he can but draw the body into danger, fear will quickly drive the soul into temptation: it is not so much from Satan's malice or hatred of our bodies, that he stirs up persecutions against us: but he knows the tie of affection is so strong betwixt these friends, that love will draw, and fear will drive the soul into many and great hazards of its own happiness, to free the body out of those dangers. Prov. xxix. 25. "The "fear of man brings a snare:" and Heb. xi. 37. "Tortured "and tempted."

Upon this ground also it is, that this life becomes a life of temptation to all men, and there is no freedom from that danger, till we be freed from the body, and set at liberty by death. Separated souls are the only free souls. They that carry *no* flesh about them, need carry no fears of temptation within them. It is the body which catches the sparks of temptation.

3. The soul manifests its dear love and affection to the body, by its sympathy, and compassionate feeling of all its burdens: whatever touches the body, by way of injury, affects the soul also by way of sympathy. The soul and body are as strings of two musical instruments, set exactly at one height; if one be touched, the other trembles. They laugh and cry, are sick and well together. This is a wonderful mystery, and a rare secret (as a learned man observes) how the soul comes to sympathize

Digitized by Google

with the body, and to have not only a knowledge, but as it were a feeling of its necessities and infirmities; how this fleshly lump comes to affect, and make its deep impressions upon a creature of so different a nature from it, as the soul or spirit is. But that it doth so, tho' we know not how, is plain and sensible to any man. If any member of the body, tho' but the lowest and meanest, be in pain and misery, the soul is presently affected with it, and commands the eyes to watch, yea, to weep, the hands to bind it up with all tenderness, and defend it from the least injurious touch; the lips to complain of its misery, and beg pity and help from others for it. If the body be in danger, how are the faculties of the soul, understanding, memory, invention, *&c.* employed with utmost strength and concernment for its deliverance! This is a real and unexceptionable evidence of its dear and tender love to the body. As those that belong to one mystical body shew their sincere love this way, 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26. so the soul.

4. The soul manifesteth its love to the body, by its fears of death, and extreme aversation to a separation from it. On this account, death is called in Job xviii. 14. "The king of ter-"rors," or the black prince, or the prince of clouds and darkness, as some translate that place: We read it, "The king of "terrors," meaning, that the terrors at death are such terrors as subdue and keep down all other terrors under them, as a prince doth his subjects. Other terrors compared with those that the soul conceives and conflicts with at parting, are no more than a cut finger, to the laying one's head on the block. Oh! the soul and body are strongly twisted and knit together in dear bands of intimate union and affection, and these bands cannot be broken without much struggling: Oh! it is a hard thing for the soul to bid the body farewel, it is a bitter parting, a doleful separation: Nothing is heard in that hour but the most deep and emphatical groans; I say *emphatical groans*, the deep sense and meaning of which the living are but little acquainted with: For no man living hath yet felt the sorrows of a parting pull; whatsoever other sorrows he hath felt in the body, yet they must be supposed to be far short of these.

The sorrows of death are in scripture set forth unto us, by the bearing throes of a travailing woman, Acts ii. 24. ὠδῖνας τοῦ θανάτου, and what those mean, many can tell. The soul is in labour, it will not let go its hold of the body, but by constraint: Death is a close siege, and when the soul is beaten out of its body, it disputes the passage with death, as soldiers use

Digitized by Google

to do with an enemy that enters by storm, and fights and strives to the last: It is also compared to a *battle* or *sharp fight*, Eccl. viii. 8. *that war*. That war with an emphasis. No conflict so sharp, each labour to the utmost to drive the other from the ground they stand on, and win the field. And though grace much over-powers nature in this matter, and reconciles it to death, and makes it desire to be dissolved, yet saints wholly put not off this reluctation of nature, 2 Cor. v. 2. Not that we would be uncloathed; as it is with one willing to wade over a brook to his father's house, puts his foot into the water, and feels it cold, starts back, and is loth to venture in; *Not that we would be uncloathed.* And if it be so with sanctified souls, how is it, think you, with others? Mark the scripture language, Job xxvii. 8. God taketh away their souls, saith our translation; but the root is, נשל *extrahere*, and signifies to pull out by plain force and violence. A graceless soul dieth not by consent, but force. Thus Adrian bewailed his departure, *O Animula, vagula, blandula, heu quo vadis!* Yea, tho' the soul have never so long a time been in the body, though it should live as long as the *Antideluvian fathers* did, for many hundred years, yet still it would be loth to part; yea, though it endure abundance of misery in the body, and have little rest or comfort, but time spent in griefs and fears, yet for all that it is loth to part with it. All this shews a strong inclination and affection to it.

5. Its desire of re-union continuing still with it, in its state of separation, speaks its love to the body. As the soul parted with it in grief and sorrow, so it still retains, even in glory, an inclination to re-union, and waits for a day of re-espousals: and to that sense some searching and judicious men understand those words of Job, chap. xiv. 14. "If a man die, shall he live again?" *viz.* by a resurrection: if so, then all the days of my appointed separation, my soul in heaven shall wait till that change come. And to the same sense is that cry of separated souls, Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11. "How long, O Lord, how long?" *(i. e.)* to the consummation of all things, when judgment shall be executed on them that killed our bodies, and our bodies so long absent, restored to us again? In that day of resurrection, the souls of the saints come willingly from heaven itself, to repossess their bodies, and bring them to a partnership with them in their glory: for it is with the soul in heaven as it is with an husband who is richly entertained, feasted, and lodged abroad, but his dear wife is solitary and comfortless; it abates the completeness of his joy. Therefore we say, the saints joy is not consummate till that day.

Digitized by Google

There is an exercise for faith, hope and desires, on this account in heaven.

The union of soul and body is natural, their separation is not so: many benefits will redound to both by a re-union, and the resurrection of the body is provided by God, as the grand relief against those prejudices and losses the bodies of the saints sustain by separation. I say not that the propension or inclination of the soul to re-union with its body, is accompanied with any perturbation or anxiety, in its state of separation; for it enjoys God, and in him a placid rest; and as the body, so the soul rests in hope; it is such a hope as disturbs not the rest of either: yet when the time is come for the soul to be re-espoused, it is highly gratified by that second marriage, glad it is to see its old dear companion, as two friends after a long separation. And so much of the evidence of the soul's love to the body.

Secondly, Next we are to enquire into the grounds and reasons of its love and inclination to the body. And,

1. The fundamental ground and reason thereof will be found in their natural union with each other. There my text lays it: "No man ever yet hated his [own] flesh." Mark, the body is the soul's own; they are strictly married and related to each other: the soul hath a propriety in its body, these two make up, or constitute one person: True, they are not essentially one, they have far different natures, but they are personally one; and though the soul be what it was, after its separation, yet to make a man the who he was, *(i. e.)* the same complete and perfect person, they must be re-united. Hence springs its love to the body. Every man loves his own, John xvii. 19. All the world is in love with its own, and hence it cares to provide for its welfare, 1 Tim v, 8. "If any man provide not for his own, he is worse than an "infidel." For nature teacheth all men to do so. Why are children dearer to parents than to all others, but because they are their own? Job xix. 17. But our wives, our children, our goods, are not so much our own, as our bodies are; this is the nearest of all natural unions.

And this is no more than necessary for the conservation of the species, else the body would be neglected, exposed, and quickly perish, being had in no more regard than any other body.

In this propriety and relation are involved the reasons and motives of our love to, and care over the body, which is no more than what is necessary to their preservation. For, were it not for this propriety and relation, no man would be at any

Digitized by Google

more cost or pains for his own body, than for that of a stranger. It is propriety which naturally draws love, care, and tenderness along with it; and these are ordered by the wisdom of providence, for the conservation of the body, which would quickly perish without it.

2. The body is the soul's ancient acquaintance, and intimate friend, with whom it hath assiduously and familiarly conversed from its beginning. They have been partners in each others comforts and sorrows. They may say to each other, as Miconius did to his colleague, with whom he had spent twenty years in the government of the *Thuringian church: Currimus, certavimus, laboravimus, pugnavimus, vicimus, et vixitmus conjunctissime;* We have run, striven, laboured, fought, overcome, and lived most intimately and lovingly together. Consuetude, and daily conversation, begets and conciliates friendship and love betwixt creatures of contrary natures: Let a lamb be brought up with a lion, and the lion will express a tenderness towards it, much more the soul to its own body.

3. The body is the soul's house, and beloved habitation, where it was born, and hath lived ever since it had a being, and in which it hath enjoyed all its comforts, natural and supernatural, which cannot but strengthen the souls engagement to it. Upon this account the apostle calls it the soul's home, 2 Cor. v. 6. "Whilst we are at home in the body." It is true, this house is not so comfortable an habitation, that it should be much desired by many souls; we may say of many gracious souls, that they pay a dear rent for the house they dwell in: or as it was said of Galba, *Anima Galbae male habitat*, their souls are but ill accommodated; but yet it is their home, and therefore beloved by them.

4. The body is the soul's instrument by which it doth its work and business in the world, both natural and religious, Rom. vi. 13. Through the bodily senses it takes in all the natural comforts of this world, and by the bodily members it performs all its duties and services. When these are broken and laid aside by death, the soul knows it can work no more in that way it now doth, John ix. 4. Eccl. ix. 10. Natural men love their bodies for the natural pleasures, they are instrumental to convey to their souls; and spiritual men, for the use and service they are of to their own, and other souls, Phil. i. 23.

5. The body is the soul's partner in the benefit of Christ's purchases. It was bought with the same price, 1 Cor. vi. 20. sanctified by the same Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 23. interested in the same promises, Matth. xxii. 32. and designed for the same

Digitized by Google

glory, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. So that we may say of it as it was said of Augustine and his friend Alippius, they are *sanguine Christi conglutinati*, glewed together by the blood of Christ. And thus of the grounds and reasons of its love.

Infer. 1. Is it so? *Learn hence the mighty strength and prevalence of divine love, which over powering all natural affections, doth not only enable the souls of men to take their separation from the body patiently, but to long for it ardently*, Phil. i. 23. While some need patience to die, others need it as much to live, 2 Thes. iii. 5. It is said, Rev. xii. 11. "They loved not their lives." And indeed, on these terms they first closed with Christ, Luke xii. 26. "to hate their lives for his sake," *(i. e.)* to love them in so remiss a degree, that whenever they shall come in competition with Christ, to regard them no more than the things we hate.

The love of Christ is to be the supreme love, and all others to be subordinate to it, or quenched by it. It is not its own comfort in the body, it principally and ultimately designs and aims at, but Christ's glory; and if this may be furthered by the death of the body, its death thereupon becomes as eligible to the soul as its life, Phil. i. 20. Oh! this is an high pitch of grace, a great attainment, to say as one did, *vixere renuo, ut Christo vivam;* I refuse life, to be with Christ: Or another, when he was asked whether he was willing to die? answered, *illius est nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad Christium;* let him be loth to die, that is loth to go to Christ. So, 2 Cor. v. 8. "We are "willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the "Lord."

It is not every Christian that can arrive to this degree of love, though they love Christ sincerely, yet they shrink from death cowardly, and are loth to be gone. There are two sorts of grounds upon which christians may be loth to be unbodied; 1. Sinful. 2. Allowable.

1. The sinful and unjustifiable grounds are such as these, *viz.* (1.) Guilt upon the conscience, which will damp and discourage the soul, and make it loth to die. It arms death with terror, "the sting of death is sin." (2.) Unmortified affections to the world, I mean in such a degree as is necessary to sweeten death, and make a man a volunteer in that sharp engagement with that last, and dreadful enemy. It is with our hearts as with fuel; if green, and full of sap, it will not burn; but if that be dried up, it catches presently. Mortification is the drying up of carnal affections to the creature, which is that which resists death, as green wood doth the fire. (3.) The

Digitized by Google

weakness and cloudiness of faith. You need faith to die by, as well as live by, Heb. xi. 13. *All these died in faith.* The less strength there is in faith, the more in death. A strong believer welcomes the messengers of death, when a weak one, unless extraordinarily assisted, trembles at them.

2. There are grounds on which we may desire a longer continuance in the body, warrantably and allowably: As (1.) to do him yet more service in our bodies, before we lay them down. Thus the saints have pleaded for longer life, Psal. xxx. 9. Psal. lxxxviii. 11, 12, 13. and Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19. (2.) To see the clouds of God's anger dispelled, whether public or personal, and a clear light break out e'er we die; Psal. xxvii. 13. (3.) They may desire, with submission, to out-live the days of persecution, and not to be delivered into the hands of cruel men, but come to their graves in peace, Psal. xxxi. 15. and 2 Thess. iii. 2. that they may be delivered from absurd men.

3. But though some Christians shun death upon a sinful account, and others upon a justifiable one; yet others there are, who seeing their title clear, their work done, and relishing the joys of heaven, in the prelibations of faith, are willing to be uncloathed, and to be with Christ. Their love to Christ hath extinguished in them the love of life; and they can say with Paul, Acts xxi. 13. *I am ready.* Ignatius longed to come to those beasts that were to devour him; and so many of the primitive Christians: Christ was so dear, that their lives were cheap, and low-prized things for this enjoyment. And here indeed is the glory and triumph of a Christian's faith and love to Christ: For (1.) it enables him to part chearfully with what he sees and feels, for what his eyes never yet saw, 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom "having not seen, ye love." (2.) To part with what is dearest on earth, and lies nearest the heart of all he enjoys, for Christ's sake. (3.) To reconcile his heart to what is most abhorrent and formidable to nature. (4.) To endure the greatest of pains and torments to be with him. (5.) To cast himself into the vast ocean of eternity, the most amazing change, to be with Christ. Oh the glorious conquests of love!

Infer. 2. *Then the apostacy of unregenerate professors, in times of imminent danger, is not to be wondered at.* They will, and must warp from Christ, when their lives are in hazard for him. The love of the body will certainly prevail over their love to Christ and religion. *Amor meus pondus meum.* Self-love will now draw. Love is the weight of the soul, which inclines and determines it, in the competition of interests, and the predominant interest always carries it. Every unregenerate professor

Digitized by Google

loves his own life more than Christ, prefers his body before his soul; such an one may, upon divers accounts, as education, example, flight convictions of conscience, or ostentation of gifts, fall into a profession of religion, and continue a long time in that profession, before he visibly recede from Christ; *hope* of the resurrection of the interest of religion in the world; *shame* of retracting his profession; *applause* of his zeal and constancy in higher trials, the peace of his own conscience, and many such motives, may prevail with a carnal professor to endure a while; but, when dangers of life come to an height, they are gone, Matth. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. And therefore our Lord tells us, that they "who hate not their lives, cannot be his disciples," Luke 12, 26. Now will they lose their lives by saving them, Matth. xvi. 25. and the reasons are plain and forcible: For,

1. Now is the proper season for the predominant love to be discovered, it can be hid no longer: and the love of life is the predominant love in all such persons; for do but compare it with their love to Christ, and it will easily be found so. They love their lives truly and really, they love Christ but feignedly and pretendedly; and the real will, and must prevail over the feigned love. They love their lives fervently and intensely, they love Christ but coldly and remissly: And the fervent love will prevail over the remiss love. Their love to their bodies hath a root in themselves, their love to Christ hath no root in themselves, Matth. xiii. 21. And that which hath a root must needs out-last and out-live that which hath none.

2. Because when life is in hazard, conscience will work in them by way of discouragement; it will hint the danger of their eternal state to them, and tell them they may cast away their souls for ever in a bravado; for though the cause they are called to suffer for be good, yet their condition is bad; and if the condition be not good as well as the cause, a man is lost for ever, though he suffer for it, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Conscience, which encourages and supports the upright, will discourage and daunt the hypocrite, and tell him, he is not on the same terms in sufferings that other men are.

3. Because then all the springs by which their profession was fed and maintained, fail and dry up. Now the wind that was in their backs is come about, and blows a storm in their faces; there are no preferments nor honours now to be had from religion. These mens sufferings are a perfect surprize to them, for they never counted the cost, Luke xiv. 28. Now they must

Digitized by Google

ſtand alone, and reſiſt unto blood, and ſacrifice all viſibles for inviſibles; and this they can never do.

Oh therefore, profeſſors, look to your hearts, try their predominant love; compare your love to Chriſt with that to your lives. Now the like queſtion will be put to you, that once was put to Peter, John xxi. 15. "Loveſt thou me more than "theſe?" What ſay you to this? You think now, you do, but, alas your love is not yet brought to the fire to be tried: you think you hate ſin, but will you be able to ſtrive unto blood againſt ſin? Heb. xii. 4. Will you chuſe ſuffering rather than ſin? Job xxxvi. 21. O try your love to Chriſt, before God bring it to the trial. Sure I am, the love of life will make you warp in the hour of temptation; except,

1. You ſat down and counted the coſt of religion before-hand: if you ſet out in proceſſion only for a walk, not for a journey; if you go to ſea for recreation, not for a voyage; if you be mounted among other proceſſors, only to take the air, and not to engage an enemy in ſharp and bloody encounters, you are gone.

2. Except you live by faith, and not by ſenſe, 2 Cor. iv. 18. "Whilſt we look not at the things that are ſeen." You muſt balance preſent ſufferings with future glory. You muſt go by that account and reckoning, Rom. viii. 18. or you are gone. "Now the juſt ſhall live by faith;" and if faith do not ſupport, your fears will certainly ſink you.

3. Except you be ſincere and plain-hearted in religion, driving no deſign in it but to ſave your ſouls; you may ſee your lot in that example, 2 Tim. iv. 10. "Demas hath forſaken me." O take heed of a cunning, deceitful, double heart in religion; be plain, be open, care not if your ends lie open to the eyes of all the world.

4. Except you experience the power of religion in your own ſouls, as well as wear the name of it. O my brethren, it is not a name to live that will do you ſervice now. Many ſhips are gone down to the bottom, for all the brave names of the *Succeſs*, the *Proſperous*, the *Happy Return*, and ſo will you. There is a knowing of ourſelves by taſte and real experience, Heb. x. 34. which doth a ſoul more ſervice in a ſuffering hour, than all the ſplendid names and titles in the world.

5. Except you make it your daily work to crucify the fleſh, deny ſelf for Chriſt, in all the forms and intereſts of it. He that cannot deny himſelf, will deny Jeſus Chriſt, Matth. xvi. 24. "Let him deny himſelf, take up his croſs, and follow me," elſe

Digitized by Google

he cannot be my disciple. Ponder these things in your hearts, whilst yet God delays the trial.

Infer. 3. If the souls of men be naturally so strongly inclined and affected towards the body; *Then hence you may plainly see the wisdom of God in all the afflictions and burdens he lays upon his people in this world, and find that all is but enough to wean off their souls from their bodies, and make them willing to part with them.*

The life of the saints in this world, is generally a burdened and a groaning life; 2 Cor. v. 2. "In this tabernacle we groan, "being burdened." Here the saints feel, (1.) A burden of sin, Rom. vii. 24. this is a dead and a sinking weight. (2.) A burden of affliction; of this all are partakers, Heb. xii. though not all in an equal degree, or in the same kind, yet all have their burdens equal to, and even beyond their own strength to support it; 2 Cor. i. 8. "pressed above measure." (3.) A burden of inward troubles for sin, and outward troubles in the flesh both together, so had Job, Heman, David, and many of the saints.

Certainly this befals them not, (1.) Casually, Job v. 6. "It "rises not out of the dust:" (2.) Nor because God loves and regards them not, for they are fruits of his love; Heb. xii. 6. "Whom he loveth he correcteth:" (3.) Nor because he takes pleasure in our groans; Lam. iii. 34. "To tread under his feet "the prisoners of the earth,—the Lord hath no pleasure:" it is not for his own pleasure, but his childrens profit; Heb. xii. 10. And among the profits that result from these burdens, this is not the least, to make you less fond of the body than you would else be, and more willing to be gone to your everlasting rest. And certainly all the diseases and pains we endure in the body, whether they be upon inward or outward accounts, by passion or compassion from God or men, will be found but enough to wean us, and loose off our hearts from the fond love of life. Afflictions are bitter things to our taste, Ruth i. 20. so bitter, that Naomi thought a name of a contrary signification fitter for her afflicted condition; call me *Marah, i. e.* bitter, not *Naomi*, pleasant, beautiful. And the church, Lam. iii. 19. calls them wormwood and gall.

The great design of God in afflicting them, is the same that a tender mother projects in putting wormwood to her breast when she would wean the child.

It hath been observed by some discreet and grave ministers, that before their remove from one place to another, God hath

Digitized by Google

permitted and ordered some weaning providence to befal them; either denying wonted success to their labour, or alienating and cooling the affections of their people towards them, which not only makes the manner of their departure more easy, but the grounds of it more clear. Much so it falls out in our natural death, the comfort of the world is imbittered to us before we leave it; the longer we live in it, the less we shall like it. We overlive most of our comforts which engaged our hearts to it, that we may more freely take our leave of it. It were good for Christians to observe the voice of such providences as these, and answer the designs of them in a greater willingness to die.

1. Is thy body which was once hale and vigorous, now become a crazy, sickly, pained body to thee, neither useful to God, nor comfortable to thee? a tabernacle to groan and sigh in? and little hopes it will be recovered to a better temper; God hath ordained this to make thee willing to be divorced from it: the less desireable life is, the less formidable death will be.

2. Is thy estate decayed and blasted by providence, so that thy life which was once full of creature-comforts, is now filled with cares and anxieties? O it is a weaning providence to thee, and bespeaks thee the more chearfully to bid the world farewel. The less comfort it gives you, the less it shall entangle and engage you. We little know with what aking hearts, and pensive breasts, many of God's people walk up and down, though for religion, or reputation sake they put a good face upon it; but by these things, God is bespeaking and preparing them for a better state.

3. Is an husband, a wife, or dear children dead, and with them the comfort of life laid in the dust? why this the Lord sees necessary to do to persuade you to come after willingly? It is the cutting asunder thy roots in the earth, that thou mayest fall the more easily. O how many strokes must God give at our names, estates, relations, and health, before we will give way to the last stroke of death that fells us to the ground?

4. Do the times frown upon religion? Do all things seem to threaten stormy times at hand? Are desirable assemblies scattered? nothing but sorrows and sufferings to be expected in this world? by these things God will imbitter the earth, and sweeten heaven to his people.

5. Is the beauty and sweetness of Christian society defaced and decayed? That communion which was wont to be pithy, substantial, spiritual, and edifying, become either frothy or contentious, so that thy soul has no pleasure in it; this also is a

Digitized by Google

weaning providence to our souls; Strigelius desired to die that he might be freed *ab implacabilibus theologorum odiis*, from the wranglings and contentions that were in his time. Our fond affection to the body requires all this, and much more, to wean and mortify them.

Infer. 4. *How comfortable is the doctrine of the resurrection to believers, which assures them of receiving their bodies again, though they part with them for a time!*

Believers must die as well as others; their union with Christ privileges them not from a separation from their bodies, Rom. viii. 10. Heb. ix. 27. But yet they have special grounds of consolation against this doleful separation above all others. For,

1. Though they part with them, yet they part in hopes of receiving them again, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. They take not a final leave of them when they die. Husbandmen cast their seed-corn into the earth chearfully and willingly, because they part with it in hope; so should we when we commit our bodies to the earth at death.

2. Though death separates these dear friends from each other, yet it cannot separate either the one or other from Christ, Luke xx. 37, 38. "I am the God of Abraham," *&c.* Your very dust is the Lord's, and the grave rots not the bond of the covenant.

3. The very same body we lay down at death, we shall assume again at the resurrection; not only the same specifical, but the same numerical body; Job xix. 25, 26. "With these eyes shall "I see God."

4. The unbodied soul shall not find the want of its body, so as to afflict or disquiet it; nor the body the want of its soul; but the one shall be at rest in heaven, and the other sweet asleep in the grave; and all that long interval shall slide away without any afflicting sense of each others absence. The time will be long, Job. xiv. 12. but if it were longer, it cannot be afflicting, considering, how the soul is cloathed immediately, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. and how the body sleeps sweetly in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14.

5. When the day of their re-espousals is come, the soul will find the body so transformed and improved, that it shall never receive prejudice from it any more, but a singular addition to its happiness and glory. Now it clogs us: Mat. xxvi. 41. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." It encumbers us with cares to provide for it, and eats up time and thoughts; but then it will be a spiritual body, 1 Cor. xv. 43. like to the angels for manner of subsistence, Luke xx. 35, 36. 1 Cor. vi. 13. and, which is the highest step of glory, like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. Well therefore might the

Digitized by Google

Father say, *Resurrectio mortuorum est consolatio Christianorum*; the resurrection of the dead is the consolation of Christians.

Use second, of reproof.

In the next place, let me press you to regulate your love to your bodies, by the rules of religion and right reason: I must press you to love them, though nature itself teacheth you so to do; but I press you to love them as Christians, as men that understand the right use and improvement of their bodies. There are two sorts of errors in our love to the body, one in defect, the other in excess; both come fitly here to be censured and healed.

First, Some offend in the defect of love to their own bodies, who use them as if they had no love for them, whose souls act as if they were enemies to their own bodies: they do not formally and directly hate them, but consequentially and eventually they may be said to hate them, and that,

(1.) By defiling them with filthy lusts; so the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. vi. 18. "Every sin that a man doth, is without the body; but he that committeth adultery sinneth against his own "body:" In other sins it is the instrument, but here it is both instrument and object; not only God, but your own bodies are abused, and wronged by it. The body may be considered two ways, Either,

1. As our vessel; or
2. As the Spirit's temple.

1. As our vessel or instrument for natural and spiritual uses and services: and on that account we should not injure or defile it, 1 Thess. iv. 4, 5. but possess it in sanctification and honour. The lusts of uncleanness, gluttony, and drunkenness, quench the vigour, blast the beauty, and destroy the health and honour of the body; and so render it both naturally and morally unfit for the service and use of the soul.

2. And the injury is yet greater, if we consider it as the Spirit's temple. On this ground the apostle strongly convinceth, and dissuadeth Christians from these abuses of the body, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16. He argues from the dignity God will put upon our bodies by the resurrection, ver. 13, 14. They are to be transformed, and made like unto Christ's glorious body; and from the honour he has already put upon the bodies of the saints in their union with Christ, ver. 15, 16. They, as well as the soul, are ingrafted into him, and joined with him; they are his temples, to be dedicated, hallowed, and consecrated to his service. O let them not be made a sink for lusts, or mere strainers for meat and drink.

Digitized by Google

(2.) By macerating them with covetous lusts, denying them their due comforts and refreshments, and unmercifully burdening them with labours and sorrows about things that perish. (1.) Some deny their bodies due comforts and refreshments, which the natural and positive laws of God both allow and command. Their souls are cruel step-mothers to their bodies, and keep them too short; not out of a prudent and Christian design to starve their lusts, but to advance their estates. Of this Solomon speaks, Eccl. vi. 22. "There is an evil which I have seen "under the sun, and it is common among men; A man to whom "God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that he want-"eth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth; yet God giv-"eth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it. "This is vanity, and it is an evil disease." *Tenacity* is a disease of the soul, like that of a *dyscrasy* in the stomach, which so indisposeth it that it cannot receive with any appetite or delight the best refreshments at a plentiful table. (2.) And others there are that wrong and abuse their own bodies, by laying unreasonable and unmerciful loads upon them, especially loads of grief and sorrow, wasting and weakening them beyond all rules of reason or religion. If a friend or relation die, they have less mercy on their own bodies than a conscientious man hath on the horse he rides. Cares and sorrows are as deadly to the body as a sword, 1 Tim. vi. 10. Intense and immoderate griefs about worldly losses and crosses have slain their ten thousands; and, which is strange, the soul seems to take a certain kind of pleasure in loading and tormenting the body. There is a real truth in that strange expression of * Seneca, "Sorrow itself hath a "certain kind of pleasure attending it."

The souls of some mourners do willingly excite and provoke their own grief, when they begin to abate, which is like the whetting of the knife that grows dull, to make it cut the deeper into the body. Thus, as † Seneca observes, "some pa-"rents that have lost their beloved children, willingly call to "mind their pleasant sayings, and pretty actions to find a kind "of pleasure in a fresh shower of tears for them;" when, poor hearts! Sorrow hath so broken them already, that they need consolations under their present sorrows, rather than irritations of new ones. And the soul's unmercifulness to the body, is in such causes farther discovered by its obstinate refusal of all that

* *Inest quiddam dulce tristitiæ.* Ep. 806.

† *Cum occurrant sermones eorum jucundi, conversatio blanda, officiosa pietas: tunc oculi velut in gaudio relaxantur.* Id. ib.

Digitized by Google

is comforting and relieving. So it is said of Rachel, Jer. xxxi. 15. "Rachel weeping for her children, would not be comforted, "because they were not." So the Israelites hearkened not unto Moses, because of the anguish of spirit, and the cruel bondage, Exod. vi. 9. Thus we studiously rake together and exasperate whatsoever is piercing, wounding, and overwhelming; and shut our ears to all that is relieving and suporting, which is cruelty to our own bodies, and that which hath so far broken the health and strength of some bodies, that they are never like to be useful instruments to the soul any more in this world; such deep and desperate wounds have their own souls given them by immoderate grief, as will never be perfectly healed, but by the resurrection. Of those wounds the body may say, as it is Zech. xiii. 6. These are the wounds "with which I was wounded in the "house (or by the hand) of my friend;" thus my own soul hath dealt cruelly and unmercifully with me.

Secondly, Others offend in the excess and extravagancy of their love to the body, and these are a hundred to one in number with those that sin in defect of love. My friends, upon a due search, it will be found, that the love of our souls generally degenerates into fondness and folly: there is but little well-tempered and ordinary love found among men. We make fondlings, yea, we make idols of our bodies; we rob God, yea, our own souls, to give to the body. It is not a natural and kindly heat of love, but a mere feverish heat, which preys upon the very spirits of religion, which is found with many of us. The feverish distemper may be discovered, by the beating of our pulse, in three or four particulars.

(1.) This appears by our sinful indulgence to our whinning appetites. We give the flesh whatsoever it craves, and can deny it nothing it desires; pampering the body, to the great injury and hazard of the soul. Some have their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, as it is, Eph. ii. 3. trading only in those things that please and pamper the flesh: "They sow to the "flesh," Gal. vi. 8. *i. e.* all their studies and labours are but the *sowing of the seeds of pleasure to the flesh*. Not a handful of spiritual seed sown in prayer for the soul all the day long: what the body craves, the obsequious soul, like a slave, is at its beck to give it; Tit. iii. 3. "Serving divers lusts and pleasures;" attending to every knock and call, to fulfil the desires of the flesh. O how little do these men understand the life of religion, or the great design of Christianity! which consists in mortifying, and not pampering and gratifying the body, Rom. xiv. 13, 14. And according to that rule, all serious Christians or-

Digitized by Google

der their bodies, giving them what is needful to keep them serviceable and useful to the soul, but not gratifying their irregular desires; giving what their wants, not what their wantonness calls for. So Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 27. "I beat it down, and "keep it under;" he understood it as his servant, not his master; He knew that Hagar would quickly perk up, and domineer over Sarah, expect more attendance than the soul, except it were kept under: these two verbs, ὑπωπιάζω and δουλαγωγω, are very emphatical; the former signifies to make it black and blue with buffeting, the other to bring it under by checks and rebukes, as masters that understand their place and authority use to do with insolent and wanton servants.

It was a rare expression of a Heathen, *Major sum, et ad majora natus, quam ut corporis mei sim mancipium;* I am greater, and born to greater things, than that I should be a slave to my body. And it was the saying of a pious divine, when he felt the flesh rebellious and wanton, *Ego faciam, asselle, ut ne calcitres;* I will make thee, thou ass, that thou shalt not kick. I know the superstitious Papists place much of religion in these external things, but though they abuse them to an ill purpose, there is a necessary and lawful use of these abridgments and restraints upon the body; and it will be impossible to mortify and starve our lusts without a due rigour and severity to our flesh. But how little are many acquainted with these things? They deal with their bodies as David with Adonijah, of whom it is said, 1 Kings i. 6. His father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so? And just so our flesh requites us, by its rebellions and treasons against the soul; it seeks the life of the soul, which seeks nothing more than its content and pleasure: this is not ordinate love, but fondness and folly, and what we shall bitterly repent for at last.

(2.) It appears by our sparing and favouring of them, in the necessary uses and services we have for them in religion. Many will rather starve their souls, than work and exercise their bodies, or disturb their sluggish rest: thus the idle excuses and pretences of endangering our health, oftentimes put by the duties of religion, or at least lose the fittest and propereſt season for them: we are lazying upon our beds, when we should be wrestling upon our knees: the world is suffered to get the start of religion in the morning, and so religion is never able to overtake it all the day long. This was none of David's course, he prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried, Psal. cxix. 147. and Psal. v. 3. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning,

Digitized by Google

"O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, "and will look up." And indeed we should consecrate unto God the freshest and fittest parts of our time, when our bodily senses are most vigorous; and we would do so, (except God by his providence disable us), were our hearts fully set for God, and religion lay with weight upon our spirits.

Some I confess, cannot receive this injunction, being naturally disabled by prevailing infirmities; but those that can, ought to do so. But O how many slothful excuses doth the flesh invent to put off duty! We shall injure our health, *&c.* O the hypocrisy of such pleas! If profit or pleasure calls us up, we have no shifts, but can rise early, and sit up late.

O friends, why hath God given you bodies, if not to waste and wear them out in his service, and the service of your own souls! If your bodies must not be put to it, and exercised this way, where is the mercy of having a body? If a stately horse were given you on this condition, that you must not ride or work him, what benefit would such a gift be to you? Your bodies must and will wear out, and it is better to wear them with working, than with rusting: we are generally more solicitous to live long, than to live usefully and serviceably; and it may be our health had been more precious in the eyes of God, if it had been less precious in our own eyes. It is just with God to destroy that health with diseases, which he sees we would cast away in slothfulness and idleness. Think with thyself, had such a soul as Timothy's or Gaius's been blest with such a body as thine, so strong and vigorous, so apt and able for service, they would have honoured God more in it in a day, than perhaps you do in a year. Certainly this is not love, but laziness; not a due improvement, but a sinful neglect and abuse of the body, to let it rust out into idleness, which might be employed so many ways for God, for your own and others souls. Well, remember death will shortly dissolve them, and then they can be of no more use; and if you expect God should put glory and honour upon them at the resurrection, use them for God now, with a faithful self-denying diligence.

(3.) It appears by our cowardly shrinking from dangers that threaten them, when the glory of God, our own and others salvation, bid us expose and not regard them. Some there are, that rather than they will adventure their flesh to the rage of man, will hazard their souls to the wrath of God *. They are

* Here the soul receives a deadly wound upon itself, to ward it off from the body. So did Spira.

Digitized by Google

too tender to suffer pain or restraint for Christ, but consider not what sufferings are prepared for the fearful and unbelieving in the world to come, Rev. xxi. 8. How many sad examples do the church-histories of antient and latter times afford us, of men, who consulting with flesh and blood in time of danger, have, in pity to their bodies, ruined their souls!

There be but few like-minded with Paul, who set a low price upon his liberty or life for Christ, Acts xx. 24. or with those worthy Jews, Dan. iii. 28. who yielded their bodies to preserve their consciences. Few of Chrysostom's mind, who told the empress, *Nil nisi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but sin; or of Basil's, who told the emperor, God threatned hell, whereas he threatned but a prison. That is a remarkable rule that Christ gives us, Mat. x. 28. The sum of it is, to set God against man, the soul against the body, and hell against temporal sufferings; and so surmounting these low fleshly considerations, to cleave to our duty in the face of dangers. You read, Gal. i. 16. how in pursuit of duty, though surrounded with danger, Paul would not confer, or *consult with flesh and blood, i. e.* ask its opinion which were best, or stay for its consent, till it were willing to suffer; he understood not that the flesh had any voice at the council-table in his soul, but willing or unwilling, if duty call for it, he was resolved to hazard it for God.

We have a great many little politicians among us, who think to husband their lives and liberties a great deal better than other plain-hearted, and too forward Christians do: but these politics will be their perdition, and their craft will betray them to ruin. They will lose their lives by saving them, when others will save them by losing them, Matth. x. 39. For the interest of the body depends on, and follows the safety of the soul, as the cabin doth the ship.

O my friends, let me beg you not to love your bodies into hell, and your souls too for their sakes: be not so scared at the sufferings of the body, as, with poor Spira, to dash them both against the wrath of the great and terrible God. Most of those souls that are now in hell, are there upon the account of their indulgence to the flesh, they could not deny the flesh, and now are denied by God. They could not suffer from men, and now must suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

(4.) In a word; it appears we love them fondly and irregularly, in that we cannot with any patience think of death and separation from them. How do some men fright at the very name of death! And no arguments can persuade them seriously

Digitized by Google

to think of an unbodied, and separated state. It is as death to them, to bring their thoughts close to that ungrateful subject. A Christian that loves his body regularly and moderately, can look into his own grave with a composed mind, and speak familiarly of it, as Job xvii. 14. And Peter speaks of the putting off of his body by death; as a man would of the putting off of his cloaths at night, 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. And certainly such men have a great advantage above all others, both as to the tranquillity of their life and death. You know a parting time must come, and the more fond you are of them, the more bitter and doleful that time will be. Nothing, except the guilt and terrible charges of conscience, put men into terrors at death, more than our fondness of the body. I do confess, christless persons have a great deal of reason to be shy of death; their dying day is their undoing day: but for Christians to startle and fright at it, is strange, considering how great a friend death will be to them that are in Christ. What are you afraid of? What, to go to Christ? to be freed of sin and affliction too soon? Certainly this hath not been so comfortable a habitation to you, that you should be loth to change it for a heavenly one.

Use third, of exhortation.

To conclude; Seeing there is so strict a friendship and tender affection betwixt soul and body, let me persuade every soul of you to express your love to the body, by labouring to get union with Jesus Christ, and thereby to prevent the utter ruin of both to all eternity.

Souls, if you love yourselves, or the bodies you dwell in, shew it by your preventing care in season, lest they be cast away for ever. How can you say you love them, when you daily expose them to the everlasting wrath of God, by employing them as weapons of unrighteousness, to fight against him that formed them? You feed and pamper them on earth, you give them all the delight and pleasures you can procure for them in this world; but you take no care what shall become of them, nor your souls neither, after death hath separated them. Oh cruel souls! cruel, not to others, but to yourselves, and to your own flesh, which you pretend so much love to! Is this your love to your bodies? What, to employ them in Satan's service on earth, and then to be cast as a prey to him for ever in hell? You think the rigour and mortification of the saints, their abstemiousness and self-denial, their cares, fears, and diligence, to be too great severity to their bodies: but they know these are the most real evidences of their true love to them; they love them too well to cast them away as you do. Alas! your love to the body doth

Digitized by Google

not consist in feeding, and cloathing, and pleasing it; but in getting it united to Christ, and made the *temple of the Holy Ghost*: in using it for God, and dedicating it to God.

I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies living sacrifices to God, which is your reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. The soul should look upon the body as a wise parent upon a rebellious or wanton child, that would, if left to itself, quickly bring itself to the gallows; the father looks on him with compassion and melting bowels, and saith, with the rod in his hand, and tears in his eyes, "My child, my "naughty, disobedient, headstrong child, I resolve to chastise "thee severely, I love thee too well to suffer thee to be ruin-"ed, if my care or correction may prevent it." So should our souls evidence their love to, and care over their own rebellious flesh. It is cruelty, not love or pity, to indulge them to their own destruction.

Except you have gracious souls, you shall never have glorified bodies: except your souls be united with Christ, the happiness of your bodies as well as your souls, is lost to all eternity. Know you not that the everlasting condition of your bodies follows, and depends on the interest your souls now get in Christ? Oh that this sad truth might sink deep into all our considerations this day; that if your bodies be snares to your souls, and your souls be now regardless of the future state of themselves, and them; assuredly they will have a bitter parting at death, a terrible meeting again at the resurrection, and horrid reflections upon each other, naturally charging their ruin upon each other to all eternity. Whilst they that are in Christ, part in hope, meet with joy, and bless God for each other for evermore.

* *

2 PET. i. 13, 14. *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance. Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.*

AT the tenth verse of this chapter, the apostle sums up his foregoing precepts and exhortations in one great and most important duty, the "making sure of their calling and e-"lection." This exhortation he enforceth on them by a most solemn and weighty motive, ver. 11. "Even an abundant en-"trance into the everlasting kingdom." No work of greater

Digitized by Google

necessity or difficulty, than to make sure our salvation, no argument more forcible and prevalent, than an easy and free entrance into glory at death, an εὐθανασια, a sweet and comfortable dissolution, to enter the port of glory before the wind, with our full lading of comfort, peace, and joy in believing, our sails full, and our streamers flying: Oh! how much better is this, than to ly wind-bound, I mean heart-bound, at the harbour's mouth! tossed up and down with fears, doubts, and manifold temptations, making many a board to fetch the harbour; for so much is signified in his figurative and allusive expression, ver. 11.

And for their encouragement in this great and difficult work, he engageth himself by promise to give them all the assistance he can, whilst God should continue his life; and knowing that would be but a little while, he resolves to use his utmost endeavour to secure these things in their memories after his death, that they might not die with him. This is the general scope and order of the words.

Wherein more particularly we have,

1. His exemplary industry and diligence in his ministerial work.

2. The consideration stimulating and provoking him thereunto.

1. His exemplary industry and diligence in his ministerial work. In which two things are remarkable, *viz.* (1.) The quality of his work, which was * *to stir them up, by putting them in remembrance*, to keep the heavenly flame of love and zeal lively upon the altar of their hearts. He well knew what a sleepy disease the best Christians are troubled with, and therefore he had need to be stirring them up, and awaking them to their duty. (2.) The constancy of his work: *as long as I am in this tabernacle; i. e.* as long as I live in this world. The body is here called a tabernacle, in respect of its moveableness and frailty, and in opposition to that house made without hands, *eternal in the heavens.* And it is observable how he limits and bounds his serviceableness to them, by his commoration in his tabernacle or body, as well knowing after death he could be no longer useful to them or any others in this world. Death puts an end to all our ministerial usefulness: but till that time he judged it meet, and becoming him, to be aiding and assisting their faith: our life and labour must end together.

2. We have here the motive, or consideration, stimulating and

* Διεγειραι, signifies to raise up, or awake, *i. e.* your minds, which are, as it were, sleepy or slumbering, and dull, &c. *Pool's Synopsis.*

Digitized by Google

provoking him to this diligence; "knowing that I must shortly put off this tabernacle, even as the Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." In which words he gives an account of, (1.) The speediness; (2.) necessity; (3.) voluntariness of his death, and the way and means by which he knew it. All these must be considered singly and apart, and then valued all together, as they amount to a weighty argument or motive to excite him to diligence in his duty.

(1.) He reflects upon the speediness or near approach of his death. "I must [† shortly] put off this my tabernacle;" which is a form of speech of the same importance with that of Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6. "The time of my departure is at hand," my time in the body is almost at an end.

(2.) The necessity of his death: It is not I *may*, but I *must* put off this my tabernacle; yea, I must put it off shortly; for so the Lord hath shewed him: Christ had signified it expressly to him, John xxi. 18, 19. And beside this, most expositors think this clause refers to some special vision or revelation which Peter had of the time and manner of his own death: so that besides the natural necessity, or the inevitableness of his death by the law of nature, he was certified of it by special revelation. We have here also,

(3.) The voluntariness of his death; for voluntariness is consistent enough with the necessity of the event. I must put off, or lay down my tabernacle; he saith not, I must be torn, or rent by violence from it, but I must *depose*, or *lay it down*. ‡ Camero will have the word here used for death, properly to signify the laying down of one's garments: he made no more of putting off his body than his garment.

Upon the consideration of the whole matter, the speediness of his death which he knew to be at hand; the necessity of it, that when it came he must be gone from, and could be no more useful to them; and his own inclination to be with Christ in a better state, being as willing to be gone, as a weary traveller to be at home; he judged it meet, or becoming him, as he was called of Christ to feed his sheep, as he was gifted extraordina-

† Ταχινὴ *brevi futurum*. Every Christian knows not the time of his death, as Peter did by special revelation.——But though we know it not by a word spoken to us in particular, we know it by a word written for all in common, Eccl. ix. 5. "The living know that they must die."

‡ He calls it a putting off or laying down, thereby signifying his willingness to die for Christ. *Pool.*

Digitized by Google

rily for the church's service, full of spiritual excellencies, all which in a short time would be taken away from them by death: I say, upon all these accounts, he could not but judge it meet to be stirring them up, and every way striving to be as useful as he could. Hence the note will be,

Doct. *How strong soever the affections and inclinations of souls are to the fleshly tabernacles they now live in, yet they must put them off, and that speedily.*

(1.) *The certainty of death*, Job xvi. 22.

The point lies very plain before us in the scriptures. That is a remarkable expression we have in Job xvi. 22. "When a few years "‖ are come, I shall go the way whence I shall "not return." In the Hebrew it is, "‖ "When "the years of number, or my numbred years are come; years "so numbred, that they are circumscribed in a very short period "of time." When those few years are past, then I must go to my long home, my everlasting abode, never more to return to this world: "The way whence I shall not return;" elsewhere called "the way of all flesh," Josh. xxiii. 15. and "the way of "all the earth," 1 Kings ii. 2.

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain "the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death, and "there is no discharge in that war," Eccl. viii. 8. By spirit understand the natural spirit, or breath of life, which, as I shewed before, connects or ties the soul and body together. This *spirit* no man can retain in the day of death. *We can* (as one speaks) *as well stop the chariot of the sun when posting to night, and chase away the shadows of the evening, as escape this hour of darkness that is coming upon us* *. A man may escape the wars by pleading privilege of years, or weakness of body, or the king's protection, or by sending another in his room; but in this war the press is so strict, that it admits no dispensation; young or old, weak or strong, willing or unwilling, all is one, into the field we must go, and look that last and most dreadful enemy in the face. It is in vain to think of sending another in our room, for no man dieth by proxy; or to think of compounding with death, as those self-deluded fools did, Isa. xxviii. 15. who thought they had been discharged of the debt by seeing the serjeant: No, no: there is no discharge in that war. *Nihil prodest ora concludere, et vitam*

‖ *Anni numeri* (i. e.) *qui numerati sunt adeo ut brevissimi temporis circumscripti.*

* No diligence avoids, no happiness subdues, and no power overcomes death, says Seneca.

Digitized by Google

fugientem retinere, saith Hierom on that text: Let us shut our mouths never so close, struggle against death never so hard, there is no more retaining the spirit, than a woman can retain the fruit of her womb, when the full time of her deliverance is come. Suppose a man were sitting upon a throne of majesty, surrounded with armed guards, or in the midst of a college of expert and learned physicians, death will pass all these guards to deliver thee the fatal message: Neither can arts help thee, when nature itself gives thee up.

The law of mortality binds all, good and bad, young and old, the most useful and desirable saints, whom the world can worst spare, as well as useless and undesirable sinners, Rom. viii. 10. "And if Christ (or though Christ) be in you, the body is dead "because of sin." Peter himself must put off his tabernacle, for they are but tabernacles, frail and moveable frames, not built for continuance; these will drop off from our souls, as the shells fall off from the bird in the nest; be our earthly tabernacles never so strong or pleasant, we must depose them, and that shortly; our lease in them will quickly expire, we have but a short term. James iv. 14. like a thin mist in the morning, which the sun presently dissipates; this is a metaphor chosen from the air: You have one from the land, where the swift post runs, Job ix. 25. So doth our life from stage to stage, till its journey be finished; and a third from the waters, there sail the swift ships, Job ix. 26. which weighing anchor, and putting into the sea, continually lessen the land, till at last they have quite lost sight of it: from the fire, Psal. lviii. 4. The lives of men are as soon extinct as a blaze made with dry thorns, which is almost as soon out as in. Thus you see how the Spirit of God hath borrowed metaphors from all the elements of nature, to shadow forth the brevity, and frailty of that life we now live in these tabernacles: so that we may say as one did before us, *Nescio an dicenda sit vita mortalis, an vitalis mors*; I know not which to call it, a mortal life, or a living death.

(2.) *The speediness of death. The scriptures borrow metaphors from all the elements to this purpose.*

The continuance of these our tabernacles or bodies is short, whether we consider them *absolutely*, or *comparatively*.

1. *Absolutely*. If they should stand 70 or 80 years, which is the longest duration, Psal. xc. 10. how soon will that time run out? What are years that are past but as a dream that is vanished, or as the waters that are past away? it is *in fluxu conti-*

Digitized by Google

nuo: there is no stopping its swift course, or calling back a moment that is past. Death set out in its journey towards us the same hour we were born, and how near is it come this day to many of us? It hath us in chase, and will quickly fetch us up, and overtake us; but few stand so long as the utmost date.

2. *Comparatively.* Let us compare our time in these tabernacles, (1.) either with eternity, or with him who inhabits it, and it shrinks up into nothing; Psal. xxxix. 5. "Mine age is "nothing unto thee." So vast is the disproportion, that it seems not only little, but nothing at all. Or (2.) with the duration of the bodies of men in the first ages of the world, when they lived many hundred years in these fleshly tabernacles. The length of their life was the benefit of the world, because religion was then ἀπαλροπαραδοτον, a thing handed down from father to son; but certainly it would be no benefit to us that are in Christ, to be so long suspended the fruition of God in the everlasting rest.

The grounds and reasons of this necessity that lies upon all, to put off their earthly tabernacles so soon, are

1. The law of God, or his appointment.
2. The providence of God ordering it suitable to this appointment.

1. The law or appointment of God which came in force immediately upon the fall; Gen. ii. 17. "In the day that thou "eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And accordingly it took place upon all mankind immediately upon the first transgression, Rom. v. 12. *Death entred by sin.* The threatning was not his immediate, actual, personal death in the day that he should eat, but a state of mortality to commence from that time to him and his posterity; hence it is said, Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed to "all men once to die."

2. The providence of God ordering and framing the body of man suitably to this his appointment; * a frail, weak creature, having the seeds of death in his constitution: Thousands of diseases and infirmities are bred in his nature, and the smallest pore in his body is a door large enough to let in death. Hence his body is compared to a piece of cloth which moths have fretted, Psal. xxxix. 11. it is become a sorry rotten thing which

* We die daily, for some part of life is taken away daily, and then also when we increase, life decreases, for first we lose infancy, then youth, even to yesterday. Whatever part of time passes is lost.

Digitized by Google

cannot long hang together. And indeed it is a wonder it continues so long as it doth.

And both these, *viz.* the divine appointment and providence, are in pursuance of a double design, or for the payment of a twofold debt, which God owes to the first and to the second Adam.

(1.) By cutting off the life, or dissolving the tabernacles of wicked men, God pays that debt of justice owing to the first Adam's sinful posterity, whose sins cry daily to his justice to cut them off. Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death." And indeed it is admirable that his patience suffers ungodly men to live so long as they do, for he endures with much long-suffering, Rom. ix. 22. He sees all their sins, he is grieved at the heart with them; his forbearance doth but encourage them the more to sin against him; Eccl. viii. 11. "Because sentence," *&c.* yet forbears: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generati-"on," Psal. xcv. 10. And it is wonderful that he hath so much patience under such a load. Habbakkuk admired it, Hab. i. 13. "Thou art of purer eyes," *&c.* Yet he suffers them to spend lavishly upon his patience from year to year, but justice must do its office at last.

(2.) By cutting off the lives of good men, God pays to Christ the reward of his sufferings, the end of his death, which was to bring many sons to glory, Heb. ii. 10. Alas! it answers not Christ's end and intention in dying, to have his people so remote from him; John xvii. 24. "He would have them where "he is, that they might behold his glory." Two vehement desires are satisfied by this appointment of God, and its execution, *viz.*

1. Christ's.
2. The saints.

1. Christ's desires are satisfied; for this is the thing he all along kept his eye upon in the whole work of his mediation; it was to bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18. Tho' he be in glory, yet his mystical body is not full till all the elect be gathered in by conversion, and gathered home by glorification, Eph. i. 23. The church is his fulness. He is not fully satisfied till he see his seed, the souls he died for, safe in heaven; and then the debt due to him for all his sufferings is fully paid him, Isa. liii. 11. He sees the travail of his soul. As it is the greatest satisfaction, and pleasure a man is capable of in this world, to see a great design, which hath been long projecting and managing, at last, by an orderly conduct, brought to its perfection.

2. The desires of the saints are hereby satisfied, and their

Digitized by Google

weary souls brought to rest. Oh! what do gracious souls more pant after than the full enjoyment of God, and the visions of his face! the state of freedom from sin, and complete conformity to Jesus Christ! From the day of their espousals to Christ, these desires have been working in their souls. Love and patience have each acted its part in them, 2 Thess. iii. 5. Love hath put them into an holy ardor and longing to be with Christ: patience hath qualified and allayed those desires, and supported the soul under the delay. Love cries, Come, Lord, come; patience commands us to wait the appointed time. This appointed time, on which so great hopes and expectations depend, is the time of dissolving these tabernacles; for till then the soul's rest is suspended; and if it were perfectly freed from all other loads and burdens, both of sin and affliction, yet its very absence from Christ would alone make it restless: for it is with the soul in the body, as is with any other creature that is off its centre, it doth and must gravitate and propend, it is still moving and inclining farther, and feels not itself easy and at rest where it is, be its condition in other respects never so easy. 2 Cor. v. 6. "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent "from the Lord." You have a little shadow, or emblem of this in other creatures: You see the rivers, though they glide never so sweetly betwixt the fragrant banks of the most pleasant meadows in their course and passage, yet on they go towards the sea; and if they meet with never so many rocks or hills to resist their course, they will either strive to get a passage through them, or if that may not be, they will fetch a compass, and creep about them, and nothing can stop them till by a central force they have finished their weary course, and poured themselves into the bosom of the ocean. Or as it is with yourselves, when abroad from your habitations and relations: this may be pleasing a little while; but if every day might be a festival, it would not long please you, because you are not at home.

The main motives that persuade gracious souls to abide here, are to finish the work of their own salvation, and farther other mens; but as their evidences for heaven grow clearer to themselves, and their capacity of service less to others, so must their desires to be with Christ be more and more inflamed.

Now the case so standing, that Christ's condition in heaven, being a condition of desire and longing for the enjoyment of his people there, and all the glory of heaven would not content him without that; and the condition of his people on earth, being also a state of longing, groaning and panting to be with him, and all the pleasures and delights and comforts they have on earth,

Digitized by Google

will not content them without it: How wise and gracious an appointment of heaven is it, that these our tabernacles shall and must be put off, and that shortly! For hereby a full and mutual satisfaction is given to the restless desires both of Christ's heart and of theirs: See the reflected flames of love betwixt them, in Rev. xxii. "The spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him "that is athirst come; Behold, I come quickly. Even so, Lord "Jesus; Come quickly." Delays make the heart sad, Prov. xiii. 12. should our commoration on earth be long, our patience had need be much greater than it is; but under all our burdens here, this is our relief, it is but a little while, and all will be well, as well as our souls can desire to have it.

Infer. 1. Must we put off these tabernacles? Is death necessary and inevitable? *Then it is our wisdom to sweeten to ourselves that cup which we must drink; and make that as pleasant to us, as we can, which we know cannot be avoided.* Die we must, whether we be fit, or unfit, willing, or unwilling: It is to no purpose to shrug at the name, or shrink back from the thing. In all ages of the world, death hath swept the stage clean of one generation, to make room for another, and so it will from age to age, till the stage be taken down, in the general dissolution.

But though death be inevitable by all, it is not alike evil, bitter, and dreadful to all. Some tremble, others triumph, at the appearance of it. Some meet it half way, receive it as a friend, and can bid it welcome, and die by consent; making that the matter of their election, which, in itself, is necessary and unavoidable; so did Paul, Phil. i. 23. But others are drawn, or rent by plain violence from the body, Job xxvii. 8. when God draws out their souls.

That man is happy indeed, whose heart falls in with the appointment of God, so voluntarily and freely, as that he dare not only look death in the face with confidence, but go along with it by consent of will. Remarkable to this purpose, is that which the apostle asserts of the frame of his own heart, 2 Cor. v. 8. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be ab-"sent from the body, and present with the Lord." Here is both confidence and complacence, with respect to death, θαρρεμεν. The word signifies courage, fortitude; or, if you will, an undaunted boldness, and presence of mind, when we look the king of terrors in the face. We dare venture upon death, we dare take it by the cold hand, and bid it welcome. We dare defy its enmity, and deride its noxious power, 1 Cor. xv. 55. "O death! where is thy sting!" And that is not all, we have complacence in it, as well as confidence to

Digitized by Google

encounter it. Ευδοκουμεν, *we are willing*; the translation is too flat, *We are well pleased:* it is a desirable, a grateful thing to us, to die; but yet not in an absolute, but comparative consideration, ευδοκουμεν μαλλον, *we are willing rather, i. e.* rather than not see, and enjoy our Lord Jesus Christ; rather than to be here always sinning, and groaning. There is no complacency in death; in itself it is not desireable. But if we must go through that strait gate, or not see God; we are willing rather to be absent from the body. So that you see death was not the matter of his submission only, he did not yield to what he could not avoid, but he ballances the evils of death, with the privileges it admits the soul into, and then pronounces, ευδοκουμεν, we are content, yea, pleased to die.

We cannot live always if we would, and our hearts should be wrought to that frame, as to say, we would not live always if we could, Job vii. 16. "I would not live always," or *long*, saith he. But why should Job deprecate that which was not attainable? "I would not live always;" he needed not to trouble himself about that, it being impossible that he should: both statute and natural law forbid it. Ay, but this is his sense: supposing no such necessity as there is, if it were pure matter of election; upon a due ballancing of accounts, and comparing the good and evil of death, I would not be confined always, or for any long time to the body. It would be a bondage unsupportable to be here always.

Indeed those that have their portion, their all, in this life, have no desire to be gone hence. They that were never changed by grace, desire no change by death; if such a concession were made to them, as was once to an English parliament, That they should never be dissolved, but by their own consent, when would they say as Paul, "I desire to be dissolved?" But it is far otherwise with them, whose portion and affections are in another world; they would not live always if they might; knowing, that never to die, is never to be happy.

Quest. If you say, *This is an excellent, and most desirable temper of soul; but how did these holy men attain it? or what is the course we may take to get the like frame of willingness?*

Sol. They attained it, and you may attain it in such methods as these.

1. They lived in the believing views of the invisible world, and so must you, if ever death be desirable in your eyes, 2 Cor. iv. 18. It is said of all that died comfortably, "that they died "in faith," Heb. xi. 13. You will never be willing to go along with death, except you know where it will carry you.

Digitized by Google

2. They had assurance of heaven, as well as faith to discern it. Assurance is a lump of sugar, indeed, in the bitter cup of death; nothing sweetens like it. So 2 Cor. v. 1. so Job xix. 26, 27. This puts roses into the pale cheeks of death, and makes it amiable, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. and Rom. viii. 38, 39.

3. Their hearts were weaned from this world, and an inordinate affection to a terrene life, Phil. iii. 8. all was dung and dross for Christ; they trampled under foot what we hug in our bosoms. So it is said, Heb. x. 34. "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves," *&c.* And so it must be with us, if ever we obtain a complacency in death.

4. They ordered their conversations with much integrity, and so kept their consciences pure, and void of offence; Acts xxiv. 16. "Herein do I exercise myself," *&c.* and this was their comfort at last, 2 Cor. i. 12. "This is our rejoicing," *&c.* So Job xxvii. 5. "My integrity will I not let go till I die:" Oh! this unstings death of all its terrors.

5. They kept their love to Christ at the height: that flame was vehement in their souls, and made them despise the terror, and desire the friendly assistance of death, to bring them to the sight of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 23. So Ignatius, *O how I long*, &c. Thus it must be with you, if ever you make death eligible and lovely to you, which is terrible in itself. There is a loveliness in the death, as well as in the life of a Christian: "Let me die the death of the righteous," said Balaam.

Inference 2. Must we put off these tabernacles of flesh? *How necessary is it, that every soul look out in season, and make provision for another habitation?* * If you must be turned out of one house, you must provide another, or lie in the streets, This the apostle comforted himself with, that "if uncloathed, he should not be found naked," 2 Cor. v. 1. a building of God, a house not made with hands. You must turn out, and that shortly, from these earthly habitations. Oh! what provision have you made for your souls against that day? The soul of Adrian was at a sad loss, when he saw he must be turned out of this world; *O animula vagula, blandula, heu quo vadis!* But it was Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's privilege, that God had prepared for them a city, Heb. xi. 16.

* Many cry out on a death-bed, O send for Ministers and Christians to pray! Alas! what can they do then? Is that a time for so great a work to be shuffled up in a hurry, amidst distractions, and agonies.

Digitized by Google

I know it is a common presumption of most men, that they shall be in heaven, when they can be no longer on earth. *Præsumendo sperant, et sperando pereunt.* But a few moments will convince them of their fatal mistake; their poor souls will meet with a confounding repulse, like that, Mat. vii. 22. There is indeed a city full of heavenly mansions prepared for some; but who are they that are entitled to it, and may confidently expect to be received into it? To be sure, not the presumptuous, who make a bridge of their own shadows, and so fall and perish in the waters. Brethren, it is one of the most solemn enquiries you were ever put upon: and therefore I beseech you, see whether your characters set you among those men, or no.

1. Those that are new-born, shall be cloathed with their new house from heaven, when death uncloaths them of these tabernacles: the *New Jerusalem* hath none but new-born inhabitants, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. and Christ tells us, John iii. 3. *all others are excluded.* Glory is the privilege of grace. Let nature be adorned, and cultivated how it will, if not renewed by grace, there is no hope of glory. You must be born again, or turned back again from the gates of heaven disappointed. You must be regenerated, or damned. This alters the temper of thy heart, and suits it to the life of God, which is indispensably necessary to them that shall live with him. Else heaven would be no heaven to us, Rom. viii. 7. and therefore we must be wrought this way to it, 2 Cor. v. 5. No privilege of nature, no duties of religion avail without this, Gal. vi. 15. If morality, without regeneration, could bring men to heaven, why are not the Heathens there? If strictness in duty, without regeneration, why not the Pharisees there? Believe it, neither names, nor duties, no nor the blood of Christ, ever did, or shall bring one soul to glory without it. O then thou that boastest of a house in heaven, lay thine hand on thy heart, and ask it; Am I a new creature, *i. e.* Am I renewed, (1.) In my state and condition? 1 John iii. 14. past from death to life. (2.) In my frame and temper? Eph. v. 8. "Once darkness now light in the Lord." (3.) In my practice and conversation? Eph. ii. 12, 13. 1 Cor. vi. 11. If not, my soul is destitute of an habitation in the city of God; and when I die, my body must lie in the lonely house of the grave, that dark vault and prison, and my soul be shut out from God into outer darkness.

2. Those that live as strangers, and pilgrims on earth, seeking a better place, and state, than this world affords them, for them God hath made preparations in glory, Heb. xi. 13, 16. If you be strangers on earth, you are the inhabitants of heaven.

Digitized by Google

Now there be six things included in this character. 1. They look not on this world as their own home, nor on the people of it, as their own people, 2 Cor. v. 8. ἐκδημῆσαι, *to be unpeopled.* These are none of my fellow-citizens, we must go two ways at death. 2. They set not their affections on things present, as their portion, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Psal. xvii. 13, 14. Their bodies are here, their hearts in heaven. 3. Their carriage, and manner of life, not like the men of this world, 1 Pet. iv. 4. ξενίζονται. So the rule guides them, Rom. xii. 2. and so their course is steered; at least intended, Phil. iii. 20. our τὸ πολίτευμα, *our trade is in heaven.* (4.) Their dialect, and language, differs from the natives of this world. Their language is earthly, 1 John iv. 5, 6. but these have a *pure lip*, Zeph. iii. 9. (5.) Their society, and chosen companions are not of this world, Psal. xvi. 3. They are a company of themselves, Acts iv. 21. (6.) Their spirit, and temper of heart is not after the world, 1 Cor. ii. 12. They have *another spirit*, Numb. xiv. 24. These things discover us to be strangers on earth, and consequently, the men for whom God hath prepared heavenly habitations when we die.

3. Those that live and die by faith, shall not fail to be received into a better habitation by death. This is another character of them that shall be received into glory, laid down in the same place, Heb. xi. 13. They lived by faith, and when they died, they died embracing the promises, which is characteristical of those that shall dwell in that heavenly city; and implies, (1.) Intimate acquaintance with the promises, they are things well known, and familiarized to them. The word ἀσπασάμενοι, *Salutantes*, saluting them, is a metaphor, from the manner of parting betwixt two dear, and intimate friends. The faith of a Christian embraces the promises in its arms, as dear friends use to do at parting, and saith, Farewel, sweet promises, from which I have sucked out so much relief and refreshment in all the troubles of my life; I must now live no more by faith on you, but by sight: O you have often cheared my soul, and been my song in the house of my pilgrimage. (2.) It implies the firm credit, that a believer gives to things unseen, upon the grounds of the promises, as if he did sensibly take and grasp them in his very arms and bosom. They take Christ, and all the invisible things in the promises, into their sensible embraces, 1 Pet. i. 8. Faith is to them instead of eyes. (3.) It implies the sincerity of a believer's profession, who dares trust to that at last gasp, which he professed to believe in the midst of life, and the comforts of this

Digitized by Google

world. As he professed to believe in health, so you shall find his actings, when his eye and heart-strings are breaking, Rom. xiv. 9. Christ, in the promises, was his professed joy and life, and this is what he grasps at death, and lays his last hold on. (4.) It shews you whence all a believer's comforts come, in life and death. O it is from the promises, Christ in the promises is the spring of their consolation. This they fetch their comfort from, when the world cannot administer one drop of refreshment to them. There be two great works faith performs for the saints, one in life, the other in death: in life, it is the principle of mortification to their sins; in death, it is the spring of consolation to their hearts: it makes them die whilst they live, and live when they die.

4. Those that love the person, and appearance of Christ, have a mark that sets them among the inhabitants of heaven, and glory, 2 Tim. iv. 8. but then this love must be, (1.) sincere, and without hypocrisy. (2.) Supreme, and above all other beloveds. (3.) Conforming the soul to Christ; if sincere, and supreme, it will be transformative. (4.) Longing to be with him. Such love is a mark of souls for whom heaven is prepared.

Infer. 3. Must we put off our tabernacles, and that shortly? *What a spur is this to a diligent redemption, and improvement of time?* This is the use Peter made of it here, and every one of us should make. It was said of Bishop Hooper, he was spare in his diet, spare in his words, but most of all spare in his time. You have but a little time in these tabernacles; what pity it is to waste much out of a little?

(1.) Great is the worth and excellency of time, all the treasures of the world cannot protract, stop, or call back one minute of time. O what is man that the heavenly bodies should be wheeled about by Almighty Power in constant revolutions, to beget time for him! Psal. viii. 3.

(2.) More precious are the seasons, and opportunities that are in time for our souls; those are the golden spots of time, like the pearl in the oyster-shell, of much more value than the shell that contains it. There is much time in a short opportunity. There is a day on which our eternal happiness depends, Luke xix. 41, 42. Heb. iv. 7.

(3.) Invaluable are the things which God doth for men's souls in time. There are works wrought upon mens hearts in a seasonable hour in this life, which have an influence into the soul's happiness throughout eternity. There is a time of mercy, a time of love, *viz.* of illumination, and conversion; and on

Digitized by Google

that point of time, eternal life hangs in the whole weight of it.

(4.) Lost opportunity is never to be recovered by the soul any more, Ezek. xxiv. 13. Rev. xxii. 11. To come before the opportunity, is to come before the bird be hatched; and to come after it, is to come when the bird is flown. There is no calling back time, when it is once past. See this in the examples you find, Luke xiii. 26. Eccles. ix. 10.

(5.) It is wholly uncertain to every soul, whether the present day may not determine his lease in this tabernacle, and a writ of ejection be served by death upon his soul to morrow, James. iv. 13. Luke xii. 20.

(6.) As soon as ever time shall end, eternity takes place. The stream of time delivers souls daily into the boundless ocean of vast eternity. *Ab hoc momento pendet æternitas.* We are now measured by time, hereafter by eternity.

(7.) In eternity all things are fixed and unalterable. We have no more to do, all means and works are at an end, John ix. 4. and Eccles. xi. 3. "As the tree falls, so it lies." Oh that these weighty considerations might lie upon your hearts, as long as you are in these tabernacles! If they did, (1.) The unregenerate would not so desperately hazard their eternal happiness, by trifling away their precious seasons under the gospel. Oh how many aged sinners, gray-headed sinners, hear me this day, who in fifty or sixty years never redeemed one solemn hour, to take their poor souls aside out of the clutter and distracting noise of the world, to ask, and debate this question with them, *Oh my soul, how stands the case with thee in reference to the world to come!* They have found no time to bethink themselves in what world their souls shall be landed, when time shall deliver them up into eternity. Their whole life hath been but a continual diversion from one trifle to another; they have been serious in trifles, and trifled in things most serious: this will afford horrid reflections in the world to come. (2.) The regenerate would not cast away the comfort of their lives, in the evidences of eternal life, at so cheap a rate as they do. May I not say to you as the apostle doth, Heb. v. 12. for the time you have had under the gospel you might have attained a rich treasure, both of grace, and comfort; *Turpe est senex elementarius.* Is it not shameful and inexcusable, to be, where you were twenty years past? Oh! let these things sink deep into every soul.

Inference 4. Must we shortly put off these our tabernacles? *Then slack your pace, and cool yourselves; be not too eager in the*

Digitized by Google

prosecution of earthly designs. O what bustling is here for the world, and for provisions for futurity, when as far less would serve the turn! We need not victual a ship to cross the channel to France, as if she were bound to the Indies. Most mens provisions, at least their cares and thoughts, are far beyond the preparations of their abode in this world. The folly of this, Christ discovers in that parable, Luke xii. 19. and on this very account gives him the title of a fool, who provided for years, many years; when poor soul, he had not one night to enjoy those provisions.

Oh the multitude of thoughts and cares this world needlessly devours! We keep ourselves in such a continual hurry and crowd of cares, thoughts and employments about the concerns of the body, that we can find little time to be alone, communing with our own hearts about our great concernments in eternity. It is with many of us, in respect of our souls, and their great interests, as it is with a man that is deep in thoughts about some subject that wholly swallows him up, he seeth not what he seeth, nor heareth what he heareth of any other matter: his eyes seem to look upon this or that, but it is all one as if he did not. So it was with Archimedes, who was so intent in drawing his mathematical schemes, that though all the city was in an alarm, the enemy had taken it by storm, the streets filled with dreadful cries, and dead bodies, the soldiers came into his particular house, nay, entred his very study, and plucked him by the sleeve, before he took any notice of it: even so many mens hearts are so profoundly immersed, and drowned in earthly cares, thoughts, projects, or pleasures, that death must come to their very houses, yea, and pull them by the sleeve, and tell them its errand, before they will begin to awake, and come to a serious consideration of things more important.

Inference 5. If we must shortly put off these tabernacles, *then the groaning and mourning time of all believers is but short: how heavy soever their burden be, yet they shall carry it but a little way.* It is said, 2 Cor. v. 4. "We that are in this ta-"bernacle do groan, being burdened." Good souls, in this state, are every where groaning under heavy pressures. Their burdens are of two sorts, sympathetical, whereby they grieve with, and on the account of others, and so every true member of the church of God ought to sympathize, both with God, Psal. cxxxix. 21. "Am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee?" Psal. xlii. 10. "It is as with a sword in their bones;" and with the people of God, Zeph. iii. 18. sorrowful for the solemn assembly; so 2 Cor. xi. 29. "Who is offended, and I burn not?"

Digitized by Google

And indeed, it is an argument of rich, as well as true grace, that we can, and do heartily mourn with, and for the interest and people of God, though our own lot in the world, as Nehemiah's, be never so comfortable. Or, else our burdens are idiopathetical, *i. e.* such as we bear upon our own proper account and score. And where is the Christian that hath not his own burden, yea, many burdens on him at once? Some groan under the burden of sin, Rom. viii. 24. Scarce one day are the tears off from some eye-lids on this account. And who groans not under the burden of affliction, either inward upon the soul, Prov. xviii. 14. Job vi. 1, 2, 3. or outward upon the body, state, relations, *&c.* These things make the people of God a burden to themselves, Job vii. 20, 21. Yea, under these burdens they would sink, did not the Lord sustain them, Psal. lv. 22.

But God will put a speedy and final end to all these things. When you put off this tabernacle, you put off with it all those burdens, inward and outward. The soul presently feels a great load off its shoulders; it shall never groan more, God shall thenceforth wipe away all tears from their eyes: for why are those burdens now permitted, and imposed by the Lord upon you, but (1.) To prevent sin, Hos. ii. 6. They are your clogs, to keep you from straying. (2.) To purge out sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. (3.) To make you long more for heaven, and the rest to come. But all these ends are accomplished in that day you put off your tabernacles, for then sin is gone, and rest is come.

Infer. 6. Must you shortly put off those tabernacles? *Then spare them not whilst you have them, but employ them for God with all diligence.* Shortly they shall be useless to you, yea, meat for worms; now they may be serviceable, and their service is their honour: you received them not for such low ends as you employ them for. See 1 Cor. vi. 20. "Glorify God in "your souls and bodies, which are his:" You expect to have them glorious bodies one day; Oh then let them be serviceable bodies now! Be not fond of them to that degree many are, who chuse rather to have them *eaten out with rust*, than *worn out with service* *. It is your present honour to be active, and will be your singular comfort another day. What greater comfort, when you come to put them off at death, than this, that you have employed them faithfully for God.

Infer. 7. Look beyond this embodied state, and learn to live

* Ambrose said of Valentinian, No man was ever such a servant to his master, as Valentinian's body was to his soul.

Digitized by Google

now as you hope to live shortly; begin to be what you expect to be. You know the time is at hand, that you shall live above all bodily concernments and employments, the soul shall be a drudge to the body no more. You shall be as the angels, Mat. xxii. 30. not marrying, nor giving in marriage, which is, by a *synechdoche*, put for all carnal employments and enjoyments; eat no more, drink no more, sleep no more, buy and sell no more. Now suit yourselves as much as your state and the duties of religion will suffer you, to that state before-hand. The sum of what I am at is in 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. Be in all your relations as if you had none. Look on those things, as if already they were not, which shortly must be none of yours; and both acquaint and accustom your thoughts to the life of separation from the body, which you must shortly leave. Which brings me home to the next point, *viz. The condition of human souls in the state of separation.*

* *

Heb. xii. 23. —— Και πνευμασι δικαιων τετελειωμενων. —— *And to the* spirits *of just men made perfect.*

THE particular scope of this context falls in with the general design of the whole gospel, which is to persuade men to a life of holiness. The matter of the exhortation is most weighty, and the arguments enforcing it most powerful: He doth not talk, but dispute; he doth not say, but prove, that greater, and more powerful engagements unto holiness lie upon those who live under the gospel, than upon the people who lived under the law. And thus the argument lies in this context.

If God, at the delivering of the law upon *mount Sinai*, strictly enjoined, and required so great purity, and holiness in that people, signified by the ceremonies of two days preparation, the washing of their cloaths, abstinence from conjugal society, *&c.* Exod. xix. 10. much more doth he require, and expect it in us, who are come under a much more excellent, and heavenly dispensation than theirs was.

To make good the *sequel*, he compares the *legal*, and *evangelical* dispensations, in many particulars, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. giving the gospel the preference throughout the whole comparison.

Hence the privileges of the New Testament-believers are stated, both *negatively*, and *positively*.

Digitized by Google

1. *Negatively*, By shewing what we are exempted from.
2. *Positively*, Shewing what we are to come unto.

1. *Negatively*, What we are exempted, or freed from; ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. "We are not come unto the Mount that might "be touched," *&c.*

The sum of all is this, that the promulgation of the law was accompanied with amazing dread, and terror. For, after Moses, by command from God, had sanctified the *mount*, and set rails about it, that neither priest nor people, man nor beast, might touch the very borders of it, lest they die; the Lord descended in fire upon the top of the *mountain*, the third day in the morning, with most terrible tokens of divine majesty, *to wit*, with thundrings, lightnings, dark clouds, and the noise of a *trumpet*, exceeding loud; the *mount* was covered with smoke, as the smoke of a furnace, and † flames mounting up into the midst of heaven, the whole mountain shaking, and trembling exceedingly: Out of this horrid tempest the awful voice of God was heard, all the people in the camp trembling, yea, and Moses himself quaking for fear.

This was the manner of the law's promulgation: But to such a terrible dispensation as this we are not come, which is the negative part of our privilege.

2. He opens the positive privileges to which we are come.

(1.) "Ye are come (saith he) to mount Sion," not the earthly, but the spiritual Sion. Mount Sion was the place celebrated above all the world for the worship of God, Psal. lxxxvi. 7. "All my springs (saith God) are in thee. There was the temple, the ark of the covenant, the glory of the Lord dwelling between the *cherubims*. The *priests* that attended the service of God, had their residence there, as the angels have in heaven. Thither the tribes went up from all quarters of Judah, Psal. lxxxiv. as the children of God now do to heaven, from all quarters of the world. Judea was the best kingdom in the world; Jerusalem the best city in that kingdom; and Sion the most glorious place in that city. Here Christ taught his heavenly doctrine; near to it he finished his glorious work of redemption. Hence the everlasting gospel went forth into all the world: And, on these considerations, it is put to signify the gospel-church, or state in this place, and is therefore called *the heavenly Jerusalem*, in the following words. We do not come to the literal *Sion*, nor to the *earthly Jerusalem;* but to the gospel-church,

† *Crebris micat ignibus æther;* i. e. The sky shines with frequent lightnings.

Digitized by Google

or state, which may be called a heaven upon earth, compared with that *literal Jerusalem.*

(2.) Ye are come "to an innumerable company of angels."] to ‡ *myriads of angels*, a *myriad* is ten thousand: but myriads in the plural number, and set down indefinitely too, may note many millions of angels: And therefore we fitly render it, "to "an innumerable company of angels."

They had the ministry of angels as well as we, thousands of them ministred to the Lord in the dispensation of the law at Sinai, Psal. lxviii. 17. But this notwithstanding, we are come to a much clearer knowledge, both of their present ministry for us on earth, Heb. i. 14. and of our fellowship, and equality with them in heaven, Luke xx. 36.

(3.) "Ye are come to the general assembly, and church of "the first-born, whose names are written (or enrolled) in hea-"ven."] This also greatly commends, and amplifies the privileges of the New Testament-believers; the church of God in former ages was circumscribed, and shut up within the narrow limits of one small kingdom, which was a garden inclosed out of a waste wilderness: But now, by the calling in of the Gentiles, the church is extended far and wide, Eph. iii. 5, 6. It is become a great assembly, comprizing the believers of all nations under heaven; and so speaking of them collectively, it is the general convention, or assembly, which is also dignified, and enobled by two illustrious characters, *viz.* (1.) That it is *the church of the first-born, (i. e.)* consisting of members dignified, and priviledged above others, as the first-born among the Israelities did excel their younger brethren. (2.) That their *names are written in heaven, (i. e.)* registred, or enrolled in God's book, as children, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, as the first-born in ‖ Israel were registred in order to the priesthood, Num. iii. 40, 41.

(4.) Ye are come "to God, the Judge of all."] But why to God the Judge? This seems to spoil the harmony, and jar with the other parts of the discourse. No, no; they are come to God as a righteous Judge, who as such, will pardon them, 1 John i. 9. *Crown* them, 2 Tim. iv. 8. and *avenge* them on all their oppressing, and persecuting enemies. 1 Thess. i. 5, 6, 7.

‡ Μυριασιν αγγελων, *i. e.* Myriads of angels. The Hellenists use the word μυριαδας, *i. e.* Myriads, without any addition to signify an innumerable multitude. *Grot.*

‖ The first-born of the Israelites were registred in an earthly register, but these in an heavenly register.

Digitized by Google

(5.) "And to the spirits of just men made perfect." A most glorious privilege indeed; in which we are distinctly to consider,

1. The quality of those with whom we are associated or taken into fellowship.

2. The way and manner of our association with them.

1. The quality of those with whom we are associated, or to whom we are said to be come; and they are described by three characters, *viz.*

(1.) Spirits of men.

(2.) Spirits of just men.

(3.) Spirits of just men perfected, or consummated.

(1.) They are called spirits, that is, immaterial substances, strictly opposed to bodies, which are no way the objects of our exterior senses, neither visible to the eye, or sensible to the touch, which were called properly souls whilst they animated bodies in this lower world; but now being loosed and separated from them by death, and existing alone in the world above, they are properly and strictly stiled spirits.

(2.) They are the *spirits of just men.*] Man may be termed *just* two ways, (1.) By a full discharge and acquittance from the guilt of all his sins, and so believers are *just men*, even whilst they live on earth, groaning under other imperfections, Acts xiii. 39. Or, (2.) By a total freedom from the pollution of any sin. And though in this sense there is not "a just man "upon earth that doth good, and sinneth not," Eccles. vii. 22. yet even in this sense Adam was just before the fall, Eccles. vii. 29. according to his original constitution; and all believers are so, in their glorified condition; all sin being perfectly purged out of them, and its existence utterly destroyed in them. On which account,

(3.) They are called the spirits of just men *made perfect*,] or consummate. The word perfect is not here to be understood absolutely, but by way of *synecdoche*; they are not perfect in every respect, for one part of these just men lies rotting in the grave: but they are perfected, for so much as concerns their spirit; though the flesh perish and lie in dishonour, yet their spirits being once loosed from the body, and freed radically and perfectly from sin, are presently admitted to the facial vision and fruition of God, which is the culminating point (as I may call it) higher than which the spirit of man aspires not; and attaining to this, it is, for so much as concerns itself, made perfect. Even as a body at last lodged in its centre, gravitates no more, but is at perfect rest; so it is with the spirit of man come home

Digitized by Google

to God in glory, 'tis now consummate, no more need to be done to make it as perfectly happy as it is capable to be made; which is the first thing to be considered, *viz.* the quality of those with whom we are associated.

2. The second follows, namely, the way and manner of our association with these blessed spirits of just men, noted in this expression, [*we are come.*] He saith not, *we shall come* hereafter, when the resurrection hath restored our bodies, or after the general judgment; but, *we are come* to these spirits of just men. The meaning whereof we may take in these three particulars.

(1.) We that live under the gospel-light, are come to a clearer apprehension, sight and knowledge of the blessed and happy estate of the souls of the righteous after death, than ever they had, or ordinarily could have, who lived under the types and shadows of the law, Eph. iii. 4, 5. And so we are come to them, in respect of clearer apprehension.

(2.) We are come to those blessed spirits in our representative, Christ, who hath carried our nature into the very midst of them, and whom they all behold with highest admiration and delight. By Christ, who is entred into that holy place where these spirits of just men live, we are come into a near relation with them: For he being the common head, both to them in heaven, and to us on earth, we and they consequentially make but one body or society, Eph. ii. 10. Whereupon (notwithstanding the different and remote countries they and we live in) we are said "to sit down with them in heavenly places," Eph. iii. 15. and ii. 6.

(3.) *We are come.*] That is, we are as good as come, or we are upon the matter come; there remains nothing betwixt them and us but a puff of breath, a little space of time, which shortens every moment: We are come to the very borders of their country, and there is nothing, to speak of, betwixt them and us: And by this expression, *we are come*, he teacheth us to account and reckon those things as present, which so shortly will be present to us, and to look upon them as if they already were, which is the highest and most comfortable life of faith we can live on earth. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That righteous and holy souls, once separated from their bodies by death, are immediately perfected in themselves, and associated with others alike perfect in the kingdom of God.*

That the spirits of just men at the time of their separation from their bodies do not utterly fail in their beings, nor that they are so prejudiced and wounded by death, that they cannot

Digitized by Google

exert their own proper acts in the absence of the body, hath been already cleared in the foregoing parts of this treatise, and will be more fully cleared from this text.

But the true level and aim of this discourse is at a higher mark, *viz.* the far more excellent, free, and noble life the souls of the just begin to live immediately after their bodies are dropt off from them by death, at which time they begin to live like themselves, a pleasant, free, and divine life. So much at least is included in the apostle's epithet in my text, spirits of just men made perfect; and suitable thereto are his words in 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 12. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which "is in part shall be done away. For now we see thro' a glass "darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then "I shall know, even as also I am known."

These two adverbs, *now* and *then*, distinguish the twofold state of gracious souls, and shew what it is whilst they are confined in the body, and what it shall be from the time of their emancipation and freedom from that clog of mortality. *Now* we are imperfect, but *then* that which is perfect takes place, and that which is imperfect is done away, as the imperfect twilight is done away by the opening of the perfect day.

And it deserves a serious animadversion, that this perfect state doth not succeed the imperfect one after a long interval, (as long as betwixt the dissolution and resurrection of the body) but the imperfect state of the soul is immediately done away by the coming of the perfect one. The glass is laid by as useless, when we come to see face to face, and eye to eye.

The waters will prove very deep here, too deep for any line of mine to fathom; there is a cloud always overshadowing the world to come, a gloom and haziness upon that state: Fain we would, with our weak and feeble beam of imperfect knowledge, penetrate this cloud, and dispel this gloom and haziness, but cannot: We think seriously and close to this great and awful subject, but our thoughts cannot pierce through it: we reinforce those thoughts by a sally, or thick succession of fresh thoughts, and yet all will not do, our thoughts return to us either in confusion, or without the expected success. For alas, how little is it that we know, or can know of our own souls now whilst they are embodied! much less of their unbodied state. The apostle tells us, 1 Cor ii. 9 "That eye hath not "seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of "man, the things which God hath prepared for them that

Digitized by Google

" love him." And another apostle adds, " It doth not yet ap-
" pear what we shall be," 1 John iii. 2.

Yet all this is no discouragment to the search, and regular enquiry into the future state; for though reason cannot penetrate these mysteries, yet God hath *revealed them to us* (tho' not perfectly) *by his Spirit.* And though we know not particularly, and circumstantially) what we shall be, yet this we know, that " we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And it is our privilege, and happiness, that we are come to the spirits of just men made perfect, *(i. e.)* to a clearer knowledge of that state, than was ordinarily attainable by believers, under former dispensations.

These things premised, I will proceed to open my apprehensions of the separate state of the spirits of just men made perfect, in *twelve propositions;* whereby, as by so many steps, we may orderly advance as far as safely, and warrantably we may, into the knowledge of this great mystery, clearing what afterwards shall remain obscure, in the solution of several questions relating to this subject, and then apply the whole, in several uses of this great point: And the first proposition is this:

Proposition 1. There is a two-fold separation of the soul from the body: *viz.* one mental, the other real: Or,

1. Intellectual, by the mind only.
2. Physical, by the stroke of death.

1. Of intellectual, or mental separation *, I am first to speak in this proposition; and it is nothing else but an act of the understanding, or mind, conceiving, or considering the soul and body, as separate and parted each from other, whilst yet they are united in a personal oneness by the breath of life. This mental separation may, and ought to be frequently, and seriously made, before death makes the real, and actual separation; and the more frequently, and seriously we do it, the less of horror, and distraction will attend that real, and fatal stroke, whenever it shall be given: For hereby we learn to bear it gradually, and, by gentle essays, to acquaint our shoulders with the burden of it. *Separation* is a word that hath much of horror in the very sound, and useth to have much more in the sense and feeling of it, else it would not deserve that title, Job viii. 14. " The king of terrors," or the most terrible of all terribles: But acquaintance, and familiarity abates that horror, and that two ways especially.

* Mental separation is, a conceiving of two things separately, which really are united. *Conimbr. on the soul,* p. 595.

Digitized by Google

(1.) As it is preventive of much guilt.

(2.) As it gains a more inward knowledge of its nature.

(1.) The serious, and fixed thoughts of the parting hour, is preventive of much guilt; and the greatest part of the horror of death rises out of the guilt of sin; "The sting of death is "sin," 1 Cor. xv. 56. * Augustine saith, "Nothing more "recals a man from sin, than the frequent meditation of death." I dare not say it is the strongest of all curbs to keep us back from sin, but I am sure it is a very strong one.

Let † a soul but seriously meditate what a change death will make shortly upon his person, and condition; and the natural effects of such a meditation, through the blessing of God upon it, will be a flatting, and quenching of its keen, and raging appetite, after the ensnaring vanities of this world (which draw men into so much guilt) a conscientious fear of sin, and an awakened care of duty. It was once demanded of a very holy man (who spent much more than the ordinary allowance of time in prayer, and searching his own heart) why he so macerated his own body by such frequent, and long-continued duties! His answer was, *Oh! I must die, I must die!* Nothing could separate him from duty, who had already separated his soul from his body, and all this world, by fixed, and deep thoughts of death.

(2.) Hereby we gain a more inward knowledge, and acquaintance with it, the less it terrifies us. A lion is much more dreadful to him that never saw him, than he is to his keeper, who feedeth him every day. A pitch'd battle is more frightful, and scaring to a new-listed soldier, that never took his place in the field before; nor saw the dreadful countenance of an army ready to engage, nor heard the thundring noise of cannon, and vollies of shot, the shouts of armies, and groans of dying men on every side, than it is to an old soldier who hath been used to such things. The like we may observe in seamen, who it may be trembled at first, and now can sing in a storm.

Scarce any thing is more necessary for weak and timorous believers to meditate on, than the time of their separation. Our hearts will be apt to start, and boggle at the first view of death;

* *Nihil sic revocat a peccato, quam frequens mortis meditatio.* Aug.

† He who considers, what he will be in death, will always act with a fear of caution, and live as in the sight of his Creator, he desires nothing that is transitory, and considers himself as almost dead, because he knows he must soon die. *Greg. Mer.* 12.

Digitized by Google

but it is good to do by them as men use to do by young colts, ride them up to that which they fright at, and make them smell to it, which is the way to cure them. "Look, as bread, "saith one ‡, is more necessary than other food, so the medita- "tion of death is more necessary than many other meditati- "ons." Every time we change our habitations, we should realize therein our great change: our souls must shortly leave this, and be lodged for a longer season in another mansion. When we put off our cloaths at night, we have a fit occasion to consider, that we must strip nearer one of these days, and put off not our cloaths only, but the body that wears them too.

Holy Job had, by frequent thoughts, familiarized death and the grave to himself, and could speak of them as men use to speak of their houses and dearest relations, Job xvii. 14. "I have "said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou "art my mother and sister." But it needs much grace to bring, and hold the heart to this work; and therefore Moses begs it of God, Psal. xc. 12. "So teach us to number our "days;" and David, Psal. xxxix. 4. "Lord, make me know "my end." Yea, the advantages of it have been acknowledged by men, whose light was less, and diversions more than ours. The Jews, for this use and end, had their sepulchres built before-hand, and that in their gardens of pleasure too; that they might season the delights of life with the frequent thoughts of death, John xix. 41.

Philip of Macedon would be awakened by his page every morning with this sentence, *memento te esse mortalem;* Remember, O king, that thou art a mortal man. A great emperor of Constantinople, not only at his inauguration, but at his great feasts, ordered a mason to bring two stones before him, and say, "‖ Chuse, O emperor, which of the two stones thou wilt for "thy tomb-stone." Reader, thou wilt find mental separation much easier than real separation: it is easier to think of death, than it is to feel it; and the more we think of it, the less we are like to feel it.

Proposition 2. *Actual separation may be considered either in* fieri, *in the previous pangs, and foregoing agonies of it; or in* facto esse, *in the last separating stroke, which actually parts the*

‡ *Sicut panis necessarius est præ cæteris elementis, ita intenta mortis meditatio necessaria est præ cæteris donis et exercitiis.* Dionys.

‖ *Elige ab his saxis ex quo, invictissime Cæsar, tibi tumulum me fabricare velis.*

Digitized by Google

soul and body asunder, lays the body prostrate, and dead at the feet of death, and thrusts the soul quite out of its antient and beloved habitation.

Let it be considered in the previous pangs and forerunning agonies, which commonly make way for this actual dissolution: and to the people of God, this is the worst and bittersest part of death (except those conflicts with Satan, which they sometimes grapple with on a death-bed) which they encounter at that time. There is (saith one) no poinard in death itself, like those in the way or prologue to it. I like not to die, (said another) but I care not if I were dead; the end is better than the way. The conflicts and struggles of nature with death are bitter and sharp pains, unknown to men before, whatever pains they have endured: nor can it be expected to be otherwise, seeing the ties and engagements betwixt the soul and body are so strong, as we shewed before.

The soul will not easily part with the body, but disputes the passages with Death, from member to member, like resolute soldiers in a stormed garrison, till at last it is forced to yield up the fort-royal into the hands of victorious Death, and leave the dearly beloved body a captive to it.

This is the dark side of death to all good men; and though it be not worth naming, in comparison with the dreadful consequents of death to all others, yet in itself it is terrible.

* Separation is not natural to the soul, which was created with an inclination to the body; it is natural indeed to clasp and embrace, to love and cherish its own body; but to be divided from it, is grievous and preternatural.

The agonies of death are expressed in scripture, by a † word which signifies "the travailing pains of a woman," yea, by the sharpest and most acute pains they at that time feel, Acts ii. 24.

And yet all are not handled alike roughly by the hands of Death; some are favoured with a desirable εὐθανασία, gentle and easy death.

It is the privilege of some Christians to have their souls fetcht out of their bodies, as it were by a kiss from the mouth of God, as the Jewish Rabbins use to express the manner of Moses his death. Mr. Bolton felt no pain at his death, but the cold hand

* Seeing the separation made by death is not natural, nor even violent, it follows, from the approved opinion of philosophers, that it may be called preternatural. *Conimb.*

† Τας ὠδινας του θανατου, *partus doloremo*

Digitized by Google

of his friend, who asked him what pain he felt. Yea, holy Bayneham in the midst of the flames, professed it was to him as a bed of roses.

Every believer is equally freed from the sting and curse of death; but every one is not equally favoured in the agonies and pains of death.

2. Separation from the body is to be considered *in facto esse, i. e.* in the result and issue of all those bitter pangs and agonies, which end in the actual dissolution of soul and body. "* Death, "or actual separation, is nothing else but the dissolving of the "tie, or loosing of the bond of union betwixt the soul and bo-"dy." "† Some call it the privation of the second act of the "soul, that is, its act of informing or enlivening the body." Others, according to scripture-phrase, the departing of the soul from the body. So Peter stiles it, 2 Pet. i. 15. μετα την εμην εξοδον, after my departure, *i. e.* after my death. Augustine ‡ calls it the laying down of a heavy burden, provided there be not another burden for the soul to bear afterwards, which will sink it into hell.

In respect of the body, which the soul now forsakes, it is called "the putting off this tabernacle," 2 Pet. i. 14. and, "the "dissolving the earthly house or tabernacle," 2 Cor. v. 1.

In respect of the *terminus a quo*, the place from which the soul removes at death, it is called our departure hence, Phil. i. 23. or our weighing anchor, and loosing from this coast or shore, to sail to another.

In respect of the *terminus ad quem*, the place to which the spirits of the just go at death, it is called our going to, or being with the Lord, Phil. i. 23. To conclude, in respect of that which doth most lively resemble and shadow it forth, it is called our falling asleep, Acts vii. 60. our sleeping in Jesus, 1 Thes. iv. 14. This metaphor of sleep must be stretched no further than the Spirit of God designed in the choice of it, which was not to favour and countenance the fancy of a sleeping soul after death, but to represent its state of placid rest in Jesus's bosom, if it refer at all to the soul; for I think it most properly respects the body: and thence the sepulchres, where the bodies of the

* Θανατος εστι ψυχης και σωματος διαλυσις, *vel animæ a corpore discessus.* Vives.

† *Privatio actus secundum ejusdem animæ, id est, informationis seu unionis erga corpus.* Conimb.

‡ *Relictio corporis depositio sarcinæ gravis, modo alio sarcina non patietur, qua homo præcipitetur in gehennam.* August.

Digitized by Google

saints were laid, got the name of κοιμητηρια, dormitories, or sleeping places ‖.

This is its last farewel to this world, never more to return to a low animal life more. Job vii. 9, 10. "For as the cloud is "consumed and vanished away, so he that goeth down to the "grave shall come up no more; he shall return no more to his "house, neither shall his place know him any more." The soul is no more bound to a body, nor a retainer to the sun, moon or stars, to meat, drink and sleep, but is become a free, single, abstracted being, a separate and pure spirit, which the Latins call *lemures*, *manes*, ghosts or souls of the dead, and my text, *Spirits made perfect;* a being much like unto the angels, who are δυναμεις ασωματοι, bodiless beings. An angel, as one speaks, is a perfect soul, a soul is an imperfect angel: I do not say, that upon their separation they become angels, for they will still remain a distinct species of spirits. Angels have no inclination to bodies, nor were ever fettered with clogs of flesh, as souls were *. And by this you see what a vast difference there is betwixt these two considerations of death: how ghastly and affrighting is it in its previous pangs! how lovely and desirable in the issue and result of them! which is but the change of earth for heaven, men for God, sin and misery, for perfection and glory.

Proposition 3. *The separation of the soul and body makes a great and wonderful change upon both, but especially upon the soul.*

There is a twofold change made upon man by death, one upon his body, another upon his soul. The change upon the body is great and visible to every eye. A living body is changed into a dead carcase: a beautiful and comely body into a loathsome spectacle: that which was lately the object of delight and love, is hereby made an abhorrence to all flesh; "Bury my dead out of my sight," Gen. xxiii. 4.

What the sun is to the greater, that the soul is to the lesser world. When the sun shines comfortably, how vegete and chearful do all things look! how well do they thrive and prosper! the birds sing merrily, the beasts play wantonly, the whole creation enjoyeth a day of light and joy: but when it departs, what a night of horror followeth! how are all things

‖ *Locus sepulturæ consecratus,* κοιμητηριον, *hoc est, dormitorium appellatur.*

* *Semper a corporis compedibus et nexibus liberi,* (i. e.) Always free from the clogs and fetters of the body.

Digitized by Google

wrapt up in the sable mantle of darkness! or if it but abate its heat, as in winter, the creatures are, as it were, buried in the winding-sheet of winter's frost and snow: just so it is with the body, when the soul shineth pleasantly upon it, or departs from it.

That body which was fed so assiduously, cared for so anxiously, loved so passionately, is now tumbled into a pit, and left to the mercy of crawling worms. The change which judgment made upon that great and flourishing city Nineveh, is a fit emblem to shadow forth that change which death makes upon human bodies: that great and renowned city was once full of people, which thronged the streets thereof; there you might have seen children playing upon the thresholds, beauties shewing themselves through the windows, melody sounding in its palaces: but what an alteration was made upon it, the prophet Zephaniah describes, chap. ii. 14. "Flocks shall lie down in the midst "of her, all the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant and "the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice "shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresh-"olds, for he shall uncover the cedar-work."

Thus it is with the body when death hath dislodged the soul: worms nestle in the holes where the beautiful eyes were once placed; corruption and desolation is upon all parts of that stately structure. But this being a vulgar theme, I shall leave the body to the dust from whence it came, and follow the soul, which is my proper subject, pointing at the changes which are made on it.

The essence of the soul is not destroyed or changed by the body's ruin; it is substantially the self-same soul it was when in the body. The supposition of an essential change, would disorder the whole frame and model of God's eternal design for the redemption and glorification of it, Rom. viii. 29, 30. But yet, though it undergo no substantial change at death, yet divers great and remarkable alterations are made upon it, by sundering it from the body. As,

1. It is not where it was: it was in a body, immers'd in matter, married unto flesh and blood; but now it is out of the body, uncloathed, and stript naked out of its garments of flesh, like pure gold melted out of the ore with which it was commixed; or as a bird let out of her cage into the open fields and woods. This makes a great and wonderful change upon it.

2. Being free from the body, it is consequently discharged and freed from all those cares, studies, fears, and sorrows to which it was here enthralled and subjected, upon the body's account: it

Digitized by Google

puts off all those passions and burdens with it; never spends one thought more about food and raiment, health and sickness, wives and children, riches or poverty, but lives henceforth after the manner of angels, Matth. xxii. 30. It is now unrelated to, and therefore unconcerned about all these things.

3. In the unbodied state it is perfectly freed from sin, both in the acts and habits; a mercy it never enjoyed since the first moment it dwelt in the body. The cure of this disease was indeed begun in the work of sanctification; but it is not perfected till the day of the soul's glorification. 'Tis now, and not till now, a spirit made perfect; that is, a soul enjoying its perfect health and rectitude: No more groans, tears, or lamentations, upon the account of indwelling sin.

4. The way and manner of its converse with, and enjoyment of God is changed. There are two *mediums* by which souls converse with God in the body, *viz.*

(1.) One internal, *to wit*, faith.

(2.) The other external, *to wit*, ordinances.

(1.) If a man walk with God on earth, it must be in the use and exercise of faith, 2 Cor. v. 7. Nor can there be any communion carried on betwixt God and the soul without it, Heb. xi. 6.

(2.) The external *mediums* are the ordinances of God, or duties of religion, both public and private, Psal. lxiii. 2. Betwixt these two *mediums* of communion with God, this remarkable difference is found: The soul may see and enjoy God by faith, in the want or absence of ordinances; but there is no seeing or conversing with God, in the greatest plenty and purity of ordinances, without faith, Heb. iv. 2.

But in the same moment the soul is cut off from union with the body, it is also cut off from both these ways of enjoying God, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, Isa. xxxviii. 11. But yet the soul is no loser; nay, it is the greatest *gainer* by this change. The child is no loser by ceasing to derive its nourishment by the navel, when it comes to receive it by the mouth, a more noble way, whereby it gets a new pleasure in tasting the variety of all delectable food. Hezekiah bemoaned the loss of ordinances upon his supposed death-bed, saying, "I shall not see the Lord, even "the Lord in the land of the living:" *q. d.* Now farewel temple and ordinances; I shall never go any more into his temple, where my soul hath been so often cheared and refreshed with the displays of his grace and goodness; I shall never more join with the assembly of his people on earth. And suppose he had

Digitized by Google

not, sure he would have lost nothing, had he then exchanged the temple at Jerusalem, for the temple in heaven; and communion with sinful imperfect saints on earth, for fellowship with angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect." By this change we lose no more than he loseth, who whilst he stands delightfully contemplating the image of his dearest friend in a glass, hath the glass snatched away by his friend, whom he now seeth face to face.

Upon this change of the mediums of communion, it will follow, that the communion betwixt God and the separate soul, excels all the communion it ever had with him on earth, in

(1.) The clearness.
(2.) The sweetness.
(3.) The constancy of it.

(1.) Its visions of God, in the state of separation, are more clear, distinct, and direct than they were on earth; clouds and shadows are now fled away: The soul now seeth as it is seen, and knoweth as it is known; its apprehensions of God there, differ from those it had here, as the crude and confused apprehensions of a child do, from those we have in the manly state.

(2.) They are also more sweet and ravishing: As our visions are, so are our pleasures; perfect visions produce perfect pleasures: The faculties of the soul now, and never till now, lie level to that rule, Matth. xxii. 37. The visions of God command, and call forth all the heart and soul, mind and strength, into acts of love and delight. It was not so here; if the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak; but there the clog is off from the foot of the will.

(3.) More constant, fixed, and steddy. 'Tis one of the greatest difficulties in religion, to fix the thoughts, and cure the wildness and rovings of the fancy: The heart is not steddy with God; and hence are its ups and downs, heatings and coolings; which are things unknown in the perfect state. By all which it apears, the change by dissolution is great and marvellous, both upon the body and soul, but upon the soul more especially.

Proposition 4. *The souls of the righteous, at the instant of their separation, are received by the blessed angels, and by them transferred unto the place of blessedness.*

Though angels are by nature a superior order of spirits, differing from men in dignity, as the nobles and barons in the kingdoms of this world, differ from inferior subjects; yet are they made ministring spirits, *(i. e.)* serviceable creatures in the kingdom of providence, to the meanest of the saints, Heb. i. 14. And herein the Lord puts a singular honour upon his peo-

Digitized by Google

ple, in making such excellent creatures as angels serviceable to them: Luther assigns to them a double office, to wit, to sing the praises of God on high, and to watch over his saints here below. Their ministry is distinguished into three branches: Νουθετικον, for admonition or warning; Φυλακτικον, for protection and defence; Βοηθητικον, for succour, help and comfort. This last office they perform more especially at the soul's departure: Like tender nurses, they keep us whilst we live, and bring us home in their arms to our Father's house when we die.

They are about our death-beds, waiting to receive their precious charge into their arms and bosoms. When Lazarus breathed out his soul, the text saith, it was "carried by the angels unto Abraham's bosom," Luke xvi. 23. And upon this account, Tertullian calls them *evocatores animarum*, the callers forth of souls. At the translation of Elijah, they appeared in the form of horses and chariots of fire, 2 Kings ii. 11. Horses and chariots are not only designed for conveyance, but for conveyance in state; and truly, it is no small honour to have such a noble convoy and guard to attend our souls to heaven.

Object. If it be demanded, *What need is there of their help or company? Cannot God by his immediate hand and power gather home the souls of his people to himself at death? He inspired them into our bodies without their help, and can receive them again when we expire them, without their aid.*

Solut. True, he can do so; but it hath pleased him to appoint this method of our translation, not out of mere necessity, but bounty. Souls ascend not to God in the virtue of the angels wings, or arms, but of Christ's ascension. Had he not ascended as our head, and representative, all the angels in heaven could not have brought our souls thither: He ascended by his own power, and we ascend by the virtue of his ascension. It is therefore rather for the state and *decorum*, than any absolute necessity, that they attend us in our ascension.

God will not only have his people brought home to him safely, but honourably: They shall come to their Father's house in a becoming equipage, as the children of a king. This puts honour upon our ascension-day; that day is adorned by the attendance of such illustrious creatures upon us. It is no small honour which God herein designs for us, that creatures of greater dignity than ourselves, shall be sent from heaven to attend, and wait upon us thither.

Yea, that our ascension-day should, in this, resemble Christ's ascension, is an honour indeed. When he ascended, there were multitudes of these heavenly creatures to wait upon him,

Digitized by Google

Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, "even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Si- "nai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high," &c. A cloud was prepared as a royal chariot, to carry up the King of glory to his princely pavilion; and then a royal guard of mighty angels to wait upon his chariot; if not for support, yet for the greater state, and solemnity of their Lord's ascension. And O what jubilations of blessed angels were heard that day in heaven! How was the whole city of God moved at his coming! The triumph is not ended to this day, no, nor ever shall.

Now, herein God greatly honours his people, that there shall be some resemblance, and conformity betwixt their ascension, and Christ's; * Angels rejoice to attend those to heaven, who must be their fellow-citizens for ever in heaven! It is convenient also, that those who had the charge of us all our life, should attend us to our Father's house at our death: In the one, they finish their ministry; in the other, they begin their more intimate society.

Moreover, the angels are they whom God will employ, to gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven, at the great day, Matth. xxiv. 31. And who more fit to attend their spirits to heaven singly, than those who must collect them into one body at last, and wait upon that collective body, when they shall be brought to Christ? Psal. lxv. 14.

Object. *But the sight, and presence of angels is exceeding awful, and overwhelming to human nature: It will rather astonish and terrify, than refresh and chear us, to find ourselves, all on a sudden, surrounded, and beset with such majestic creatures. We see what effects the appearance of an* angel *hath had upon good men in this world:* "We shall die, (saith Manoah) for we have "seen God," Judges xiii. 22. So Eliphaz, "a spirit passed be- "fore my face; the hair of my flesh stood up," Job iv. 15.

Solut. True, whilst our souls inhabit these mortal and sinful bodies, the appearance of angels is terrible to them, and cannot be otherwise, partly upon a *natural*, and partly upon a *moral* account. The dread of angels naturally falls upon our animal spirits: They shrink and tremble at the approach of spirits; not only the spirits of men, but of beasts, quail at it. A dog, or a horse is terrified at it, as well as a man, Numb. xxii. 25. The dread of spirits strikes the animal, or natural spirits prima-

* As they, (*i. e.* angels) served the head, in like manner do they serve the members. They rejoice to serve them on earth, whom they shall have afterwards for companions in heaven. *Gerhard.*

Digitized by Google

rily; and the mind, or rational soul, by consent. There is also another cause of fear in man, upon the sight, or presence of angels, *viz.* a consciousness of guilt. Wherever there is guilt, there will be fear, especially upon any extraordinary appearance of God to us, though it be but mediately upon an angel.

But when the soul is freed, both from flesh, and sin, and shall enjoy itself in a nature like to these pure and holy spirits, the dread of angels is then vanished, and the soul will take great content, and satisfaction in their company and communion: The soul then finds itself a fit companion for them; looks upon them as its fellow-servants, for so they are, Rev. xix. 10. And the angels look upon the spirits of just men, not as inferiors, underlings, but with great respect, as spirits, in some sense, nearer to Christ than themselves: So that henceforth no dread falls upon us from the presence of these excellent creatures; but each enjoyeth singular delight, in each other's society. And thus we see in what honourable and pleasing company the souls of the just go hence to their Father's house, and bosom.

Proposition 5. *The soul is not so maimed and prejudiced by its separation from the body, but that it both can, and doth live, and act without it; and performs the acts of cogitation, and volition, without the aid, and ministry of the body.*

I know it is objected by them that assert the soul's sleeping till the resurrection, that though its essence be not destroyed by death, yet its operations are obstructed by the want, and absence of the body, its tool, and instrument: And thus they form their objection.

Object. *All that the soul understands, it understands by* species †; *that is, the images of things which are first formed in the phantasy: As when we would conceive the nature of a house, a ship, a man, or a beast: we first form the image, or species thereof in our fancy, and then exercise our thoughts about it: But this depending upon bodily organs, and instruments, the separated soul can form no such images: It hath no such innate* species *of its own, but comes into the world an* abrasa tabula, *white paper; and being deprived by separation of the help of senses, and phantasms, it consequently understands nothing.*

† There are three conditions requisite for the acts of the understanding. 1. The object, a being that is real and intelligible. 2. The Phantasm, or sensible image lurking in the phantasy. 3. The intelligible image, which is a spiritual accident, representing to the understanding, in an ideal way, the material object that exists without the understanding.

Digitized by Google

Thus the soul, in its state of separation, is represented to us as wounded in its powers, and operations, to that degree, which seems to extinguish the very nature of it. But,

Solut. 1. We deny that the soul knows nothing now but by phantasms ‡, and images; for it knows itself, its own nature and powers, of which it cannot possibly feign, or form any image or representation. What form, shape, or figure, can the fancy of a man cast his own soul into, to help him to understand its nature?

And what shall we say of its understanding during an extasy, or rapture? Doth the soul know nothing at such a time? Doth a dull torpor seize and benumb its intellectual powers? No, no, the understanding is never more bright, clear, apprehensive, and perfect, than when the body, in an extasy, is laid aside, as to any use or assistance of the mind: The soul for that space uses not the body's assistance, as the very words *extasy* and *rapture* convince us.

2. ‖ To understand by *species*, doth not agree to the soul naturally and necessarily, but by accident, as it is now in union with the body: Were it but once loosed from the body, it would understand better without them, than ever it did in the body by them. A man that is on horseback, must move according to the motion of the horse he rids; but if he were on foot, he then uses his own proper motion as he pleaseth; so here. But though we grant the soul doth in many cases now make use of phantasms, and that the agitation of the spirits, which are in the brain and heart, are conjunct with its acts of cogitation and intellection: Yet, as a searching † scholar well observes, the spirits are rather subjects than instruments of those actions; and the whole essence of those acts is antecedent to the motion of the spirits: As when we use a pen in writing, or a knife in cutting, there is an operation of the soul upon them, before there can be any operation of the soul upon them, before there can be any

‡ The understanding contemplates objects incorporeal and immaterial, such as God and intelligent beings. But these by no means affect the phantasy, for they are beyond the reach of corporeal powers. *Conimb. on the soul. l.* 3. *c.* 8. *q.* 8.

‖ For if this belongs not to the nature of the soul, but by accident agrees to it, namely from this, that it is tied to the body, as the Platonists affirm, then the question is easily solved. For the soul being loosed from the body, will return to its own nature. *Aquin. p.* 1. *Q.* 8. *Art.* 1.

† Howe's *Blessedness. p.* 174, 175.

Digitized by Google

operation by them: They act as they are first acted, and so do these bodily spirits. So that to speak properly, the body is bettered by the use the soul makes of it in these its noble actions; but the soul is not advantaged by being tied to such a body; it can do its own work without it; its operations follow its essence, not the body to which it is for a time united.

Upon the whole; it is much more absonous and difficult to conceive a stupified, benummed, and unactive soul, whose very nature is to be active, lively, and always in motion, than it is to conceive a soul freed from the shackles and clogs of the body, acting freely according to its own nature. I wish the favourers of this opinion may take heed, lest it carry them farther than they intend, even to a denial of its existence and immortality, and turn them into downright *Somatists* or *Atheists*.

Proposition 6. *That the separated souls of the just having finished all their work of obedience on earth, and the Spirit having finished all his work of sanctification upon them, they ascend to God, with all the habits of Grace inherent in them; and all the comfortable improvements of their graces accompanying and following them.*

This proposition is to be opened and confirmed in these four branches.

(1.) When a gracious soul is separated from the body, all its work of obedience in this world is finished. Therefore death is called the "finishing of our course," Acts xx. 24. "The "night when man works no more," John ix. 4. "There is no "working in the grave," Eccl. ix. 10. for death dissolves the *compositum*, and removes the soul immediately to another world, where it can act for itself only, but not for others, as it was wont to do on earth. "I shall see man no more (saith Heze-"kiah) with the inhabitants of the world," Isa. xxxviii. 11. That which was said of David's death, is as true of every Christian, that "having served his generation according to the will "of God, he fell asleep," Acts xiii. 36.

I do not say this lower world receives no benefit at all by them after their death? for though they can speak no more, write no more, pray for, and instruct the inhabitants of this world no more, nor exhibit to them the beauty of religion in any new acts or examples of theirs (which is what I mean by saying *they have finished all their work of obedience on earth*); yet the benefit of what they did whilst in the body, still remains after they are gone: As the apostle speaks of Abel, Heb. xi. 4. "Who being dead, yet speaketh." This way indeed a-

Digitized by Google

bundance of service will be done for the souls of men upon earth, long after they are gone to heaven. And this should greatly quicken us to leave as much as we can behind us, for the good of posterity, that *after our decease* (as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. i. 15.) they may have our words and examples in remembrance. But for any service to be done *de novo*, after death, it is not to be expected: We have accomplished, as a hireling, our day, and have not a stroke more to do.

(2.) As all our work of obedience is then finished by us, so at death all the work of God is finished by his Spirit upon us. The last hand is then put to all the preparatory work for glory, not a stroke more to be done upon it afterwards; which appears as well by the immediate succession of the life of glory, (whereof I shall speak in another proposition) as by the cessation of all sanctifying means and instruments, which are totally laid aside as things of no more use after this stroke is given; *Adepto fine, cessant media*, means are useless when the end is attained. *There is no work* (saith Solomon) *in the grave*. How short soever the soul's stay and abode in the body was, though it were regenerated one day, and separate the next, yet all is wrought upon it, which God ever intended should be wrought in this world, and there is no preparation-work in the other world.

(3.) But though the soul leave all the means of grace behind it, yet it carries away with it to heaven all those habits of grace which were planted and improved in it in this world, by the blessing of the Spirit upon those means: Though it leaves the ordinances, it loseth not the effects and fruits of them; though they cease, their effects still live. "The truth dwelleth in us, "and shall be in us for ever," 1 John ii. 17. "The seed of "God remaineth in us," 1 John iii. 9.

Common gifts fail at death; but saving grace sticks fast in the soul, and ascends with it into glory. Gracious habits are inseparable; glory doth not destroy, but perfect them: They are the soul's meetness for heaven, Col. i. 12. and therefore it shall not come into his presence, leaving its meetness behind it. In vain is all the work of the Spirit upon us in this world, if we carry it not along with us into that world, seeing all his works upon us in this life have a respect and relation to the life to come.

Look, therefore, as the same natural faculties and powers which the soul had (though it could not use them) in its imperfect body in the womb, came with it into this world, where they freely exerted themselves in the most noble actions of natural life; so the habits of grace, which, by regeneration, are

Digitized by Google

here implanted in a weak and imperfect soul, go with it to glory, where they exert themselves in a more high and perfect way of acting than ever they did here below. The languishing spark of love is there a vehement flame; the faint, remiss and infrequent delight in God, is there at a constant, ravishing and transporting height.

(4.) To conclude, As all implanted habits of grace ascend with the sanctified soul to heaven; (for the soul ascends not thither as a natural, but as a new creature) so all the effects, results, and sweet improvements of those graces which we gathered as the pleasant fruits of them on earth, these accompany and follow the soul into the other world also; "Their works follow "them," Rev. xiv. 13. They go not before in the notion of merits, to make way for them, but they follow or accompany them as evidences, and comfortable experiences. I doubt not, but the very remembrance of what passed betwixt God and the soul here, betwixt the day of its espousals to Christ, and its divorce from the body, will be one sweet ingredient in their blessedness and joy, when they shall be singing in the upper region the song of Moses and of the Lamb. They were never given to be lost, or left behind us. And thus you see with what a rich cargo the soul sails to the other world, though if it had no other, it would never drop anchor there.

Proposition 7. *The souls of the just when separated from their bodies, do not wander up and down in this world, nor hover about the sepulchres where their bodies lie; nor are they detained in any purgatory, in order to their more perfect purification; nor do they fall asleep in a benummed stupid state: but do forthwith pass into glory, and are immediately with the Lord.*

When once the mind of man leaves the scripture-guidance and direction, which is to it what the compass or pole-star is to a ship in the wide ocean, whither will it not wander? In what uncertainties will it not fluctuate? and upon what rocks and quick-sands must it inevitably be cast? Many have been the foolish and groundless conceits and fancies of men about the receptacles of departed souls.

1. Some have assigned them a restless wandering life, now here, now there, without any certain dwelling-place any where. The only grounds for this fancy, is the frequent apparitions of the ghosts or spirits of the dead, whereof many instances are given; and who is there that is a stranger to such stories? Now, if departed souls were fixed any where, this world would be quiet and free from such disturbances.

Digitized by Google

I make no doubt, but very many of these stories, have been the industrious fictions and devices of wicked and superstitious votaries, to gain reputation to their way, speaking lies in hypocrisy, to draw disciples after them. And many others have been the tricks and impostures of Satan himself, to shake the credit of the saints rest in heaven, and the imprisonment of ungodly souls in hell, as will more fully appear when I come to speak to that question more particularly.

2. Others think, when they are loosed from the body at death, they hover about the graves and solitary places where their bodies lie, as willing, seeing they can dwell no longer in them, to abide as near them as they can; just as the surviving turtle keeps near the place where his mate died, and may be heard mourning for a long time about that part of the wood. This opinion seeks countenance and protection from that law, Deut. xviii. 10, 11. which prohibits men to consult with the dead; of which restraint there had been no need or use, if it had not been practised; and such practices had never been continued, if departed souls had not frequented those places, and given answers to their questions. But what I said before of Satan's impostures, is enough for the present to return to this also.

3. The Papists send them immediately to purgatory, in order to their more thorough purification. This purgatory * Bellarmine thus describes: "It is a certain place wherein, as in a "prison, souls are purged after this life, that were not fully "purged here, to the intent they may enter pure into heaven; "and tho' the church (saith he) hath not defined the place, yet "the schoolmen say, it is in the bowels of the earth, and upon "the borders of hell." And, to countenance this profitable fable, divers scriptures are by them abused and misapplied, as 1 Cor. iii. 15. Matth. v. 25, 26. 1 Pet. iii. 19. All which have been fully rescued out of their hands, and abundantly vindicated by our divines, who have proved, God never kindled that fire to purify souls; but the *Pope* to warm his own *kitchen*.

4. Another sort there are, who affirm, they neither wander about this world, nor go into purgatory, but are cast by death into a swoon or sleep; remaining in a kind of benummed condition, till the resurrection of the body. This was the error of Beryllus; and Irenaeus seems to border too near upon it, when he saith †, "The souls of disciples shall go to an invisible place

* *Bellarmin lib. 2. de Purg. cap. 6.*

† *Discipulorum animæ abibunt in invisibilem locum, definitum eis*

Digitized by Google

" appointed for them of God, and shall there tarry till the re-
" surrection, waiting for that time: and then receiving their
" bodies, and perfectly, *(i. e.)* corporeally, rising again, as
" Christ did, they shall come to the sight of God."

All these mistakes will fall together by one stroke; for if it evidently appear (as I hope it will) that the spirits of the just are immediately taken to God, and do converse with, and enjoy him in heaven; then all these fancies vanish, without any more labour about them particularly. Now there are four considerations which to me put the immediate glorification of the departed souls of believers beyond all rational doubt.

1. Heaven is as ready and fit to receive them as ever it shall be.

2. They are as ready and fit for heaven as ever they will be.

3. The scripture is plainly for it. And,

4. There is nothing in reason against it.

1. Heaven is as fit and ready to receive them, when they die, as ever it shall be. Heaven is prepared for believers, (1.) By the purpose and decree of God, and so far it was prepared from the foundation of the world, Matth. xxv. 34. (2.) By the death of Christ, whose blood made the purchase of it for believers, and so meritoriously opened the gates thereof, which our sins had barred up against us, Heb. x. 19, 20. (3.) By the ascension of Christ into that holy place, as our representative and forerunner, John xiv. 2. This is all that is necessary to be done for the preparation of heaven; and all this is done, as much as ever God designed should be done to it, in order to its preparation for our souls: so that no delay can be upon that account.

2. The departed souls of believers are as ready for heaven as ever they will be: for there is no preparation-work to be done by them, or upon them after death, John ix. 3. Eccl. ix. 10. Their justification was complete before death, and now their sanctification is so too; sin, which came in by the union, going out at the separation of their souls and bodies. They are *spirits made perfect.*

3. The scripture is plain and full for their immediate glorification; Luke xxiii. 43. " To day shalt thou be with me in
" paradise." Luke xvi. 22. " The beggar died, and was car-

eis a Deo; et ibi usque ad resurrectionem commorabuntur, sustinentes resurrectionem; post, recipientes corpora, et perfecte resurgentes, i. e. *corporaliter, quemadmodum et Dominus resurrexit, sic venient ad conspectum Dei,* Iren. lib. 5.

Digitized by Google

" ried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Phil. i. 21. "I " desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far " better." The scripture speaks but of two ways, by which souls see, and enjoy God, *viz.* Faith and sight; the one imperfect, suited to this life; the other perfect, fitted for the life to come; and this immediately succeeding that, for the imperfect is done away, by the coming of that which is perfect, as the twilight is done away, by the advancing of the perfect day.

4. To conclude; there is nothing in reason lying in bar to it. It hath been proved before, that the soul in its unbodied state, is capable to enjoy blessedness, and can perform its acts of intellection, volition, *&c.* not only as well, but much better than it did, when embodied. I conclude therefore, that seeing heaven is already as much prepared for believers, as it need be, or can be; and they as much prepared from the time of their dissolution, as ever they shall be; the scriptures also being so plain for it, and no bar in reason against it; all the forementioned opinions are but the dreams and fancies of men, who have forsaken their scripture-guide; and this remains an unshaken truth, that the spirits of the just go immediately to glory, from the time of their separation.

Proposition 8. *At the time of a gracious soul's separation from the body, it is instantly and perfectly freed from sin, which, till that time, dwelt in it from its beginning; but thenceforth shall do so no more.*

Immediately upon their separation from the body, they are spirits *made perfect*, as my text stiles them; and that epithet * *perfect* could never suit them, if there were any remaining root or habit of corruption in them.

The time, yea, the set time is now come, to put an end to all the dolorous groans of gracious souls, upon the account of indwelling sin. What the angel said to Joshua, Zech. iii. 3, 4. the same doth God say of every upright soul, at the time of its separation, " Take away the filthy garments from him, and " cloath him with change of raiments, and set a fair mitre upon " his head." Thus the garments spotted with the flesh, are taken away with the body of flesh, and the pure unchangeable robes of perfect holiness, cloathed upon the soul, in which it appears without fault before the throne of God, Rev. xiv. 5.

* Therefore he calls them consecrated or perfect, because they are no more subject to the infirmities of the flesh, the flesh itself being laid aside. *Marlorate on the place.*

Digitized by Google

There is a threefold burdensome evil in sin under which all regenerated souls groan in this life; *viz.* (1.) The guilt; (2.) The filth; (3.) The inherence of it in their nature. And there is a threefold remedy or cure of these evils: the guilt of sin is remedied by justification; the filth of sin is inchoatively healed by sanctification: the inherence of sin is totally eradicated by glorification; For as it entred into our persons by the union of our souls and bodies, so it is perfectly cast out by their disunion or separation at death: the last stroke is then given to the work of sanctification, and the last is evermore the perfecting stroke: sin languished under imperfect sanctification in the time of life, but it gives up the ghost under perfected sanctification, from and after death: sanctification gave it its deadly wound, but glorification its final abolition. For it is with our sins after regeneration, as it was with that beast mentioned, Dan. vii. 12. which, though it was "wounded with a deadly wound, yet its life was "prolonged for a season." And this is the appointed season for its expiration. For if at their dissolution they are immediately received into glory (as it hath been proved they are, in our seventh proposition) they must necessarily be freed from sin, immediately upon their dissolution; because, nothing that is unclean can enter into that pure and holy place; they must be, as the text truly represents them, "the spirits of just men made perfect."

For, if so great holiness and purity be required in all that draw nigh to God upon earth, as you read, Psal. xciii. 5. certainly, those who are admitted immediately to his throne, must be without fault, according to Rev. vii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

When a compounded being comes to be dissolved, each part returns to its own principle; so it is here: the spirit of man, and all the grace that is in it, came from God; and to him they return at death, and are perfected in him and by him: the flesh returns to earth, whence it came, and all that body of sin is destroyed with it; neither the one or other shall be a snare or clog to the soul any more. A Christian in this world, is but gold in the ore; at death, the pure gold is melted out and separated, and the dross cast away and consumed.

Hence three consectaries offer themselves to us.

Consectary 1. That a believer's life and warfare end together. We lay not down our weapons of war, till we lie down in the dust, 2 Tim. iv. 7. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished "my course." The course and conflict you see are finished together: though they commence from different terms, yet they always terminate together. Grace and sin have each acted its part upon the stage of time, and the victory hovered doubtfully, some-

Digitized by Google

times over sin, and sometimes over grace; but now the war is ended, and the quarrel decided, grace keeps its ground, and sin is finally vanquished. Now, and never before, the gracious soul stands triumphing like that noble *Argive*,

In vacuo solus sessor plausorque theatro.

not an enemy left to renew the combat; the war is ended, and with it all the fears and sorrows of the saints.

Consectary 2. Separated souls become impeccable, or free from all the hazard of sin, from the time of their separation: for, there being no root of sin now inherent in them, consequently no temptation to sin can fasten upon them; all temptations have their handles in the corruptions of our natures: did not Satan find matter prepared within us, dry tinder fitted to his hand, he might strike in temptations long enough, before one of his hellish sparks could catch or fasten upon us. Temptations are grievous exercises to believers; they are darts, Eph. vi. 16. they are thorns, 2 Cor. xii. 7. But the separate soul is out of gunshot: it were as good discharge an arrow at the body of the sun, as a temptation at a translated soul.

Consectary 3. Separated souls are more lovely companions, and their converses more sweet and delightful than ever they were in this world. It was their corruption which spoiled their communion on earth; and it is their spotless holiness which makes it incomparably pleasant in heaven. The best and loveliest saints have something in them which is distasteful; even sweet briars and holy thistles have their offensive prickles: but when that which was so lovely on earth is made perfect in heaven, and nothing of that remains in heaven, which was so offensive in them on earth; O what blessed, delightful companions will they be! O blessed society! O most desirable companions! let my soul for ever be united to their assembly. I love them under their corruptions; but how shall my soul be knit to them, when it seeth them shining in their perfections?

Proposition 9. *The pleasure and delights of the separate spirits of the just, are incomparably greater and sweeter than those they did, or at any time could experience in their bodily state.*

With what a pleasant face would death smile upon believers! what roses would it raise in its pale cheeks, if this proposition were but well settled in our hearts by faith! And if we will not be wanting to ourselves, it may be firmly settled there, by these four considerations, which demonstrate it.

Consideration 1. *Whatsoever pleasure any man receives in this world, he receives it by means of his soul.* Even all corporeal and sensitive delights have no other relish and sweetness, but what

Digitized by Google

the soul gives them: which is demonstrable by this; that if a man be placed amidst all the pleasing objects and circumstances in the world, if he were in that centre, where he might have the confluence of all the delights of this world: yet if the spirit be wounded, there is no more relish or savour in them, than in the white of an egg. What pleasure had Spira in his liberty, estate, wife and children; these things were indeed proposed and urged, again and again, to relieve him; but instead of pleasure they became his horror: let but the mind be wounded, and all the mirth is marred; one touch from God upon the spirit, destroys all the joy of this world. Nay,

Let but the intention of the mind be strongly carried another way, and for that time, (though there be no guilt or wound upon the soul) the most pleasant enjoyments lose their pleasure. What delight, think you, would bags of gold, sumptuous feasts, or exquisite melody have afforded to Archimedes, when he was wholly intent upon his mathematical lines? By this then it is evident, that the rise of all pleasure is in the mind, and the most agreeable and pleasing objects and enjoyments signify nothing without it: the mind must be sound in itself, and at leisure to attend them, or we can have no pleasure from them.

Consideration 2. *Of all natural pleasures in the world, intellectual pleasures are found to be most agreeable, and connatural to the soul of man.*

The more refined and remote from sense any pleasure is, the more grateful is it to the soul; those are certainly the sweetest delights that spring out of the mind. A drop of intellectual pleasure is valued by a generous and well-tempered soul, above the whole ocean of impure joys, which come to it sophisticated, and tanged through the muddy channels of sense.

No sensualists in the world can extract such pleasure out of gold, silver, meat and drink; as a searching and contemplating mind finds in the discovery of truth. * Heinsius that learned library-keeper of Leyden, professed, "That when he had shut "up himself among so many illustrious souls, he seemed to sit "down there, as in the very lap of eternity, and heartily pitied "the rich and covetous worldlings, that were strangers to his "delights."

* *In qua simulac pedem posui, foribus pessulum obdo, et in ipso æternitas gremio, inter tot illustres animas sedem mihi sumo, cum ingenti quidem animo: ut subinde magnatum misereat, qui hanc felicitatem ignorant.* Epist. Prin.

Digitized by Google

And † Cardan tells us, "That to know the secrets of nature, and the order of the universe, hath greater pleasure and "sweetness in it, than the thought of man can fathom, or any "mortal hope for." "Yea, such beauty, saith ‡ Plutarch, there "is in the study of the *mathematics*, that it were unworthy to "compare such baubles and bubbles as riches with it." "Yea, "saith another, it were a sweet thing to be extinguished in "those studies ‖."

Julius Scaliger was so delighted with poetry, that he protested he had rather be the author of twelve verses in Lucan, than emperor of Germany. And to say truth, "there is a kind of "enchanting sweetness in those intellectual pleasures, and "feasts of the mind; such a delight as hardly suffers the mind "to be pulled away from it *." These pleasures have a finer edge, a higher gust, a more agreeable savour to the mind than sensitive ones; as approaching much nearer to the nature of the soul, which is spiritual.

Consideration 3. And as intellectual pleasures do as far exceed all sensitive pleasures, as those which are proper to a man, do those which we have in common with beasts; *So divine pleasures do again much more surmount intellectual ones.* For what compare is there betwixt those joys which surprise a scholar in the discovery of the secrets of nature, and those that overwhelm and swallow up the Christian in the discovery of the glorious mysteries of redemption by Christ, and his own personal interest therein!

To solve the *phaenomena* of nature is pleasant, but to solve all the difficulties about our title to Christ and his covenant, that is ravishing. Archimedes his εὕρηκα, I have found it, was but the frisk, or skip of a boy, to that rapturous voice of the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." These are entertainments for angels, 1 Pet. i. 11. a short salvation for the season it is felt and tasted, 1 Pet. i. 8. after these delights, all others are insipid and dry. And yet one step higher,

Consideration 4. *All that divine pleasure, which ever the*

† *Arcana cœli, naturæ secreta, ordinem universi scire; majoris fœlicitatis et dulcedinis est, quam cogitatione quis assequi potest, aut mortalis sperare.*

‡ *Talis est mathematum pulchritudo, et his indignum sit divitiarum phaleras istas et bullas et puerilia spectacula comparari.*

‖ *Dulce est extingui mathematicarum artium studio.* Leon. Diggs.

* *Talis suavitas, ut cum quis ea degustaverit, quasi Circeis poculis captus, non potest unquam ab illis divelli.* Cardan.

Digitized by Google

holiest, and devoutest soul enjoyed in the body, is but a sip or prelibation, compared with those full draughts it hath in the unbodied state.

Whilst it is embodied, it rejoiceth in the earnests and pledges of joy; but when it is unbodied, it receives the full sum; Psal. xvi. 11. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." This fulness of joy is not to be expected, because not to be supported in this world. The joy of heaven would quickly make the hoops of nature fly. When a good man had but a little more than ordinary joy of the Lord poured into his soul, he was heard to cry, Hold, Lord, hold! thy poor creature is but a clay vessel, and can hold no more! These pleasures the soul hath in the body, are of the same kind indeed with those in heaven, but are exceeding short of them in divers others respects.

1. The spiritual pleasures the soul hath in the body, are but by reflection; but those it enjoys out of the body, are by immediate *intuition*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. now in a glass, then face to face.

2. The pleasures it now hath, though they be of a divine nature, yet they are relished by the vitiated appetite of a sick and distempered soul; the embodied soul is diseased and sickly, it hath many distempers hanging about it. Now we know the most pleasant things lose much of their pleasure to a sick man; the separate soul is made perfect, thoroughly cured of all diseases, restored to its perfect health; and consequently, divine pleasures must needs have a higher gust, and relish in heaven, than ever they had on earth.

3. The pleasures of a gracious soul on earth are but rare and seldom, meeting with many and long interruptions. And many of them occasioned by the body, which often calls down the soul to attend its necessities, and converse with things of a far different nature; but from these, and all other ungrateful and prejudicial avocations, the separated soul is discharged and set free; so that its whole eternity is spent in the highest delights.

4. The highest pleasures of a gracious soul in the body, are but the pleasures of an uncentered soul, which is still gravitating and striving forward, and, consequently, can be but low, and very imperfect, in comparison with those it enjoys, when it is centered and fixed in its everlasting rest. They differ as the shadow of the labourer, for an hour in the day, from his rest in his bed, when his work is ended.

To conclude; the pleasures it hath here, are but the pleasures of hope and expectation, which cannot bear any propor-

Digitized by Google

tion to those of sight and full fruition. O see the advantages of an unbodied state!

Proposition 10. *That gracious souls, separate from the body, do attain to the perfection of knowledge, with more ease than they attained any small degree of knowledge whilst they dwelt in the body.*

Great are the inconveniences, and prejudices, under which souls labour, in their pursuits after knowledge in this life, *Veritas in puteo*, Truth lies deep. And it is hard, even with much labour, pains and study, to pump up one clear notion; for the soul cannot now act as it would, but is fain to act as it can, according to the limitations and permissions of the body, to which it is confined: By heedful observations, and painful searches it is forced to deduce one thing from another, and is too often deceived, and imposed upon by such tedious and manifold connections.

Beside, truth is now forced, in compliance with our weakness, and distance from the fountain, to descend from heaven under vails *, shadows and umbrages, thereby to contract some kind of affinity with our fancies and exterior senses first, that so it may with more advantage transmit itself to our understanding. It must come under some vail or other to us, whilst we are vailed with mortality, because the soul cannot behold it with its native lustre, nor converse otherwise with it.

And hence it was that Augustine made his rational conjecture, Why men used to be so much delighted with metaphors, because they are so much proportioned to our senses, with which our reason, in this embodied state, hath contracted such an intimacy and familiarity: but when the soul lays aside its vail of flesh, truth also puts off her vail, and shews the soul her naked, beautiful, and ravishing face; it henceforth beholds all truth in God, the fountain of truth. There are five ways by which men attain the knowledge of God, say the schools, four of which the soul makes use of in this world; but the fifth, which is the most perfect, is reserved for the separate state. Men discern God here,

(1.) *In vestigio*, By his footsteps in the works of creation. God hath impress the marks of his wisdom and power upon the creatures, by which impressions we discern that God hath been

* The light from above never descends without a vail: for it is impossible that divine light could otherwise shine to us, unless it is covered with a variety of sacred shadowings. *Dionys. Arcop. de cœlest. Hier. c.* 1.

Digitized by Google

there. Thus the very Heathens arrive to some knowledge of a God, Rom. i. 20. Acts xvii. 24, 27.

(2.) *In umbra*, By his shadow: if you see the shadow of a man, you guess at his stature and dimensions thereby. Thus Christ made some discovery of himself to the world, in the *Mosaical* ceremonies, and antient types and umbrages, Heb. x. 1.

(3.) *In speculo*, In a glass: This gives us a much clearer representation of a person, than either his *footsteps* or *shadow* could: this is an imperfect or darker vision of his face, by way of reflection. And thus God is seen in his word and ordinances, wherein, "as in a glass, we behold the glory of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(4.) *In Filio*, in his own Son, who is the living image and express character of his Father. Thus we sometimes see a child so lively representing his father in speech, gate, gesture, and every lineament of his face, that we may say,

Sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat.

Just so his father spake, so he went, and just such a one he was.

Thus we know God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. who is the express image of his Father, Heb. i. 3. and John xiv. 9. This is the highest way of attaining the knowledge of God in this life. But then, in the unbodied state, we see him,

(5.) *Face to face*, with a direct vision. This is to *see him as he is*. The believer is a candidate for this degree now, but cannot be invested with it, till it be divested of this body of flesh. Yet the soul, when unbodied, and made perfect, attaineth, not to a comprehensive knowledge of God, for it will still remain a finite being, and so cannot comprehend that which is infinite. That question, Job xi. 7. "Canst thou find out the Almighty "unto perfection?" may be put to the highest graduate in heaven. And yet,

1. To see God face to face, and know him as he is, will be a knowledge of the divine essence itself. To see the divine essence, is to see God as he is; *i. e.* to see him so perfectly, and fully, that the understanding can proceed no farther in point of knowledge, concerning that great question, *What is God?* Thus no man hath seen or can see God in this world. Even Moses himself could not see God, Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20. But the spirits of the just made perfect, have satisfying apprehensions, though not perfect comprehensions of the divine essence.

2. In this light they clearly discern those deep mysteries which they here racked their thoughts upon, but could not penetrate in this life. There they will know what is to be known

Digitized by Google

of the union of the two natures in the wonderful person of our Emmanuel; and the manner of the subsistence of each person, in the most glorious and undivided Godhead, John xiv. 20. The several attributes of God will then be unfolded to our understandings; for his essence and attributes are not two things, Rev. iv. 8, 9, 10, 11. Oh! what a ravishing sight will this be!

The mysteries of the scriptures, and providences of God, will be no mysteries then: Curiosity itself will be there satisfied.

3. This immediate knowledge, and sight of God face to face, will be infinitely more sweet, and ravishingly pleasant, than any, or all the views we had of him here by faith ever were, or possibly could be. There is a joy unspeakable in the visions of faith, 1 Pet. i. 8. but it comes far short of the facial vision. Who can tell the full importance of that one text, Rev. xxii. 4. "The throne of the Lamb shall be in it, and they shall see "his face?" Oh! for such a heaven (said one) as to get one glimpse of that lovely face! Earth cannot bear such sights. This light overwhelms, and confounds the inadequate faculties of imperfect and embodied souls. But there is *lumen confortans*, a chearing, strengthening, pleasant light, as the light of *the morning-star*, Rev. ii. 28.

4. This sight of God will be appropriative, and applicative. We there see him as our own God, and portion. Without a clear interest in him, the sight of him could never be beatifical, and satisfying. Sight without interest is like the light of a glow-worm, light without heat. All doubts and objections are solved, and answered, in the first sight of this blessed face.

5. To conclude: This perfect, and most comfortable knowledge, is attained without labour by the separate soul. Here every degree of knowledge was with the price of much pains. How many weary hours, and aking heads, did the acquisition of a little knowledge stand us in! But then it flows in upon the soul easily. It was the saying of a great usurer, *I once took much pains to get a little*, (meaning the first stock) *but now I get much without any pains at all.* Oh lovely state of separation! That body which interposed, clogged, and clouded the willing and capable spirit, being drawn aside (as a curtain) by death, the light of glory now shines upon it, and round about it, without any interception, or lett.

Proposition 11. *The separated souls of the just do live in a more high and excellent way of communion with God, in his temple-worship in heaven, than ever they did in the sweetest gospel-ordi-*

Digitized by Google

nances, and most spiritual duties, in which they conversed with him here on earth.

That saints on earth have real communion with God, and that this communion is the joy of their hearts, the life of their life, and their relief under all pressures and troubles in this life, is a truth so firmly sealed upon their hearts by experience, as well as clearly revealed in the word, that there can remain no doubt about it, among those that have any saving acquaintance with the life and power of religion.

This communion with God is of that precious value with believers, that it unspeakably endears all those duties and ordinances to them, which, as means and instruments, are useful to maintain it.

At death, the people of God part with all those precious ordinances and duties, they being only designed for, and fitted to the present state of imperfection, Eph. iv. 12, 13. but not at all to their loss, no more than it is to his that loses the light of his candle, by the rising of the sun. A candle, a star is comfortable in the night; but useless when the sun is up, and in its meridian glory. Christian, pray much, hear much, and be as much as thou canst among the ordinances of God, and duties of religion: For, the time is at hand that you shall serve, and wait on God no more this way.

But yet think not your souls shall be discharged from all worship, and service of God, when you die: No, you will find heaven to be a temple built for worship, and the worship there to be much transcendent to all that in which you were here employed. The sanctuary was a pattern of heaven in this very respect, Heb. ix. 23. And, on this very account, it is called *Sion* in my text, and the *heavenly Jerusalem*; as denoting a church-state, and the spiritual worship there performed by the spirits of just men made perfect.

Some help we may have to understand the nature thereof, by comparing it with that worship and service which we perform to God here, in this state of imperfection, and by considering the agreements, and disagreements betwixt them. In this they agree, that the worship above, and below, are both addressed, and directed to one and the same object, Father, Son, and Spirit; all centers, and terminates in God. They also agree in the general quality, and common nature; they are both spiritual worship. But there are divers remarkable differences betwixt the one and the other, as will be manifest in the following collation.

1. All our worship on earth is performed, and transacted by

Digitized by Google

faith, as the instrument, and means thereof, Heb. xi. 6. "He "that cometh to God must believe," &c. In heaven, faith ceaseth, and sight takes place of it, 1 Cor. v. 7. There we see, what here we only believe. There are now before us ordinances, scriptures, ministers, and the assemblies of saints in the places of worship: But if we have any communion with God, by, or among these, we must set ourselves to believe those things we see not. By realizing, and applying invisible things, we here get sometimes, and with no small pains, a taste of heaven, and a transient glance of that glory. In this service our faith is put hard to it, it must work and fight at once; resolutely act whilst sense and reason stand by, contradicting and quarreling with it. And if, with much ado, we get but one sensible touch of heaven upon our spirits, if we get a little spiritual warmth, and melting of our affections towards God, we call that day a good day, and it is so indeed.

But in heaven all things are carried at a high rate, the joy of the Lord overflows us without any labour, or pain of ours to procure it. We may say of it there, as the prophet speaks of the dew, and showers upon the grass, "which tarrieth not for "man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," Micah v. 7.

2. No grace is, or can be acted here, without the clog of a contrary corruption, Rom. vii. 21. "When I would do good, "evil is present with me." Every beam of faith is presently darkened by a cloud of unbelief, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I be-"lieve, help thou my unbelief." "We often read in the book "of experience (saith * one) what an inconsistent fickle thing "the heart is in duties: Now it is with us, by and by it is fled "away and gone; we know not where to find it: It is con-"stant only in its inconstancy and lubricity." There is iniquity in our most holy things, which needs pardon, Exod. xxviii. 38. Our best duties have enough in them to damn us, as well as our worst sins: But in that perfect state above, grace flows purely out of the soul, as beams do from the sun, or chrystal streams from the purest fountain. No impure, or imperfect acts proceed from spirits made perfect.

3. Here the graces of the saints are never, or very rarely acted, in their highest and most intense degree. When they love God most fervently, there is some coldness in their love. Who comes up to the height of that rule, Mat. xxii. 37. "Thou shalt love

* *Sæpe in libro experientiæ legimus quomodo a corde nostro relinquimur: Nunc est obiscum, nunc alibi; nunc evolat, nunc recurrit: in sola lubricitate manent.* Bern.

Digitized by Google

" the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and " all thy strength?" When we meditate on God, it is not in the depth of our thoughts, without some wanderings and extravagancies; 'tis very hard, if not impossible, for the soul to stand long in its full bent to God.

But in heaven it doth so, and will do so for ever, without any relaxation or remission of its fervour. Christ, among the saints and angels in heaven, is as a mighty load-stone cast in among many needles, which leap to him, and fix themselves inseparably upon him. They all act in glory as the fire doth here, to the utmost of their power and ability. There is no note lower than glory to God in the highest.

(4.) The most spiritual souls on earth, who live most with God, have, and must have their daily and frequent intermissions. The necessities of the body, as well as the defectiveness of their graces, require, and necessitate it to be so. Our hands with Moses will hang down and grow weary. Our affections will cool and fall, do what we can.

But as the spirits of just men made perfect know no remissions in the degree, so neither any intermissions in the acting of their grace: "They shall serve him day and night in his temple," Rev. vii. 15. You that would purchase the continuance of your spiritual comforts but for a day, with all that you have in this world, will there enjoy them at full, without any intermitting, through eternity.

5. If the best hearts on earth be at any time more than ordinarily enlarged in spiritual comforts, they need presently some humbling providence to hide pride from their eyes. Even Paul himself must have a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him. Bernard could never perform any duty with comfortable enlargement, but he seemed to hear his own heart whisper thus, *Bene feciſti, Bernarde,* O well done, Bernard.

But, in heaven the highest comforts are enjoyed in the deepest humility; and the entire glory is ascribed to God, without any unworthy defalcations. Rev. iv. 10. They put not the crown upon their own heads, but Christ's: They cast down their own crowns, and fall down at the feet of him that sitteth upon the throne.

6. All assemblies for worship in this world are mixed; they consist of regenerate and unregenerate, living and dead souls: This spoils the harmony, and allays the comfort of mutual communion. In a congregation consisting of a thousand persons, Ah! how few comparatively are there that are heartily con-

Digitized by Google

cerned in the duty? But it is not so above. There are ten thousand times ten thousand, even thousands of thousands before the throne, loving, adoring, praising, and triumphing together, and not a jarring string in all their harps.

7. Here the worship of God is impured, mixed, and adulterated by the sinful additions and inventions of men. This gracious souls groan under as a heavy burden, sighing and praying for reformation; as knowing they can expect no more of God's presence, than there is of his order and institution in worship. But, above, all the worship is pure, the least pin in the heavenly *tabernacle* is according to the perfect pattern of the divine will.

8. We have here duties of divers kinds and natures to perform. All our time is not to be spent in loving, praising, and delighting in God; but we must turn ourselves also to searching, watching, and soul-humbling work. Sometimes we are called to get up our hearts to the highest praise, and then to humble them to the dust for sin and judgments; one while to sing his praises, and another while to sigh even to the breaking of our loins: But the spirits of just men made perfect, have but one kind of employment, *viz.* praising, loving, and delighting in God. There is no groaning, sighing, searching, or watching-work, in that state.

9. The most illuminated believers on earth have but dark and crude apprehensions of Christ's intercession work in heaven, or of the way and manner in which it is there performed by him. We know indeed that our High-priest is for us entered within the vail, Heb. vi. 20. That he appears in that most holy place for us, Heb. ix. 24. That he there represents his sufferings for us to God, standing before him as a lamb that had been slain, Rev. v. 6. That he offers up our prayers with his incense to God, Rev. viii. 3.

But the immediate intuition of the whole performance, by the person of Christ in heaven, the beholding of him in his work there, with the smiles and honours, the delight and satisfaction of the Father in his person and work: Certainly, this must be a far different thing, and what must make more deep and suitable impressions upon our hearts than ever the most affecting view of them by Faith, at this distance, could do.

10. *In such ravishing sights, and joyful ascriptions of glory to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore, all the separated spirits of the just are employed and wholly taken up in heaven, as they come in their several times thither; and will be so employed in that temple-service unto the end of the*

Digitized by Google

world, when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father, and thenceforth God shall be all in all.

The illustration and confirmation of this assertion we have in these two or three particulars.

(1.) That all the spirits of just men, from the beginning of the world, until Christ's ascension into heaven, did enter into heaven, as a place of rest, as a city prepared for them of God, Heb. xi. 16. and did enjoy blessedness and glory there: But yet there seems to be an alteration even in heaven itself, since the ascension of Christ into it, and such an alteration as advanceth the glory thereof both to angels and saints. 'Heaven itself (saith one * who is now there) was not what it is, before 'the entrance of Christ into the sanctuary for the administration of his office. Neither the saints departed, nor the angels 'themselves, were participant of that glory which now they are. 'Neither yet doth this argue any defect in heaven, or the state 'thereof in its primitive constitution: For, the perfection of 'any state hath respect unto that order of things which it is 'originally suited unto. Take all things in the order of the first 'creation, and with respect thereunto, heaven was perfect in 'glory from the beginning, *&c.*

'Whatever was their rest, refreshment, and blessedness; 'whatever were their enjoyments of the presence of God, yet 'was there no throne of grace erected in heaven, no high-priest 'appearing before it, no lamb as it had been slain, no joint 'ascription of glory unto him that sitteth upon the throne and 'to the Lamb for ever;" † *God having ordained some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect,* Heb. xi. 40.

Now both the angels and saints in heaven, do behold Christ in his priestly office within that sanctuary; a sight never seen in heaven before.

(2.) This frame of heavenly worship will continue as it is unto the end of the world, and then another alteration will be made in the manner of his dispensatory kingdom: "For then "he must deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; "and then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that "put all things under him, that God may be all in all," as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28. So that as the present state of heaven is not, in all respects, what it was before Christ's

* Dr. Owen's Christologia, p. 158.—355.

† *Priusquam ad nostra tempora perventum est.* Camero.

Digitized by Google

ascension thither; so after the consummation of the mediatorial kingdom, and the gathering all the elect into glory, it will not in all respects be what now it is.

Christ will never cease to be the immediate head of the whole glorified creation. God having gathered all the elect, both angels and men, unto a head in him, and he being the knot or centre of that collective body, the whole frame of the glorified church would be dissolved, should he lose his relation of a head to it. Yea, I doubt not but he will for ever continue to be the medium of communion betwixt God and his glorified church: God will still communicate himself to us through Christ, and our adherence, love and delight, will still be thro' Christ: In a word, whatever change shall be made, the person of Christ, and therein his human nature, shall still continue to be the eternal object of divine glory, praise, and worship, Rev. xxii. 4.

But when he shall have gathered home all his elect to glory, he will resign his dispensatory † kingdom, and become subject *(as man, and as head of that body which he purchased)* to his Father himself, "that God may be all in all," as it is 1 Cor. xv. 28.

(1.) *All in all*, that is, all the saints shall be filled, and abundantly satisfied, in and from God alone; there shall be no emptiness, no want, no complaint: For, as there is water enough in one sea to fill all rivers, light enough in one sun to illuminate all the world; so all souls shall be eternally filled, satisfied, and blessed in one God. Surely, there is enough in God for millions of souls: For, if there be enough in God for all the angels, Mat. xviii. 10. yea, enough in God for Jesus Christ, Col. i. 19. there must be enough for all our souls. The capacity of angels is larger than ours; the capacity of Christ is larger than that of angels: He that fills them, can, and will therefore fill us, or be all in all to us.

(2.) *All in all*, that is, complete satisfaction to all the saints, in the absence of all other things, out of which they were wont to suck some comfort and delight in this world. He will now be instead of all; eminently all without them. We shall suck no more sweetness out of food, sleep, relations, ordinances, *&c.* there will be no more need or use of them, than there is of candles in the sun-shine, Rev. xxii. 5.

(3.) *All in all*, that is, God only shall be loved, praised, and

† For if this dispensatory kingdom (of Christ) had never been delivered up, then he (*viz.* God) would never receive the full use of his natural kingdom. *Junius.*

Digitized by Google

admired by all the saints; they shall love no creature out of God, but all in God, or rather God in them all. This is that blessed state to which all things tend, for which the angels and glorified souls in heaven long. Hence it is that there is joy in heaven upon the conversion of any poor sinner on earth; because thereby the body of Christ mystically advanceth towards its fulness and completeness, Luke xv. 10. No sooner is a poor soul struck by the word to the heart, and sent home crying, O sick! sick! sick of sin, and sick for Christ! but the news of it is quickly in heaven, and is matter of great joy there, because they wait as well as Christ, for the time of consummation. To conclude, those that went first to heaven before Christ's ascension, were fully at rest in God, and blessed in his enjoyment, and yet upon Christ's ascension thither, their happiness was advanced: 'Tis a new heaven as it were to feed their eyes upon the *man Christ Jesus* there. Those that now stand before the throne, ravished with the face of Christ, and ascribing glory to him for ever, are also in a most blessed state, and are filled with the joy of the Lord. And yet, two things still remain to be farther done, before they are, as they shall be for ever, *viz.* the restitution of their bodies, which yet lie in the dust, and the delivering up of the dispensatory kingdom, upon the coming in of the fulness of all their fellow-saints; and after that no more alteration for ever, but they shall be both in soul and body for ever with the Lord. What tongue of man or angel can give us the complete emphasis of that word, *ever with the Lord?* or that, of God's being *all in all?* O what hath God prepared for them that love him!

Proposition 12. *It pleaseth God at some times, even in this life, to give some men the foresight and foretaste of that blessedness, which holy separated souls do now enjoy, and themselves shall shortly enjoy with God in glory.*

Specimens and earnests of heaven are no unknown things upon earth. As the grapes of Eshcol, so the joy of heaven may be tasted before we come thither, and these foresights and prelibations of heaven are either,

1. Extraordinary, or
2. Ordinary.

1. Extraordinary, for the way and manner; when the soul is either, (1.) Caught from the body for a short time, in an extasy, when in a visional way heavenly things are presented to it: or, (2.) When the bodily eye is elevated, and strengthened above its natural vigour and ability, to behold the astonishing objects of the other world.

Digitized by Google

(1.) Of the first sort and rank was that famous rapture of Paul, mentioned 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. "I knew a man in Christ "fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell, or "whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth) such "an one caught up to the third heaven," *&c.* * 'Tis questionable indeed, whether the soul of the apostle was really separated from his body, whilst he suffered that extasy, or whether his senses were only laid, as it were, asleep for that time; he himself could not determine the question, much less can any other: But whether so or no, this seems evident, that his senses were for that time utterly useless to him. If his body was not dead, it was all one as if it had been so, for any use his soul then made of it.

"† In extasies, all the senses and powers are idle, except the "understanding:" His soul, for that time, seemed to be disjoined from his body, much as a flame of fire, which you shall sometimes see to play and hover at a distance from the wood, and then catching the fewel again. Probably, this was that trance he fell into, in the temple, when he was praying, mentioned in Acts xxi. 17.

In this rapture his soul ascended above this world, it was caught up into paradise, into the third heaven, the place in which Christ's soul was after his death: and there he heard those ἄρρητα ῥήματα, unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter: For, alas! poor mortals cannot pronounce the *Shibboleth* of heaven: The heavenly inhabitants talk in no other dialect; but the language of heaven is not properly spoken by any but the inhabitants of heaven. Now Paul was not admitted into their society at that time, as he was at his death, but was only a spectator, a stander-by, as the angels are in the assemblies of the saints here on earth. But, O what a day was that day to his soul! It was as one of the days of heaven; no words could signify to another man what he felt, what he tasted in that hour. Such favours will not be indulged to many: he was a chosen vessel, and appointed to extraordinary sufferings

* It does not appear with certainty, whether the soul of Paul was then separated from the body; seeing he himself owns his ignorance as to that matter: Hence we cannot determine what befel him as to abstraction from the senses, namely, whether the senses were extinct, his body being dead, through the separation of the soul: Or only sopited, the body not being dead. *Collog. Conimbr. lib.* 3. *Art.* 3. *p.* 512.

† *In extasi feriari omnes potentias præter intellectum.* Abulen.

Digitized by Google

for Christ, and it was necessary his supports, and encouragements should be answerable.

It was no less an extraordinary and wonderful vision, which Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John had ‡; such representations of God as overwhelmed them, and made nature faint under them; and no wonder, for if the eyes of creatures are so weak, that they cannot directly behold such a glorious creature as the sun, how much less can they bear the glorious excellency and majesty of God?

(2.) And sometimes, without an extasy, representations of Christ, and the glory of heaven, have been made, and the very bodily eye fortified, and elevated above its natural vigour, and ability to behold him. Thus it was with Stephen, at his martyrdom. *Acts* vii. 55, 56. "Who being full of the Holy Ghost, "looked stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and "Jesus standing on the right-hand of God." This was not a sight of faith, but an extraordinary sight by the bodily eye, is evident, from its effect upon his outward man; it made his face to shine, as the face of an angel.

2. There are also, beside this, ordinary, and more common foretastes of heaven, and the glory to come, with which many believers are favoured in this world; and such are those which come into the heart, upon the steady, and more fixed views of the world to come, by faith, and the more raised, spiritual actings of grace in duty. "Believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, "and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. χαρα δεδοξασμενη, with a glorified joy, or a joy of the same kind, and nature, with the joy of glorified spirits, though in an inferior, and allayed degree.

And yet, with the allowance of its allay, and rebatement, it is like new wine put into old, and crazy bottles, which is ready to make them fly, and would do so, should they be of any long continuance. "Stay me (saith the spouse) with flaggons, com-"fort me with apples, I am sick of love," Cant. ii. 5. The sickness was not the sickness of desire, or of grief, of that she had complained before; but the sickness of love, *(i. e.)* she was ready to faint under the unsupportable weight of Christ's manifested and sealed love, not able to bear what she felt, pained with the love of Christ; and the desired cure speaks this to be her case, "Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples." As if she had said, Lord, support, and under-prop my soul, for it reels, staggers, and fails under the pressure, and weight of thy love. Much like the case of a holy man, who cried out,

‡ Isa. vi. 1, 2. Ezek. i. 1. Dan. x. 8, 9. Rev. i. 17.

Digitized by Google

under the overwhelming sense of the love of Christ, shed abroad into his heart in prayer, Hold, Lord, hold, thy poor creature is a clay vessel, and can hold no more. Though these joys bring not the soul into a perfect *extasy*, they certainly bring it as near as may be, to it Mr. ‖ Fox tells us of one Giles, of Bruxels, a godly martyr, who in prison spent most of his time apart from the rest, in secret prayer; in which his soul was so ardent, and intent, that he often forgot himself, and the time; and when he was called to meat, he neither saw, nor heard those that stood by him, till he was lifted up by the arms; and then he would gladly speak to them, as one newly awaked out of a sweet sleep. These foretastes of heaven may, from the manner of their conveyance, be distinguished into,

1. Mediate. And,
2. Immediate.

1. *Mediate*, in, and by the previous use, and exercise of faith, heart-examination, *&c.* The Spirit of God concurring with, and blessing of such duties, as these, helps the soul by them to a sight of its interest in Christ, and the glory to come; which being gained, joy is no more under the soul's command. I have, with good assurance, this account of a minister, 'Who 'being alone in a journey, and willing to make the best im- 'provement he could of that day's solitude, set himself to a close 'examination of the state of his soul, and then of the life to 'come, and the manner of its being, and living in heaven, in 'the views of all those things which are now pure objects of 'faith, and hope. After a while, he perceived his thoughts be- 'gin to fix, and come closer to these great, and astonishing 'things, than was usual; and as his mind settled upon them, 'his affections began to rise with answerable liveliness, and 'vigour.

'He therefore (whilst he was yet master of his own thoughts) 'lifted up his heart to God in a short ejaculation that God 'would so order it in his providence, that he might meet with 'no interruption from company, or any other accident, in that 'journey: which was granted him: For, in all that day's 'journey, he neither met, overtook, or was overtaken by any. 'Thus going on his way, his thoughts began to swell, and rise 'higher and higher, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, till at 'last they became an overflowing flood. Such was the inten- 'tion of his mind, such the ravishing tastes of heavenly joys, 'and such the full assurance of his interest therein; that he ut-

‖ Acts and Mon. p. 811.

Digitized by Google

'terly loſt a ſight, and ſenſe of this world, and all the concerns 'thereof; and, for ſome hours, knew no more where he was, 'than if he had been in a deep ſleep upon his bed. At laſt he 'began to perceive himſelf very faint, and almoſt choaked with 'blood, which running in abundance from his noſe, had diſco-'loured his clothes, and his horſe, from the ſhoulder to the 'hoof. He found himſelf almoſt ſpent, and nature to faint 'under the preſſure of joy unſpeakable, and unſupportable; 'and at laſt, perceiving a ſpring of water in his way, he, with 'ſome difficulty, alighted, to cleanſe, and cool his face and 'hands, which were drenched in blood, tears and ſweet.

'By that ſpring he ſat down, and waſhed, earneſtly deſiring, 'if it were the pleaſure of God, that it might be his parting-'place from this world: He ſaid, death had the moſt amiable 'face in his eye, that ever he beheld, except the face of Jeſus 'Chriſt, which made it ſo; and that he could not remember '(though he believed he ſhould die there) that he had one 'thought of his dear wife, or children, or any other earthly 'concernment.

'But having drank of that ſpring, his ſpirits revived, the blood 'ſtanched, and he mounted his horſe again; and on he went, 'in the ſame frame of ſpirit, till he had finiſhed a journey of 'near thirty miles, and came, at night, to his inn, where, being 'come, he greatly admired how he came thither, that his 'horſe, without his direction, had brought him thither, and 'that he fell not all that day, which paſſed not without ſeveral 'trances, of conſiderable continuance.

'Being alighted, the inn-keeper came to him, with ſome aſto-'niſhment, (being acquainted with him formerly) O Sir, ſaid 'he, what is the matter with you? You look like a dead man. 'Friend, replied he, I was never better in my life. Shew me 'my chamber, cauſe my cloak to be cleanſed, burn me a little 'wine, and that is all I deſire of you for the preſent. Accord-'ingly it was done, and a ſupper ſent up, which he could not 'touch; but requeſted of the people, that they would not 'trouble, or diſturb him, for that night. All this night paſſed 'without one wink of ſleep, though he never had a ſweeter 'night's reſt in all his life. Still, ſtill, the joy of the Lord 'overflowed him, and he ſeemed to be an inhabitant of the 'other world. The next morning being come, he was early 'on horſeback again, fearing the divertiſement in the inn might 'bereave him of his joy; for he ſaid it was now with him, as 'with a man that carries a rich treaſure about him, who ſuſpects

Digitized by Google

'every *passenger* to be a *thief:* But within a few hours he was 'sensible of the ebbing of the tide, and before night, though 'there was a heavenly serenity, and sweet peace upon his spirit, 'which continued long with him, yet the transports of joy were 'over, and the fine edge of his delight blunted. He many 'years after called that day one of the days of heaven, and 'professed he understood more of the life of heaven by it, than 'by all the books he ever read, or discourses he ever had en-'tertained about it.' This was, indeed, an extraordinary foretaste of heaven for degree, but it came in the ordinary way and method of faith and meditation.

There are, also, immediate illapses of heavenly joy, in the hearts of believers, at some times; of which, we may say as the prophet doth of the dew and rain, that "it tarrieth not for "man, nor waiteth for the sons of men;" a surprising light and joy, like that, Cant. vi. 12. "Or ever I was aware, my "soul made me like the chariots of Aminadab."

There is a witness of the Spirit, distinct from that of water, and blood, 1 John v. 8. that is, a witness, or sealing, which comes not in an argumentative way, by reasoning from either justification, or sanctification, but seems to come immediately from the Spirit. I know both sorts of testimonies, how clear, and sweet soever they are for the present, are liable afterwards to be called into question; but certainly, during the abode of them upon the soul, they are no less than *a short salvation*, a real participation of the joy of the Lord. And that which makes them so ravishing, and transporting, is,

(1.) The infinite weight with which the concerns of eternity lie upon the hearts, and thoughts of the people of God; nothing lies so near to their spirits, in all the world, as the matters of salvation do, and have still done ever since God thoroughly awakened them in their first effectual conviction. 'Tis said of Luther, * "There was such a strong impression of God upon "his spirit, in his first conviction, that there was neither heat, "nor blood, nor sense, nor speech discernible in him." Tho' it rise to that height but in a few, yet it settles in a deep, serious, and most solemn sense, and solicitude in all. This heightens the joy.

(2.) The restlessness of the soul, whilst matters of Salvation hang in a dubious suspence, must needs proportionably overflow it with joy, when God shall clear it. It was the saying of one,

* *Nec calor, nec sanguis, nec sensus, nec vox supprimebat.* Ep. ad Melanct.

Digitized by Google

and is the sense of many more, I have borne (said she) seven children, and they have all cost me dear; yet could I be well content to bear them all over again, for one glimpse of the love of God to my soul. This heightens the joy above expression.

And now, having explained the substance of the doctrine, in these twelve *propositions*, it remains, that, as a *mantissa*, or cast upon the whole, I farther clear what belongs to this subject, in the solution of several *queries* about the soul, in its unbodied, and separated state; and though the nature of some of these *queries* may seem too curious, yet I shall labour to speak according to the rules of sobriety, and contain myself within the line of modesty, in what I shall speak about them. And the first is this;

Query 1. *Whether any notion, or conception, can be formed of a separate soul? And if so, how we may be assisted duly to form it, and conceive of it?*

Sol. 1. It must be acknowledged not only very difficult, but an impossible task, for a soul immersed in matter, and so unacquainted with its own nature and powers, as it is in its embodied state, to gain a perfect, clear, and adequate conception of what it shall be in the world to come. Expect not then a perfect image, much less any magnificent draught of this excellent creature; this would be the same thing, as to go about to paint the sun in its glory, motions, and influences with a pencil. I shall think I have done enough, if I can but give you any umbrage, or faint representation of this sublime and spiritual being, and the manner of its subsisting and acting out of the body. For, seeing it is by nature invisible, and in most of its actions (whilst it is in the state of composition) it makes the same use of the body and natural spirits, that a scribe doth of his pen and ink, without which he cannot decypher the characters which are formed in his fancy; it must needs be difficult to conceive how it subsists and acts in a separate state.

Sol. 2. But though we acknowledge it to be a great difficulty to trace it beyond the limits of this world, though we perceive nothing to depart from the body at the instant of its expiration, but a puff of breath which vanishes like smoak into the air; and though atheistical † wits daringly pronounce an immaterial substance to be a mere jargon, a contradiction *in terminis*; which, being joined together, destroy one another: yet all this doth not make the notion of a separate soul impos-

† Hobb's Leviathan, chap. xxxvi.

Digitized by Google

sible, much less undermine its existence in its unbodied and lonely state; the scriptures having so abundantly obviated all these atheistical suggestions, by so many plain discoveries of the happiness of some, and misery of others after this life: yea, my text answers us, that death is so far from destroying or annihilating, that it perfects the spirits of the just.

Sol. 3. There can be no more difficulty in conceiving of a separate soul, than there is in conceiving of an angel. For it is certain, that a separated soul, and an angel, are the liveliest and clearest representations of each other, in the whole number of created beings ‡. Some make the difference betwixt them little more than of a sword in the scabbard, from one that is naked. A soul is but a *genius* in the body, and a *genius* (or angel) is a soul out of the body. An angel (saith another) is a complete and perfect soul, a soul an imperfect and incomplete angel.

The separate soul doth not become an angel by putting off the body; they are, and still will be divers species: but in this they agree, that in their common nature they are both spirits, that is, immaterial substances, endued with understanding, will, and active power. And I know not why the one should not be as intelligible as the other; or if there be any advantage, the soul certainly must have it, seeing our acquaintance with souls is much more intimate than with angels. Angels indeed have larger capacities, and have no natural inclination to be embodied as souls have; but their common nature, as they are spirits, is the same: and if we can conceive of one, we may also of the other.

Sol. 4. But the difficulty seems to lie in this, how the soul can subsist alone without a body; and how the habits of grace, which were infused into it in this life by sanctification, do inhere in it, or can be reduced into act by it, when it hath no bodily organs to work by.

As to the first, there is no difficulty at all, if we once rightly apprehend what is meant, when we call it a spiritual substance; that is, a being by itself, independent upon any other creature as to its existence, as was opened before: the soul depends not for its life upon the body, but the body upon the soul. It is the same sword when it is drawn, as it was when sheathed in its scabbard; the soul is as much itself, when separated from the body, as it was when united with it; its being is independent on it, it can live and act in a body, and it can do so with-

‡ Dr. More's immortality of the soul, l. 2. c. 17. § 4, *et* 8. *Bell. de Ascen. mentis.*

Digitized by Google

out it: for it is a diſtinct being from its body, a ſubſtantial being itſelf. And,

Sol. 5. As for the habits of grace which accompany it to heaven, it would much facilitate our apprehenſion of it, if we but compare acquired and infuſed habits with each other. It is true, they are of different natures and originals, but the ſoul is the ſubject of them both, and their inheſion, and improvement, is much after the ſame manner.

Take we then an acquired habit into conſideration, which is nothing elſe but a permanent quality rendering the ſubject of it prompt and ready to perform a work with eaſe: ſuppoſe that of muſic, or writing, and we ſhall find theſe habits to be ſafely lodged in the ſoul, as well when the body is laid into the deepeſt ſleep, which is the image of death, as when it is awake and moſt active; for they are both artiſts when aſleep, and need learn no new rules to play or write when you awake them; which ſhews the habits to be permanently rooted in their minds.

Infuſed habits of grace are as deeply rooted in the ſoul, yea, deeper than any acquired habit can be: for when knowledge and tongues ſhall be done away, love abideth, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. *viz.* after death, when the body is aſleep in the grave.

Sol. 6. Add hereto, that theſe habits of grace are inſeparably rooted or lodged in a ſubject, which is by nature a *ſpirit*, that is to ſay, an intelligent, active being, able to uſe its faculties of ‖ underſtanding, will, and affections, and conſequently, in their uſe, to reduce theſe habits of grace inherent in them, into act, without the help of the body: for to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, were to diſpirit it, and deſtroy the very nature of it.

Moreover, let the ſpirit, thus furniſhed with gracious habits, be now conſidered in ſeparation from the body, in which ſtate it enjoyeth, and rejoiceth in a double privilege it never had before, *viz.* perfection both of itſelf, and of its graces, and the neareſt acceſs to God it is capable of; 2 Cor. v. 6. "Abſent "from the body, and preſent with the Lord." It hath now no body to clog or cloud it, nor can it complain of diſtance from God as it did in this world. Oh! at what rate muſt we conceive the love and delight of a ſoul under theſe great advantages,

‖ The underſtanding and will are the primary faculties of the ſoul, and therefore are called *inorganical*, becauſe not fixed to any member of the body, as the ſenſitive appetite and loco-motive powers are to their proper organs. The ſoul therefore hath the free uſe and exerciſe of them in its ſeparate ſtate.

Digitized by Google

to cast out their very spirits, as I may say, in their glorious activities and exercises! Well then, here you find 'a spirit naturally endued with understanding, will, and affections: in these 'faculties and affections, the habits of grace permanently rooted, which therefore accompany it in its ascension to glory: 'an ability to use and exercise these faculties and graces, and 'that in a more excellent degree and manner, than it did or 'could in this world, the subject and habits inherent being now 'both made perfect: the clog of flesh knocked off, and all distance from God removed, by its coming home to him, even 'as near as the capacity of the soul can admit. Conceive such 'a spirit so qualified, now ranked in its proper order among 'innumerable other holy and blessed spirits, which surround 'the throne of God, beholding his face with infinite delectation, 'and acting all its powers and graces to the highest, in the 'worshipping, praising, loving, and admiring him that sitteth 'on the throne, and the lamb for evermore:' And then you have a true, though imperfect idea or notion of the spirit of a *just man made perfect.*

I will not here make use of the other glass to represent a damned soul, separate for a time from its body, and for ever from the Lord: that will be shewn you in its proper place.

Query 2. *Whether there be any difference in the separation of gracious souls from their bodies? And if so, in what particulars doth the difference appear?*

Sol. For the clear stating and satisfying this question, I will lay down some things negatively, and some things positively about it. On the negative part, I desire two things may be noted.

1. That there is no difference betwixt the separation of one gracious soul and another, in point of safety. Every regenerate soul is fully secured, in and by Jesus Christ, from the danger of perishing, and is out of hazard of the wrath to come.

This must needs be so, because all that are in Christ are equally justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, without difference, to them all; Rom. iii. 22. "Even the righteousness "of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon "all them that believe, for there is no difference:" by virtue whereof, they are all equally secured from wrath to come, one as well as another. As all that sailed with Paul, so all that die in Christ come safe to the shore of glory, and not one of them is lost. The sting of death smites none that are in Christ.

2. There is no difference betwixt the departing souls of just men, in respect of the supporting presence of God with them,

Digitized by Google

in that their hour of distress; that promise belongs to them all, Psal. xci. 15. "I will be with him in trouble;" and so doth that, Heb. xiii. 5. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Their God is certainly with them all, to order the circumstances of their death, and all the occurrences of that day, to his glory, and their good. *Supports* I have, (said a good man in such an hour) though *suavities* I want; and so they have also who meet with the hardest conflict at death.

But notwithstanding their equality in these privileges, there is a great difference betwixt the departing souls of just men. And this difference is manifest both in the

1. External
2. Internal

circumstances of their death.

1. In the external circumstances of their death, all have not one and the same passage to heaven in all respects; for,

(1.) Some go thither by the ordinary road of a natural death from their beds, and the arms of lamenting friends, to the arms and bosom of Jesus Christ: but others swim through the Red-sea to Canaan: from a scaffold to the throne; from a gibbet or stake to their Father's house; from insulting enemies to their triumphant brethren, the palm-bearing multitude. This is a rough, but honourable way to glory.

(2.) Some lie long under the hand of death, before it dispatch them; it approaches them by slow and lingering paces, they feel every step of death distinctly as it comes on towards them; but others are favoured with a quick dispatch, a short passage from hence to glory. Hezekiah feared a pining sickness, Isa. xxxviii. 10, 12. what he feared, many feel. O how many days, yea, weeks and months, have many gracious souls dwelt upon the brink of the pit, crying, How long, Lord, how long?

3. The pains and agonies of death are more acute and sharp to some of God's people than to others: death is bitter in the most mild and gentle form of it. Two such dear and intimate friends as the soul and body are, cannot part without some tears, groans, or sighs; and those more deep and emphatical than the groans and sighs of the living use to be: but yet, comparatively speaking, the death of one, may be stiled sweet and easy to another's. Latimer and Ridley found it so, though burnt in the same flame.

In this respect all things come alike to all, and the same difference is found in the worst, as well as in the best men: some like sheep are laid in the grave, Psal. xlix. 14. others die in the

Digitized by Google

bitterness of their soul, Job xxi. 25. and by this no man knows either love or hatred.

2. There are besides these, some remarkable internal differences in the dissolution of good men: the sum whereof is this,

1*st*, That some gracious souls have a very hard, strait, difficult entrance into heaven: just as it is with ships that sail by a very bare wind; all their art, care, and pains, will but just weather some head-land, or cape: they steer fast by some dangerous rock or sand, and with a thousand fears and dangers, win their port at last. Saved they are, but yet to use the apostle's phrase, scarcely saved, or saved as by fire. And this difficulty ariseth to them from one, or all these causes.

(1.) It ordinarily ariseth from the weakness of their faith, which is in many souls, without either the light of evidence, or strength of reliance; neither able to dissolve their doubts, nor steadily repose their hearts: and thus they die, much at the rate they lived, poor doubting, and cloudy, though gracious souls. They can neither speak much of the comfort of past experiences, nor of the present foretastes of heaven.

(2.) The violent assaults and batteries of temptations make the passage exceeding difficult to some. O the sharp conflicts, and dreadful combats many poor souls endure upon a death bed! O the charges of hypocrisy, fortified by neglects of duty, formality and by-ends in duty, falls into sin after conviction and humiliation, *&c.* all which the soul is apt to yield to, and admit the dreadful conclusion.

These are the last, and therefore oft-times the most violent conflicts. The malice of Satan will send them halting to heaven, if he cannot bar them out of it.

(3.) To conclude: The hiding of God's face, puts terror into the face of death, and makes a dying day, a dark, and gloomy day. All darkness dispose to fear, but none like inward darkness. They must like a ship in distress, venture into the harbour in the dark, though they see not their landmarks.

2*dly*, But others have the privilege of an εὐθανασια, easy death, a comfortable, and sweet passage into glory, through the broad gate of assurance, 2 Pet. i. 11. even an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. What a difference doth God make not only betwixt those that have grace, and those that have none, but betwixt gracious souls themselves in this matter: the things which usually make an easy passage to heaven are,

Digitized by Google

1. A pardon cleared, Isa. xxxiii. 24. The sense of pardon swallows up the sense of pain.

2. A heart weaned from this world, Heb. xi. 9, 13, 16. A heart loosed from the world, is a foot out of the snare. Mortified limbs are cut off from the body with little pain.

3. Fervent love to Christ, and longings to be with him, Phil. i. 23. He that loves Christ fervently, must needs loath absence from Christ proportionably.

4. Purity, and peace of conscience, make a death-bed soft and easy. The strains and wounds of conscience, in the time of life, are so many thorns in our bed, or pillow, in the time of death, 1 John iii. 21. But integrity gives boldness.

5. The work of obedience faithfully finished, or a steddy course of holiness throughout our life, is that which usually yields much peace and joy in death, Acts xx. 24.

6. But above all, the presence of the Comforter with us in that cloudy and dark day, turns it into one of the days of heaven, 1 Peter iv. 14. And thus ye see, though all dying Christians be equally safe, and all supported, and carried through by the power of God; yet their farewels to the body are not alike cheerful. There are many external, and internal circumstantial differences in the death of good men, as well as a substantial and essential difference betwixt all their deaths, and the death of a wicked man.

Query 3. *Whether any souls have notices, and forewarnings given them by signs, or predictions, in an extraordinary way, of their approaching separation?*

The terms of this question need a little explanation. Let us therefore briefly consider what is meant by signs, what by predictions, and what by extraordinary signs and predictions. *Terms opened.*

"A sign * is that which represents something else to us than "that which is seen or heard." And a sign of death, is that which gives notice to our minds that our departure is at hand.

"A prediction † is a forewarning of a person more plainly "and expresly of any thing which is afterwards to fall out or "come to pass;" and a prediction of death is an expres notice or message, informing us of our own, or of another's death, to the end the mind may be actually disposed to an expectation thereof.

* *Signum est quod aliud repræsentat quam quod cernitur.*
† *Prædicere est aliquem de re aliqua eventura prænonere.*

Digitized by Google

Of signs, some are ordinary and natural, some extraordinary and supernatural, or at least preternatural.

There are natural symptoms and prognostics of death which are common to most dying persons, and by which physicians inform themselves, and others, of the state of the sick. These are out of this question, we have nothing to do with them here; but I am enquiring after extraordinary signs and predictions by words or things forewarning us immediately, or by others, of our approaching death. The question is, Whether such intimations of death be at any time truly given unto men? or, Whether we are to take them for fabulous reports, and superstitious fancies?

For the negative, the following grounds are laid.

Reasons for the negative.

Reason 1. The sufficient ordinary provision God hath made in this case, renders all such extraordinary notices and intimations of our death needless: and be sure the most wise God doth nothing in vain. We have three standing, ordinary, and sufficient means to premonish us of our departure hence, *viz.* the scriptures, reason, and daily examples of mortality before our eyes. The scriptures tell us, our life is but "a va- "pour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth "away," James iv. 14. That our "days are but as an hand- "breadth," and that "every man in his best estate is vanity," Psal. xxxix. 5.

Reason tells us, so feeble a tie as our breath is can never secure our lives long. "The living know that they must die," Eccl. ix. 5. The radical moisture, which is daily consuming by the flame of life, must needs be spent e're long.

And all the graves we see opened so frequently, are sufficient warnings, that we ourselves must shortly follow. Therefore, as there was no need of manna, when bread might be had in an ordinary way, so neither is there need of extraordinary signs, when God hath abundantly furnished us with standing and ordinary means for this purpose.

Reason 2. And as the scriptures render such signs needless, so they seem to be directly against them. Christ commands us to "watch, because we know not in what hour the Lord cometh." Yea, even Isaac himself, an extraordinary person, and endowed with a spirit of prophecy, whereby he foretold the condition of his sons after him, yet it is said, Gen. xxvii. 2. "That he knew "not the day of his death." And it is not reasonable to think that common persons should know that, which extraordinary and prophetic persons knew not.

Digitized by Google

Reason 3. All mankind belong either to God or the devil. To such as belong to God, such extraordinary warnings are needless, for they have a watchful principle within them, which continually prompts them to mind their change; and besides, death cannot endanger those that are in Christ, how suddenly or unexpectedly soever it should befal them.

And for wicked men, it cannot be thought God should favour and privilege them in this matter above his own children; and as for Satan, he knows not the time of their death himself: and if he did, it would thwart his design and interest to discover it to them, Luke xi. 21. So that upon the whole, it should seem such signs and predictions are of no use, and the relations and reports of them fabulous.

E contra.

But though these reasons make the common and daily use of such signs and predictions needless, yet they destroy not the credibility of them in all cases, and at all times. For,

1. There are recorded instances in scripture, of premonitions and predictions of the death of persons. Thus the death of Abijah was foretold to his mother by the prophet, and the precise hour thereof, which fell out answerably, 1 Kings xiv. 6, 12. And, thus, the death of the king of Assyria was foretold exactly, both as to kind and place, Isa. xxxvii. 7, —— 37, 38.

2. These predictions serve to other ends and uses sometimes, than the preparation of the persons warned, even to display the fore-knowledge, power, and justice of God, in marking out his enemies for ruin. And, thus, "the Lord is known by the "judgments that he executeth," Psal. ix. 16.

Thus Mr. Knox predicted the very place and manner of the death of the laird of Grange *. You have sometimes seen the courage and constancy of the laird of Grange in the cause of God, and now that unhappy man is casting himself away. I pray you, go to him from me, (said Mr. Knox), and tell him, that unless he forsakes that wicked course he is in, the rock wherein he confideth shall not defend him, nor the carnal wisdom of that man, (meaning the young Leshington) whom he counteth half a God, shall help him: but he shall be shamefully pulled out of that nest, and his carcase hung before the sun. And even so it fell out in the following year, when the castle was taken, and his body hanged out before the sun. Thus God exactly fulfilled the prediction of his death.

* Clark's Lives, p. 277.

Digitized by Google

The ſame Mr. Knox, in the year 1566, being in the pulpit at Edinburgh, upon the Lord's day, a paper was given up to him, among many others, wherein theſe words were ſcoffingly written concerning the earl of Murray, who was ſlain the day before, "Take up the man whom ye accounted another God." At the end of the ſermon, Mr. Knox bewailed the loſs that the church and ſtate had by the death of that virtuous man; and then added, "There is one in this company that makes this "horrible murder the ſubject of his mirth, for which all good "men ſhould be ſorry; but I tell him, he ſhall die where there "ſhall be none to lament him." The man that wrote this paper was one Thomas Metellan, a young gentleman, who ſhortly after, in his travels, died in Italy, having none to aſſiſt or lament him.

3. And others have had premonitions and ſigns of their own deaths, which accordingly fell out. And theſe premonitions have been given them, ſometimes by ſtrong irreſiſtible impreſſions upon their minds, ſometimes in dreams, and ſometimes by unuſual elevations of their ſpirits in duties of communion with God.

(1.) Some have had ſtrong and irreſiſtible impreſſions of their approaching change, made upon their minds. So had Sir Anthony Wingfield, who was ſlain at Breſt, *anno* 1594 †. At his undertaking of that expedition, he was ſtrongly perſuaded it would be his death; and therefore ſo ſettled and diſpoſed of his eſtate, as one that never reckoned to return again. And the day before he died, he took order for the payment of his debts, as one that ſtrongly preſaged the time was now at hand; which accordingly fell out the next day.

Much of the ſame nature was that of the late earl of Marlborough, who fell in the Holland war. He not only preſaged his own fall in that encounter, (which was exactly anſwered in the event) but left behind him that memorable and excellent letter, which evidenced to all the world, what deep and fixed apprehenſions of eternity it had left upon his ſpirits. Many examples of this nature might be produced, of ſuch as have, in their perfect health, foretold their own death; and others, who have dropt ſuch paſſages as were afterwards better underſtood by their ſorrowful friends, than when they firſt dropt from their lips.

(2) Others have been premoniſhed of their death by dreams, ſometimes their own, and ſometimes others. The learned and

† Sir John Norris's expedition, p. 46

Digitized by Google

judicious Amyraldus ‡ gives us this well attested relation of Lewis of Bourbon, That a little before his journey from Dreux, he dreamed that he had fought three successful battles, wherein his three great enemies were slain, but that at last he himself was mortally wounded: and that after they were laid upon one another, he also was laid upon the dead bodies. The event was remarkable; for the Mareschal of St. Andree was killed at Dreux, the duke of Guise at Orleans, the constable of Montmorency at St. Denis: and this was the triumvirate, which had sworn the ruin of those of the reformed religion, and the destruction of that prince. At last, he himself was slain at Balsac, as if there had been a continuation of deaths and funerals.

Suetonius in the life of Julius Caesar, tells us, that the night before he was slain, he had divers premonitions thereof, for that night all the doors and windows of his chamber flew open; his wife also dreamed that Caesar was slain, and that she had him in her arms. The next day he was slain in Pompey's court, having received 23 wounds in his body.

Pamelius ‖ in the life of Cyprian, tells us, for a most certain and well attested truth, that upon his first entrance into Garubis (the place of his banishment) it was revealed to him in a dream, or vision, that upon that very day twelve-month he should be consummate: which accordingly fell out; for a little before the time prefixed, there came suddenly two apparitors to bring him before the new proconsul Galeius, by whom he was condemned, as having been a standard-bearer of his sect, and an enemy of the gods. Whereupon he was condemned to be beheaded, a multitude of Christians following him, crying, Let us die together with him.

And as remarkable is that recorded by the learned and ingenious Dr. Sterne *, of Mr. Usher of Ireland, a man, saith he, of great integrity, dear to others by his merits, and my kinsman in blood: who upon the 8th day of July 1657, went from this to a better world. About four of the clock the day before he died, a matron, who died a little before, and whilst living was dear to Mr. Usher, appeared to him in his sleep, and invited him to sup with her the next night: he at first denied her, but she more vehemently pressing her request on him, at last he consented, and that very night he died.

I have also the fullest assurance that can be, of the truth of

‡ Amyraldus, of divine dreams, p. 122, 123.
‖ *Pamelius in vita Cypriani.*
* Dr. Sterne's *dissertatio de morte*, p. 163.

Digitized by Google

this following narrative. A person yet living was greatly concerned about the welfare of his dear father and mother, who were both shut up in London, in the time of the great contagion in 1665. Many letters he sent to them, and many hearty prayers to heaven for them. But about a fortnight before they were infected, he fell about break of day into this dream, That he was in a great inn which was full of company, and being very desirous to find a private room, where he might seek God for his parents life, he went from room to room, but found company in them all; at last, casting his eye into a little chamber, which was empty, he went into it, locked the door, kneeled down by the outside of the bed, fixing his eyes upon the plaistered wall, within side the bed; and whilst he was vehemently begging of God the life of his friends, there appeared upon the plaister of the wall before him, the sun and moon shining in their full strength. The sight at first amazed and discomposed him so far, that he could not continue his prayer, but kept his eye fixed upon the body of the sun; at last a small line or ring of black, no bigger than that of a text-pen, circled the sun, which increasing sensibly, eclipsed in a little time the whole body of it, and turned it into a blackish colour; which done, the figure of the sun was immediately changed into a perfect death's head, and after a little while vanished quite away. The moon still continued shining as before; but while he intently beheld it, it also darkened in like manner, and turned also into another death's head, and vanished. This made so great an impression upon the beholder's mind, that he immediately awaked in confusion and perplexity of thoughts about his dream; and awaking his wife, related the particulars to her with much emotion and concernment; but how to apply it, he could not presently tell, only he was satisfied that the dream was of an extraordinary nature: at last Joseph's dream came to his thoughts with the like emblems, and their interpretation; which fully satisfied him that God had warned and prepared him thereby for a sudden parting with his dear relations; which answerably fell out in the same order, his father dying that day fortnight following, and his mother just a month afterwards.

I know there is much vanity in dreams; and yet I am fully satisfied, some are weighty, significant and declarative of the purposes of God.

(3.) *Lastly*, An unusual and extraordinary elevation of the soul to God, and enlargement in communion with him, hath been a signifying forerunner of the death of some good men: for as the body hath its *levamen ante ferale*, lightning before

Digitized by Google

death, and more vegete and brisk a little before its dissolution, so it is sometimes with the soul also. I have known some persons to arrive on a sudden to such heights of love to God, and vehement longings to be dissolved, that they might be with Christ, that I could not but look upon it, as Christ did upon the box of ointment, as done against their death: and so indeed it hath proved in the event.

Thus it was with that renowned saint, Mr. Brewen of Stapleford; as he excelled others in the holiness of his life, so he much excelled himself towards his death, his motions towards heaven being then most vigorous and quick. The day before his last sickness, he had such extraordinary enlargements of heart in his closet-duty, that he seemed to forget all the concernments of his body, and this lower world; and when his wife told him, Sir, I fear you have done yourself hurt with rising so early; he answered, "If you had seen such glorious things as I "saw this morning in private prayer with God, you would "not have said so; for they were so wonderful and unspeakable, "that whether I was in the body, or out of the body, with "Paul, I cannot tell."

And so it was with learned and holy Mr. Rivet, who seemed as a man in heaven, just before he went thither; and so it hath been with thousands beside these. I confess it is not the lot of every gracious soul (as was shewed you in the last question) nor doth it make any difference as to the safety of the soul, whatever it makes as to comfort. Let all therefore labour to make sure their union with Christ, and live in the daily exercises of grace, in the duties of religion; and then, though God should give them no such extraordinary warning one way or other, they shall never be surprised by death to their loss, let it come never so unexpectedly upon them.

Quest. It may be also queried, whether Satan, by his instruments, may not foretel the death of some men? How else did the witch of Endor fortel the death of Saul? and the Soothsayers the death of Caesar upon the *Ides*, *(i. e.)* the fifteenth day of March, which was the fatal day to him?

Sol. Foreknowledge of things to come, which appear not in their next causes, is certainly the Lord's prerogative, Isa. xli. 23. Whatever, therefore, Satan doth in this matter, must be done either by conjecture or commission. As to the case of Saul, 'tis not to be questioned but that he knowing the kingdom was made to David by promise, and that the Lord was departed from Saul, and seeing how near the armies were to a battle, might strongly conjecture and conclude, and accordingly tell

Digitized by Google

him, "To-morrow thou shalt be with me," 1 Sam. xxviii. 19.

And so for the death of Caesar, the devil knew the conspiracy was strong against him, and the plot laid for that day; and so it was both easy for him to reveal it to the Soothsayers, and his interest to do it, thereby to bring that cursed art into reputation.

As for other signs and forewarnings of death, by the unusual resort of doleful creatures, as *owls* and *ravens*, vulgarly accounted ominous: *Wall-watches*, upon this account called *death-watches*; and the eating of wearing apparel by rats: I look upon them generally as superstitious fancies, not worthy to be regarded among Christians. God may, but I know not what ground we have to believe, that he doth commission such creatures to bring us the message of death from him. To conclude, therefore,

Let no man expect, or depend upon any such extraordinary premonitions and warnings of his change, and neglect his daily work and duty of preparation for it. We have warnings in the word, in the examples of mortality, frequently before us, in all the diseases and decays we often feel in our own bodies; and by the signs of the times, which threaten death and desolation. Be ye, therefore, always ready, for ye know not in what watch of the night your Lord cometh.

Query 4. *Whether separated souls have any knowledge of, or commerce or intercourse with men in this life; and if not, what is to be thought of the apparitions of the dead?*

1. *By separated souls*, understand the departed souls, both of godly, and ungodly, indifferently, and not as it is restrained to one sort only in the text; for of both it is pretended there are frequent apparitions after death.

2. By the knowledge such souls are supposed to have after death, both of persons and things in this lower world, we understand not a general knowledge, which one sort of them have of the state and condition of the church militant on earth; for this, we think, cannot be denied to the spirits of the just made perfect, seeing they are still fellow-members with us of the same mystical body of Christ, and do behold our High-priest appearing before God, and offering up our prayers for us, and long for the consummation of the body of Christ, as well as cry for vengeance against the persecutors thereof, Rev. vi. 10. Nor do I think those words, Isa. lxiii. 16. repugnant hereunto: "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not:" for I look upon the import of those words only as an humble acknowledgment of their defection, which rendered them un-

Digitized by Google

worthy that their forefathers should own, or acknowledge them any more for their children; and not as implying their utter ignorance, or total oblivion of the church's state on earth.

But I here understand such a particular knowledge of our personal states and conditions, as they once had when they dwelt among us in the body; and this seems to be denied them by those scriptures alledged against it in the margin *.

3. By commerce and intercourse; understand not their intercession with God for us, which the Papists affirm; but their concernments about our natural, or civil interests in this world, so as to be useful to our persons, by warning us of death, or dangers; or to our estates, by disquieting such as wrong us, in not fulfilling the wills and testaments they once made; or by giving us notice, by words or signs, of the death of our friends, who died at a distance from us, or come to some violent and untimely end.

The sense of the words being thus determined, and the question so stated, I will, for the resolution of it, give you,

I. The strength of what I find offered for the affirmative.

II. The general concessions, or what may be granted.

III. My own judgment about it, with the grounds thereof.

I. Some there are, even among the learned and judicious, who are for the affirmative part of the question, and do with much confidence assert, that departed souls both know our particular concerns in this world, and intermeddle with them: confirming their assertion both by reasons to convince us that it may be so, and variety of instances that it is so. I will produce both the one and the other, and give them a due consideration and censure.

The substance of what is pleaded for the affirmative, I find thus collected and improved by † Dr. Sterne, a learned physician in Ireland, in his book entitled, *A Dissertation concerning Death*: where he offers us these four arguments, to convince that it is possible for departed souls thus to appear, and perform such offices for their friends on earth.

" *Arg.* 1. ‡ Angels by command from God, are useful and

* Job xiv. 21. Eccles. ix. 5, 6. John xix. 25.

† *Dissertatio de morte, a p.* 208. *ad p.* 214.

‡ (1.) *Angeli jussu Dei hominibus opitulantur, haudquaquam ambigitur; unde animas a corpore solutas sese rebus humanis miscere comprobari videtur. Sequelæ fundamentum duplex est, prius, quod animæ separatæ angeli sunt, saltem angelis æquales; poste-*

" helpful to men; they are the saints guardians, and it is pro-
" bable that each Christian hath his peculiar angel: whence
" it will follow, that separated souls do mingle themselves with
" human affairs, and that because they are angels, at least equal
" unto angels, Luke xx. 36. Besides, they being spirits that
" were once embodied, must needs be more fit for this employ-
" ment, than those who never had any tie at all to a body;"
unless we can imagine them to have lost the remembrance of all that ever they did, and suffered in the body; as also that they put off, and buried all their affections to us with their bodies, which is hard to think. Even as Christ our High-priest is qualified for that office, above all others in heaven, because he once dwelt, and suffered in a body, like ours, here upon earth; so separated souls are qualified above all other spirits, who are unrelated to bodies of flesh.

" *Arg.* 2. * The church triumphant and militant are but
" one body; and how much better the triumphant are than
" the militant, by so much the more propense they are to suc-
" cour and help the other that stand in need of it." This being the case, we cannot imagine but they are inclined to perform all good offices for us; for else they should do less for us now, they are in a state of the highest perfection in heaven, than they did, or were willing to do, in their imperfect state on earth.

" *Arg.* 3. † A will, or testament (as Ulpian defines it) is
" the just sentence, or declaration of our minds, concerning
" that which we would have done after our decease. These
" testaments have always, and among all nations, been religi-
" ously observed, as the apostle witnesseth, Gal. iii. 15. The

rius, quod magis idonei sunt quibus officium generi humano succurrendi demandetur, quam spiritus inter quos et corpus nullus unquam interceſſit nexus, &c.

* (2.) *Eccleſia est corpus unum, cujus membra quo meliora, eo magis ad aliis ejuſdem corporis membris opitulandum sunt propensa; hujus autem corporis pars altera est triumphans in cœlis, altera militans in terris: Illa melior, hæc opis magis indigna*, &c.

† (3.) *Teſtamentum (Ulpiano definiente) est voluntatis noſtræ juſta ſententia de eo quod poſt mortem noſtram fieri volumus. Teſtamentum autem tanquam res ſacra ab omnibus gentibus religioſe obſervatur*, Gal. iii. 15. *Ratio autem tam religioſæ tamque univerſalis obſervantiæ est, quoniam animas eorum qui Teſtamenta condiderant, etiam ſuam poſt mortem, in eadem voluntate perſeverare, ejus complementa curare, ac deinque ejus vel executrices, vel non præſtitæ vindices esse præſumitur.*

Digitized by Google

" reasons of this so religious observance are a presumption, that " those who made them when alive, continue in the same mind " and will after death; that they take care for the fulfilling of " them, and revenge the non-performance upon the unjust ex- " ecutors." For otherwise there can be no reason why so great a stress should be laid upon the will of the dead, if they care not whether their wills be performed, or no. Why should we be sollicitous and studious about it, and pay so great a reverence to it, but upon this account?

" *Arg.* 4. ‡ The scriptures forbid consultations with the " dead, Deut. xviii. 10, 11. This prohibition supposeth some " did consult them, and received answers from them; which " must needs imply some commerce betwixt the living, and the " souls that are departed:" And, considering he had before forbidden their consulation with the devil, it appears that here we must needs understand the very souls of the dead, and not the devil personating them only.

These are the arguments of this learned author for the affirmative, which he closes with two necessary cautions: *First*, That this lays no foundation for religious worship, or invocation of departed souls; those that are helpful to us, are not therefore to be worshipped. *Secondly*, That we must acknowledge ourselves to be under much darkness, as to the way and manner of the converse of spirits with us.

The most acute and learned ‖ Dr. More, I find of the same opinion. He affirms, that departed souls are capable of a vital union with an airy vehicle (or body) in which they can easily move from place to place, and appear to the living; and act in their own affairs: as in detecting murders, rebuking injurious executors, visiting and counselling their wives and children, forewarning them of such and such courses, *&c.* To which we may add, the profession of the Spirit, thus appearing, of being the soul of such a one; as also, the similitude of the person: And all this a-do is in things very just, and serious, unfit for a devil, with that care, and kindness, to promote; and as unfit for a good genius: it being below so noble a creature to tell a

‡ (4.) *In sacris scripturis consulere mortuos passim prohibetur, ut* Deut. xviii. 10, 11. *Sed si homines a mortuis non suscitentur, legibus haud opus est; et si mortui rogati non aliquando respondererent, ab hominibus haudquaquam consalerentur.* Stern. de Morte, ubi supr.

‖ Dr. More's immortality of the soul, B. 2. c. 16.

Digitized by Google

lie. All these things put together, and rightly weighed, the violence of prejudice not pulling down the ballance, I dare appeal (saith he) to any, whether it will not be certainly carried for the present cause? And whether any indifferent judge ought not to conclude, if these stories, which are so frequent every where, and in all ages, concerning the ghosts of men appearing, be but true, that it is true, also, that they are their ghosts, *&c.*

These are the strongest arguments I meet with, for the affirmative, that the matter is possible, it may be so; and then adding the credible instances that it is so, the matter seems to be determined.

To this purpose Dr. Sterne alledges several instances out of scripture; as that appearance of Samuel unto Saul, and the conference betwixt them; as also, the letters that were sent to Jehoram, by Elijah, after that Elijah was translated to heaven; as appears by comparing 2 Chron. xxi. 12. with 2 Kings iii. 11. in which it appears, that in Jehoshaphat's time, who preceded this Jehoram, Elijah was dead; and yet, in Jehoram's time, who succeeded him, he is said to receive letters from Elijah. The appearance, and conference also betwixt Christ, and Moses, and Elias, upon the mount, in the presence of some of the disciples, confirms it, Matth. xvii. 3.

These are the principal scripture-instances, others are almost innumerable; from among that vast heap, I will select some few, that are most material, and of clearest credit.

"It is a thing (saith * my author) both known and frequent, "that the inhabitants of the Scottish isles, when their friends "are dying, come to them, and request them, that, upon such "or such a day, after their death, and in such a place, they "would meet them; which the dead accordingly do, at the "time and place agreed upon, and have sometimes discourse "with them."

Infinite examples of murders (saith Dr. More) have been discovered by dreams, the souls of the persons murdered seeming to appear to some or other asleep, and to make their complaints to them; giving us a notable example out of Baronius, of Marcilius Ficinius, who having made a solemn vow with Michael Mercatus, (after they had been pretty warmly disputing of the immortality of the soul, out of the principles of their master

* *Insularum Scoticarum incolæ ad ægros, cum plo deperatis habentur, accedunt, et rogant, ut certo a morte die, locoque certo, ipsos conveniant; quod et mortui tempore et loco præstitutis præstant*, Sterne. ibid.

Digitized by Google

Plato) that whether of them two died first, he should appear to his friend, and give him certain information of that truth. It was Ficinius his fate to die first, and that not long after this mutual resolution: He was mindful of his promise, when he had left the body; for Mercatus being very intent at his studies, betimes in a morning, heard a horse riding by with all speed, and observed that he stopt at his window, and therewith heard the voice of his friend Ficinius, crying out, aloud, *O Michael, Michael, vera, vera, sunt illa;* that is, *O Michael, Michael, those things are true, they are true.* Whereupon he suddenly opened his window, and espying Marcilius upon a *white steed*, called after him, but he vanished out of his sight. He sent therefore presently to Florence, to know how Marcilius did, and understood that he died about that hour he called at his window.

Much to the same purpose is that so famous and well attested story of the apparition of major George Sydenham, to captain William Dyke, both of Somersetshire, attested by the worthy and learned Dr. Thomas Dyke, a near kinsman of the captain's; and by Mr. Douch, to whom the major and captain were intimately known *. The sum is this: The major and captain had many disputes about the being of a God, and the immortality of the soul, in which points they could never be resolved, though they much sought for, and desired it; and therefore it was at last fully agreed betwixt them, that he that died first, should, the third night after his funeral, come betwixt the hours of twelve and one, to the little house in the garden adjoining to major Sydenham's house, at Dulverton, in Somersetshire. The major died first, and the captain happened to lie, that very night which was appointed, in the same chamber, and bed, with Dr. Dyke; he acquainted the doctor with the appointment, and his resolution to attend the place, and hour that night, for which purpose he had got the key of that garden. The doctor could by no means divert his purpose, but, when the hour came, he was upon the place, where he waited two hours and a half, neither seeing nor hearing any thing more than usual. About six weeks after, the captain, and doctor, went to Eaton, and lay both in the same inn, but not both in the same chamber, as they had done before at Dulverton.

The morning before they went thence, the captain stayed longer than was usual in his chamber, and at length came into the doctor's chamber, but in visage and form much different

* *Sad. Trium. part* 2. *p.* 183.

Digitized by Google

from himself, with his hair and eyes staring, and his whole body shaking and trembling: Whereat the doctor wondering, demanded, What is the matter, cousin captain? the captain replies, I have seen my major. At which the doctor seeming to smile, the captain said, If ever I saw him in my life, I saw him but now; adding as followeth: This morning (said he) after it was light, some one came to my bed-side, and suddenly drawing back the curtains, calls, *Cap. cap.* (which was the term of familiarity that the major used to call the captain by) to whom I replied, What, my *major?* To which he returns, I could not come at the time appointed, but I am now come to tell you, *That there is a God, and a very just and terrible one; and if you do not turn over a new leaf, you will find it so.* This stuck so close to him, little meat would go down with him at dinner, though a handsome treat was provided. These words were sounding in his ears frequently, during the remainder of his life; he was never shy, or scrupulous to relate it to any that asked him concerning it, or ever mentioned it, but with horror, and trepidation. They were both men of a brisk humour, and jolly conversation, of very quick, and keen parts, having been both university, and Inns-of-court gentlemen.

The apparition of the ghost of Sir George Villiers, father of the duke of Buckingham, giving three solemn warnings, by three several apparitions to his servant Mr. Parker, is a known and credible story. But I will wade no farther into particulars, they are almost innumerable; let these suffice for a taste.

II. In the next place, therefore, I will lay down some concessions about this matter; and the

First concession is this: *That the separate souls, or spirits of men, are capable of performing, and executing any ministry, or service of God, (if he should please to commission them so to do) as well as angels are, whom we know he frequently employs about the persons and affairs of his people on earth.*

Though souls become not angels by their separation, as Maximus Tyrius calls them, but remain spirits specifically distinct from them; yet are they spiritual substances, as the angels are: This their nature capacitates them either to live, and act out of the body, or to assume (as angels do) an *aerial body*, for the time of their ministry: Nor do I know any thing in scripture, or philosophy, repugnant hereunto.

Concess. 2. *It cannot be doubted, but, upon some special, and extraordinary reasons, and occasions, some departed souls have returned to, and appeared in this world, by order and commission from God.*

Digitized by Google

This is too manifest to be doubted by any that understand and believe the instances recorded in scripture. Moses and Elias, long after their departure, appeared to, and talked with Christ, upon the holy mount, in the presence of some of his apostles, Matth. xvii. 3. nor is there any reason to question the reality of their apparition, or to think it to be no more than a *phantasm*, or imaginary resemblance of these persons, but very Moses and Elias themselves: For they came to be witnesses to Christ's prophetical office, "And it was not * fit so great a "point should be attested by imaginary witnesses," or that they should be called Moses and Elias, if they were not the very same persons.

"'Tis therefore most likely they both appeared in their own "bodies †;" for Moses's body, we know, was hidden by the Lord, and Elias's body was immediately translated, with his soul to heaven: When therefore the Lord would send them upon this solemn errand, the soul of Moses probably reassumed that body, which was never found by man, and Elias was already embodied, and fit, immediately, for this expedition.

In like manner we read, Mat. xxvii. 52, 53. that, at the resurrection of our Lord, "many bodies of the saints arose, and "appeared unto many:" These were no *phantasms*, but the very souls of the departed saints returned (having reassumed their own bodies) unto this world, not only to confirm the truth of Christ's resurrection, and adorn that great day, but as a specimen, or handsel of the resurrection of all the saints, in the virtue of his resurrection, at the great day.

Nor will I deny, but, upon some lesser (though never without weighty and solemn) occasions, and reasons, God may sometimes send the souls of the dead back again into this world, as in cases before recited, to evidence against the *atheism* of men, *&c.* ‡ Augustine relates a memorable example, which fell out at Milan, where a certain citizen being dead, there came a creditor, to whom he had been indebted, and unjustly demanded the money of his son: The son knew the debt was satisfied by his father, but having no acquittance to shew, his father appeared to him in his sleep, and shewed him where the acquittance lay. Whether it were the very soul of his *father*, or, rather, an *angel*, as Augustine thinks, is not certain, tho' the one, as well as the other, is possible. But though rarely, and

* *Non enim conveniebat ut veritas mendacio, vel imaginariis testibus probaretur.* Maldon. Capellus in loc.

† *Credibilius est vere corporibus suis apparuisse.* Pareus in loc.

‡ *Aug. in lib. de cura pro mortuis agenda.*

Digitized by Google

upon some weighty, and solemn occasions, some souls have returned, and appeared; yet I judge this is not frequently done upon slight, and ordinary errands; and therefore to give you my own thoughts, I judge,

Concel. 3. *That those apparitions which seem to be, and are generally reputed, and taken for the souls of the dead, are not indeed so, but other spirits, putting on the shapes, and resemblances of the dead, and (for the most part) tricks of the devil, to delude, or disquiet men.*

In this, I think, the learned ‖ Dr. Brown delivered his judgment more solidly, and orthodoxly, than in some other points; where he saith, "I believe that the whole frame of a beast doth "perish, and is left in the same state after death, as before it "was materialled into life; that the souls of men know neither "contrary, nor corruption; that they subsist beyond the body, "and continue, by the privilege of their proper nature, and "without a miracle; that the souls of the faithful, as they "leave earth, take possession of heaven; that those apparitions, "and ghosts of departed persons, are not the wandering souls "of *men*, but the unquiet walks of *devils*, promoting, and "suggesting us into *mischief*, *blood*, and *villany*." And with this opinion I concur, as to the ordinary, and common apparitions of the dead. And my reasons are,

(1.) Because the scriptures every where describe the state of departed souls as a fixed state, either in heaven, or in hell; and assign the good, or evil done in this world by spirits, not to the departed spirits of men, but to angels or devils: And it is our duty to regulate our conceits by scripture, and not according to the vain philosophy of the heathens, or the superstitious traditions, and opinions of men.

As for the souls of the godly, they are at rest with Christ, Rev. xiv. 13. Isa. lvii. 2. and as fixed as pillars in the house of God, Rev. iii. 12.

And for the wicked, their spirits are confined, and secured in hell, as in a prison, 1 Pet. iii. 19. there is a fixed Gulph betwixt them and the living, Luke xvi. 27, to 32.

What good offices are to be done by spirits for us, the angels are God's commission-officers to do them. Heb. i. 14. "They "are all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them who "shall be heirs of salvation:" These are the spirits sent forth to walk to and fro through the earth, Zech. i. 10. Their ministry was *emblematically* represented in Jacob's vision, where

‖ *Religio Med. Sect.* 37. *p.* 82.

Digitized by Google

they were seen ascending and descending as upon a ladder, betwixt heaven and earth, Gen. xxviii. 12. Yea, their very name *angel* is a name of office, signifying a messenger, or one sent.

And for the mischief done by spirits in this world, the scriptures ascribe that to the devils; those unquiet spirits have their walks in this world, they compass the whole earth, and walk up and down in it, Job i. 7. and 1 Pet. v. 8. they can assume any shape; yea, I doubt not but he can act their bodies when dead, as well as he did their souls and bodies when alive: How great his power is this way, appears in what is so often done by him in the bodies of *witches*. They are not ordinarily therefore the spirits of men, but other spirits that appear to us.

(2.) If God should ordinarily permit the spirits of men inhabiting the other world, a liberty so frequently to visit this, what a gap would it open for Satan to beguile and deceive the living! What might he not by this means impose upon weak and credulous mortals? * There hath been a great deal of superstition and idolatry already introduced under this pretence: he hath often personated saints departed, and pretended himself to be the ghost of some venerable person, whose love to the souls of the people, and care for their salvation, drew him from heaven to reveal some special secret to them. Swarms of errors, and superstitious and idolatrous opinions and practices, are this way conveyed, by the tricks and artifices of Satan, among the Papists, which I will not blot my paper withal; only I desire it may be considered, that if this were a thing so frequently permitted by God, as is pretended, upon what dangerous terms had he left his church in this world, seeing he hath left no certain marks by which we may distinguish one spirit from another, or a true messenger from heaven, from a counterfeit and pretended one.

But God hath tied us to the sure and standing rule of his word; forbidding us to give heed to any other voice or spirit leading us another way, Isa. viii. 19. 2 Thes. ii. 1, 2. Gal. i. 8. It was therefore a discreet reply which one of the antients made when in a prayer, a vision of Christ appeared to him, and told him, thy prayers are heard, for thou art worthy: the good man immedi-

* For what hath more propagated idolatry among Heathens and Christians? Hence did flow many peregrinations, monasteries, temples, festival-days, and such like. *Dav. on Job* 33.

Digitized by Google

ately clapt his hands upon his eyes, and ſaid, *Nolo hic videre Chriſtum*, &c. *I will not ſee Chriſt here, it is enough for me that I ſhall behold him in heaven.*

To conclude. My opinon upon the whole is this, that altho' it cannot be denied, but in ſome grand, extraordinary caſes, as at the transfiguration and reſurrection of Chriſt, God did, and perhaps ſometimes, tho' rarely, may order or permit departed ſouls to return into this world; yet, for the moſt part, I judge thoſe apparitions are not the ſouls of the dead, but other ſpirits, and, for the moſt part, evil ones.

Of this judgment was * St. Auguſtine, who when he had at full related the ſtory above of the father's ghoſt directing his ſon to the accquittance; yet will not allow it to be the very ſoul of his father, but an angel: Where he farther adds, If (ſaith he) the ſouls of the dead may be preſent in our affairs, they would not forſake us in this ſort; eſpecially my mother Monica, who in her life, could never be without me, ſurely ſhe would not thus leave me being dead.

Obj. 1. *But it was pleaded before, that we allow the apparition of angels; and departed ſouls, if they be not angels, at leaſt are equal unto angels, and in reſpect of their late relation to us, are more propenſe to help us, than ſpirits of another ſort can be ſuppoſed to be.*

Sol. It ſeems too bold, and impoſing upon ſovereign Wiſdom to tell him what meſſengers are fitteſt for him to ſend and employ in his ſervice; who hath taught him, or been his counſellor?

Obj. 2. *But theſe offices ſeem to pertain properly to them, as they are not only fellow members, but the moſt excellent members of the myſtical body, to whom it belongs to aſſiſt the meaner and weaker.*

Sol. If there be any force of reaſon in this plea, it carries rather for the angels than for departed ſouls: for angels are gathered under the ſame common head with ſaints; the text tells us, *we are come to an innumerable company of angels:* they and the ſaints are fellow-citizens, and we know they are a more noble order of ſpirits; and as for their love to the elect, it is exceeding great, as great to be ſure as the departed ſouls of our deareſt relatives can be. For after death they ſuſtain no more civil relation to us: all that they do ſuſtain, is as fellow-members of the ſame body, or fellow-citizens, which the angels alſo are as well as they.

* *Lib. de cura mortuis.*

Digitized by Google

Obj. 3. *But*, saith the doctor, *the reason why all nations pay so great honour, and religious care to the will of the dead, is a supposition that they still continue in the same mind after death, and will avenge the falsifications of trusts upon injurious executors, else no reason can be given why so great a stress should be laid upon the will of the dead.*

Sol. This is *grâtis dictum*, to say no worse, a cheap and unwary expression: Can no reason be given for the religious observance of the testaments of the dead, but this supposition? I deny it: for though they that made them be dead, yet God, who is witness to all such acts and trusts, liveth: and though they cannot avenge the frauds, and injustice of men, he both can and will do it, 1 Thess. iv. 6. which, I think, is a weightier ground and reason to enforce duty upon men than the fear of ghosts. Besides, this is a case wherein all the living are concerned, all that die must commit a trust to them that survive; and if frauds should be committed without impunity, who could safely repose confidence in another; *Quod tanget omnes, tangi debet ab omnibus*: that which is of general concernment, and becomes every man's interest, infers a general obligation upon all.

As for the letters of Elijah, it is a vanity to think they came post from heaven; no, no, they were doubtless left behind him, out of due care to the government, and produced on that fit occasion.

Obj. 4. *But what need of a law to prohibit necromancy or consultation with the dead, if it were not practicable?*

Sol. I do not think the wicked art there prohibited enabled them to recal departed souls; but it was a conversing with the devil who personated the dead, and therein a kind of homage was paid him to the dishonour of God; or he might possibly raise the bodies of wicked men, and appear in them: but I think the spirits of the dead return not, except as was before limited.

Obj. 5. *But the matters they discover are found to be true, and the causes in which they concern themselves are just; real murders are detected by them, and real frauds and injuries corrected and rectified: but the devil being himself a liar, and deceiver, would never do it; it is not his interest to discover or discourage such things.*

Sol. Though it be not his interest merely to discover it, yet it is certainly his interest to precipitate wicked men, and hasten their ruin by the hand of justice; and he will speak the truth,

Digitized by Google

and seem to own a righteous cause, to bring about his great design of ruining the souls and bodies of men. I will shut up with three cautions.

Caution 1. Strain not conscience to enrich posterity: be true to the trusts committed to you by the dead, or by the living, remembring, that though they be dead, and cannot avenge the wrong, yet the Lord lives, and will surely do it in a severer manner than they could, should they appear in the most terrible and frightful forms to you: Besides, your own consciences will haunt you worse than a ghost. Be just and true therefore in all your promises and trusts, for God is the avenger.

Caution 2. Finish your work for eternity before you die; for "as the cloud is consumed, and vanished away, so he that go-"eth down to the grave shall come up no more; he shall re-"turn no more to his house, neither shall his place know him "any more," Job. vii. 9, 10. Your souls will be fixed in eternity soon after they are loosed from your bodies: when death comes, away you must go, willing or unwilling, ready or unready; but no returning hither, how willing soever.

Caution 3. Keep yourselves from that heathenish and accursed practice of consulting the devil about your absent or dead relations; a practice too common in sea-port towns, and of deep and heinous guilt before God: Isa. viii. 19. "And when they shall "say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and "unto wizards that peep and mutter; should not a people seek "unto their God? for the living to the dead?"

You need not call the devil twice, that subtle and officious spirit draws the living into his net by such a bait as this: You meet your mortal enemy under the disguise of your dead friend.

Query 5. *Whether the separated souls of the just in heaven have any converse or communication with each other? and how that can be, seeing all the organs and instruments of speech and hearing, are laid aside with their bodies?*

It seems impossible that separated or unbodied spirits should converse together, seeing the instruments by which the thoughts are communicated from one to another, are perished in the grave. Suppose the tongue of a man to be cut out, his eyes and hands perished, or made useless, whilst the soul remains in the body; it may enjoy its own thoughts within itself, but it is impossible to signify them to another by words or signs.

Or suppose a man in a deep sleep (wherein the senses are only bound for a little time) he may indeed exercise his own fancy in a pleasant dream, but another cannot understand how it is entertained; but in death the senses are not bound, but extinguished,

Digitized by Google

Beside, we must not think the felicity of the departed holy souls to consist in mutual converses one with another, but in their ineffable visions of God, and communion with him. To him who is omniscient, and understands their most inward thoughts, they can freely communicate them, and receive his, as well as pour forth their own love; but to do it to their fellow creatures, who see not as God doth, seems impossible.

Indeed it was never doubted, but after the resurrection they shall both know and talk with one another in a more excellent and perfect manner than now they do; but till that time, the reasons above seem to persuade us, that all the converses above, are only betwixt God and them, which indeed is enough to make them happy; and indeed if this ability be allowed to separated souls, it seems to render the resurrection of their bodies needless; for they are well enough without them. But certainly the spirits of just men are not mutes; such an august assembly of holy and excellent spirits, do not live together in their Father's house without mutual converse and fellowship with each other, as well as with God.

That acute and judicious divine, Mr. Joseph Symonds, in his epistle to his book, intituled, *Sight and faith*, expresseth himself about this matter thus: 'I often think (saith he) of the communion of the spirits of men, which is certainly more than many are acquainted with: though we act one upon another in our present state, by the help of sense; yet we are wrought and designed to a more excellent way. Angels, and the spirits of men made perfect, converse and trade in a mutual communication, not without sense, but without such sense as ours. This, as eternal life, begins here, and is found in some degrees in this mortal state, though not in so visible appearances as to lie open to much observation.

'Angels, good and bad, do act upon our spirits, and our spirits hold converse with them, and with the Father of spirits, which may be discerned in secret parlies and discourses betwixt them and us; much of this appears in David's psalms: and there passeth not only an inward speech, but there are invisible approaches, entertainments and touches, which Paul found when bound in the Spirit, and under the working of God, which wrought in him mightily, Col. i. 29. It is also most certain that our souls are not mute, and shut out from all mutual traffic with each other, except what they have by the mediation of senses.

'Instances are found, that (as they say of two needles touched with the loadstone) the spirit of one at a distance, hath found

Digitized by Google

' itself affected with the motion and state of another. And this ' we are all sensible of, that there is a strong desire in us to ' communion of spirits; and that, because the way most ready ' and convenient to our bodily state is by sense, we are carried ' with much inclination to maintain intercourse of our minds ' and spirits by sense; but, as being made to a better way, our ' souls are not satisfied with this present way, as being both ' painful and short. We cannot give an exact copy of our ' apprehensions, desires, designs, delights and other affections, ' by these two great mediators of communion, the eye, and the ' ear: but, because we are in so great a measure confined to ' this course, our souls, as it were, stand in these two gates, to ' send and receive mutual embassies from each other. Which ' way, as it is short in itself, so it is much shortened by distances, ' disaffections, impotencies, and disparities.'

I cannot imagine, that men, in a state of imperfection, should have so many ways to communicate their minds, as by speaking, writing, *&c.* yea, that the very birds, and beasts, are, by nature, enabled to signify to each other their inclinations; and that the spirits of just men (which are the best of all human spirits, and that when made perfect too, which is the best, and highest state attainable by them) should have none, but live at a greater disadvantage, in this respect, than they did, or the very birds, and beasts in this world do. The sum of my thoughts, about this matter, I will lay down in the following sections.

Sect. 1. The state of heaven, (as was at large opened in our eleventh proposition) being an association of angels, and blessed souls, for the glorifying and praising of God in his temple there, and this worship being carried on by joint consent, as appears by their joint ascriptions of glory to God, Rev. vii. 9, 10, 11, 12. they must of necessity, for the orderly carrying on of this heavenly worship, understand each others minds, and communicate their thoughts: for without this it is not imaginable how a joint or common service, in which thousands of thousands are employed, can be decorously and orderly managed, except we conceive of them as so many *machines*, or wind-instruments that are managed by an intelligent agent, though themselves be senseless and merely passive: certainly their consent is a different thing from that of the keys of a *harpsicord*, or strings of a *lute*, they are intelligent beings, who understand their own and each others mind: and besides, without this ability, that society in heaven would be less comfortable, as to mutual refreshing fellowship, than the society of saints is here. So that it is not to be doubted, but these noble and excellent spirits can, and do

Digitized by Google

communicate their thoughts to each other, and that in a most excellent way.

Sect. 2. But yet we cannot imagine these communications betwixt them to be by words, formed by such instruments, and organs of speech, as we now use, for they are bodiless beings: words, and articulate sounds, are fitted to the use and service of embodied spirits. It is therefore probable, that they convey, and communicate their minds to one another, as the blessed angels do, not with tongues of flesh, (though we read of the *tongues of angels*, 1 Cor. xiii. 1.) but in a way somewhat analogous to this, though much more noble and excellent *. For look, as the scripture stiles the most excellent food, angels food; so the most excellent speech, or most eloquent tongues, angels tongues. The purest rhetoric that ever flowed from the lips of the most charming orator, is but babbling, to the language of angels, or of spirits made perfect.

When Paul was wrapt into the third heaven, where he was admitted to the sight, and hearing of this blessed assembly, it is said he heard ἄρρητα ῥήματα, words unspeakable, spiritual language, such as his tongue neither could, or ought to utter; such as none but heavenly inhabitants can speak. And, Dan. viii. 13. "I heard, (said Daniel) one saint speaking, and another "saint said unto that certain saint that spake," &c. He heard the enquiries of the angels, desiring to know the mystery from the mouth of Christ. A language they have, but not like ours.

Sect. 3. The communications of angels, and souls in heaven, is therefore conceived to be an ability in those blessed spirits, silently, and without sound, to instil, and insinuate their minds and thoughts to each other, by a mere act of their wills; just as we now speak to God, or ourselves †, in our hearts, when our lips do not move, or the least outward sign appears.

There are two ways by which the souls of men speak, one outwardly, by the instruments of speech, or sensible signs; the other inwardly, without sound, or sign: This inward, silent speech, is nothing else but an act of the will, calling forth such things into our actual thoughts, and meditations, which before lay hid, and quiet in the memory, or habit of knowledge.

* It is certain angels have not tongues, but something analogous thereunto, by which they communicate their thoughts to one another. *Lightfoot.*

† We are said to speak to ourselves in our hearts, when we actually think upon, or revolve any thing in our minds; but we think actually, at the command of the will, *i. e.* when we will. *Zanch.*

Digitized by Google

These thoughts, or actual revolvings of things in the mind, are in scripture called דבר עם לבבו, a word or speech in the heart, Deut. xv. 9. Take heed to thyself, that there be not a wicked word in thy heart; we translate it, *a wicked thought:* thoughts are the words, and voice of the soul. And so, Mat. ix. 3. they spake within themselves, *i. e.* their souls spake, though their lips moved not. "All meditation is an inward "speech in the soul, and therefore שיח indifferently signifies "both to speak, and to meditate *." The objects which we revolve in our thoughts, are so many companions with whom we converse; and thus a man, (like Heinsius) may be in the midst of abundance of excellent company, when he is all alone. And this is silent talk to ourselves, without any sound or noise.

Obj. But you will say, *Though the spirit of a man can thus talk to, or with itself; yet this can signify nothing to others:* For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man, that is in him? 1 Cor. ii. 11. *It is not therefore enough to open this internal door of the will; for except we open, also, the external † door of the lips, no man can know our minds, or be admitted into the secrets of our souls: should we never so earnestly desire that another should know our mind, except we please, also, to discover it by a word, or sign, he cannot know it; and therefore an act of the will is not sufficient, without some external signification superadded. And these souls being bodiless, can give no outward signification.*

Sol. There is, indeed, a necessity among men in this world, to unlock another door, beside that of their will, to communicate the secrets of their hearts to others; "but ‡ angels, and

* Ειπον εν αυτοις, שיח, *Cum puncto sinistro, locutus est ore, aut corde cogitavit, meditatus est.*

† There are two doors with respect to others, and unless thou open both of these, it is not possible that another man can know what passes in thy mind, or be admitted into the secrets of thy heart. On the part of the soul, the will is the one door, for unless thou incline to reveal to others these things which ly hid in thy heart, w ho can know them? the other door is the body of flesh itself, and therefore, although, having, as it were, opened the first and inward door, thou incline to make known unto another what is in the mind, yet he can in no way know this, unless thou also open the other door which is external. *Zanchius on the works of God, book* 3. *chap.* 29.

‡ *Quoniam igitur angeli iis carent crassis corporibus, idcireo nihil impedit, quo minus quæ unus angelus in sua versat mente, ea alter videat, nisi voluntas: si enim ea nolit ab altero rescíri nunquam, nisi Deo revelante, rescientur.* Zanch. ubi supra.

Digitized by Google

"the spirits of men, having no bodies, consequently have but "one door, to wit, that of the will, to open; and the open- "ing thereof, (which is done by one act, or desire, in a "moment) is enough to discover so much of their minds, as "they would have discovered to another spirit. If they keep "the door of their will shut, no angel, or spirit, can know "what is in their thoughts, without a revelation from God;" and if they but will, or desire others should know, no words can so fully manifest one man's mind to another, as such an act of the will doth manifest theirs. And this, saith learned Zanchy, is the tongue of angels; and the same way the spirits of men have to make known their minds in the unbodied state. It is but the turning the key of the will, and their thoughts, or desires, are presently seen and known, by others, to whom they will discover them, as a man's face is seen in a glass, when he pleaseth to turn his face to it. Would one spirit make known his mind to another, it is but to will he should know it, and it is immediately known.

Sect. 4. This internal way of speaking, and communication among spirits, is much more noble, perfect, and excellent, than that which is in use among us, by words and signs; and that in two respects, *viz.*

1. Of clearness.

2. Of dispatch and speed.

1. Spiritual language is more clearly expressive of the mind, and thoughts, than words, writings, or any other external signs can be. The greatest masters of language do often cloud their meaning, for want of words fit, and full enough to express it: truth suffers by the poverty and ambiguity of words: many controversies are but mere strifes about words, and scufflings in the dark, by the mistake of each other's sense and meaning: few have the ability of putting their own meanings into apt, proper, and full expressions; and, if they can, yet others, to whom they speak, want an answerable ability of understanding, and clearness of apprehension to receive it. If we could discern the true and natural sense of things, just as it is in the mind of the speaker, or writer, how many controversies would be thereby quickly ended?

But spirits unbodied so convey their sense and mind to one another, that there can be no mistakes, no darkenings of counsel, by words without knowledge; but one receives it just as it lies in the other's mind.

2. Spiritual language is more easy, and of quicker dispatch;

Digitized by Google

some men have voluble tongues, and are more ready, and pre-sential, than others: their tongues are as the pen of a ready scribe; and others, no less ready with their hands, which keep pace with, yea, out-run the tongue of the speaker, as Martial notes.

Currant verba licet, manus est velocior illis;
Nondum lingua suum dextra, peregit opus *.

Yet all this is but bungling work, to the ready dispatch of spirits; one act of the will opens the window to discern the mind of another clearly; so that the converse of spirits must needs be more excellent, in both respects, than any we are accustomed to, or acquainted with in this world. I will shut up this question with one

Corollary. Long to be associated with the spirits of just men made perfect. You that are going to join that blessed assembly, will even in this respect, gain an invaluable advantage. It is true, there is much of comfort in the present converses of embodied and imperfect saints; it is sweet to fast and pray, to sigh and groan together; it is sweeter to rejoice and praise our God together; it is sweet to talk of heaven with our faces thitherward; but alas! what is this to the converses that are among the spirits of just men made perfect? With what melting hearts have we sometimes sat, under the doctrine of the gospel? How have our ears been chained with delight to the preachers lips, whilst he hath been discoursing of those ravishing subjects, *Christ*, and *Heaven!* But, alas! how dry, and dull a thing is the best of this, to the language of heaven! Three things debase and spoil the communications of the saints on earth, *viz.* the darkness, dulness, and frothiness thereof.

1. The darkness and ignorance of our understandings. How crude, weak, and indigested are our highest and purest notions of spiritual things! we speak of them but as children, 1 Cor. xiii. 11. for, alas! the vail is yet upon our faces. The body of sin, and the body of flesh cast a very dark shadow upon the world to come; but the apprehensions of separated souls are most bright and clear. This darkness begets mistakes; mistakes beget so many quarrels, and janglings, that our fellowship on earth loseth, at once, both its profit and pleasure.

2. There is much dulness and deadness accompanying the communion of saints on earth, abundance of precious time is wasted among us, in unprofitable silence, and when we engage in discourses of heaven, that discourse is often little better than

* *Martial. Epigr. lib.* 14. *ep.* 176.

Digitized by Google

silence; our words freeze betwixt our lips, and we speak not with that concernedness and warmth of spirits, which suits with such subjects.

It is not so among our brethren above; their affections are at the highest pitch, giving *glory to God in the highest.*

3. To conclude; In the discourses of the best of men on earth, there is too much froth and vanity; many words, like water, run away at the waste spout, but there God is the centre, in which all terminates. O therefore let us long to be among the unbodied people! this world will never suit us with companions in all things agreeable to the desires of our hearts. The best company are got together in the upper room; an hour there is better than an age below. Whatever fellowship saints leave on earth, they shall be sure to find better in heaven.

Query 6. *Whether the separated souls of the just in heaven, do incline to a re-union with their own bodies? And how that re-union is at last affected?*

That these blessed souls have no such inclination, or desire, these reasons seem to persuade.

1. That their bodies, whilst they lived in them, were no better than so many prisons; many were the prejudices, damages, and miseries they have sustained and suffered in them. It kept them at an uncomfortable distance from the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 6. their bemoaning cries spake their uneasy state: how often hath every gracious soul, thus lamented itself, "Wo is me that I "dwell in Mesheck." It inclosed their souls within its mud walls, which intercepted the light and joy of God's face. Death therefore did a most friendly office, when it set it at liberty, and brought it forth into its own pure and pleasant light and liberty *. These blessed spirits now rejoice as prisoners do in their recovered liberty; and can it be supposed, after all these sufferings, groans, and sighs, to be dissolved, they can be willing to be embodied again? Surely there is as little reason for souls at liberty to desire to be again embodied, as there is

* The body obstructs and obscures the mind in its conceptions, and pollutes it by its union with the flesh; hence the light of the mind is more defective, as it passes, in a manner, through a glass of flesh: doubtless, when, by the power of death, the soul is, as it were, squeezed out of the body, to which it was so closely united; and in this manner purified, then it breaks from its confinement in the body, to a pure and unmixed light, suitable to its nature. *Tertullian on the soul.*

Digitized by Google

for a bird got out of the snare or cage, to fly back again to its place of confinement and restraint. Yea, when we consider how loth some holy souls, when under the excruciating pains of sickness, and as yet in the sight of this alluring world, have been to hear of a return to it by the recovery of their health; we cannot think, but, being quite out of the sight of this, and in the fruition of the other world, the thoughts of the body must needs be more lothsome to them than ever.

We read, that when a good man, in time of his sickness was told by his friends, that some hopeful signs of his recovery began now to appear, he answered, And must I then return to this body? I was as a sheep driven out of the storm almost to the fold, and then driven back into the storm again: or as a weary traveller near his home, who must go back again to fetch something he had neglected: or as an apprentice, whose time was almost out, and then must begin a new term. Of some others it hath been also noted, that the greatest infirmities they discovered upon their death-bed, have been their too passionate desires to be dissolved, and their unsubmissiveness to God's will in their longer stay in the body. Now, the bodies of the saints being so cheerfully forsaken, and that only upon a foretaste of heaven by faith; how can it be thought they should find any inclination to a re-union, when they are so abundantly satisfied with the joys of his face in heaven? Certainly the body hath been no such pleasant habitation to the soul, that it should cast an eye or thought that way, when it is once delivered out of it: if it were burdensome here, a thought of it would be lothsome there.

2. We have shewed before, that the separate soul wants not the help of the body, but lives and acts at a more free and comfortable rate than ever before. It is true, it is not now delighted with meat and drink, with smells and sounds, as it was wont to be; but then it must be considered, that it is happiness and perfection not to need them. It is now become equal to the angels in the way and manner of its living; and what it enjoyed by the ministry of the body, it eminently and more perfectly enjoys without it. What perfections can the soul receive from matter †? What can a lump of flesh add to a spirit? And if it can add nothing to it, there is no reason why it should hanker after it, and incline to a re-union with it. It added nothing of

† The rational soul receives no perfection from matter, which it could not receive without it; therefore, when it shall be separated from it, it is not said to have a propensity to it. *Gamush.*

Digitized by Google

happiness to it, but much trouble, and therefore becomes justly undesireable to it.

3. The supposition of such a propension and inclination, seems no way to suit with that state of perfect rest which the souls of the just enjoy in heaven. The scripture tells us, that at death they enter into rest, Isa. lvii. 2. Heb. iv. 9. That they rest from their labours, Rev. xiv. 13. But that which inclines and desires (especially when the desired enjoyment, as in this case, is suspended so long) must be as far from rest, as it is from satisfaction in the enjoyment of the thing desired. We know what Solomon hath observed of such a life, (and his observation is experimentally true), that "hope deferred makes the heart "sick," Prov. xiii. 12. Who finds not his own desires a very rack to him in such cases? If we be kept but a few days in earnest expectation, and desire of an absent friend, and he comes not, what an uneasy life do we life! But here we must suppose some have such an unsatisfied life for hundreds, and others for thousands of years already; and how much longer they may remain so, who can tell? We use to say, Lovers hours are full of eternity. These reasons seem to carry it for the negative.

But if the matter be weighed once more, with the following reasons in the counterscale, and prejudice do not pull down the ballance; we shall find the contrary conclusion much more strong and rational. For,

Arg. 1. The soul and body are the two constitutive parts of man; either of these being wanting, the man is not complete and perfect. The good of the whole is the good of the parts themselves; and every thing hath a natural desire and appetite to its own good and perfection *. It is confessed, the soul, for as much as concerns itself singly, is made perfect, and enjoys blessedness in the absence of the body; but this is only the perfection and blessedness of one part of man; the other part *viz.* the body, lies in obscurity and corruption: and till both be blessed, and blessed together, in a state of composition and re-union, the whole man is not made perfect. For this therefore the soul must wait.

* A separate soul has a propensity to union with the body, for it desires the actual constitution of the whole compound being, seeing it is for this, as its end, that it exists, and is found within the compass of real beings. And this is that perfection which the soul obtains by that propensity: for the good of the whole compound being is the good of the parts themselves. It must therefore be affirmed, that the separate soul naturally desires the resurrection. *Alsted. Meter. theol. part* 1. *p.* 214, 215.

Digitized by Google

Arg. 2. Though death hath dissolved the union, yet it hath not destroyed the relation betwixt the soul and the body; that dust is more to it than all the dust of the whole earth. Hence it is that the whole person of a believer is sometimes denominated from that part of him, namely, his body, which remains captivated by death in the grave. Hence, 2 Thess. iv. 15. dead believers are called *those that sleep*, which must needs properly respect the body, for the soul sleeps not, and shews what a firm and dear relation still remains betwixt these absent friends. Now we all know the mighty power of a relation, if it be at least among entities, yet surely it is one of the greatest things in the world in efficacy.

It is difficult to bear the absence of our dear relatives, especially if we be in prosperity, and they in adversity: As the case here is betwixt the spirit in heaven, and its body in the grave; this associated with angels, that prey'd upon by worms. Joseph's case is the liveliest emblem that occurs to my present thoughts to illustrate the point in hand. He was advanced to be lord over all Egypt, living in the greatest pomp and splendor there; but his father, and brethren, were, at the same time, ready to perish, in the land of Canaan, Gen. xliii. 29, 30, 31. He had been many years separated from them, but neither the length of time, nor honours of the court, could alienate his affections from them. O see the mighty power of relation! no sooner doth he see his brethren, and understand their case, and the pining condition of Jacob, his father, but his bowels yerned, and his compassions rolled together for them; yea, he could not forbear, nor stifle his own affections, though he knew how injurious his brethren had been to him, and betrayed him, as the body hath the soul: Yet notwithstanding all this, he breaks forth into tears, and outcries, over them, which made the house ring again with the news that Joseph's brethren were come. Nor could he be at rest in the lap of honour, and plenty, until he had got home his dear, and ancient relations to him. Thus stands the case betwixt soul and body.

Arg. 3. The regret, reluctancy, and sorrows expressed by the soul at parting, do strongly argue its inclination to a re-union with it, when it is actually separated from it: For why should we surmise, that the soul, which mourned, and groaned so deeply at parting, which clasped, and embraced it so dearly, and affectionately, which fought, struggled, and disputed the passage with death, every foot, and inch of ground it got, and would not part with the body, till by plain force it was rent out of its arms; should not, when absent, desire to see, and

Digitized by Google

enjoy its old, and indeared friend again? Hath it lost its affection, though it continue its relation? That is very improbable: Or doth its advancement in heaven make it regardless of its body, which lies in contempt, and misery? That is an effect which Christ's personal glory never produced in him towards us, nor a good man's preferment would produce in him to his poor and miserable friends in this world, as we see in the case of Joseph, just now instanced in. It is therefore harsh, and incongruous, to suppose the soul's love to the body was extinguished in the parting hour, and that now, out of sight, out of mind.

Object. But was it not urged before, in opposition to this assertion, that the souls of the righteous looked upon their bodies as their prisons, and sighed for deliverance by death, and greatly rejoiced in the hope, and foresight of that liberty death would restore them to? How doth this consist with such reluctancies at parting, and inclinations to re-union?

Sol. The objection doth not suppose any man to be totally free from all reluctancies, and unwillingness to die; the holiest souls that ever lived in bodies of flesh, will give an unwilling shrug, when it comes to the parting point, 2 Cor. v. 2. but this their willingness to be gone, arises from two other grounds, which make it consistent enough with its reluctancies at parting, and inclination to a second meeting.

(1.) This willingness to die, doth not suppose the soul's love to the body to be utterly extinguished, but mastered, and overpowered by another, and stronger love. There is in every Christian a double love, one natural to the body, and the things below, the other supernatural, to Christ, and the things above; the latter doth not extinguish, though it conquer, and subdue the other. Love to the body pulls backward, love to Christ pushes forward, and finally prevails. This is so consistent with it, that it supposes natural reluctation, and unwillingness to part.

(2.) The willingness of God's people to be dissolved, must not be understood absolutely, but comparatively; in that sense the apostle will be understood, 2 Cor. v. 8. "We are confident, "I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and pre-"sent with the Lord," *(i. e.)* rather than to live always a life of sin, sorrow, and absence from God; death is not desirable in, and for itself, but only as it is the soul's outlet from sin, and its inlet to God.

So that the very best desire is but comparatively, and it is but few who find the love of this animal life subacted, and overpowered by high-raised acts of faith, and love. The genera-

Digitized by Google

lity; even of good souls, feel strong renitencies, and suffer sharp conflicts at their dissolution; all which discovers with what lothness, and unwillingness, the soul unclasps its arms, to let go its body. Now, as divines argue the frame of Christ's heart in heaven, towards his people on earth, from all those endearing passages, and demonstrations of love he gave them at parting; so we here argue the continued love, and inclination of the soul to its body after it is in heaven, from the manifold demonstrations it gave of its affection to it in this world, especially in the parting hour. No considerations, in all the world, less than the more full fruition of God, and freedom from sin, could possibly have prevailed with it to quit the body, though but for a time, and leave it in the dust. Which is our third argument.

Arg. 4. And as the dolorous parting hour evidenceth it, so doth the joy with which it receives it again, at the resurrection. If it part from it so heavily, and meet it again with joy unspeakable; sure, then, it still retaineth much love for it, and desires to be re-espoused to it, in the interval. Now, that its meeting in the resurrection, is a day of joy, to the soul, is evident, because it is called *the time of refreshment*, Acts iii. 19. and they *awake with singing, out of the dust*, Isa. xxvi. 19. If the direct and immediate scope of the prophet points not (as some think it doth) at the resurrection, yet it is allowed by all, to be a very lively allusion to it, which is sufficient for my purpose: And, indeed, none that understand, and believe the design, and business of that day, can possibly doubt but there was reason enough to call it a time of refreshment, a singing morning; for the souls of the righteous come from heaven with Christ, and the whole host of shouting angels, not to be spectators only, but the subjects of that days triumph: They come to re-assume, and be re-espoused to their own bodies, this being the appointed time for God to vindicate and rescue them from the tyrannical power of the grave, to endow them with spiritual qualities, at the second marriage to their souls, that in both parts they may be completely happy. O the joyful claspings, and dear embraces, betwixt them! who, but themselves, can understand! And, by the way, this removes the objection before-mentioned, of the miseries and prejudices the soul suffered in this world, in, and from the body; for now it receives it a spiritual body, (*i. e.*) so subdued to, and fitted for the use of the spirit, as never to impede, clog, or obstruct its motions, and inclination any more, 1 Cor. xv. 44. In this hope it parted from it, and with this consolation it now receives it again.

Digitized by Google

Arg. 5. There are many scriptures which very much favour, if they do not positively conclude for the soul's inclination to, and desire to be re-united with its own body, even whilst it is in the state of its single glorification in heaven: Certainly our souls leave not their bodies at death, as the *ostrich* doth her egg in the sand, without any further regard to it, or concernment for it; but they are represented as crying to God to remember, avenge, and vindicate them, Rev. vi. 10, 11. "How long, "Lord, how long wilt thou not avenge our blood?" *Our blood*, speaks both the continued relation, and suitable affection they have to their absent bodies.

And to the same sense * a judicious and learned pen expounds that place, Job xiv. 14. (which is commonly, but I know not how fitly, accommodated to another purpose) "All the days of "my appointed time will I wait till my change come." Which words, by a diligent comparing of the context, appears to have this for their proper scope and sense.

'Job in the former verse had expressed his confidence by 'way of petition, that at a set and appointed time God would 'remember him, so as to recal him out of the grave; and now, 'minded to speak out more fully, puts the question to himself, "If a man die, shall he live again?' And thus answers it, 'All "the days of my appointed time' (that is, of the appointed 'time which he mentioned before, when God should revive 'him out of the dust) 'will I wait till my change come;' that 'is, that glorious change, when the corruption of a lothsome 'grave should be exchanged for immortal glory: Which he 'amplifies, and utters more expressly, ver. 15. 'Thou shalt "call, and I will answer; thou shalt have a desire to the work "of thy hands:' Thou wilt not always forget to restore and 'perfect thine own creature. And surely this waiting is not 'the act of his inanimate sleeping dust, but of that part which 'should be capable of such an action: *q. d.* I, in that part 'which shall be still alive, shall patiently wait the appointed 'time of reviving me in that part also, which death and the 'grave shall insult over in a temporary triumph in the mean 'time.'

Upon these grounds, I think, the inclination of the separated spirits of the just to their own bodies to be a justifiable opinion. As for the damned, we have no reason to think such a re-union to be desirable to them; for alas, it will be but the increase

* Mr. Howe's blessedness of the righteous, p. 170, 171.

Digitized by Google

and aggravation of their torments: Which consideration is sufficient to over-power and stifle the inclination of nature, and make the very thoughts of it horrid and dreadful. To what end (as the prophet speaks in another case) is it for them to desire that day? It will be a day of darkness and gloominess to them; re-union being designed to complete the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other.

But before I take off my hand, and dismiss this question, I must remember that I am debtor to two objections.

Object. 1. *The soul can both live, and act separate from the body, it needs it not; and if it do not want, why should it desire it?*

Sol. The life and actings of the glorified are considerable two ways, (1.) Singly and abstractedly for the life and action of one part: And so we confess the soul lives happily, and acts forth its own powers freely in the state of separation. (2.) Personally, or concretely, as it is the life and action of the whole man, and so it doth both need and desire the conjunction or re-union of the body; for the body is not only a part of Christ's purchase, as well as the soul, and to have its own glory, as well as it, but it is also a constitutive part of a complete glorified person; and so considered, the saints are not perfectly happy till this re-union be effected, which is the true ground and reason of this its desire.

Object. 2. *But this hypothesis seems to thwart the account given in scripture of the rest, and placid state of separate souls: for look, as bodies which gravitate and propend do not rest, so neither do souls which incline and desire.*

Sol. There is a vast difference betwixt the tendencies, and propensions of souls in the way to glory, and in glory: We that are absent from the Lord, can find no rest in the way; but those that are with the Lord can rest in Jesus, and yet wait without anxiety, or self-torturing impatience, for the accomplishment of the promises to their absent bodies, Rev. vi. 10, 11.

Corollary. Let this provoke us all to get sanctified souls, to rule and use these their bodies now for God. This will abundantly sweeten their parting at death, and their meeting again at the resurrection of the just; else their parting will be doleful, and their next meeting dreadful. And so much for the doctrine of separation.

The Uses of the Point.

Our way is now open to the improvement, and use of this excellent subject and doctrine of separation; and certainly it

Digitized by Google

affords as rich an entertainment for our affections, as for our minds, in the following uses; of which the first will be for our information in six practical *inferences*.

Infer. 1. If this be the life and state of gracious souls after their separation from the body, *Then holy persons ought not to entertain dismal and terrifying thoughts of their own dissolution.*

The apprehensions and thoughts of death should have a peculiar pleasantness in the minds of believers. You have heard into what a blessed presence and communion death introduceth your souls; how it leads you out of a body of sin, a world of sorrows, the society of imperfect saints, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, to that lovely mount Sion, to the heavenly sanctuary, to the blessed visions of the face of God. Oh! methinks there hath been enough said, to make all the souls, in whom the well-grounded hopes of the life of glory are found, to cry out with the apostle, "We are confident, I say, yea, and willing rather "to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord," 2 Cor v. 8.

When good Musculus drew near his end, how sweet and pleasant was this meditation to his soul! Hear his swan-like song:

* *Nil supereſt, vitae frigus praecordia captat;*
Sed, tu Chriſte, mihi vita perennis ades:
Quid trepidas anima, ad ſedes arbitura quietis?
En tibi ductor adeſt angelus ille tuus.
Linque domum hanc miſeram, nunc in ſua fata ruentem
Quam tibi fida Dei dextera reſtituet.
Peccaſti? Scio, ſed Chriſtus credentibus in ſe,
Peccata expurgat ſanguine cuncta ſuo.
Horribilis mors eſt? Fateor, ſed proximus vita eſt,
Ad quam te Chriſti gratia certa vocat.
Praeſto eſt de Satana, peccato et morte triumphans
Chriſtus; ad hunc igitur laeta alacriſque migra.

Which may be thus translated.

Cold death my heart invades, my life doth flie:
O Christ, my everlasting life draw nigh.
Why quivereſt thou, my soul, within my breast?
Thine angel's come to lead thee to thy rest.
Quit chearfully this drooping house of clay;
God will restore it in the appointed day.

* *Melchior Adams, in vita Muſculi, p* 385.

Digitized by Google

Haſt ſinn'd? I know it, let not that be urg'd;
For Chriſt thy ſins, with his own blood hath purg'd.
Is death affrighting? True, but yet withal
Conſider, Chriſt thro' death to life doth call.
He triumphs over Satan, ſin, and death;
Therefore with joy reſign thy dying breath.

Much in the ſame chearful frame was the heart of dying Bullinger *, when his mournful friends expreſſed their ſenſe of the loſs they ſhould ſuſtain by his removal. "Why, ſaid he, if God "will make any farther uſe of my labours in the miniſtry, he "will renew my ſtrength, and I will gladly ſerve him: But if "he pleaſe (as I deſire he would) to call me hence, I am ready "to obey his will; and nothing more pleaſant can befal me, "than to leave this ſinful and miſerable world to go to my Sa-"viour Chriſt." O that all, who are out of the danger of death, were thus got out of the dread of death too.

Let them only tremble, and be convulſed at the thoughts and ſight of death, whoſe ſouls muſt fall into the hands of a ſin-revenging God by the ſtroke of death; who are to breath out their laſt hope with their laſt breath. Death is *yours*, ſaith the apoſtle, 1 Cor. iii. 22. your friend, your privilege, your paſſage to heaven; it is your ignorance of it, which breeds your fears about it.

Infer. 2. *Gather from hence, the abſolute, indiſpenſible neceſſity of your union with Chriſt, before your diſſolution by death.*

Wo to that ſoul which ſhall be ſeparated from its body before it be united with Chriſt: None but the ſpirits of juſt men are made perfect at death. Righteous ſouls are the only qualified ſubjects of bleſſedneſs.

'Tis true, every ſoul hath a natural capacity of happineſs, but gracious ſouls only have an actual meetneſs for glory. The ſcriptures tell us in the plaineſt words, that "without holineſs "no man ſhall ſee the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. that "except we "be regenerate, and born again, we cannot ſee the kingdom "of God," John iii. 3. You make the greateſt adventure that ever was made by man; indeed, an adventure infinitely too great for any man to make, when you ſhoot the gulph of vaſt eternity upon terms of hazard and uncertainty.

* *Si Deo viſum fuerit, mea opera ulterius in eccleſiæ miniſterio uti; ipſe vires ſufficiet, et libens illi parebo; ſin me voluerit (quod opto) ex hac vita evocare, paratus ſum illius voluntati obſequi; ac nihil eſt quod mihi jucundius poſſit contingere, quam ex hoc miſera et corruptiſſimo ſeculo ad Chriſtum ſervatorem meum migrandum ſit,* Idem. p. 503.

Digitized by Google

What thinkeſt thou, reader? Dareſt thou adventure thy ſoul and eternal happineſs upon it, that the work of regeneration and ſanctification, that very ſame work of grace, on which the Spirit of God has placed all thy hopes of heaven in theſe ſcriptures, is truly wrought by him in thy ſoul? Conſider it well, paule upon it again and again before thou go forth. Should a miſtake be committed here, (and nothing is more eaſy or common, all the world over, than ſuch miſtakes) thou art irrecoverably gone. This venture can be made but once, and the miſcarriage is never to be retrieved afterwards; thou haſt not another ſoul to adventure, nor a ſecond adventure to make of this. Well might the apoſtle Peter call for all diligence to make our calling and our election ſure: That can never be made too ſure, which is ſo invaluable in its worth, and to be but once adventured.

Infer. 3. *How prejudicial is it to dying men to be then incumbred, diverted, and diſtracted about earthly concernments, when the time of their departure is at hand.*

The buſineſs and employment of dying perſons is of ſo vaſt importance and weight, that every moment of their time need to be carefully ſaved, and applied to this their preſent and moſt important concern. How well ſoever you have improved the time of life, believe it, you will find work enough upon your hand at death: dying hours will be found to be buſy and laborious hours, even to the moſt painful, ſerious, and induſtrious ſouls, whoſe life hath been moſtly ſpent in preparations for death. Leave not the proper buſineſs of other days to that day; for that day will have buſineſs enough of its own. Sufficient for that day are the labours thereof. Let a few conſiderations be pondered, to clear and confirm this inference.

Conſider. 1. The buſineſs and employment of dying perſons, is of the moſt ſerious, awful, and ſolemn nature and importance; it is their laſt preparatory work on earth, to their immediate appearance before God their judge, Heb. ix. 27. it is their ſhooting the gulph into eternity, and leaving this world, and all their acquaintance and intereſts therein for ever, Iſa. xxviii. 11. It is therefore a work by itſelf to die, a work requiring the moſt intenſe, deep, and undiſturbed exerciſes of all the abilities and graces of the inner man; and all little enough.

Conſider. 2. Time is exceeding precious with dying men; the laſt ſand is ready to fall, and therefore not to be waſted, as it was wont to be. When we had a fair proſpect of many years before us, we made little account of an hour or day; but now one of thoſe hours, which we ſo careleſsly laviſhed away, is

Digitized by Google

of more value than all this world to us, especially if the whole weight of eternity should hang upon it, (as oftentimes it doth) then the loss of that portion of time, is the loss of soul, body, and hope for evermore.

Consider. 3. Much of that little precious time of departing souls will be unavoidably taken up, and employed about the inexcusable, pressing calls and necessities of distressed nature; all that you can do for your souls must then be done only by fits and snatches, in the midst of many disturbances, and frequent interruptions: So that it is rarely found, that a dying man can pursue a serious meditation with calm and fixed thoughts: for besides the pains and faintings of the body, the abilities of the mind usually fail. Here also they fall into a sad *dilemma*; if they do not with the utmost intention of mind fix their hearts and thoughts on Christ, they lose their comfort, if godly, and their souls if ungodly; and if they do, *friends* and *physicians* assure them they will destroy their bodies. These are the straits of men bordering close upon eternity; they must hastily catch a few moments in the intervals of pain, and then are put by all again.

Consider. 4. There is no man living but hath something to do for his own soul in a dying hour, and something for others also.

Suppose the best that can be supposed, that the soul be in real union with Christ, and that union be also clear; yet it is seldom found but there are some assaults of Satan: Or if not, yet, how many relations and friends need our experiences and counsels at such a time? How many things shall we have to do after our great and main work is done? And others have a great deal more to do, though as safe as the former. O the knots and objections that are then to be dissolved and answered! The usual onsets and assaults of Satan that are then to be resisted! And yet most dying persons have much more upon their hands than either of the former. The whole work of repentance and faith is to do when time is even done.

Consider. 5. Few, yea, very few, are found furnished with wisdom, experience and faithfulness to give dying persons any considerable assistance in soul-affairs. It may be there may be found among the visitants of the sick, now and then a person who hath a word of wisdom in his heart; but then either he wants opportunity or courage and faithfulness to do the part of a true spiritual friend. Elihu describes the person so qualified as he ought for this work, Job xxxiii. 23, 24. and calls him, *One among a thousand.* Some are too close and reserved, others too trifling and impertinent; some are willing, but want ability;

Digitized by Google

others are able, but want faithfulness; some cut too deep by uncharitable censoriousness; others skin over the wound too slightly, speaking peace where God and conscience speak none: So that little help is to be expected.

Consider. 6. How much therefore doth it deserve to be lamented, that, where there is so much to do, so little time to do it, and so few to help in the best improvement of it, all should be lost as to their souls by earthly incumbrances and worldly affairs, which might have been done sooner and better in a more proper season! O therefore let me persuade all men to take heed of bringing the proper business of healthful days to their sick beds.

Infer. 4. *What an excellent creature is the soul of man, which is capable, not only of such preparatious for God, whilst it is in the body, but of such sights and enjoyments of God, when it lives without a body.*

Here the Spirit of God works upon it, in the way of grace and sanctification, Eph. ii. 10. The scope and design of this his workmanship, is to qualify and make us meet for the life of heaven, 2 Cor. vi. 5. For this self-same thing, or purpose, our souls are wrought, or moulded, by grace, into quite another frame and temper, than that which nature gave them; and when he hath wrought out and finished all that he intends to be wrought in the way of sanctification, then shall it be called up to the highest enjoyments, and employments for ever, that a creature is susceptible of.

Herein the dignity of the soul appears, that no other creature in this world, beside it, hath a natural capacity, either to be sanctified inherently in this world, or glorified everlastingly in the world to come; to be transformed into the image, and filled with the joy of the Lord. There are *myriads* of other souls in this world, besides ours, but to none of them is the Spirit of sanctification sent, but only to ours: The souls of *animals* serve only to move the dull and sluggish matter, and take in for a few days the sensitive pleasures of the creation, and so expire, having no natural capacity of, or designation for, any higher employment or enjoyment.

And it deserves a most serious animadversion, that this vast capacity of the soul for eternal blessedness, must of necessity make it capable of so much the more misery and self-torment, if at last it fail of that blessedness: For it is apparent they do not perish because they are *uncapable*, but because they are *unwilling*: not because their souls wanted any natural faculty that others have, but because they would not open those they have,

Digitized by Google

to receive Christ in the way of faith and obedience, as others did.

Think upon this, you that live only to eat, and drink, and sleep, and play, as the birds and beasts of the field do; What need was there of a reasonable soul for such sensual employments? Do not your noble faculties speak your designation for higher uses? And will you not wish to exchange souls with the most vile and despicable *animal* in this world, if it were possible to be done? Certainly it were better for you to have no capacity of eternal blessedness (as they have not) if you do not enjoy it; and no capacity of torment beyond this life (as they have have not) if you must certainly endure it.

Infer. 5. *If our souls and bodies must be separate shortly, how patiently should we bear all lesser separations, that may and will be made, betwixt us and any other enjoyments in this world?*

No union is so intimate, strict, and dear, as that betwixt our souls and bodies. All your relations and enjoyments in this world, hang looser from your souls than your bodies do: and if it be your duty, patiently and submissively, to suffer a painful parting pull from your bodies; it is doubtless your duty, to suffer meekly and patiently a separation from other things, which are but a prelude to it, and a mere shadow of it. It is good to put such cases to ourselves in the midst of our pleasant enjoyments.

I have now many comfortable relatives in the world, wife, children, kindred, and friends; God hath made them pleasant to me, but he may bereave me of all these. Doth not providence ring such changes all the world over? Are not all kingdoms, cities, and towns, full of the sighs and lamentations of widows, orphans, and friends bereaved of their pleasant and useful relations? But if God will have it so, it is our duty to bound our sorrows, remembring the time *is short*, 1 Cor. vii. 29. In a few days we must be stript much nearer, even out of our own bodies by death.

God may also separate betwixt me and my health by sickness, so that the pleasure of this world shall be cut off from me; but sickness is not death, though it be a prelude and step towards it: I may well bear this with patience, who must submissively bear sharper pains than these ere long. Yea, and well may I bear this submissively, considering that by such imbittering and weaning providences, God is preparing me for a much easier dissolution, than if I should live at ease in the body all my days, till death comes to make so great and sudden a change upon me.

God may also separate betwixt me and my liberty by restraint.

Digitized by Google

It hath been the lot of the best men that ever were in the world; and if it should be ours also, we should not be much startled at it, considering these bodies of ours must be shortly pent up in a straiter, darker, and more loathsome place of confinement, than any prison in this world can be. The grave is a darker place, Job xvii. 13. and your abode there will be longer, Eccl. xi. 8.

These, and all other our outward enjoyments, are separable things, and it is good thus to alleviate our loss of them.

Infer. 6. *How heavenly should the tempers and frames of those souls be, who are candidates for heaven, and must be so shortly numbered with the spirits of just men made perfect.*

It is reasonable that we all begin to be, that which we expect to be for ever; to learn that way of living and conversing, which we believe must be our everlasting life, and business in the world to come. Let them that hope to live with angels in heaven, learn to live like angels on earth, in holiness, activity, and ready obedience.

There is the greatest reason that our minds be there, where our souls are to be for ever. A spiritual mind will be found possible, congruous, sweet, and evidential of an interest in that glory, to all those holy souls, who are preparing and designed for it.

1. It is possible, notwithstanding the clogs and entanglements of the body, to be heavenly-minded. Others have attained it, Phil. iii. 20. Two things make a heavenly conversation possible to men, *viz.*

(1.) The natural abilities of the mind.

(2.) The gracious principles of the mind.

(1.) The natural abilities of the mind, which can, in a minute's time, dispatch a nimble messenger to heaven, and mount its thoughts from this to that world in a moment. The power of cogitation is a rich endowment of the soul, such as no other creature on earth is participant of. Though spiritual thoughts be not the natural growth of the soul, yet thoughts capable of being spiritualized are. And without this ability of projecting thoughts, all intercourse must have been cut off.

(2.) The gracious principles implanted in the soul, do actually incline the mind, and mount its thoughts heaven-ward. Yea, this will prove more than a possibility of a conversation in heaven; whilst saints tabernacle on earth, in bodies of flesh, it will almost prove an impossibility that it should be otherwise, for these spiritual principles setting the bent and tendency of the

Digitized by Google

heart heaven-ward, we must act against the very law of our new nature, when we place our affections elsewhere.

2. A mind in heaven is most congruous, decorous and comely for those that are the enrolled inhabitants of that heavenly city. Where should a Christian's love be, but where his Lord is! Our hearts and our homes do not use to be long asunder. It becomes you so to think, and so to speak now, as those who make account to be shortly singing *hallelujahs* before the throne.

3. It is most sweet and delightful; no pleasure in this world is comparable to this pleasure; Rom. viii. 6. "To be spiritual-"ly minded is life and peace." It is a young heaven born in the soul in its way thither.

4. To conclude: it is evidential of your interest in it: an agreeable frame is the surest title, Col. iii. 1, 2. Matth. vi. 21. If heaven attract your minds now, it will center them for ever.

Use 2. This doctrine of the separation of the spirits of the just from their bodies, as it lies before you in this discourse, affords a singular help to all the people of God, to entertain lovely and pleasant thoughts of that day; to make death not only an unregretted, but a most pleasant and desireable thing to their souls.

I know there is a pure, simple, natural fear of death, from which you must not expect to be perfectly freed, by all the arguments in the world. And there is a reverential, awful fear of death, which it would be your prejudice and loss to have destroyed. You will have a natural, and ought to have a reverential fear of death: the one flows from your sensitive, the other from your sanctified nature.

But it is a third sort of fear, which doth you all the mischief; a fear springing in gracious souls out of the weakness of their graces, and the strength of their unmortified affections: a fear arising partly out of the darkness of our minds, and partly out of the sensuality and earthliness of our hearts; this fear is that which so convulseth our souls when death is near, and imbitters our lives, even whilst it is at a distance. He that hath been over-heated in his affections to this world, and over-cooled by diversions and temptations, neglects and intermissions, to that world, cannot chuse but give an unwilling shrug, if not a frightful screech at the appearance of death.

And this being the sad case of too many, good and upright souls for the main; and there being so few, even amongst serious Christians, that have attained to that courage and complacence in the thoughts of death, which the apostle speaks of, 2 Cor. v. 8. to be both confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord; I will, from

Digitized by Google

this discourse, furnish them with some special assistance therein. But withal, I must tell you upon what great disadvantages I am here to dispute with your fears: so strong is the current of natural and vicious fear, that except a special hand of God enforce, and set home the arguments that shall be urged, they will be as easily swept away before it, as so many straws by a rapid torrent; nor will it be to any more purpose to oppose my breath to them, than to the tides and waves of the sea.

Moreover, I am fully convinced, by long and often experience, how unsteady and inconstant the frames and tempers of the best hearts are; and that if it be not altogether, yet it is next to an impossibility, to fix them in such a temper as this I aim at is. Where is that man to be found, who after the revolutions of many years, and in those years various dispensations of providence without him, altering his condition, and greater variety of temptations within, can yet say, notwithstanding all these various aspects and positions, his heart hath still held one steady, and invariable tenour and course?

Alas, there be very few (if any) of such a sound and settled temper of mind, whose pulse beats with an even stroke, through all inequalities of condition, alike free and willing at one time, as another, to be unclothed of the body, and to be with Christ. This height of faith, and depth of mortification; this strength of love to Christ, and ardour of holy desire, are degrees of grace to which very few attain.

The case standing thus, it is no more than needs, to urge all sorts of arguments upon our timorous and unsteady hearts; and it is like to prove a hard and difficult task, to bring the heart but to a quiet and unregretting submission to the appointment of God herein, though submission be one of the lowest steps of duty in this case.

If it be hard to fix our thoughts but an hour, on such an unpleasant subject as death, how hard must it be to bring over the consent of the will? If we cannot endure it at a distance, in our thoughts, how shall we embrace, and hug it in our bosoms? If our thoughts fly back with distaste, and impatience, no wonder if our will be obstinate, and refractory: we must first prevail with our thoughts, to fix themselves, and think close to such a subject, before it can be expected we chearfully resign ourselves into the hands of death. We cannot be willing to go along with death, till we have some acquaintance with it; and acquainted with it we cannot be, till we accustom ourselves to think assiduously, and calmly of it. They that have dwelt many

Digitized by Google

years at death's door, both in respect of the condition of their bodies, and disposition of their minds, yet find reluctancy enough when it comes to the point.

Object. *But if separation from the body be (as it is) an enemy to nature, and there be no possibility to extinguish natural aversation; to what purpose is it, to argue and persuade, where there is no expectation of success?*

Sol. Death is to be considered two ways, by the people of God:

1. As an enemy to nature.

2. As a *medium* to glory.

If we consider it simply in itself, as an enemy to nature, there is nothing in it for which we should desire it; but if we consider it as a *medium*, or passage into glory, yea, the only ordinary way through which all the saints must pass, out of this into a better state; so it will appear not only tolerable, but desirable to prepared souls. Were there not a shore of glory on the other side of these black waters of death, for my own part, I should rather chuse to live meanly, than to die easily. If both parts were to perish at death, there were no reason to persuade one to be willing to deliver up the other; it were a madness for the soul to desire to be dissolved, if it were so far from being better out of the body than in it, that it should have no being at all. But, Christians, let me tell you, death is so far from being a bar, that it is a bridge in your way to glory, and you are never like to come thither, but by passing over it: except, therefore, you will look beyond it, you will never see any desirableness in it. "I desire to be dissolved (saith Paul) and to be "with Christ, which is far better." To be with death is sad, but to be with Christ is sweet; to endure the pains of death is doleful, but to see the face of Christ is joyful; to part with your pleasant habitations is irksome, but to be lodged in the heavenly mansions is most delightful; a parting hour with dear relations is cutting, but a meeting hour with Jesus Christ is transporting; to be rid of your own bodies is not pleasing, but to be rid of sin, and that for ever, what can be more pleasing, to a gracious soul?

You see, then, in what sense I present death as a desirable thing to the people of God; and therefore seeing nature teacheth us, (as the apostle speaks) to put the more abundant comeliness upon the uncomely parts; suffer me to dress up death in its best ornaments, and present it to you in the following arguments, as a beautiful, and comely object of your conditional, and well-regulated desires. And,

Arg. 1. *If upon a fair and just account, there shall appear to*

Digitized by Google

be more gain to believers in death, than there is in life; reason must needs vote death to be better to them that are in Christ, than life can be; and consequently, it should be desirable in their eyes.

'Tis a clear dictate of reason, in case of choice, to chuse that which is best for us. Who is there that freely exercises reason, and choice together, that will not do so?

What merchant will not part with a hundred pound's worth of glass beads, and pendants, for a tun of gold? A few tinsel toys, for as many rich diamonds? *Mercatura est amittere, ut lucreris;* that is true merchandise, to part with things of lesser, for things of greater value.

Now, if you will be tried, and determined by God's book of rates, then the case is determined quickly, and the advantage appears exceedingly upon death's side. Phil. i. 21. "To me "to live, is Christ; and to die, is gain."

Object. *True, it might be so to Paul, who was eminent in grace, and ripe for glory; but it may be loss to others, who have not attained the height of his holiness, or assurance.*

Sol. The true and plain sense of the objection is this, whether heaven, and Christ, be as much gain to him that enjoys them, though behind others both in grace and obedience, as it is to them who are more eminent in grace, and have done, and suffered more for their sake? And let it be determined by yourselves. But if your meaning be, that Paul was ready for death, and so are not you; his work and course was almost comfortably finished, and so is not yours; his death, therefore, must needs be gain to him, but it may be loss to you, even the loss of all that you are worth for ever.

To this I say, the wisdom of God orders the time of his people's death, as well as all other circumstances about it: And in this, your hearts may be at perfect rest, that being in Christ, you can never die to your loss, die when you will. I know you will reply, That if your union with Christ were clear, the controversy were ended; but then you must also consider, they are as safe who die by an act of recumbency upon Christ, as those that die in the fullest assurance of their interest in him.

And beside, your reluctancies, and aversations to death, are none of your way to assurance; that such a strong aversation to sin, and such a vehement desire after, and love to Christ, as can make you willing to quit all that is dear, and desirable to you in this world for his sake, is the very next door or step to assurance; and if the Lord bring your hearts to this frame, and fix them there, it is not likely you will be long without it.

But to return: Paul had here valued life, with a full allow-

Digitized by Google

ance of all the benefits and advantages of it; "To me to live, "is Christ;" that is, if I live, I shall live in communion with Christ, and service for Christ, and in the midst of all those comforts which usually result from both. Here is life, with the most weighty, and desirable benefits of it, laid in one scale, and he lays death, and, probably, a violent death too, (for of that he speaks to them afterwards, chap. ii. 17.) in the other scale. Thus he fills the scale, and the balance breaks on death's side; yea, it comes down with a πολλῳ μαλλον κρεισσον, a far, far better.

But here falls in (as an excellent person * observes) a rub in the way: there are in this case two judges, the flesh, and the spirit, and they cannot agree upon the values, but contradict each other. Nature saith, It is far better to live, than to die, and will not be beaten off from it. What then? I hope you will not put blind and partial nature in competition with God also, as you do life with death. But seeing nature can plead so powerfully, as well as grace, let us hear what those strong reasons are, that are urged by the flesh on life's side, and what the soul hath to reply, and plead on death's side, (for the soul can plead, and that charmingly too, though not by words and sounds) and then determine the matter as we shall see cause: but be sure prejudice pull not down the balance.

1. *The pleas of nature for life, and against dissolution.*

And here the doleful voice of nature laments, pleads, and bemoans itself to the willing soul.

'O my soul, what dost thou mean by these 'desires to be dissolved? Art thou in earnest, 'when thou sayest thou art willing to leave 'thine own body, and be gone? Consider; and think again, 'ere thou bid me farewel, what thou art to me, and what I 'have been, and am to thee; thou art my soul, that is, my 'prop, my beauty, my honour, my life, and, indeed, all that is 'comfortable to me. If thou depart, what am I but a spectacle of pity, an abhorred carcass, in a few moments? a prey 'to the worms, a captive to death? If thou depart, my candle 'is put out, and I am left in the horrors of darkness.

'I am thy house, thy delightful habitation, the house in 'which thou hast dwelt from the first moment of thy creation, 'and never lodgest one night in any other: every room in me 'hath one way or other, been a banqueting-room for thy entertainment, a room of pleasure; all my senses have been pur-

* Mr. How, in Mrs. Margaret Baxter's funeral sermon.

Digitized by Google

'veyors for thy delight, my members have all of them been 'thine instruments and servants, to execute thy commands and 'pleasure. If thou and I part, it must be in a shower; thou 'shalt feel such pains, such travailing throws, such deep, em-'phatical groans, such sweats, such agonies as thou never felt 'before: for death hath somewhat of anguish peculiar to itself, 'and which is unknown, though guessed at by the living. Be-'sides, whenever thou leavest me, thou leavest all that is, and 'hath been comfortable to thee in this world: thy house shall 'know thee no more, Job vii. 10. thy lands, thy money, thy 'trade, which have cost thee so many careful thoughts, and 'yielded thee so many refreshments, shall be thine no longer; 'death will strip thee of all these, and leave thee naked.

'Thou hast also, since thou becamest mine, contracted ma-'nifold relations in the world, which I know are dear unto thee; 'I know it by costly experience: How hast thou made me to 'wear and waste myself, in labours, cares, and watchings for 'them? But if thou wilt be gone, all these must be left expo-'sed, God knows to what wants, abuses, and miseries! for I 'can do nothing for them, or myself, if once thou leave me.' Thus it charms and pleads; thus it layeth, as it were, violent hands upon the soul, and saith, 'O my soul, thou shalt not 'depart.' It hangs about it much, as the wife and children of good Galeacius Caracciolus did about him, when he was leaving Italy, to go to Geneva, (a lively emblem of the case before us). It saith to the soul, as Joab did to David, "Thou hast "shamed thy face this day, in that thou lovest thine enemy, "death, and hatest me, thy friend." 'O my soul! my life! 'my darling! my dear and only one! let nothing but una-'voidable necessity part thee and me.' All this the flesh can plead, and a great deal more than this, and that a thousand times more powerfully and feelingly, than any words can plead the case. And all its arguments are back'd by sense; sight, and feeling attest what nature speaks.

Let us, in the next place, weigh the pleas, and reasons, which, notwithstanding all this, do over-power, and prevail with the believing soul to be gone, and quit its own body, and return no more to the elementary world.

2. *The pleas of faith in behalf of death.*

And thus the power of faith and love enables it to reply:

'My dear body, the companion and partner of my comforts 'and troubles, in the days of my pilgrimage on earth, great is 'my love, and strong are the bonds of my affections to thee. 'Thou hast been tenderly, yea, excessively beloved by me; my

Digitized by Google

'cares and fears for thee have been inexpreſſible, and nothing
'but the love of Jeſus Chriſt is ſtrong enough to gain my con-
'ſent to part with thee; thy intereſt in my affection is great,
'but as great as it is, and as much as I prize thee, I can ſhake
'thee off, and thruſt thee aſide, to go to Chriſt.

'Nor may this ſeem abſurd, or unreaſonable, conſidering that
'God never deſigned thee for a manſion, but only a temporary
'tabernacle to me: it is true, I have had ſome comfort during
'my abode in thee; but I enjoyed theſe comforts only in thee,
'not from thee; and many more I might have enjoyed, hadſt
'thou not been a ſnare and a clog to me.

'It is thou that haſt eaten up my time, and diſtracted my
'thoughts, enſnared my affections, and drawn me under much
'ſin and ſorrow: however, though we may weep over each o-
'ther, as acceſſories to the ſins and miſeries we have drawn u-
'pon ourſelves; yet in this is our joint-relief, that the blood
'of Chriſt hath cleanſed us both from all ſin.

'And therefore I can part the more eaſily, and comfortably
'from thee, becauſe I part in hope to receive, and enjoy thee
'in a far better condition than I leave thee. It is for both our
'intereſts to part for a time; for mine, becauſe I ſhall thereby
'be freed and delivered from ſin and ſorrow, and immediately
'obtain reſt with God, and the ſatisfaction of all my deſires in
'his preſence, and enjoyment, which there is no other way to
'obtain, but by ſeparation from thee: and why ſhould I live a
'groaning, burdened, reſtleſs life always, to gratify thy fond
'and irrational deſires? If thou loveſt me, thou wouldſt rejoice,
'not repine at my happineſs. Parents willingly part with their
'children at the greateſt diſtance, for their preferment, how
'dearly ſoever they love them; and doſt thou envy, or repine
'at mine? I have lived many months a ſuffocating, obſcure
'life, with thee in the womb, and neither you nor I had ever
'taſted or experienced the comforts of this world, and the va-
'rious delights of ſenſe, if we had not ſtruggled hard for an
'entrance into this world. And now we are here, alas! though
'thou art contented to abide; I live in thee, but as we both
'lived in the womb, an obſcure, uneaſy, and unſuitable life;
'thou canſt feed upon material bread, and delight thyſelf a-
'midſt the variety of ſenſitive objects thou findeſt here; but
'what are all theſe things to me? I cannot ſubſiſt by them;
'that which is food to thee, is but chaff, wind, and vanity to
'me: if I ſtay with thee, I ſhall be ſtill ſinning, and ſtill groan-
'ing; when I leave thee, I ſhall be immediately freed from
'both, and arrive at the ſum and perfection of all the hopes,

Digitized by Google

'desires, and whatsoever I have aimed at, and laboured for, in 'all the duties of my life. Let us therefore be content to part.

'Shrink not at the horror of a grave; it is, indeed, a dark 'and solitary house, and the days of darkness may be many; 'but to thee, my dear companion, it shall be a bed of rest, yea, 'a perfumed bed, where thy Lord Jesus lay before thee: and 'let the time of thy abode there be never so long, thou shalt 'not measure it, nor find the least tediousness in it; a thousand 'years there, shall seem no more in the morning of the resur-'rection, than the sweetest nap, of an hour long, seemed to be 'when I was wont to lay thee upon thy bed to rest.

'The worms in the grave shall be nothing to thee, nor give 'thee the thousandth part of that trouble that a flea was wont 'to do; and though I leave thee, Jesus Christ shall watch, in 'the mean time, over thy dust, and not suffer a grain of it to 'be lost: and I will return, assuredly to thee again, at the time 'appointed; I take not an everlasting farewel of thee, but de-'part for a time, that I may receive thee for ever. To con-'clude, there is an unavoidable necessity of our parting; whe-'ther willing or unwilling, we must be separated: but the con-'sent of my will to part with thee, for the enjoyment of Jesus 'Christ, will be highly acceptable to God, and greatly sweeten 'the bitter cup of death to us both.'

This, and much more, the gracious soul hath to say for its separation from the body; by which it is easy to discern where the gain and advantage of death lies, to all believers, and consequently, how much must it be, every way, their interest to be unbodied.

Arg. 2. To be weary of the body, upon the pure account and reason of our hatred to sin, and longing desires after Jesus Christ, argues strongly grace in truth, and grace in strength; it is both the test of our sincerity, and measure of our attainment, and maturity of grace, and, upon both accounts, highly desirable by all the people of God.

It is so great an evidence of the truth of grace, that the scriptures have made it the descriptive periphrasis of a Christian: so we find it in 2 Tim. iv. 8. the crown of life is there promised, to all them that love the appearance of Christ, *i. e.* those that love to drink of it, that delight to steep their thoughts in subjects belonging to the other world, and cast many a yearning look that way: and 2 Pet. iii. 12. they are described to be such as are "looking for, and hastening to the coming of the day "of God." Their earnest expectations, and longings, do not

Digitized by Google

only put them upon making all the haste they can to be with Christ, but it makes the interposing time seem so tedious, and slow, that with their most vehement wishes and desires, they do what they can to accelerate and hasten it. As Rev. xxii. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Lovers hours, saith the proverb, are full of eternity. 'O, said Mr. Rutherford, that 'Christ would make long strides! O that he would fold up the 'heavens, as a cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way!' Such desires as these, can spring from none but gracious and renewed souls; for nature is wholly disaffected to a removal hence, upon such motives and considerations as these: if others wish, at any time, for death, it is but in a pet, a present passion, provoked by some intolerable anguish, or great distress of nature: but to look, and long, and hasten to the other world, out of a weariness of sin, and a hearty willingness to be with Christ, supposes necessarily a deep-rooted hatred of sin, abhorring it more than death itself, the greatest of natural evils, and a real sight of things invisible by the eye of faith, without which it is impossible any man's heart should be thus framed and tempered.

And as it evidenceth the truth, so also the strength and maturity of grace; for, alas, how many thousands of gracious souls, that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, are to be found quite below this temper of mind! O it is but here and there one, among the Lord's own people, that have reached this height and eminence of faith and love. It is with the fruits of the Spirit, just as it is with the fruits of the earth; some are green and raw, others are ripe and mellow: the first stick fast on the branches, you may shake and shake again, and not one will drop; or as those fruits that grow in hedges, with their coats and integuments enwrapping them, as nuts, *&c.* you may try your strength upon them, and sooner break your nails, than disclose and separate them: so fast and close do their husks stick to them: but when time and the influences of heaven, have ripened and brought them to perfection, the apples drop into your hands without the least touch, and the nut falls out of its case, of its own accord. So, much more, doth the soul part from its body, when maturated, and come to its strength, and vigour.

Arg. 3. It may greatly prevail upon the will and resolution of a believer, to adventure boldly and cheerfully upon death, that our bodies, of which we are bereaved and deprived by death, shall be most certainly and advantageously restored to us by the resurrection. The resurrection of the dead is the encouragement and consolation of the dying; the more our faith is established in the doctrine of the resurrection, the more we

Digitized by Google

shall surmount the fears of dissolution. If Paul urged it as an argument to reconcile Philemon to his servant Onesimus, ver. 15. "That he therefore departed for a season, that Philemon "might receive him for ever;" the same argument may reconcile every believer to death, and take off the prejudice of the soul against it. You shall surely receive your bodies again, and enjoy them for ever.

Now the doctrine of the resurrection is as sure in itself, as it is comfortable to us; the depth, and strength of its foundation, fully answers to the height, and sweetness of its consolation. Be pleased to try the two pillars thereof, and see which of them may be doubted or shaken. Mat. xxii. 29. "You err (saith "Christ to the Sadducees, who denied this doctrine) not know-"ing the scriptures, and the power of God." This is the ground and root of their error, not knowing the scriptures, and the power of God: *q. d.* did you know and believe the scriptures of God, and the power of God, you would never question this doctrine of the resurrection, which is built upon them both. The power of God convinceth all men, that know and believe it, that it *may be so*, and the scriptures of God convince all that know and believe them, that it *must be so*. As for his power, who can doubt it? At the command and fiat of God, the earth brought forth every living creature after his kind, Gen. i. 24, 25. at his command Lazarus came forth, John xi. 43. And was there not as much difficulty in either of these, as in our resurrection? By this power our souls were quickened, and raised from the death of sin and guilt, to the spiritual life of Christ, Eph. i. 19. And is it not as easy to raise a dead body as a dead soul? But what stand I arguing in so plain a case, when we are assured this mighty power is able to subdue all things to itself? Phil. iii. 21.

And then, for his promise that it shall be so, what can be plainer? See 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16. "This we say unto you by "the word of the Lord," *&c. (i. e.)* in the name or authority of the Lord, and by commission and warrant from him. He first opens his commission, shews his credentials, and then publishes the comfortable doctrine of his resurrection, and the saints pre-eminence to all others therein.

Well then, what remains in death to fright and scare a believer? Is it our parting with these bodies? Why, it is not for ever that we part with them; as sure as the power and promises of God are true, firm, and sufficient to accomplish it, we shall see and enjoy them again. This comforted Job, chap. xix. 25, 26. over all his diseases, when of all his enjoyments that once

Digitized by Google

he had, he could not say, my friends, my children, my estate; yet then he could say, my Redeemer. When he looked upon a poor wasted, withered, lothsome body of his own, and saw nothing but a skeleton, an image of death, yet then could he see it a glorious body, by viewing it believingly in this glass of the resurrection. So then all the damage we can receive by death, is but the absence of our bodies for a time; during which time, the covenant-relation betwixt God and them, holds good and firm, Mat. xxii. 32. He therefore will take care of them, and in due time restore them, with marvellous improvements and endowments, to us again, divested of all their infirmities, and cloathed with heavenly qualities and perfections, 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. And in the mean time, the soul attains its rest, and happiness, and satisfaction in the blessed God.

Arg. 4. The consideration of what we part from, and what we go to, should make the medium, by which we pass from so much evil to so great good, lovely and desirable in our eyes, how unpleasing or bitter soever it be in itself.

No man desires physic for itself. There is no pleasure in bitter pills and lothsome potions, except what rises from the end, *viz.* the disburdening of nature, and recovery of health; and this gives it a value with the sick and pained. Under a like consideration is death desired by sick and pained souls, who find it better to die once, than groan under burdens continually.

Death certainly is the best physician, next, and under Jesus Christ, that ever was employed about them; for it cures radically and perfectly, so that the soul never relapses more into any distemper. Other medicines are but anodynes, or at best they relieve us but in part, and for a time; but this goes through the work, and perfects the cure at once. Methinks that call of Christ, which he gives his spouse in Cant. iv. 8. "(Come with "me from Lebanon: (my spouse) with me from Lebanon: "and look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and "Hermon, from the lions dens, from the mountains of leo-"pards)" scarce suits any time so well as the time of death. Then it is that we depart from the lions dens, and the mountains of leopards, places uncomfortable and unsafe. More particularly at death the saints depart,

1. From defiling corruptions	into	1. Perfect purity.
2. From heart sinking sorrows		2. Fulness of joy.
3. From entangling temptations		3. Everlasting freedom.
4. From distressing persecutions		4. Full rest.
5. From pinching wants		5. Universal supplies.
6. From distracting fears		6. Highest security.
7. From deluding shadows		7. Substantial good.

Digitized by Google

1. From defiling corruptions into perfect purity. No sin hangs about the separated, though it do about the sanctified soul. They come out of the body suitable to that character and encomium, Cant. iv. 7. "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no "spot in thee." It doth that for the saints, which all their graces and duties, all their mercies and afflictions, could never do. Faith is a great purifier, communion with God a great cleanser, sanctified afflictions a refiner's fire and fuller's soap; these have all done their parts, and been useful in their places: But none of them, nor all together, perfected this cure till death come, and then the work is done, and the cure perfected.

All weeping, all praying, all believing, all hearing, all sacraments, all the means and instruments in the world, cannot do what death will do for thee. One dying hour will do what ten thousand praying hours never did, nor could do. In this hour the design of all those hours is accomplished; as he that is dead by mortification, is, at present, freed from sin, in respect of imputation and dominion, Rom. vi. 7. so he that is justified and mortified, when dead naturally, is immediately freed from the very indwelling and existence of sin in him. We read of the washing of the robes of the saints, in Rev. vii. 14. The blood of the Lamb cleanseth them from every spot; but it doth it gradually. The last spot of guilt indeed was fetched out by one act of justification; but the last spot of filth is not fetched out till the time of their dissolution; when they are come out of the agonies of death (which the scripture calls great tribulation) then, and not till then, are they perfectly cleansed. Sin brought in death, and death carries out sin.

Oh! what a pure, lovely, shining creature, is the separated spirit of a just man? how clear is its judgment, how ordinate its will, how holy, and altogether heavenly are all its affections now! and never till now it feels itself perfectly well, and as it would be.

2. From heart-sinking sorrows, into fulness of joy. The life we now live is a groaning life, 2 Cor. v. 2. where is the Christian, that if his inside could be seen, and his heart laid naked, would not be found wounded from many hands? from the hand God, of enemies, of friends, of Satan; but especially by the hands of its own corruptions? Christ our head was stiled *a man of sorrows*, from the multitude of his sorrows; and it is the lot of all his to be in a state of sorrow in the body. "In the "world (saith he) you shall have trouble." When I consider how oft the candle of sorrow is held to the thread of life, I justly wonder how it is protracted to such a length. What friend,

Digitized by Google

what enjoyment had we ever in this world, from which no sorrow, nay, many sorrows have not sprung up to us? And if the best comforts bring forth sorrows, what do the worst things we meet with here bring forth? I suppose there are many thousands of God's people this day in the world, that have as much reason to assume the same new name, that Naomi did, and say, call me *Marah*. Look, as day and night divide all time betwixt them; so do our comforts and our sorrows, only with this difference, that our nights of sorrow, like winter nights, are long, cold and dark; and our days of comfort short, and frequently overcast.

But when we put off these bodies, we put off our mourning garments with them, and shall never sorrow any more: Thenceforth God wipes away all tears from his peoples eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. And that is not all, but they enter in into their Master's joy, even fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. Groans are turned into triumphs, and sighs, and tears, into joyful acclamations and songs of praise. Oh that we were once made throughly sensible of the advantages that come by this exchange!

3. From entangling temptations into everlasting freedom. It is this body, and the interests, and concerns of it, upon which Satan raises most of his batteries against our souls: It is our flesh that causeth our souls to sin; and whilst the soul dwells in the body, it is within Satan's reach to tempt, and defile, and trouble it. Oh what grievous things do the best souls endure, and suffer on this account!

Temptations are of two sorts; ordinary and mediate, by Satan's exciting and managing our corruptions, by presenting objects to them; or extraordinary and immediate, like fiery darts shot immediately out of hell into the soul, which puts it all into a flame and combustion: Of the former you read in James i. 14, the latter, Eph. vi. 16. and upon the account of the one and the other, the people of God are weary of their lives. Think what a grief it must be to a soul, that loves God, to feel in itself such things as militate against, and wound the name and honour of God, which is, and ought to be dearer to it than its life.

But by the door of death every gracious soul makes its escape from the tempting power of Satan: He can no more touch or affect the soul with any temptation, than we can batter the body of the sun with snow-balls: For as Satan can have no access to that place of blessedness, where the souls of the saints are; so if he could, he can find nothing in them to fasten a temptation upon. The schoolmen give this as the reason why the saints

Digitized by Google

in heaven are impeccable, because all their thoughts and affections are everlastingly fixed in, and employed about the blessed God, whose face they continually behold in glory.

4. From distressing persecutions, into full and perfect rest. As death sets us free from the power of Satan, so from the reach of all persecutors: "There the wicked cease from trou-"bling, and there the weary are at rest," as it is in Job iii. 17. The price of one Ahab, who had sold himself to work wickedness, was a stock sufficient to purchase many years trouble to all Israel, 1 Kings xviii. 17. "Wicked men are as the unquiet trou-"bled sea which cannot rest," Isa. lvii. 20. They cannot rest from troubling the saints, till they cease to be wicked or to live: When God puts out the candle of their lives, they are silent in darkness, 1 Sam. ii. 9. And when God puts out the candle of our life, we are at rest, though they rage never so much in this world. Death is the saints *quietus est*, their full and final discharge from persecuting enemies. When we are dying, we may say, as Psal. ix. 6. "O thou enemy, destructions are come "to a perpetual end."

God may put an end to these persecutions before death, and such a time, according to promise, is to be expected, "when our "officers shall be peace, and our exactors righteousness," Isa. lx. 17. but if the accomplishment of the promise be reserved for ages to come, and we must spend our days under the oppression of the wicked; yet this is our comfort, we know when we shall be far enough out of their reach.

5. From pinching wants, to universal supplies. This is the day in which the Lord abundantly satisfies the desires, and supplies the needs of all his people. There are two sorts of wants upon the people of God: *spiritual* and *temporal*.

Spiritual wants are the just complaints of all gracious souls. You read, 1 Thess. iii. 10. of that which is lacking in the faith of the saints: There are none but find many things lacking to the perfection of every grace: our knowledge of God wants clearness, and efficacy; our love to God fervor, and constancy; our faith wants strength, and stability: Darkness mixes itself with our knoweldge, deadness with our love, unbelief with the purest acts of faith. Go where you will, you shall find God's people every where complaining of their spiritual wants: one of a dark head, another of a dead heart, another of a treacherous memory. Thus they are loading one another with their complaints.

Temporal outward wants pinch hard also upon many of God's people: The greatest number of them consist of the poor of this

Digitized by Google

world, James ii. 5. Those whose soul's are discharged and acquitted by God, whose debts are paid by Jesus Christ, may yet be intangled in a brake of cares and troubles in the world, and not know which way to turn themselves in their streights and difficulties. But by death the saints pass from all their wants, inward and outward, to a state of complete satisfaction, where nothing is lacking: From that day all their spiritual wants are supplied; for they are now arrived to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, to a perfect man," Eph. iv. 13. Now "that which is perfect is come, and all that was in part is "done away, 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

And for outward wants, they shall feel them no more: For putting off the body, we must needs put off all cares and concerns about it. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, "God shall destroy both it and them," 1 Cor. vi. 13.

6. From distracting fears, into the highest security and rest of thoughts for evermore. The fears of God's people are either about their souls, or about their bodies; the fears they have about their souls are inexpressible. Two things especially exercise their fears about their soul. (1.) Whether they be really united to Christ. (2.) Whether they shall be able to continue and persevere in the ways of Christ to the end? they are afraid of their sincerity and of their stability: And these fears accompany many of God's people from their regeneration to their dissolution. O what would they not give, what would they not do, yea, what would they not endure to get full satisfaction in those things! Every working of corruption, every discovery made by temptation, puts them into a fright, and makes them question all that ever was wrought in them.

And, as their fears are great about the inward man, so also about the outward man; especially when such bloody preparations seem to be making by the enemies that have acted such, and so many bloody tragedies already in the world.

But at death they enter into a perfect peace and security, Isa. lvii. 2. No wind of fear shall ever ruffle and disturb their souls, and put them into a storm any more.

7. From deluding shadows into substantial good. This world is the world of shadows, and delusive appearances. Here we are imposed upon, and baffled by empty and deceitful vanities: All we have here is little else but a dream; at death the soul awakes out of its dream, and finds itself in the world of realities, where it feeds upon substantial good to satisfaction, Psal. xvii. 15.

Now the advantages accruing to the soul by death, being so

Digitized by Google

great and many, tho' the medium be harsh and ungrateful in itself, yet there is all the reason in the world we should covet it, for the benefits that come by it.

Argum. 5. The foretastes we have had of heaven already in the body, should make all the saints long to be unbodied for the full and perfect fruition of that joy, seeing it cannot be fully and perfectly enjoyed by the soul, till it hath put off the body by death.

That there are prelibations, first-fruits, and earnests of future glory given at certain seasons to believers, in this life, is put beyond all doubting, not only by scripture-testimonies, but frequent experiences of God's people. I speak not only with the scriptures, but with the clear experience of many saints, when I say, here are to be felt and tasted, even here in the body, the earnests of our inheritance, Eph. i. 14. "The first-fruits "of the spirit," Rom. viii. 23. "The sealing of the spirit," Eph. i. 13. "The very Joy of the Lord," 1 Pet. i. 8. of the same kind, tho' in a less degree with that of the glorified.

That the fulness of this joy cannot be in us whilst we tabernacle in bodies of flesh, is as plain. When Moses desired a sight of that face which the spirits of just men made perfect do continually behold and adore, the answer was, "No man can "see my face and live," Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20. *q. d.* Moses, thou askest a great thing, and understandest not how unable thou art to support that which thou desirest: should I shew thee my glory in this compounded state thou now art in, it would confound thee and swallow thee up. Nature, as now constituted, cannot support such a weight of glory: A ray, a glimpse of this light overpowers man, and breaks such a clay vessel to pieces: which is the reason why the resurrection must interveen betwixt this state, and that of the body's glorification.

And it is not to be doubted, but one main end and reason why these foretastes of heaven are given us in the body, is to embolden the soul to venture thro' death itself for the full enjoyment of those delights and pleasures. They are like the grapes of Eshcol to the faint-hearted Israelites, or the sweet wines of Italy to the Gauls, which, once tasted, made them restless till they had conquered that good country where they grew. Rom. viii. 23. "We which have the first-fruits of "the Spirit, even we ourselves do groan within ourselves, "waiting for the adoption, *viz.* the redemption of our bo-"dies."

Well then, reflect seriously upon these sweet tastes that you

Digitized by Google

have had of God, and his love, in your sincere and secret addresses to him, and converses with him. What a holy forgetfulness of all things in this world hath it wrought! How insipid and tasteless hath it rendered the sweetest creature-enjoyments! What willingness to be dissolved for a more full fruition of it! God this way brings heaven nigh to your souls, out of design to overcome your reluctancies at death, through which you must pass to the enjoyment of it. And after all those sights and tastes, both of the truth and goodness of that state, shall we still reluctate, and hang back, as if we had never tasted how good the Lord is! O you may justly question, whether you ever had a real taste of Jesus Christ, if that taste do not kindle coals of fire in your bosoms, I mean, ardent longings to be with him, and to be satiated with his love.

If you have been privileged with a taste of that hidden Manna, with the sight of things invisible, with joys unspeakable, and full of glory, and yet are loath to be gone to the fountain whence all this flows; certainly you herein both cross the design of the Spirit in giving them, and cast a vile disgrace and reproach upon the blessed God, as thinking there is more bitterness in death, than there is sweetness in his presence. Yea, it argues the strength of that unbelief which still remains in your hearts, that after so many tastes and trials as you have had, you still remain doubtful and hesitating about the certainty and reality of things invisible.

O what ado hath God with his froward and peevish children! If he had only revealed the future state to us in his word, as the pure object of faith, and required us to die upon the mere credit of his promise, without such pawns, pledges, and earnests as these are; Were there not reason enough for it? But after such, and so many wonderful and amazing condescensions, wherein he doth as it were say, Soul, if yet thou doubtest, I will bring heaven to thee, thou shalt have it in thy hand, thy eyes shall see it, thy hands shall handle it, thy mouth shall tasted it; How inexcusable is our reluctancy?

Argum. 6. *It should greatly fortify the people of God, against the fears of dissolution, to consider that death can neither destroy the being of their souls by annihilation, nor the hopes and expectations they have of blessedness, by disappointment and frustration,* Prov. xiv. 32. "The righteous hath hope in his death."

Though all earthly things fail at death (upon which account dying is expressed by failing, Luke xvi. 19.) yet neither the soul, nor the well-grounded hopes can fail. The anchor of a believer's hope is firm and sure, Heb. vi. 18. It will come home

Digitized by Google

in the greatest storm that can beat upon the soul. For, (1.) God hath foreknown and chosen them to salvation before the world was, 1 Pet. i. 2. "And this foundation of God standeth "sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. His decrees are as firm as mountains of brass, Zech. vi. 1. (2.) God hath justified their persons, and therein destroyed the power of death over them, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. "O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? "The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law." If all the hurtful power of death lies in sin, and all the destructive power of sin rises from the law; then neither death, nor sin, have any power to destroy the believer, in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, Rom. viii. 4. namely, by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to them, in respect of which they are as righteous, as if in their own persons they had perfectly obeyed all its commands, or suffered all its penalties. Thus death loseth its sting, its curse and killing power over the souls of all that are in Christ. (3.) God hath sanctified their natures, which sanctification is not only a sure evidence of their election and justification, 2 Thess. i. 5, 6. Rom. viii. 1. but a sure pledge of their glorification also, 2 Cor. v. 4, 5. Yea, (4.) He hath made a sure, and an everlasting covenant with believers; and among other gracious privileges thereby conferred upon them, death is found in the inventory, 1 Cor. xiii. 21. *Death is yours;* to die is gain to them: It destroys their enemies, and the distance that is betwixt Christ and them. (5.) He hath sealed them to his glory by the holy Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. So that their hopes are too firmly built to be destroyed by death; and if it cannot destroy their souls, nor overthrow their hopes, they need not fear all that it can do besides.

Argum. 7. *It may greatly encourage and embolden the people of God to die, considering that though at death they take the last sight and view of all that is dear to them on earth; yet then they are admitted to the first immediate sight and blessed vision of God, which will be their happiness to all eternity.*

When Hezekiah was upon his supposed death-bed, he complained, Isa. xxxviii. 11. "I shall see man no more, with the "inhabitants of the world." We shall see thenceforth these corporeal people no more. We shall see our habitations and dwelling-places no more, Job vii. 9. 10, 11. We shall see our children and dear relations no more. Job xiv. 21. His sons come "to honour, and he knoweth it not." These things make death terrible to men; but that which cures all this trouble is, that

Digitized by Google

we shall neither need, nor desire them, being thenceforth admitto the beatifical vision of the blessed God himself.

It is the expectation and hope of this, which comforteth the souls of the righteous here, Psal. xvii. 15. "When I awake, I "shall behold thy face in righteousness." Those weak and dim representations made by faith, at a distance, are the very joy and rejoicing of a believer's soul now, 1 Pet. i. 7, 8. but how sweet and transporting soever these visions of faith be, they are not worthy to be named in comparison with the immediate and beatifical vision, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. This is the very sum of a believer's blessedness: And what it is we cannot comprehend in this imperfect state; only, in general, we may gather these conclusions about it, from the account given of it in the scriptures.

1. That it will not be such a sight of God as we now have by the mediation of faith, but a direct, immediate, and intuitive vision of God; (* 1 John iii. 2. "We shall see him as he is." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "Then face to face,") which far transcends the vision of faith, in clearness and in comfort. This seems to import no less than the very sight of the divine Essence, that which Moses desired on earth to see, but could not, Exod. xxxiii. 20. nor can be seen by any man dwelling in a body, 1 Tim. vi. 16. nor by unbodied souls comprehensively: so God only sees himself. Our eyes see the sun which they cannot comprehend, yet truly apprehend. God will then be known in his essence, and in the glory of all his attributes. The sight of the attributes of God gives the occasion and matter of those ascriptions of praise and glory to him, which is the proper employment of glorified souls, Rev. iv. 11. and ver. 12, 13, which is the proper employment of angels, Isa. vi. 3. Oh how different is this from what we now have through faith, duties, and ordinances! See the difference betwixt knowledge by reports, and immediate sight, in that example of the *queen of the south*, 1 Kings x. 10. the former only excited her desires, the latter transported and overcame her very soul.

Some may think such a vision of God to exceed the abilities of nature, and capacities of any creature. But as a learned † man rightly observes, if the *Divine Nature* be capable of union with a creature, as it is evident in the person of Christ, it is also

* The light of glory is an actual illumination, *i. e.* a supernatural influx of God, elevating the understanding to a sight of the divine essence. *Smissing Tracter. 2. Dis. 6. N. 33.*

† Norton's Orthodox, Evang. p. 327.

Digitized by Google

capable of being the object of vision to the creature. Beside, we must know the light of glory hath the same respect to this blessed vision, that assisting grace hath to the acts of faith and obedience performed here on earth. It is a comforting, soul-strengthening light, not to dazzle and overpower, but to comfort, strengthen, and clear the eye of the creature's understanding. Rev. ii. 28. "I will give him the morning-star," *lumen confortans;* and Isa. xxxvi. 9. "In thy light we shall see light."

2. It will be a satisfying sight, Psal. xvii. 15. so perfectly quieting, and giving rest to the soul in all its powers, that they neither can proceed, nor desire to proceed any farther. The understanding can know no more, the will can will no more; the affections of joy, delight, and love are at full rest and quiet in their proper centre. For all good is in the chiefest good eminently; as all the light of the candles in the world is in the sun, and all the rivers in the world in the sea. That which makes the understanding, will, and affections move farther, as being restless, and unsatisfied in all discoveries and enjoyments here, is the limited and imperfect nature of things we now converse with; as if you bring a great ship that draws much water, into a narrow, and shallow river, she can neither sail nor swim, but is presently aground: But let that ship have sea-room enough, then she can turn and sail before the wind, because there is depth of water, and room enough. So it is here; all that delighted, but could never satisfy you in the creature, is eminently in God; and what was imperfectly in them, is perfectly to be enjoyed in him, 1 Cor. xv. 28. "God shall be all "in all;" the comforts you had here were but drop by drop, inflaming, not satisfying the appetite of the soul: But then "the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed "them, and lead them unto fountains of living water," Rev. vii. 17. The object fills the faculties.

3. It will be an appropriating vision of God; you shall see him as your own God, and proper portion; else it could never be a satisfying vision, Job xix. 27. "Whom I shall see for my-"self!" Not look on him as another's God, but as my God and portion for ever. Balaam saw Christ by a spirit of prophecy; but he had no comfort, because no interest in him, Numb. xxiv. 17. The wicked shall see him, but without joy, yea, with weeping eyes, and gnashing of teeth, because they cannot see him as their Lord, Luke xiii. 28. 'Tis but a poor comfort to starving beggars to stand quivering and famishing in the streets in a cold dark night, and see the lights in the bridegroom's

Digitized by Google

houſe, the noble diſhes ſerved in, and to hear the muſic and mirth of the gueſts that feaſt within. Here it will be as clear that he is *our God*, as that he is *God*. Aſſurance is that which many ſouls have deſired, prayed, and panted for, but cannot attain. There be many rubs and ſtumbling-blocks in the way to that ſweet enjoyment; but here we find what we have been ſo long ſeeking: There be no doubts, ſcruples, objections, puzzling caſes, to exerciſe your own, or others thoughts. But as theſe did ariſe from one of theſe grounds, *viz.* the working of corruption, the efficacy of temptation, or divine withdrawments, and the hidings of God's face: So all theſe being removed perfectly and for ever in that ſtate, the heavens muſt needs be clear, and not a cloud of doubt or fear to be ſeen for ever.

4. It will be a deeply affecting ſight; your eyes will now ſo affect your hearts, as they were never affected before. The firſt view of God will ſnatch away your hearts to him, as a greater flame doth the leſs. Love will not now diſtil from the heart, as waters from a cold ſtill, but guſh out as from a ſluice or floodgate pulled up. The ſoul will not move after God ſo deadly and ſlowly as it doth now, but be as the chariots of Aminadab, Cant. vi. 12. We may ſay of the frames of our hearts there, compared with what they are here, as it is ſaid, Deut. xii. 8, 9. "You ſhall not love, *or delight in*, God, as you "do this day." If the perfection of that ſtate would admit ſhame or ſorrow, how ſhould we bluſh and mourn in heaven, to think how cold our love, and how low our delights in God were on earth! 1 John iv. 16. "God is love; and he that "dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." Look, as iron put into the fire becomes all fiery, ſo the ſoul dwelling in the God of love, becomes all love, all delight, all joy. Oh what tranſports muſt that ſoul feel, that abides under the line of love! feels the perpendicular beams of electing, creating, redeeming, preſerving love, beating powerfully upon it, and melting it into love! See ſome of their tranſports, Rev. v. 13, 14.

5. It will be an *everlaſting viſion of God*, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. "So ſhall we be ever with the Lord," [ever with the Lord.] Who can find words to open the deep ſenſe of theſe few words! *Vacabimus et videbimus, videbimus et amabimus, amabimus et laudabimus in fine fine fine*, ſaith bleſſed Auſtin. This is the everlaſting ſabbath, which hath no night, Rev. xxii. 4, 5. The eternal happineſs purchaſed for the ſaints by the invaluable blood of Chriſt. If one hour's enjoyment of God, in the way

Digitized by Google

of faith, be so sweet, and no price can be put upon it, nothing on earth taken in exchange for it; what must a whole eternity, in the immediate and full visions of that blessed face in heaven, be!

Well then, if such sights as these, immediately succeed the sight you have on earth, either by sense of things natural, or by reason of things intellectual, or by faith of things spiritual, who that believes the truth, and expects the fulfilling of such promises as these, would not be willing to have his eyes closed by death, as soon as God shall please? I have read of a holy man that had sweet communion with God in prayer, who in the close of his duty cried out, *claudimini, oculi mei, claudimini*, &c. *Be shut, O my eyes, be shut; you shall never see any thing on earth like that I have now seen.* Ah! little do the friends of dead believers think what visions of God, what ravishing sights of Christ, the souls of their friends have, when they are closing their eyes with tears.

Argum. 8. *The consideration of the evil days that are to come, should make the people of God willing to accept of an hiding place in the grave, as a special favour from God.*

It is accounted an act of favour by God, Isa. lvii. 1, 2. to be taken away from the *evil to come*. There are two kinds of evils to come, the evil of *sin*, and the evil of *sufferings*. Sins to come are terrible to gracious hearts, when temptations shall be at their height, and strength. Oh, what warping and shrinking, what dissembling, yea, downright denying the known truths and ways of God, may you see every-where? Many consciences will then be wounded and wasted? Many scandals and rocks of offence will be rolled into the way of godliness: Christ will be exposed, and put to open shame. Should we only be spectators of such tragedies as these, it were enough to overwhelm a gracious and tender heart. But what upright heart is there without fears and jealousies of being brought under the guilt of these evils in itself, as well as the shame and grief for them in others? Oh! it were a thousand times better for you to die in the purity and integrity of your consciences, than to protract a miserable life without them. Oh! think what a world it is you are like to leave behind you, in respect of that to come!

And as there are many evils of sin to come, so there are many evils of sufferings coming on: "The days of visitation are coming on, the days of recompence are come, and Israel shall "know it," Hos. ix. 7. All the sufferings you have yet met with, have been in books and histories: You never saw the martyrdom of the saints, but in the pictures and stories; but you will find it quite another thing to be the *subjects* of these cruelties, than

Digitized by Google

to be the mere *readers* or *relators* of them. 'Tis one thing to see the painted lion on a sign-post, and another to meet the living lion roaring upon you. Ah! little do we imagine how the hearts of men are convulsed, what fears, what faintings invade their spirits, when they are to meet the King of terrors, in the frightful formalities of a violent death.

The consideration of these things will discover to you the reason of that strange wish of Job, chap. xiv. 13. "Oh that thou "wouldst hide me in the grave; that thou wouldst keep me in "secret till thy wrath be past!" And it deserves a serious thought, that when the holy Ghost had, in Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11, 12. described the miserable plight of those poor souls, who being overcome by their own fears and the love of this world, should plunge themselves first into a deep guilt, by compliance with Antichrist, and receiving his mark; then into a hell upon earth, the remorse and horror of their own consciences, which gives them no rest, day nor night; he immediately subjoins, ver. 13. "Blessed are the "dead that die in the Lord; yea, from henceforth, saith the "Spirit," *&c.* Oh! it is a special blessing and favour to be hid out of the way *of those temptations and torments, in a seasonable and quiet grave.*

Argum. 9. *Your fixed aversation and unwillingness to die, will provoke God to imbitter your lives with much more afflictions than you have yet felt, or would feel, if your hearts were more mortified and weaned in this point.*

You cannot think of your own deaths with pleasure, no nor yet with patience. Well, take heed, lest this draw down such trouble upon you, as shall make you at last to say with Job, chap. x. 1. "My soul is weary of my life;" an expression much like that, 2 Sam. i. 9. "Anguish is come upon me, because my life "is whole in me. My soul is hardened, or become cruel against my life, as the Chaldee renders it.

There is a twofold weariness of life; one from an excellency of spirit, a noble principle, the ardent love of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 23. "I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." Another from the mere pressures, of affliction and anguish of spirit, under heavy and successive strokes from the hand of God and men. Is it not more excellent and desirable to groan for death under a pressure of love to Christ, than of affliction from Christ?

I am convinced that very many of our afflictions come upon this score and account, to make us willing to die.

Is it not sad that God is forced to bring death upon all our comfortable and desirable things in this world, before he can gain our consents to be gone? Why will you put God upon

Digitized by Google

such work as this? Why cannot he have your hearts at a cheaper rate? If you could die, many of your comforts, for ought I know, might live. Had Joab come to Absalom when he sent for him the first or second time, Absalom had never set his field of barley on fire, 2 Sam. xiv. 30. And were you more obedient to the will of God in this manner, it is likely he would not consume your health, and estates, and relations, with such heavy strokes, as he hath done, and will yet farther do except your wills be more compliant.

Alas! to cut off your comforts one after another, and make you live a groaning life, the Lord hath no pleasure in it; but he had rather you should lose these things, than that he should lose your hearts on earth, or company in heaven: *Impatiens aegretus crudelem facit medicum.*

Argum. 10. *The decree of death cannot be reversed, nor is there any other ordinary passage for the soul into glory, but through the gates of death.* Heb. ix. 27 "It is appointed for "all men once to die, but after that the judgment."

There is but one way to pass out of the obscure suffocating life in the womb, into the more free and nobler life in the world, *viz.* through the agonies of birth: and there is ordinarily but one way to pass from this sinning, groaning life we live in this world, to the enjoyment of God and the glory above, *viz.* through the agonies of death. You must cast off this mean, this vile body, before you can be happy. Heaven cannot come down to you, you cannot see God and live, Exod. xxxiii. 20. It would certainly confound and break you to pieces, like an earthen pitcher, should God but ray forth his glory upon you in the state you now are; and it is sure you cannot expect the extraordinary favour of such a translation as Enoch had, Heb. xi. 5. or as those believers shall have, that shall be found alive at Christ's coming, 1 Thess. iv. 17. You must go the common road that all the saints go; but tho' you cannot avoid, you must sweeten it. God will not reverse his decree, but you may, and ought to arm yourselves against the fears of it. Ahasuerus would not recal the proclamation he had emitted against the Jews, but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themselves against their enemies. It is much so here, the sentence cannot be revoked; but yet God gives you leave, yea, he commands you to arm yourselves against death, and defy it, and trample it under the feet of faith.

Arg. 11. *When you find your hearts reluctate at the thoughts of leaving the body, and the comforts of this world, then consider*

Digitized by Google

how willingly and chearfully Jesus Christ left heaven, and the Bosom of his Father, to come down to this world for your sakes, Prov. viii. 30, 31, Psal. xl. 7. *Lo, I come,* &c.

O compare the frames of your hearts with his, in this point, and shame yourselves out of so unbecoming a temper of spirit.

(1.) He left heaven, and all the delights and glory of it, to come down to this world to be abased and humbled to the lowest; you leave this world of sin and misery to ascend to heaven, to be exalted to the highest. He came hither to be impoverished, you go thither to be enriched, 2 Cor. viii. 9. yet he came willingly, and we go grudgingly.

(2.) He came from heaven to earth, to be made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. we go from earth to heaven, to be fully and everlastingly delivered from sin; yet he came more willingly to bear our sins, than we go to be delivered from them.

(3.) He came to take a body of flesh, to suffer and die in, Heb. ii. 14. you leave your bodies that you may never suffer in, or by them any more.

(4.) As his incarnation was a deep abasement, so his death was the most bitter death that ever was tasted by any from the beginning, or ever shall be to the end of the world; and yet how obediently doth he submit to both at the Father's call, Luke xii. 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how "am I straitned till it be accomplished!" Ah Christian, your death cannot have the ten thousandth part of that bitterness in it that Christ's had. I remember one of the martyrs being asked, why his heart was so light at death? returned this answer, because Christ's heart was so heavy at his death. O there is a vast difference betwixt the one and the other; the wrath of God, and curse of the law were in his death, Gal. iii. 13. but there is neither wrath nor curse in their death who die in the Lord, Rom. viii. 1.

God forsook him when he hanged upon the tree in the agonies of death, Mat. xxvii. 46. "My God, my God, why hast "thou forsaken me?" But you shall not be forsaken; He will make all your bed in sickness, Psal. xli. 3. He will never leave you nor forsake you, Heb. xiii. 5.

Yet he regretted not, but went as a sheep or lamb, Isa. liii. 7. O reason yourselves out of this reluctancy at death, by this great example and pattern of obedience.

Arg. 12. Lastly, *Let no Christian be affrighted at death, considering that the death of Christ is the death of death, and hath utterly disarmed it of all its destructive power.*

Digitized by Google

If you tremble when you look upon death, yet you cannot but triumph when you look believingly upon Christ.

For, (1.) Christ died (O believer) for thy sins, Rom. iv. 25. his death was an expiatory sacrifice for all thy guilt, Gal. iii. 13. so that thou shalt not die in thy sins: The pangs of death may, and must be on thy outward man, but the guilt of sin, and the condemnation of God shall not be upon thy inner man.

(2.) The death of Christ, in thy room, hath utterly destroyed the power of death, which once was in the hand of Satan, Heb. ii. 24. Col. ii. 14, 15. his power was not authoritative, but executive: not as the power of a king, but of a sheriff; which is none at all when a pardon is produced.

(3.) Christ hath assured us, that his victory over death shall be complete in our persons. It is already a complete personal victory, in respect of himself, Rom. vi. 9. he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. It's an incomplete victory already as to our persons. It can dissolve the union of our souls and bodies, but the union betwixt Christ and our souls it can never dissolve, Rom. viii. 38, 39. and as for the power it still retains over our dust, that also shall be destroyed at the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, compared with ver. 54. 55. 56. 57. so that there is no cause for any soul in Christ to tremble at the thought of a separation from the body, but rather to embrace it as a privilege; *death is ours.*

O that these arguments might prevail! O that they might at last win the consent of our hearts to go along with death, which is the messenger sent by God to bring us home to our Father's house!

But I doubt, when all is said, we are where we were; all this suffices not to overcome the regrets and reluctancies of nature; still the matter sticks in our minds, and we cannot conquer our disinclined wills in this matter. What is the matter? Where lie the rubs and hindrances? O that God would remove them at last!

Objection 1. *This is a common plea with many, I am not ready and fit to die: were I ready, I should be willing to be gone.*

Solution (1.) How long soever you live in the body, there will be somewhat still out of order, something still to do; for you must be in a state of imperfection while you remain here, and according to this plea, you will never be willing to die. (2.) Your willingness to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, is one special part of your fitness for death: and till you attain it in some good measure, you are not so fit to die as you should be. (3.) If you be in Christ, you have a fundamental fitness

Digitized by Google

for death, though you may want some circumstantial preparatives. And as to all that is wanting in your sanctification or obedience now, it will be compleated in a moment upon your dissolution.

Object. 2. *Others plead, the desire they have to live, is in order to God's farther service by them in this world. Oh, say they, it was David's happiness to die, when he had served his generation according to the will of God;* Acts xiii. 36. *If we had done so too, we should say with Simeon,* "Now lettest "thou thy servant depart in peace."

Sol. (1.) God needs not your hands to carry on his service in the world: he can do it by other hands when you are gone. Many of greater gifts and graces than you, are daily laid in the grave, to teach you, God needs no man's help to carry on his work.

(2.) If the service of God be so dear to you, there is higher and more excellent service for you in heaven, than any you ever were, or can be employed in here on earth. Oh! why do not you long to be amidst the company of angels and spirits made perfect in the temple-service in heaven?

Obj. 3. *O but my relations in the world lie near my heart, what will become of them when I am gone?*

Sol. (1.) It is pity they should lie nearer your heart than Jesus Christ: if they do, you have little reason to desire death indeed.

(2.) Who took care of you, when death snatched your dear relations from you, who possibly felt the same workings of heart that you now do? Did you not experience the truth of that word, Psal. xxvii. 10. "When father and mother forsake me, then the "Lord taketh me up?" And if you be in the covenant, God hath prevented this plea with his promise, Jer. xlix. 11. "Leave "thy fatherless children to me, I will keep them alive; and let "their widows trust in me."

Obj. 4. *But I desire to live to see the felicity of* Zion *before I go hence, and the answer of the many prayers I have sown for it; I am loath to leave the people of God in so sad a condition.*

Sol. The publicness of thy spirit, and love to Zion, is doubtless pleasing to God; but it is better for you to be in heaven one day, than to live over again all the days you have lived on earth in the best times that ever the church of God enjoyed in this world: the promises shall be accomplished, tho' you may not live to see their accomplishment; die you in the faith of it, as Joseph did; Gen. l. 24

But, alas! the matter doth not stick here: this is not the

Digitized by Google

main hindrance. I will tell you where I think it lies: (1.) In the hesitancy and staggering of our faith about the certainty and reality of things invisible. (2.) In some special guilt upon the conscience, which discourages us. (3.) In a negligent and careless course of life, which is not ordinarily blessed with much evidence or comfort. (4.) In the deep engagements of our hearts to earthly things: they could not be so cold to Christ, if they were not over-heated with other things. Till these distempers be cured, no arguments can prosper that are spent to this end. The Lord dissolve all those ties betwixt us and this world, which hinder our consent and willingness to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

And now we have had a glance and glimmering light, a faint umbrage of the state of the separated souls of the just in heaven: it remains that I shew you somewhat of the state and case of the damned souls in hell. A dreadful representation it is; but it is necessary we hear of hell, that we may not feel it.

* *

1 PET. iii. 19. *By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*

IN the former discourse we have had a just view of heaven, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, the inhabitants of that blessed region of light and glory.

In this scripture we have the contrary glass, representing the unspeakable misery of those souls or spirits which are separated by death from their bodies for a time, and by sin from God for ever; arrested by the law, and secured in the prison of hell, unto the judgment of the great day.

A sermon of hell may keep some souls out of hell, and a sermon of heaven may be the means to help others to heaven: the desire of my heart is, that the conversations of all those who shall read these discourses of heaven and hell, might look more like a diligent flight from the one, and pursuit of the other.

The scope of the context is a persuasive to patience, upon a prospect of manifold tribulations coming upon the Christian churches, strongly enforced by Christ's example, who both in his own person, v. 18. and by his spirit in his servants, v. 19. exercised wonderful patience and long-suffering as a pattern to his people.

This 19 verse gives us an account of his long-suffering towards that disobedient and immorigerous generation of sinners,

Digitized by Google

on whom he waited an hundred and twenty years in the ministry of Noah.

There are difficulties in the text. *Estius reckons on less than ten expositions of it, and saith, "It is a very difficult scripture in "the judgment of almost all interpreters;" but yet I must say, those difficulties are rather brought to it, than found in it. It is a text which hath been rackt and tortured by Popish expositors, to make it speak Christ's local descent into hell, and to confess their doctrine of *purgatory*; things which it knew not.

But, if we will take its genuine sense, it only relates the sin and misery of those contumacious persons, on whom the spirit of God waited so long in the ministry of Noah; giving an account of,

1. Their sin on earth.
2. Their punishment in hell.

1. Their sin on earth, which is both specified and aggravated. (1.) Specified; namely their disobedience. They were sometimes disobedient and unpersuadable; neither precepts nor examples could bring them to repentance. (2.) This their disobedience is aggravated by the expence of God's patience upon them for the space of an hundred and twenty years, not only forbearing them so long, but striving with them, as Moses expresseth it; or waiting on them, as the apostle, here: but all to no purpose; they were obstinate, stubborn, and unpersuadable to the very last.

2. Behold, therefore, in the next place, the dreadful, but most just, and equal punishment of these sinners in hell; they are called, *spirits in prison, i. e.* the souls now in hell †.

At that time when Peter wrote of them, they were not entire men, but *spirits*, in the proper sense, *i. e.* separated souls, bodiless, and lonely souls: whilst in the body, it is properly a soul; but when separated, a spirit according to scripture-language, and the strict notion of such a being.

These spirits, or souls, in the state of separation, are said to be in a *prison*, that is, in hell, as the word elsewhere notes, Rev. xx. 7. and Jude, ver. 6. Heaven and hell are the only receptacles of departed, or separated souls.

Thus you have, in a few words, the natural, and genuine sense of the place, and it is but wasting time to repeat, and refel the many false, and forced interpretations of this text, which corrupt minds, and mercenary pens, have perplexed, and darkened it

* Psal. xxxi. 6. Eccl. xii. 7. Acts vii. 59.

† *Locus hic omnium pene interpretum judicio difficillimus.* Estius.

Digitized by Google

withal: That which I level at, is comprised in this plain proposition.

Doct. *That the souls or spirits of all men who die in a state of unbelief and disobedience, are immediately committed to the prison of hell, there to suffer the wrath of God due to their sins.*

Hell is shadowed forth to us, in scripture, by divers metaphors; "for we cannot conceive spiritual things, unless they are so "cloathed and shadowed out unto us †." Augustine gives this reason for the frequent use of metaphors and allegories, in scripture, because they are so much proportioned to our senses, with which our senses have contracted an intimacy and familiarity; and therefore God, to accomodate his truth to our capacities, doth as it were, this way embody it in earthly expressions, according to that celebrated observation of the Cabbalists, *Lumen supremum nunquam descendit sine indumento;* the pure, and supreme light never descends to us without a garment or covering. In the Old Testament, the place and state of damned souls, is set forth by metaphors taken from the most remarkable places, and exemplary acts of vengeance upon sinners in this world; as the overthrow of the giants by the flood, those prodigious sinners that fought against heaven, and were swept by the flood, into the place of torments. To this Solomon is conceived to allude, in Prov. xxi. 16. "The man that wanders out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead;" in the Hebrew it is, he shall remain with the *Rephaims*, or giants. These giants were the men that more especially provoked God to bring the flood upon the world; they are also noted as the first inhabitants of hell, therefore from them the place of torment takes its name, and the damned are said to remain in the place of giants.

Hell called the place of giants and why.

Sometimes hell is called Tophet, Isa. xxx. 33. This Tophet was in the valley of Hinnon, and was famous for divers things. There the children of Israel caused their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, or sacrificed to the devil, drowning their horrible shrieks and ejaculations with the noise of drums.

Hell called Tophet, and why.

In this valley also was the memorable slaughter of eighteen hundred thousand of the Assyrian camp, by an angel, in one night.

There, also, the Babylonians murdered the people of Jerusa-

† *Spiritualia capere non possumus, nisi adumbrata.*

Digitized by Google

lem, at the taking of the city, Jer. vii. 31, 32. So that Tophet was a mere shambles, the public chopping-block, on which the limbs of both young and old were quartered out, by thousands. It was filled with dead bodies, till there was no place for burial. By all which it appears, that no spot of ground in the world was so famous for the fires kindled in it to destroy men, for the doleful cries that ecchoed from it, or the innumerable multitudes that perished in it; for which reason it is made the emblem of hell. Sometimes it is called a "lake of fire burning with brimstone," Rev. xix. 20. denoting the most exquisite torment, by an intense and durable flame.

Hell a lake of fire.

And in the text, it is called a *prison*, where the spirits of ungodly men are both detained and punished. This notion of a prison gives us a lively representation of the miserable state of damned souls, and that especially in the following particulars.

A prison.

First, Prisoners are arrested, and seized by authority of law; it is the law which sends them thither, and keeps them there; the mittimus of a justice is but the instrument of the law, whereby they are deprived of liberty, and taken into custody. The law of God, which sinners have both violated and despised, at death takes hold of them, and arrests them. It is the law which claps up their spirits in prison, and in the name and authority of the great and terrible God, commits them to hell. All that are out of Christ, are under the curse and damning sentence of the law, which now comes to be executed on them, Gal. iii. 10.

Secondly, Prisoners are carried, or haled to prison, by force and constraint; natural force backs legal authority: the law is executed by rough and resolute bailiffs, who compel them to go, though never so much against their will; this also is the case of the wicked at death: Satan is God's bailiff, to hurry away the law-condemned souls to the infernal prison. The devil hath the power of death, Heb. ii. 14. as the executioner hath of the body of a condemned man.

Thirdly, Prisoners are chained and bolted in prison, to prevent their escape; so are damned spirits secured by the power of God, and chained by their own guilty and trembling consciences, in hell, unto the time of judgment, and the fulness of misery; not that they have no torment in the mean time: alas! were there no more but that fearful expectation of wrath and fiery indignation, spoken of by the apostle, Heb. x. 27. it were an inexpressible torment; but there is a farther degree of tor-

Digitized by Google

ment to be awarded them at the judgment of the great day, to which they are therefore kept, as in chains and prisons.

Fourthly, Prisons are dark and noisome places, not built for pleasure, as other houses are, but for punishment; so is hell. Jude, ver. 6. "Reserved in everlasting chains under darkness," as he there describes the place of torments, yea, *utter darkness*, Matth. viii. 12. extreme or perfect darkness. Philosophers tell us of the darkness of this world, *Non dantur puræ tenebræ*, that there is no pure or perfect darkness here, without some mixture of light; but there is not a glade of light, not a spark of hope or comfort shining into that prison.

Fifthly, Mournful sighs and groans are heard in prisons: Psal. xcvii. 11. Let the "sighing of the prisoners come before thee," saith the psalmist. But deeper sighs and emphatical groans are heard in hell, "There shall be weeping and wailing, and "gnashing of teeth," Matth. viii. 12. Those that could not groan under the sense of sin on earth, shall howl under anguish and desperation in hell.

Sixthly, There is a time when prisoners are brought out of the prison to be judged, and then return in a worse condition than before, to the place from whence they came. God also hath appointed a day for the solemn condemnation of those spirits in prison. The scriptures call it "the judgment of the "great day," Jude ver. 6. from the great business that is to be done therein, and the great and solemn assembly that shall then appear before God.

But I will insist no longer upon the display of the metaphor; my business is to give you a representation of the state and condition of damned souls in hell, and to assist your conceptions of them, and of their state.

It is a dreadful sight I am to give you this day; but how much better is it to see, than to feel that wrath? The treasures thereof shall shortly be broken up, and poured forth upon the spirits of men.

You had in the former discourse, a faint umbrage of the spirits of just men in glory; in this you will have an imperfect representation of the spirits of wicked men in hell: and look, as the former cannot be adequate and perfect, because that happiness surpasseth our knowledge; so neither can this be so, because the misery of the damned passeth our fear.

The case and state of a damned spirit will be best opened in these following propositions.

Proposition 1. *That the guilt of all sin gathers to, and settles*

Digitized by Google

in the conscience of every Christless sinner, and makes up a vast treasure of guilt in the course of his life in this world.

The high and awful power of conscience belonging to the understanding faculty in the soul of man, was spoken to before, as to its general nature, and that conscience certainly accompanies it, and is inseparable from it, was there shewed; I am here to consider it as the seat or centre of guilt, in all unregenerate and lost souls. For look, as the tides wash up, and leave the slime and filth upon the shore, even so all the corruption and sin that is in the other faculties of the soul, settle upon the conscience. "Their mind and conscience (saith the apostle) is defiled," Tit. i. 15. it is, as it were, the sink of a sinner's soul, into which all filth runs, and guilt settles.

The conscience of every believer is purged from its filthiness by the blood of Christ, Heb. ix. 14. his blood and his spirit purify it, and pacify it, whereby it becomes the region of light and peace; but all the guilt which hath been long contracting, through the life of an unbeliever, fixes itself deep and fast in his conscience; "It is written upon the tables of their hearts, as "with a pen of iron," Jer. xvii. 1. *i. e.* guilt is as a mark or character, fashioned or engraven in the very substance of the soul, as letters are cut into glass with a diamond.

Conscience is not only the principle *engagee*, obliged unto God as a judge, but the principal director and guide of the soul, in its courses and actions, and consequently, the guilt of all sin falls upon it, and rests in it. The soul is both the spring and fountain of all actions, that go outward from man, and the term or receptacle of all actions inward; but in both sorts of actions, going outward, and coming inward, conscience is the chief counsellor, guide, and director in all, and so the guilt which is contracted either way, must be upon its head. It is the bridle of the soul, to restrain it from sin; the eye of the soul, to direct its course; and therefore is principally chargeable with all the evils of life. Bodily members are but instruments, and the will itself, as high and noble a faculty or power as it is, moveth not, until the judgment cometh to a conclusion, and the debate be ended in the mind.

Now, in the whole course and compass of a sinner's life in this world, what treasures of guilt must needs be lodged in his conscience? What a magazine of sin and filth must be laid up there? It is said of a wicked man, Job xx. 11. "His bones are "full of the sins of his youth;" meaning his spirit, mind, or conscience, is as full of sin, as bones are of marrow; yea, the very sins of his youth are enough to fill them: and Rom. ii. 5.

Digitized by Google

they are said "to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath," which is only done by treasuring up guilt? for wrath and guilt are treasured up together in proportion to each other. Every day of his life vast sums have been cast into this treasury, and the patience of God waiteth till it be full, before he calls the sinner to an account and reckoning, Gen. xv. 16.

Prop. 2. *All the sin and guilt, contracted upon the souls and consciences of impenitent men in this world, accompanies and follows their departed souls to judgment, and there brings them under the dreadful condemnation of the great and terrible God, which cuts off all their hopes and comforts for ever.*

"If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins," John viii. 24. And Job xx. 11. "His bones are full of the sins "of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." No proposition lies clearer in scripture, or should ly with greater weight on the hearts of sinners: nothing but pardon can remove guilt; but without faith and repentance there never was, nor shall be a pardon, Acts x. 43. Rom. iii. 24, 25. Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Look, as the graces of believers, so the sins of unbelievers follow the soul whithersoever it goes: All their sins who die out of Christ, cry to them when they go hence, *We are thy works, and we will follow thee.* The acts of sin are transient, but the guilt and effects of it are permanent; and it is evident by this, that in the great day, their consciences, which are the books of records, wherein all their sins are registred, will be opened, and they shall be judged by them, and out of them, Rev. xx. 12.

Now, before that general judgment, every soul comes to its particular judgment, and that immediately after death: of this I apprehend the apostle to speak in Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed "for all men once to die, but after that the judgment." The soul is presently stated by this judgment in its everlasting and fixed condition. The soul of a wicked man appearing before God, in all its sin and guilt, and by him sentenced, immediately it gives up all its hope, Prov. xi. 7. "When a wicked man "dieth, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of the unjust "man perisheth." His strong hope * perisheth, as some read it, *i. e.* his strong delusion: for, alas, he took his own shadow for a bridge over the great waters, and is unexpectedly plunged into the gulph of eternal misery, as Matth. vii. 22.

This perishing, or cutting off of hope, is that which is called

* *Etiam spes valentissima, i. e.* Even the strongest hope.

Digitized by Google

in scripture *the death of the soul*, for so long the soul will live, as it hath any hope. The deferring of hope makes it sick, but the final cutting off of hope strikes it quite dead, *i. e.* dead as to all joy, comfort, or expectation of any for ever, which is that death which an immortal soul is capable to suffer; *The righteous hath hope in his death*; but every unregenerate man in the world breathes out his last hope in a few moments after his last breath, which strikes terror into the very centre of the soul, and is a death-wound to it.

Prop. 3. *The souls of the damned are exceeding large and capacious subjects of wrath and torment; and in their separate state their capacity is greatly enlarged, both by laying asleep all those affections whose exercise is relieving, and throughly awakening all those passions which are tormenting.*

The soul of man being by nature a spirit, an intelligent spirit, and, in its substantial faculties, assimilated to God, whose image it bears; it must, for that reason, be exquisitely sensible of all the impressions and touches of the wrath of God upon it. The spirit of man is a most tender, sensible, and apprehensive creature; the eye of the body is not so sensible of a touch, a nerve of the body is not so sensible when pricked, as the spirit of man is of the least touch of God's indignation upon it. "A "wounded spirit who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14. Other external wounds upon the body, inflicted either by man or God, are tolerable; but that which immediately touches the spirit of man, is insufferable: who can bear or endure it?

And as the spirit of man hath the most delicate and exquisite sense of misery; so it hath a vast capacity to receive, and let in the fulness of anguish and misery into it: it is a large vessel, called, Rom. ix. 22. "A vessel of wrath fitted to destruction." The large capacity of the soul is seen in this, that it is not in the power of all the creatures in the world to satisfy and fill it: it can drink up, as one speaks, all the rivers of created good, and its thirst not quenched by such a draught; but after all, it cries, Give, give. Nothing but an infinite God can quiet and satisfy its appetite and raging thirst.

And as it is capable and receptive of more good than is found in all the creatures, so it is capable of more misery and anguish than all the creatures can inflict upon it. Let all the elements, of men on earth, yea, all the devils and damned in hell, conspire and unite in a design to torment man; yet when they have done all, his spirit is capable of a farther degree of torment; a torment as much beyond it, as a rack is beyond a hard bed, or the sword in his bowels is beyond the scratch of a pin. The devils

Digitized by Google

indeed are the executioners and tormentors of the damned; but if that were all they were capable to suffer, the torment of the damned would be, comparatively, mild and gentle to what they are. Oh, the largeness of the understanding of man, what will it not take into its vast capacity!

But add to this, that the damned souls have all those affections laid in a deep and everlasting sleep, the exercises whereof would be relieving, by emptying their souls of any part of their misery; and all those passions throughly and everlastingly awakened, which increase their torments.

The affections of joy, delight and hope, are benumbed in them, and laid fast asleep, never to be awakened into act any more. Their hope, in scripture, is said to *perish*, *i. e.* it so perisheth, that, after death, it shall never exert another act to all eternity. The activity of any of those affections would be like a cooling gale, or refreshing spring, amidst their torments; but as Adrian lamented himself, *Nunquam jocos dabis*, Thou shalt never be merry more.

And as these affections are laid asleep, so their passions are rouzed, and thoroughly awakened to torment them; so awakened, as never to sleep any more. The souls of men are sometimes jogged and startled in this world, by the words or rods of God, but presently they sleep again, and forget all: but hereafter the eyes of their souls will be continually held waking, to behold and consider their misery; their understandings will be clear and most apprehensive; their thoughts fixed and determined; their consciences active and efficacious; and, by all this, their capacity to take in the fullest of their misery, enlarged to the uttermost.

Prop. 4. *The wrath, indignation, and revenge of God poured out, as the just reward of sin, upon the so capacious souls of the damned, is the principal part of their misery in hell.*

In the third proposition I shewed you, that the souls of the damned can hold more misery than all the creatures can inflict upon them. When the soul suffers from the hand of man, its sufferings are but either by way of sympathy with the body; or if immediately, yet it is but a light stroke the hand of a creature can give: But when it has to do with a sin-revenging God, and that immediately, this stroke cuts off the spirit of man, as 'tis expressed, Psal. lxxxviii. 16. The body is the cloathing of the soul. Most of the arrows shot at the soul in this world, do but stick in the cloaths (*i. e.*) reach the outward man: But in hell, the spirit of man is *the white* at which God himself shoots. All his envenomed arrows strike the soul, which is, after death, laid bare

Digitized by Google

and naked to be wounded by his hand. At death, the soul of every wicked man immediately falls into the hands of the living God; and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," as the apostle speaks, Heb. x. 31. Their punishment is "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his "power," 2 Thes. i. 9. They are not put over to their fellow-creatures to be punished, but God will do it himself, and glorify his power, as well as his justice, in their punishment. The wrath of God lies immediately upon their spirits, and this is the "fiery "indignation which devoureth the adversaries," Heb. x. 27. A fire that licks up the very spirit of man. Who knoweth the power of his anger! Psal. xc. 11. How insupportable it is, you may a little guess by that expression of the prophet Nahum, chap. i. 5, 6. "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and "the earth is burnt at his presence; yea, the world, and all "that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? "And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury "is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by "him."

And as if anger and wrath were not words of a sufficient edge and sharpness, it is called fiery indignation and vengeance, words denoting the most intense degree of divine wrath. For indeed his power is to be glorified in the destruction of his enemies, and therefore now he will do it to purpose. He takes them now into his own hands. No creature can come at the soul immediately, that is God's prerogative, and now he hath to do with it himself in fury, and revenge is poured out. "Can thy hands be "strong, or thy heart endure when I shall deal with thee?" Ezek. xxii. 14. Alas! the spirit quails and dies under it. This is the hell of hells.

What doleful cries and lamentings have we heard from God's dearest children, when but some few drops of his anger have been sprinkled upon their souls, here in this world! But, alas! there is no compare betwixt the anger, or fatherly discipline of God over the spirits of his children, and the indignation poured out from the beginning of revenges upon his enemies.

Prop. 5. *The separate spirit of a damned man becomes a tormentor to itself by the various and efficacious actings of its own conscience, which are a special part of its torment in the other world.*

Conscience, which should have been the sinners curb on earth, becomes the whip that must lash his soul in hell. Neither is there any faculty, or power belonging to the soul of man, so fit and able to do it as his own conscience. That which was the seat

Digitized by Google

and center of all guilt, now becomes the seat and center of all torments. The suspension of its tormenting power in this world is a mystery, and wonder to all that duly consider it. For certainly should the Lord let a sinner's conscience fly upon him with rage, in the midst of his sins and pleasures, it would put him into a hell upon earth, as we see in the doleful instances of Judas, Spira, &c. But he keeps a hand of restraint upon them, generally, in this life, and suffers them to sleep quietly by a grumbling or seared conscience, which couches by them as a sleepy lion, and lets them alone.

But no sooner is the Christless soul turned out of the body, and cast for eternity at the bar of God, but conscience is rouzed, and put into a rage never to be appeased any more. It now racks and tortures the miserable soul with its utmost efficacy and activity. The mere presages and forebodings of wrath, by the consciences of sinners in this world, have made them lie with a ghastly paleness in their faces, universal trembling in all their members, a cold sweating horror upon their panting bosoms, like men already in hell: But this, all this, is but as the sweating of the stones before the great rain falls. The activities of conscience (especially in hell) are various, vigorous, and dreadful to consider, such are its *recognitions*, *accusations*, *condemnations*, *upbraidings*, *shamings*, and *fearful expectations*.

1. The consciences of the damned will recognize, and bring back the sins commited in this world fresh to their mind: For what is conscience, but a register, or book of records, wherein every sin is ranked in its proper place and order! This act of conscience is fundamental to all its other acts; for it cannot accuse, condemn, upbraid, or shame us for that it hath lost out of its memory, and hath no sense of. *Son remember*, said Abraham to Dives, in the midst of his torments. This remembrance of sins past, mercies past, opportunities past, but especially of hope past and gone with them, never to be recovered any more, is like that fire not blown (of which Zophar speaks) which consumes him, or the glittering sword coming out of his gall, Job xx. 24. &c.

2. It chargeth and accuseth the damned soul; and its charges are home, positive, and self-evident charges: A thousand legal and unexceptionable witnesses cannot confirm any point more than one witness in a man's bosom can do, Rom. ii. 15. It convicts, and stops their mouths, leaving them without any excuse or apology. Just and righteous are the judgments of God upon thee, saith conscience: In all this ocean of misery, there is not

Digitized by Google

one drop of injury or wrong: The judgment of God is according to truth.

3. It condemns as well as chargeth and witnesseth, and that with a dreadful sentence; backing and approving the sentence and judgment of God, 1 John iii. 21. every self-destroyer will be a self-condemner: This is a prime part of their misery.

——Prima est haec ultio, quod se
Judice, nemo nocens absolvitur, improba quamvis
Gratia fallacis praetoris vicerit urnam.

Juv. Sat. 13.

4. The upbraidings of conscience, in hell, are terrible and insufferable things: To be continually hit in the teeth and twitted with our madness, wilfulness, and obstinacy, as the cause of all that eternal misery which we have pulled down upon our own heads, what is it, but the rubbing of the wound with salt and vinegar? Of this torment holy Job was afraid, and therefore resolved what in him lay to prevent it, when he saith, Job xxvii. 6. "My heart (*i.e.* conscience) shall not reproach "me so long as I live." O the twits and taunts of conscience are cruel cuts and lashes to the soul!

5. The shamings of conscience are unsufferable torments. Shame ariseth from the turpitude of discovered actions. If some mens secret filthinesses were but published in this world, it would confound them; what then will it be, when all shall lie open, as it will, after this life, and their own consciences shall cast the shame of all upon them? They shall not only be derided by God, Prov. i. 26. but by their own consciences also.

Lastly, the fearful expectations of conscience, still looking forward into more and more wrath to come, this is the very sum and complement of their misery. What makes a prison so dreadful to a malefactor, but the trembling expectation he there lives under of the approaching assizes? Much after the same rate, or rather after the rate of condemned persons preparing for execution, do these spirits in prison live in the other world. But alas no instance or similitude can reach home to their case.

Prop. 6. *That which makes the torments and terrors of the damned spirits so extreme and terrible, is, that they are unrelievable miseries, and torments for ever.*

They are not capable either of,

1. A partial relief, by any mitigation, or
2. A complete relief, by a final cessation.

Digitized by Google

1. Not of a partial relief, by any mitigation; could they but divert their thoughts from their misery, as they were wont to do in this world, drink and forget their sorrows; or had they but any hope of the abatement of their misery, it would be a relief to them: But both these are impossible. Their thoughts are fixed and determined: to remove them (though but for a moment) from their misery, is as impossible as to remove a mountain: Their sin and misery is ever before them. As the blessed in heaven are *bene confirmati*, so fixed and settled in blessedness, that they are not diverted one moment from beholding the blessed face of God, for they are ever with the Lord: So the damned in hell are *male obfirmati*, so settled and fixed in the midst of all evil, that their thoughts and miseries are inseparable for ever.

2. Much less can their undone state admit the least hope of relief by a final cessation of their misery. All hope perisheth from them, and the perishing of their hope is the plainest proof that can be given of the eternity of their misery. For were there but the remotest possibility of deliverance at last, hope would hang upon that possibility: And whilst hope lives, the soul is not quite dead; the death of hope is the death of a man's spirit: The cutting off of the soul from God, and the last act of hope to see or enjoy him for ever, is that death which an immortal soul is capable of suffering. "Depart from "me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," is that sentence which strikes hope and soul dead for ever. In these six propositions you have the true and terrible representation of the spirits in prison, or the state of damned souls. I have not mentioned their association with devils, or the dismal place of their confinement, which, though they complete their misery, yet are not the principal parts of it, but rather accessories to it, or rivers running into the ocean of their misery. The sum of their misery lies in what was opened before, and the improvement of it is in that which followeth.

Infer. 1. Is this the state of ungodly souls after death? Then it follows, that *neither death nor annihilation are the worst of evils incident to man.* Aristotle calls death *the most terrible of all terribles*, and the schoolmen affirm annihilation to be a greater evil than the most miserable being: But it is neither so, nor so; the wrath of God, the worm of conscience, are much more bitter than death. The pains of death are natural and bodily pains: The wrath of God and anguish of conscience are spiritual and inward: Those are but the pains of a few hours or days, these are the unrelieved torments of eternity.

Digitized by Google

And as for annihilation, what a favour would the damned account it! Indeed if we respect the glory of God's justice, which is exemplified and illustrated in the ruin of these miserable souls; it is better they should abide as the eternal monuments thereof, than not to be at all; but with respect to themselves we may say, as Christ doth of the son of perdition, Mat. xxvi. 24. "Good had it been for them if they had never been "born." For a man's soul to be of no other use than a vessel of wrath, to receive the indignation, and be filled with the fury of God; surely an untimely birth, that never was animated with a reasonable soul, is better than they: For alas! they seek for death, but it flies from them. The immortality of their souls, which was their dignity and privilege above other creatures, is now their misery, and that which continually feeds and perpetuates their flame. Here is a being without the comfort of it, a being only to howl and tremble under divine wrath, a being therefore which they would gladly exchange with the contemptiblest fly, or most lothsome toad, but it cannot be exchanged, or annihilated.

Infer. 2. Hence it follows, *that the pleasures of sin are dear bought, and costly pleasures.* There is a greater disproportion betwixt that pleasure and this wrath, than betwixt a drop of honey and a sea of gall. Could a man distil all the imaginary pleasure of sin, and drink nothing else but the highest and most refined delights of it all his life, though his life should be protracted to the term of Methuselah's; yet one day, or night, under the wrath of God would make it a dear bargain. But,

1. 'Tis certain sin hath no such pleasures to give you: They are embittered either by adverse strokes of providence from without, or painful and dreadful gripes and twinges of conscience, within; Job xx. 14. "His meat in his bowels is turned, "it is the gall of asps within him."

2. 'Tis as certain, the time of a sinner is near its period when he is at the height of his pleasure in sin: For look, as high delights in God speak the maturity of a soul for heaven, and it will not be long before such be in heaven; so the heights of delight in sin, answerably speak the maturity of such a soul for hell, and it will not be long e'er it be there. Sin is now a big embryo, and speedily the soul travails with death.

3. According to the measure of delights men have had in sin, will be the degrees and measures of their torments in hell, Rev. xviii. 7. so much torment and sorrow, as there was delight, and pleasure in sin.

4. To conclude, "the pleasures of sin are but for a season,"

Digitized by Google

as you read, Heb. xi. 25. but the wrath of God in hell is for ever and ever. There is a time when the pleasures of sin cannot be called pleasures to come, but the wrath of God that will still be wrath to come. Oh! consider for what a trifle you sell your souls. When Lysimachus parted with his kingdom for a draught of water, he said when he had drank it, *For how short a pleasure have I sold a kingdom!* And Jonathan lamented, 1 Sam. xiv. 43. "I tasted but a little honey, and I must die." Satan would not charm so powerfully as he doth with the pleasures of sin, if this point were well believed, and heartily applied.

Inf. 3. *What a matchless madness is it to cast the soul into God's prison, to save the body out of man's prison!*

Men have their prisons, and God hath his: But because the one is an object of sense, and the other an object of faith, that only is feared, and this slighted all over this unbelieving world; except by a very small number of men, who tremble at the word of God. Now this I say is the height of madness, and will appear to be so in a just collation of both in a few particulars. (1.) Man's prison restrains the body only, God's prison soul and body, Mat. x. 28. The spirits of men (as my text speaks) are the prisoners there. Oh! what a vast odds doth this single difference make! A thousand times more than the captivating and binding of the greatest king or emperor differs from the imprisonment of a poor mechanic or vagrant beggar. (2.) In man's prison there are many comforts and unspeakable refreshments from heaven, but in God's prison none, but the direct contrary. You read of the apostles, Acts xvi. 25 how they sang in the prison: The Spirit of God made them a banquet of heavenly joys, and they could not but sing at it: Though their feet were in the stocks, their spirits were never more at liberty. Algerius dated his letters *from the delectable orchard of the Leonine prison; where*, saith he, *flows the sweetest nectar.* Another tells us, Christ was always kind to him; but since he became a prisoner for him, he even overcame himself in kindness. *I verily think* (saith he) *the chains of my Lord are all overlaid with pure gold, and his cross perfumed.* But the worst terrors of the prisoners in hell come from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thes. i. 9. "God is a terror to them." (3.) The cause for which a man is cast into prison by men, may be his duty, and so his conscience must be at least quiet, if not joyful in such sufferings. So was it with Paul, Acts xxviii. 20. "For the hope of Israel am I bound with this

Digitized by Google

"chain:" This diffuses joy and peace through the conscience into the whole man. But the cause for which men are cast into God's prison, is their sin and guilt, which arms their own consciences against them, and makes them, as you heard before, self-tormentors, terrors to themselves. What odds is here! (4.) In man's prison the most excellent company and sweet society may be found. Paul and Silas were fellow-prisoners. In queen Mary's days the most excellent company to be found in England was in the prisons: Prisons were turned into churches. But in God's prison no better society is to be found than that of devils and damned reprobates, Mat. xxv. 41. (5.) In man's prisons there is hope of a comfortable deliverance, but in God's prison none: Mat. v. 26. "Thou shalt not come out thence "till thou hast paid the last mite." 'Tis an everlasting prison.

Compare these few obvious particulars, and judge then what is to be thought of that man, who stands readier to cast himself into any guilt, than into the least suffering. What is it but as if a man should offer his neck to the sword, to save his hand? The Lord convince us what trifles our estates, liberties, and lives are to our souls, or to the peace and purity of our consciences.

Infer. 4. *What an invaluable mercy is the pardon of sin, which sets the soul out of all danger of going into this prison!* When the debt is satisfied, a man may walk as boldly before the prison door as he doth before his own: They that owe nothing, fear no bailiffs. 'Tis the law (as I said before) that commits men to prison, a mittimus is but an instrument of law; but the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in them that believe, Rom. viii. 4. Yea, they are made *the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. There can be no process of law against them. For who shall condemn when it is God that justifieth? Rom. viii. 33, 34. And that Divine justice might be no bar to our faith and comfort, he adds, *It is Christ that died*; and yet farther, to assure us that his death had made plenary satisfaction to God for all our sins and debts, it is added, *yea, rather, that is risen again*: q. d. If the debts of believers to God were not fully paid and satisfied for by the blood of Christ, how comes it to pass that our surety is discharged, as by his resurrection he appears to be! Oh believer! thy bonds are cancell'd, the hand-writing that was against thee is nailed to the cross, the blood of Christ hath done that for thee that all the gold and silver in the world could not do, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. "It is a * coun-

* Ἀντίλυτρον *est pretium ex adverso respondens.*

Digitized by Google

" terprice fully answering to thy debts," Mat. xx. 28. And hence, to the eternal joy of thy heart, result three properties of thy pardon, which are able to make thine eyes gush out with tears of joy whilst thou art reading of it.

1. It is a free pardon to thy soul; though it cost Christ dear, its costs thee nothing. We have redemption, even " the remis- " sion of sins, according to the riches of his grace," Eph. i. 7. The project of it was God's, not thine; the price for it was Christ's blood, not thine; the glory and riches of free grace are illustriously displayed in thy forgivenness.

2. It is as full as it is free; a complete and perfect cause produceth a complete and perfect effect, Acts xiii. 39. " Justified " from all things." Whatever thy sins be for nature, number, or circumstances of aggravations, they cannot exceed the value of the meritorious cause of remission. The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

3. It must be as firm as it is free and full, even an irrevocable pardon for evermore. Christ did not shed his blood at a hazard; the way of justification by faith, makes the promise sure, Rom. iv. 16. The Justified shall never come again under condemnation. Oh the unspeakable joy that flows from this spring! Oh the triumphs of faith upon this foundation!

Is it not ravishing, melting, overwhelming, and amazing, to think thus with thyself! Here sit I with a joyful, plenary, free pardon of sin in my hand, whilst many, who never sinned to that height and degree I have, lie groaning, howling, sweating, and trembling under the indignation of God, poured out like fire upon their souls in hell. A greater sinner saved, and lesser damned. Oh how unspeakably sweet is that rest into which my terrified and disquieted soul is come by faith! Rom. v. 1. Heb. iv. 3. " We which have believed, do enter into rest." Oh blessed calm after a dreadful tempest! This poor breast of mine was lately panting, sweating, trembling under the horrors of wrath to come, terrified with the visions of hell. No other sound was in mine ears, but that of fiery indignation to devour the adversaries. Oh what price can be put upon my *quietus est!* What value upon a pardon, delivered as it were at the ladder's foot! Oh precious hand of faith that receives it! But oh the most precious blood of Christ which purchased it! If Satan now come with his accusations, the law with its comminations, death with its dreadful summons, I have in a readiness to answer them all.

Here is the law, the wrath of God, and everlasting burnings, the just demerit of sin upon one side, and a poor sinful creature on the other: But the covenant of grace hath solved all. An act

Digitized by Google

of oblivion is past in heaven, "I will forgive their iniquities, and "their sins and transgressions will I remember no more." In this act of grace my soul is included; I am in Christ, and there is no condemnation. Die I must, but damned I shall not be: My debts are paid, my bonds are cancelled, my conscience is quieted: let death do its worst, it shall do me no harm; that blood which satisfied God, may well satisfy me.

Infer. 5. How amazingly sad and deplorable is the security, and stilness of the consciences of sinners, under all their own guilt, and the immediate danger of God's everlasting wrath!

Philosophers observe that before an earth-quake the wind lies, and the weather is exceeding calm and still, not a breath of wind going. So it is in the consciences of many, just before the tempest and storm of God's wrath pours down upon them. What a golden morning opened upon Sodom, and began that fatal day! Little did they imagine showers of fire had been ready to fall from so pleasant and serene a sky as they saw over their heads. How secure, still, and unconcerned are those to day, who it may be shall rage, roar, and tremble in hell to morrow! Caesar hearing of a citizen of Rome who was deep in debt, and yet slept soundly, would needs have his pillow, as supposing there was some strange, charming virtue in it.

It is wonderful to consider what shift men make to keep their consciences in that stilness and quiet they do, under such loads of guilt, and threatnings of wrath, ready to be executed upon them. It must be strong *opium* that so stupifies and benumbs their consciences; and upon inquiry into the matter we shall find it to be the effect of,

1. A strong delusion of Satan.
2. A spiritual judicial stroke of God.

1. This stilness of conscience, upon the brink of damnation, proceeds from the strong delusions of Satan; blinding their eyes: and feeding their false hopes: He removes the evil day at many years imaginary distance from them, and interposeth many a fair day betwixt them and it, and in that interposed season, time enough to prepare for it; without such an artifice as this, his house would be in an uproar, but this keeps all in peace, Luke xi. 21. "By presuming he feeds their hopes, and by "their hopes destroys their souls *." Some he diverts from all serious thoughts of this day by the pleasures, and others by the cares of this life: and so that day cometh upon them unawares, Luke xxi. 34.

* *Præsumendo sperans, et sperando pervertit.*

Digitized by Google

2. This stillness of conscience, in so miserable and dangerous a state, is the effect of a spiritual, judicial stroke of God upon the children of wrath. That's a dreadful word, Isa. vi. 10. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears "heavy, and shut their eyes:" The eye and ear are the two principal doors or inlets to the heart; when these are shut, the heart must needs be insensible, as the † fat of the body is. There is a spirit of a deep sleep poured out judicially upon some men, Isa. xxix. 10. such as that upon Adam when God took a rib from his side, and he felt it not: But this is upon the soul, and is the same as to give up a man to a reprobate sense.

Infer. 6. *The case of distressed consciences upon earth, is exceeding sad, and calls upon all for the tenderest pity, and utmost help from men.*

You see the labourings of conscience, under the sense of guilt and wrath, is a special part of the torments of hell; of which there is not a livelier emblem or picture, than the distresses of consciences in this world.

It must be thankfully confessed there are two great differences betwixt the terrors of conscience here, and there: One, in the degrees of anguish, the other, in the reliefs of that anguish. The ordinary distresses of conscience here, compared with those of the damned, are as the flame of a candle to a fiery oven, a mild and gentle fire; or as the sparks that fly out of the top of a chimney, to the dreadful eruptions of Vesuvius, or mount Etna. Besides, these are capable of relief, but those are unrelievable: Their hearts die, because their hope is perished from the Lord.

But yet of all the miseries and distresses incident to men in this world, none like those of distressed consciences; the terrors of God set themselves in array, or are drawn up in battalia against the soul, Job vi. 4. "Whilst I suffer thy terrors (saith "Heman) I am distracted," Psal. lxxxviii. 15. Yea, they not only distract, but cut off the spirit, as he adds, ver. 16. They lick up the very spirit of a man, and none can bear them, Prov. xviii. 14. for now a man hath to do immediately with God; yea, with the wrath of the great and dreadful God: And this wrath, which is the most acute and sharp of all torments, falls upon the most tender and sensible part, the spirit and mind which now lies open and naked before him to be wounded by it. No creature can administer the least relief, by the application of any temporal comfort or refreshment to it. Gold and silver, wife

† Naturalists agree that fat not only makes animals unruly, but also, is void of sensation. *Gluss.*

Digitized by Google

and children, meat and melody, signify no more than the drawing off a silk stocking to cure the *paroxysms* of the *gout*.

All that can be done for their relief, is by seasonable, judicious, and tender applications of spiritual remedies: And what can be done, ought to be done for them. What heart can hear a voice like that of Job, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, "O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me;" and not melt into compassion over them? Is there a word of wisdom in thy heart, let thy tongue apply it to the relief of thy distressed brother: Whilst his heart meditates *terror*, let thine meditate his *succour*. It is not impossible but thou, who lendest a friendly hand to another, mayest, e'er long, need one thyself; and he that hath ever felt the terrors of the Almighty upon his soul, hath motive enough to draw forth the bowels of his pity to another in the like case.

Alas for poor distressed souls, who have either none about them that understand, and are able and willing to speak a word in season to their weary souls, or too many about them to exasperate their sorrows, and persecute them whom God hath smitten. You that have both ability and opportunity for it, are under the strongest engagements in the world to endeavour their relief with all faithfulness, seriousness, compassion, and constancy. Did Christ shed his blood for the saving of souls, and wilt not thou spend thy breath for them? Shall any man that hath found mercy from God, shew none to his brother? God forbid. A soul in hell is out of your reach; but these that are in the suburbs of hell are not: The candle of intense sorrow is put to the thread of their miserable life; and should they be suffered to drop into hell, whilst you stand by as unconcerned spectators of such a tragedy, you will have little peace. Your unmercifulness to their souls will be a wound to your own.

Infer. 7. *Be hence informed of the evil that is in sin, be convinced of the evil that is in it, by the eternal misery that followeth it.*

If hell be out of measure dreadful, then sin must be out of measure sinful: The torments of hell do not exceed the demerit of sin, though they exceed the understandings of men to conceive them. God will lay upon no man more than is right. Sin is the founder of hell; all the miseries and torments there, are but the treasures of wrath which sinners, in all ages, have been treasuring up; and how dreadful soever it be, it is but the Ἀντιμισθια, the recompense which is meet, Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death."

We have slight thoughts of sin; *Fools make a mock of sin:*

Digitized by Google

But if the Lord by the convictions of mens consciences did but lead them thro' the chambers of death, and give them a sight of the wrath to come; could we but see the piles that are made in hell (as the prophet calls them, Isa. xxx. 33.) to maintain the flames of vengeance to eternity; could we but understand in what dialect the damned speak of sin, who see the treasures of wrath broken up to avenge it, surely it would alter our apprehensions of sin, and strike cold to the very hearts of sinners.

Cannot the extremity and eternity of hell-torments exceed the evil that is in sin? What words then can express the evil of it? Hell flames have the nature of a punishment, but not of an atonement.

Oh think on this, you that look upon sin as the veriest trifle, that will sin—for the value of a penny, that look upon all the humiliations, broken-hearted confessions, and bitter moans of the saints under sin, as frenzy, or melancholy, slighting them as a company of half-witted hypochondriac persons! Thou that never hadst one sick night, or sad day in all thy life upon the account of sin, let me tell thee, that breast of thine must be the seat of sorrow; that frothy airy spirit of thine must be acquainted with emphatical sobs and groans. God grant it may be on this side hell, by effectual repentance; else it must be there, in the extremity and eternity of sorrows.

Infer. 8. *What enemies are they to the souls of men, who are Satan's instruments, to draw them into sin, or who suffer sin to lie upon them?*

When there were but two persons in the world, one drew the other into sin; and among the millions of men and women now in the world, where are there two to be found that have in no case been snares to draw some into sin? Some tempt designedly, taking the devil's work out of his hands; others virtually and consequentially, by examples, which have a compelling power to draw others with them into sin. The first sort are among the worst of sinners, Prov. i. 10. the latter are among the best of saints; see Gal. ii. 14. whose conversation is so much in heaven, that nothing falls out in the course thereof, which may not farther some or other in their way to hell?

Among wicked men, there are five sorts eminently accessory to the guilt and ruin of other men's souls. (1.) Loose professors, whose lives give their lips the lie; whose conversations make their professions blush. (2.) Scandalous apostates, whose fall is more prejudicial than their profession was ever beneficial to others. (3.) Cruel persecutors, who make the lives, liber-

Digitized by Google

ties, and estates of men the occasion of the ruin of their consciences. (4.) Ignorant and unfaithful ministers, who strengthen the hands of the wicked, that they should not return from their wickedness. (5.) Wicked relations, who quench and damp every hopeful beginning of conviction and affection in their friends. Of all which I shall distinctly speak in the next discourse, to which, therefore, I remit it at present.

And many there are who suffer sin to lie upon others, without a wise and seasonable reproof to recover them.

Oh what cruelty to souls is here! The day is coming when they will curse the time that ever they knew you: 'Tis possible you may repent, but then, it may be, those, whose souls you have helped to ruin, are gone, and quite out of your reach. The Lord make you sensible what you have done in season, lest your repentance come too late for yourselves, and them also.

Infer. 9. *How poor a comfort is it to him that carries all his sins out of this world with him, to leave much earthly treasure (especially if gotten by sin) behind him?*

It is a poor consolation to be praised where thou art not, and tormented where thou art ‡; to purchase a life of pleasure to others on earth, at the price of thy own everlasting misery in hell. All the consolation, sensual, voluptuous, and oppressing worldlings have, is but this, that they were *coached to hell* in pomp and state, and have left the same *chariot* to bring their graceless children after them, in the same equipage, to the place of torments. There be five considerations provoking pity to them that are thus past into a miserable eternity, and caution to all that are following after, in the same path.

First, That fatal mistake in the practical understanding and judgment of men deserves a compassionate lamentation, as the cause and reason of their eternal miscarriage and ruin. They looked upon trifles as things of greatest necessity, and the most necessary things as mere trifles; putting the greatest weight and value upon that which little concerned them, and none at all upon their greatest concernment in the whole world, Luke xii. 21.

Secondly, The perpetual diversions that the trifles of this world gave them from the main use and end of their time. O what a hurry and thick succession of earthly business and encumbrances filled up their days! So that they could find no

‡ *Quid prodest esse, quod esse non prodest:* Tertull.

Digitized by Google

time to go alone, and think of the awful and weighty concernments of the world to come, James v. 5.

Thirdly, The total waste and expence of the only season of salvation, about these vanishing, impertinent trifles, which is never more to be recovered, Eccles. ix. 10.

Fourthly, That these deluding shadows, the pleasures of a moment, is all they had in exchange for their souls, a goodly price it was valued at, Mat. xvi. 26.

Fifthly, That by such a life they have not only ruined their own souls, but put their posterity, by their education of them in the same course of life, into the same path of destruction, in which they went to hell before them. Psal. xlix. 13. "Their "posterity approve their saying."

Infer. 10. *How rational and commendable is the courage and resolution of those Christians, who chuse to bear all the sufferings in this world from the hands of men, rather than to defile and wound their consciences with sin, and thereby expose their souls to the wrath of God for ever!*

That which men now call pride, humour, fancy, and stubbornness, will, one day, appear to be their great wisdom, and the excellency of their spirits. It is the tenderness of their consciences, not the pride and stoutness of their stomachs, which makes them inflexible to sin; they know the terrors of a wounded conscience, and had rather endure any other trouble from the hands of men, than fall by known sin, into the hands of an angry God. Try them in other matters, wherein the glory of God, and the peace or purity of their consciences are not concerned, and see if you can charge them with stubbornness and singularity. It was the excellency of the spirits of the primitive Christians, that they durst tell the emperor, to his face, when he threatned them with torments; "Pardon us, O emperor, "thou threatnest us with a prison, but God with hell *." Do we call that ingenuity and good nature, which makes the mind soft and tractable to temptations, and will rather venture upon guilt than be esteemed singular?

"† Salvian tells us of some in his time, who were compel-"led to be evil, lest they should be accounted vile." And was that their excellency? May I not fitly apply the words of Salvian here: O in what honour and repute is Christ among Christians, when religion shall make them base and ignoble! He

* *Ignosce imperator; tu carcerem minaris, Deus gehennam.*
† *Mali esse coguntur, ne viles habeantur.*

Digitized by Google

that understands what the punishment of sin will be in hell, should endure all things rather than yield to sin on earth. Indeed, if you that threaten, and tempt others to violate their consciences, could bear the wrath of God for them in hell, it were somewhat; but we know there is no suffering by a *proxy* there, they tremble at the word of God, and have felt the burden of guilt, and dare not yield to sin, tho' they yield their estates and bodies to prevent it.

Infer. 11. *How patiently should we bear the afflictions of this life, by which sin is prevented and purged?*

The discipline of our spirits belongs to God the Father of Spirits; he corrects us here, that we may not be punished hereafter, 1 Cor. xi. 32. "We are chastened of the Lord, that we "may not be condemned with the world." It is better for us to groan under afflictions on earth, than to roar under revenging wrath in hell. Parents who are wise, as well as tender, had rather hear their children sob and cry under the rod, than stand with halters about their necks on the ladder, bewailing the destructive indulgence of their parents.

Your chastisements, when sanctified, are preventive of all the misery opened before. It is therefore as unreasonable to murmur against God, because you smart under his rod, as it would be to accuse your dearest friend of cruelty, because he strained your arm to snatch you from the fall of a house, or wall, which he saw ready to crush and overwhelm you in its ruins.

If we had less affliction, we should have more guilt. We see how apt we are to break over the hedge, and go astray from God, with all the clogs of afflictions designed for our restraint; what should we do if we had no clog at all; It is better for you to be whipped to heaven with all the rods of affliction, than coached to hell with all the pleasures of the world.

Christian, thy God sees, if thou do not, that all these troubles are few enough to save thee from sin and hell. Thy corruptions require all these, and all little enough. "If need be, "ye are in heaviness," 1 Pet. i. 6. If there be need for it, thy dearest comforts on earth shall die, that thy soul may live; but if thy mortification to them render thy removal needless, thou and they shall live together. 'Tis better to be preserved in brine, than rot in honey. Sanctified afflictions, working under the efficacy of the blood of Christ, are the safest way to our souls.

Infer. 12. *How doleful a change doth the death of wicked men make upon them! from palaces on earth, to the prison of hell.*

Digitized by Google

No sooner is the soul of a wicked man stepped out of his own door at death, but the serjeants of hell are immediately upon it, serving the dreadful summons on the law-condemned wretch. This arrest terrifies it more than the hand-writing upon the plaister of the wall did him, Dan. v. 5. How are all a man's apprehensions changed in a moment! Out of what a deep sleep are most, and out of what a pleasant dream of heaven are some awaked and startled at death, by the dreadful arrest and summons of God to condemnation.

How quickly would all a sinner's mirth be damped, and turned into howlings in this world, if conscience were but throughly awakened! It is but for God to change our apprehensions now, and it would be done in a moment: but the eyes of most mens souls are not opened till death hath shut their bodily eyes; and then how sudden, and how sad a change is made in one day!

O think what it is to pass from all the pleasures and delights of this world into the torments and miseries of that world; from a pleasant habitation, into an infernal prison; from the depth of security, to the extremity of desperation; from the arms and bosoms of dearest friends and relations, to the society of damned spirits! Lord, what a change is here; had a gracious change been made upon their hearts by grace, no such doleful change could have been made upon their state by death: little do their surviving friends think what they feel, or what is their estate in the other world, whilst they are honouring their bodies with splendid and pompous funerals. None on earth have so much reason to fear death, to make much of life, and use all means to continue it, as those who will, and must, be so great losers by the exchange.

Infer. 13. *See here the certainty, and inevitableness of the Judgment of the great day.*

This prison, which is continually filling with the spirits of wicked men, is an undeniable evidence of it: for why is hell called a prison, and why are the spirits of men confined and chained there, but with respect to the judgment of the great day? As there is a necessary connection betwixt sin and punishment, so betwixt punishing and trying the offender; there are millions of souls in custody, a world of spirits in prison; these must be brought forth to their trial, for God will lay upon no man more than is right; the legality of their *mittimus* to hell, will be evidenced in their solemn day of trial. God hath therefore "appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," Acts xvii. 31.

Digitized by Google

Here sinners run in arrears, and contract vast debts; in hell they are seized and committed, at judgment tried and call for the same. This will be a dreadful day, those that have spent so prodigally upon the patience of God, must now come to a severe account for all; they have past their particular judgment immediately after death, Eccl. xii. 7. Heb. ix. 27. By this they know how they shall speed in the general judgment, and how it shall be with them for ever, but tho' this private judgment secures their damnation sufficiently, yet it clears not the justice of God before angels and men sufficiently, and therefore they must appear once more before his bar, 2 Cor. v. 10. In the fearful expectation of this day, those trembling spirits now lie in prison, and that fearful expectation is a principal part of their present misery and torment. You that refuse to come to the throne of grace, see if you can refuse to make your appearance at the bar of justice; you that braved and brow-beat your ministers that warned you of it, see if you can out-brave your judge too as you did them. Nothing more sure or awful than such a day as this.

Infer. 14. *How much are ministers, parents, and all to whom the charge of souls is committed, bound to do all that in them lies, to prevent their everlasting misery in the world to come!*

The great apostle of the Gentiles found the consideration of the terror of the Lord, as a spur urging, and enforcing him to a ministerial faithfulness and diligence; 2 Cor. v. 11. "Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." And the same he presseth upon Timothy, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." Oh that those to whom so great a trust as the souls of men is committed, would labour to acquit themselves with all faithfulness therein, as Paul did, warning every one night and day with tears, that if we cannot prevent their ruin, which is most desirable; yet at least we may be able to take God to witness, as he did, that we are pure from the blood of all men.

Oh! consider, my brethren, if your faithful plainness, and unwearied diligence to save men's souls produce no other fruit but the hatred of you now; yet it is much easier for you to bear that, than that they and you too should bear the wrath of God for ever.

Digitized by Google

We have all of us personal guilt enough upon us; let us not add other men's guilt to our account: to be guilty of the blood of the meanest man upon earth, is a sin which will cry in your consciences; but to be guilty of the blood of souls, Lord, who can bear it! Christ thought them worth his heart blood, and are they not worth the expence of our breath? Did he sweat blood to save them, and will not we move our lips to save them? It is certainly a sore judgment to the souls of men, when such ministers are set over them as never understood the value of their peoples souls, or were never heartily concerned about the salvation of their own souls.

* *

MATTH. xvi. 26. *For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

DIFFICULT duties need to be enforced with powerful arguments. In the 24th verse of this chapter, our Lord presseth upon his disciples the deepest and hardest duties of self-denial, acquaints them upon what terms they must be admitted into his service: "If any man will come after me, let him "deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

This hard and difficult duty he enforceth upon them by a double argument, *viz.* From,

1. The vanity of all sinful shifts from it, ver. 25.

2. The value of their souls, which is imported in it, ver. 26.

They may shift off their duty to the loss of their souls, or save their souls by the loss of such trifles. If they esteem their souls above the world, and can be content to put all other things to the hazard for their salvation, making account to save nothing but them by Christianity; then they come up to Christ's terms, and may warrantably and boldly call him their Lord and Master; and to sweeten this choice to them, he doth, in my text, balance the soul and all the world, weighing them one against the other, and shews them the infinite odds and disproportion betwixt them: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain "the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man "give in exchange for his soul?"

What is a man profited?] There is a plain meiosis in the phrase; and the meaning is, how inestimably and irreparably is a man damnified! what a soul-ruining bargain would a man make!

Digitized by Google

If he should gain the whole world.] There is a plain hyperbole in this phrase; for it never was, nor ever will be the lot of any man to be the sole owner and possessor of the whole world *. But suppose all the power, pleasure, wealth, and honour of the whole world were bid and offered in exchange for a man's soul; what a dear purchase would it be at such a rate! "What were this, says one †, but to win Venice, and then be "hanged at the gate of it?" As that man acts like a mad man, that goes about to purchase a treasure of gold with the loss of his life; for life being lost, what is all the gold in the world to him? he can have no enjoyment of it, or comfort in it: so here, what is all the world, or as many worlds as there are creatures in it, when the soul is lost, if he gain this?

And lose his own soul.] The comparison lies here betwixt one single soul and the whole world. The whole world is no price for the poorest, meanest, and most despised soul that lives in it.

By losing the soul, we are not to understand the destruction of its being, but of its happiness and comfort, the cutting it off from God, and all the hopes of his favour and enjoyment for ever. This is the loss here intended, a loss never to be repaired. The whole world can be no recompence for the loss to the soul, if it be but the loss of its purity or peace for a time; much less can it recompence the loss of the soul, in the loss of all its happiness for ever. When a man's chief happiness is finally lost, then is his soul lost: for what benefit can it be, nay, how great a misery must it be, to have a being perpetuated in torments for ever? ‡ This is the *fine* or *mulct* which is set upon sin, as some render the word. What shall a man gain by such pleasures, for which God will *mulct*, or *fine* him at the rate or price of his own soul? That is, of all the happiness, joy, and comfort of it to all eternity.

Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? ‖ The question aggravates the sense, and amplifies the loss and damage of the man that sells his soul for the whole world. There is no recompense in all the world for the hazard or danger of the

* By this hypothetical hyperbole is denoted the great atrociousness of losing eternal salvation. *Glassius.*

† *Non magis juvabitur, quam qui acquirit Venetias, ipse vero suspendatur ad portam.* Paræus in loc.

‡ *Anima vero sua mulctetur, i. e.* If one is punished with the loss of his own soul. *Bez, Maldon.*

‖ *Interrogatio exaggerans.*

Digitized by Google

that one hour: nor would a man that understands what a soul and eternity are, put it into danger for ten thousand worlds, much less for one penny, yea, for nothing, as many do: but to barter or exchange it for the world, to take any thing in lieu of it; this is the height of madness. "The way of buying "in former times was not by money, but by the exchange of one "commodity for another;" and to this custom * Brugensis thinks this phrase is allusive. Now what commodity is found in all the world; or who that is not blinded by the god of this world, can think that the whole world itself, if all the rocks in it were rocks of diamonds, and the seas and rivers were liquid gold, is a commodity of equivalent worth to his own soul? Hence two notes arise naturally,

Doct. 1. *That one soul is of more value than the whole world.*

Doct. 2. *How precious and invaluable soever the soul of man is, it may be lost and cast away for ever.*

I begin with the first.

Doct. 1. *That one soul is of more value than the whole world.*

I need not spend much time in the proof of it, when you have considered, that he who bought them, hath here weighed and valued them; and that the point before us is the result and conclusion of one that hath the best reason to know the true worth of them. That which I have to do is to gather out of the scriptures the particulars; which, put together, make up the full demonstration of the point. And,

1. The invaluable worth of souls appears from the manner of their creation. They were created immediately by God, as hath been proved, and that not without the deliberation of the whole Trinity; Gen. i. 26. "Let us make man." For the production of other creatures, it was enough to give out the word of his command. "Let there be light, let the earth and the waters "bring forth;" but when he comes to man, then you have no FIAT, *let there be*, but he puts his own hand immediately to it, as to the master-piece of the whole creation: yea, a council is called about it; *Let us*, implying the just consultation and deliberation of all the persons in the Godhead about it, that our hearts might be raised to the expectation of some extraordinary work to follow; great counsels and wise debates being both the forerunners and foundations of great actions and events to ensue

* Ἀνταλλαγμα vocat id quo dato, redimitur aliquid; juxta piscatorum commercia, quæ non numeta, sed rerum permutationes constabant. Brugens.

thereupon. Thus Elihu in Job xxxv. 10. "None saith, Where "is God my makers?" And David, in Psal. cxlix. 2. "Let "Israel rejoice in his Makers:" in both places the word is plural. The consultation here is only amongst the divine Persons, no angels are called to this council table, the whole matter was to be conducted by the wisdom, and effected by the power of God; and therefore there was no need to consult with any but himself, the wisdom of angels being from him: but this great council shews what an excellent creature was now to be produced, and the excellency of that creature man, was principally in his soul; for the bodies of other creatures, which were made by the word of his command, are as beautiful, elegant, and neat as the body of man; yea, and in some respects more excellent. The soul then was that rare piece which God in so condescending an expression tells us was created with the deliberation of the Godhead; those great and excellent Persons laid their heads, as it were, together to project its being.

And by the way, this may smartly check the pride and arrogance of souls, who dare take it upon them to teach God, as murmurs at his disposals of us. Shall that soul which is the product of his wisdom and counsel, dare to instruct or counsel its Maker? But that by the by. You see there is a transcendent dignity and worth in the soul of man above all other beings in the world, by the peculiar way of its production into the number of created beings: no wise man deliberates long, or calls a council about ordinary matters, much less the Allwise God.

2. The soul hath in itself an intrinsic worth and excellency, worthy of that divine original whence it sprang: view it in its noble faculties, and admirable powers, and it will appear to be a creature upon which God hath laid out the riches of his wisdom and power.

There you shall find a mind susceptive of all light, both natural and spiritual, shining as the candle of God in the inner man, closing with truth, as the iron doth with the attractive loadstone, a shop in which all arts and sciences are laboured and formed: what are all the famous libraries and monuments of learning, but so many systems of thoughts laboured and perfected in the active inquisitive minds of men? Truth is its natural and delectable object, it pursues eagerly after it, and even spends itself and the body too in the chase and prosecution of truth; when it lies deep, as a subterranean treasure *, the mind sends out inno-

* *Veritas in puteo, i. e.* Truth in the well.

Digitized by Google

merable thoughts, reinforcing each other in thick successions, to dig for, and compass that invaluable treasure; if it be disguised by misrepresentations and vulgar prejudice, and trampled in the dirt under that disguise, there is an ability in the mind to discern it by some lines and features, which are all well known to it, and both own, honour, and vindicate it under all that dirt and obloquy, with more respect than a man will take up a piece of gold, or a sparkling diamond out of the mire: it searches after it by many painful deductions of reason, and † triumphs more in the discovery of it, than in all earthly treasures; no gratification of sense like that of the mind, when it grasps its prey for which it hunted.

The mind passes through all the works of creation, it views the several creatures on earth, considers the fabric, use, and beauty of animals, the signatures of plants penetrating thereby into their nature and virtues: it views the vast ocean, and the large train of causes laid together in all these things, for the good of man, by God, whose name it reads in the most diminutive creature it beholds on earth.

It can, in a moment, mount itself from earth to heaven, view the face thereof, describe the motions of the sun in the ecliptic, calculate tables for the motions of the planets and fixed stars, invent convenient cycles for the computation of time, foretel, at a great distance, the dismal eclipses of the sun and moon to the very digit, and the portentous conjunctions of the planets, to the very minute of their ingress: These are the pleasant employments of the Understanding.

But there is a higher game at which this eagle plays, it reckons itself all this while employed as much beneath its capacity, as Domitian in catching flies; though these be lawful and pleasant exercises, when it hath leisure for them, yet it is fitted for a much nobler exercise, even to penetrate the glorious mysteries of redemption, to trace redeeming love through all the astonishing methods, and manifold discoveries of it; and yet higher than all this, it is capable of an imediate sight, or facial vision of the blessed God, short of which it receives no pleasure that is fully agreeable to its noble power and infinite appetite.

View its Will, and you shall find it like a queen upon the throne of the soul, swaying the sceptre of liberty in her hand,

† Archimedes, when he made a valuable discovery of a new truth, leapt out of the bath for joy, crying, I have found it, I have found it.

Digitized by Google

(as one * expresseth it) with all the affections waiting and attending upon her. No tyrant can force it, no torment can wrest the golden sceptre of liberty out of its hand, the keys of all the chambers of the soul hang at its girdle, those it delivers to Christ in the day of his power; victorious grace sweetly determines it by gaining its consent, but commits no violence upon it. God accepts its offering, though full of imperfections; but no service is accepted without it, how excellent soever be the matter of it.

View the conscience and thoughts with their self reflective abilities, wherein the soul retires into itself, and sits concealed from all eyes but his that made it, judging its own actions, and censuring its estate; viewing its face in its own glass, and correcting the indecencies it discovers there: things of greatest moment and importance are silently transacted in its secret chamber betwixt the soul and God; so remote from the knowledge of all creatures, that neither angels, devils, or men, can know what is doing there, but by uncertain guess, or revelation from God †: here it impleads, condemns, ‡ and acquits itself as at a privy session, with respect of the judgment of the great day; here it meets with the best of comforts, and with the worst of terrors.

Take a survey of its passions and affections, and you will find them admirable: see how they are placed by divine wisdom in the soul, some for defence and safety, others for delight and pleasure. Anger actuates the spirits, and quickens its courage, enabling it to break through difficulties: fear keeps centinel, watching upon all dangers that approach us: Hope foretasts the good, and anticipates the joys of the next life, and thereby supports and strengthens the soul under all the discouragements and pressures of the present life: Love unites us to the chiefest good: "He that dwelleth in love, dwells in God, and God in "him:" Zeal is the dagger which love draws in God's cause and quarrel, to secure itself from sin, and testify its resentments of God's dishonour.

O what a divine spark is the soul of man! well might Christ prefer it in dignity to the whole world.

3. The worth of a soul may be gathered and discerned from its subjective capacity and hability both of grace and glory. It is capable of all the graces of the Spirit, of being filled with the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 19. to live to God here, and with God

* Culverwell.

† 1 Cor. ii. 11.

‡ Rom. ii. 15. 2 Cor. i. 12.

Digitized by Google

for ever. What excellent graces do adorn some souls? How are all the rooms richly hanged with divine and costly hangings, that God may dwell in them! This makes it like the carved works of the temple, overlaid with pure gold; here is glory upon glory, a new creation upon the old; in the innermost parts of some souls is a spiritual altar erected with this inscription, *Holiness to the Lord*: here the soul offers up itself to God in the sacred flames of love, and here it sacrifices its vile affections, devoting them to destruction, to the glory of its God: here God walks with delight, even a delight beyond what he takes in all the stately structures and magnificent adorned temples in the whole world, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

No other soul besides man's is marriageable to Christ, or capable of espousals to the King of glory; they were not designed, and therefore not endued with a capacity for such an honour as this: but such a capacity hath every soul, even the meanest on earth, and such honour have all his saints: others may, but they are betrothed to Christ in this world, 2 Cor. xi. 2. and shall be presented without spot before him in the world to come, Eph. v. 27.

It is now a lovely and excellent creature in its naked natural state, much more beautiful and excellent in its sanctified and gracious state: but what shall we say, or how shall we conceive of it, when all spots of sin are perfectly washed off its beautiful face in heaven, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon it! when its filthy garments are taken away, and the pure robes of perfect holiness, as well as righteousness, superinduced upon this excellent creature! If the imperfect beauty of it, begun in sanctification, enamoured its Saviour, and made him say, "Thou hast "ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one of the "chains of thy neck;" what will its beauty, and his delight in it be in the state of perfect glorification! As we imagine the circles in the heavens to be vastly greater than those we view upon the globe; so must we imagine in the case before us.

4. The preparations God makes for souls in heaven, speak their great worth and value. When you lift up your eyes to heaven, and behold that bespangled azure canopy beset and inlaid with so many golden studs and sparkling gems, you see but the floor or pavement of that place which God hath prepared for some souls. He furnished this world for us before he put us into it; but, as delightful and beautiful as it is, it is no more to be compared with the Father's house in heaven, than the smallest ruined chapel your eyes ever beheld, is to be compared with Solomon's temple, when it stood in all its shining glory.

Digitized by Google

When you see a stately and magnificent structure built, richest hangings and furniture prepared to adorn it, you conclude some great persons are to come thither: such preparations speak the quality of the guests.

Now heaven, yea, the heaven of heavens, the palace of the great King, the presence-chamber of the Godhead, is prepared, not only by God's decree and Christ's death; but by his ascension thither in our names, and as our forerunner, for all renewed and redeemed souls. John xiv. 2. "In my Father's house "are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told "you: I go to prepare a place for you."

And, where is the place prepared for them, but in his Father's house? The same place, the very same house where the Father, Son and Spirit themselves do dwell: such is the love of Christ to souls, that he will not dwell in one house, and they in another; but, as he speaks, John xii. 26. "Where I am, there shall "my servant also be." There is room enough in the Father's house for Christ and all the souls he redeemed to live and dwell together for evermore. His ascension thither was in the capacity of a common or public person, to take livery and seisin of those many mansions for them, which are to be filled with their inhabitants, as they come thither in their respective times and orders.

5. The great price with which they were redeemed and purchased, speaks their dignity and value. No wise man will purchase a trifle at a great price, much less the most wise God. Now, the redemption of every soul stood in no less than the most precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. "You "know (saith the apostle there) that we were not redeemed "with corruptible things as silver and gold,——but with the "precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish or spot." All the gold and silver in the world was no ransom for one soul; nay, all the blood of the creatures, had it been shed as a sacrifice to the glory of justice, or even the blood which is most dear to us, as being derived from our own; I mean, the blood of our dear-children, even of our first-born, the beginning of our strength, which usually have the strength of affection: I say, none of this could purchase a pardon for the smallest sin that ever any soul committed, much less was it able to purchase the soul itself, Mic. vi. 6, 7. "Thousands of rams, and ten thou-"sand rivers of oil," or our *first-born*, are no ransom to God *for the sin of the soul.* It is only the precious blood of Christ that is a just ransom or counter-price, as it is called, Mat. xx. 28.

Digitized by Google

Now, who can compute the value of that blood? Such was the worth of the blood of Christ, which, by the communication of properties, is truly stiled the blood of God, that one drop of it is above the estimations of men and angels; and yet, before the soul of the meanest man or woman in the world could be redeemed, every drop of his blood must be shed; for no less than his death could be a price for our souls. Hence then we evidently discern an invaluable worth in souls: A whole kingdom is taxed, when a king is to be ransomed, the delight and darling of God's soul must die, when our souls are to be redeemed. O the worth of souls!

6. This evidences the transcendent dignity and worth of souls, that *eternity is stampt upon their actions*, and theirs only of all the beings in this world. The acts of souls are immortal, as their nature is; whereas the actions of other animals, having neither moral goodness or moral evil in them, pass away as their beings do.

The apostle therefore, in Gal. vi. 7. compares the actions of men in this world to seed sown, and tells us of everlasting fruits we shall reap from them in the next life; they have the same respect to a future account that seed hath to the harvest; "He "that soweth iniquity, shall reap vanity," *i. e.* everlasting disappointment and misery, Prov. xxii. 8. and "they that now sow "in tears, shall then reap in joy," Psal. cxxvi. 5. Every gracious action is the seed of joy, and every sinful action the seed of sorrow; and this makes the great difference betwixt the actions of a rational soul, and those done by beasts: and if it were not so, man would then be wholly swayed by sense and present things, as the beasts are, and all religion would vanish with this distinction of actions.

Our actions are considerable two ways, physically and morally; in the first sense they are transient, in the last permanent: a word is past as soon as spoken, but yet it must and will be recalled and brought into the judgment of the great day, Mat. xii. 36. Whatever therefore a man shall speak, think or do, once spoken, thought, or done, it becomes eternal, and abides for ever. Now, what is it that puts so great a difference betwixt human and brutal actions; but the excellent nature of the reasonable soul? It is this which stamps immortality upon human actions, and is at once a clear proof, both of the immortality, and dignity of the soul of man, above all other creatures in this world.

7. The contentions of both worlds, the strife of heaven and

Digitized by Google

hell about the soul of man, speaks it a most precious and invaluable treasure.

The soul of man is the prize about which heaven and hell contend: the great design of heaven is to save it, and all the plots of hell to ruin it. Man is a borderer betwixt both kingdoms, he lives here upon the confines of the spiritual and material world; and therefore Scaliger fitly calls him *Utriusque mundi nexus*, one in whom both worlds meet: his body is of the earth, earthly; his soul the off-spring of a Deity, heavenly. It is then no wonder to find such tugging and pulling this way and that way, upward and downward, such sallies from heaven to rescue and save it, such excursions from hell to captivate and ruin it.

The infinite wisdom of God hath laid the plot and design for its salvation by Christ in so great depth of counsel, that the angels of heaven are astonished at it, and desire to pry into it. Christ in pursuance of this eternal project, came from heaven professedly to seek and to save lost souls, Luke xix. 10. He compares himself to a good shepherd, who leaveth the ninety nine to seek one lost sheep, and having found it, brings it home upon his shoulders, rejoicing that he hath found it, Luke xv. 7.

Hell employs all its skill and policy, sets a-work all wiles and stratagems to destroy and ruin it; 1 Pet. v. 8. "Your adversa-"ry, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom "he may devour." The strong man armed gets the first possession of the soul, and with all his forces and policies labours to secure it as his property, Luke xi. 21. Christ raises all the spiritual militia, the very *posse cæli*, the powers of heaven, to rescue it, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And do heaven and earth thus contend, think you, *de lana caprina*, for a thing of nought? No, no, if there were not some singular and peculiar excellency and worth in man's soul, both worlds would never tug and pull at this rate which should win that prize. It was a great argument of the worth and excellency of Homer, that incomparable poet, that seven cities contended for the honour of his nativity.

Ἑπτὰ πόλεις διερίζουσι περὶ ῥίζης Ὁμήρου,
Σμύρνα, Ῥόδος, Κολοφών, Σαλαμὶς, Χίος, Ἄργος, Ἀθῆναι.

Smyrna, Rhodes, Colophon, Salamis, Chius, Argos, and Athens were all at strife about one poor man, who should crown themselves with the honour of his birth: but when heaven and hell shall contend about a soul, certainly it much more speaks the dignity of it, than the contention of seven cities for one Homer.

Digitized by Google

What are all the wooings, expostulations, and passionate beseechings of Christ's ministers? What are all the convictions of conscience, and the strong impressions made upon the affections? What are all the strokes from heaven upon men, in the way of sin? I say, what are all these but the efforts of heaven to draw souls out of the snares of hell?

And what are the hellish temptations that men feel in their hearts, the alluring objects presented to their eyes, the ensnaring examples that are set round about them, but the attempts of Satan, if possible, to draw the souls of men into the same condemnation and misery with himself?

Would heaven and hell be up in arms, as it were, and strive at this rate for nothing? Thy soul, O man, how vilely soever thou depreciatest and slightest it, is of high esteem, a rich purchase, a creature of nobler rank than thou art aware of. The wise merchant knows the value of gold and diamonds, though ignorant Indians would part with them for glass beads and tinsel toys. And this leads us to

8. The eighth evidence of the invaluable worth of souls, which is the joy in heaven, and the rage in hell, for the gain and loss of the soul of man.

Christ, who came from heaven, and well knew the frame and disposition of the inhabitants of that city, tells us, that "there "is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner "that repenteth," Luke xv. 7, 10. * No sooner is the heart of a sinner darted with conviction, broken with sorrow for sin, and begins to cry, "men and brethren, what shall I do?" but the news is quickly in heaven, and sets all the city of God a rejoicing at it, as is in the chief city of a kingdom when a young prince is born.

We never read that Christ laughed in all his time on earth; but we read that he once rejoiced in spirit, Luke x. 21. And what was the occasion of that his joy, but the success of the gospel in the salvation of the souls of men? Now, certainly it must be some great good that so effects Christ, and all his angels in heaven at the sight of it; the degree of a wise man's joy is according to the value of the object thereof: No man that is wise will rejoice, and feel his heart leap within him for gladness at a small or common thing.

* As often as we do good, so often the angels are glad, and the devils are sad? and as often as we depart from good, so often the devil rejoices, and the angels are defrauded of their joy. *Aug.*

Digitized by Google

And as there is joy in heaven for the saving, so certainly there is grief and rage in hell for the loss of a soul. No sooner had God, by Paul's ministry, converted one poor Lydia, at Philippi, whither he was called by an immediate express from heaven for that service, but the devil put all the city into an uproar, as if an enemy had landed on their coast; and raised a violent persecution, which quickly drave him thence, Acts xvi. 9, 14, 22.

And, indeed, what are all the fierce and cruel persecutions of God's faithful ministers, but so many efforts of the rage and malice of hell, against them, for plucking souls as so many captives and preys out of his paws? For this he owes them a spight, and will be sure to pay them, if ever he get them at an advantage. But all this joy and grief demonstrates the high and great value of the prize which is won by heaven, and lost by hell.

9. The institution of gospel-ordinances, and the appointment of so many gospel-officers purposely for the saving of souls, is no small evidence of their value and esteem.

No man would light and maintain a lamp fed with golden oil, and keep it burning from age to age, if the work to be done by the light of it were not of a very precious and important nature; what else are the dispensations of the gospel, but lamps burning with golden oil to light souls to heaven? Zech. iv. 2, 3, 4, and 12. compared: A magnificent vision is there presented to the prophet, *viz.* A candlestick of gold with a bowl or cistern upon the top of it, and seven shafts with seven lamps at the ends thereof, all lighted: And that these lamps might have a constant supply of oil, without any accessary human help, there are presented (as growing by the candlestick) two fresh and green olive trees on each side thereof, ver. 3. which do empty out of themselves golden oil, ver. 12. naturally dropping and distilling it into that bowl, and the two pipes thereof to feed the lamps continually. Under this stately emblem you have a lively representation of the spiritual gifts and graces distilled by the Spirit into the ministers of the gospel, for the use and benefit of the church, as you find not only by the angel's exposition of it here, but by the Spirit's allusion to it, and accommodation of it in Rev. xi. 3, 4. See herein what price God puts upon the salvation of souls: Gospel lamps are maintained for their sakes, not with the sweat of ministers brows, or the expence and waste of their spirits, but by the precious gifts and graces of God's Spirit continually dropping into them for the use and service of souls. These ministerial gifts and graces are Christ's ascension-gifts, Eph. iv. 8. "When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men;"

Digitized by Google

and what were the royal gifts of that triumphant day? Why, he "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, "and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body "of Christ." It is an allusion to the Roman triumphs, wherein the conqueror did *spargere missilia*, scatter abroad his treasures among the people. It is reported of the palm-tree, saith one, that when it was first planted in Italy, they watered its roots with wine, to make it take the better with the soil: But God waters our souls with what is infinitely more costly than wine, he waters them with the heart-blood of Christ, and the precious gifts and graces of the Spirit; which certainly he would never do, if they were not of great worth in his eyes. O how many excellent ministers, who were, as it is said of John, burning and shining lights in their places and generations, have spent themselves, and how many are there who are willing to spend, and be spent, as Paul was for the salvation of souls! God is at great expences for them, and therefore puts a very high value upon them.

Now all this respects the soul of man, that is the object of all ministerial labours. The soul is the *terminus actionum ad intra*, the subject upon which God works, and upon which he spends all those invaluable treasures. 'Tis the soul which he aims at, and principally designs and levels all to, and reckons it not too dear a rate to save them at.

No man will dig for common stones with golden mattocks, the instruments that would be worn out being of far greater value than the thing. This may convince us of what worth our souls are, and at what rates they are set in God's book, that such instruments are sent abroad into the world, and such precious gifts and graces, like golden oil, spent continually for their salvation; "Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, all are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. *i. e.* all set apart for the service and salvation of your souls.

10. The great encouragements and rewards God propounds, and promiseth to them that win souls, speak their worth, and God's great esteem of them.

There cannot be a more acceptable service done to God, than for a man to set himself heartily and diligently to the conversion of souls; so many souls as a man instrumentally saves, so many diadems will God crown him withal in the great day. St. Paul calls his converted Philippians *his joy and his crown*, Phil. iv. 1. and tells the converted Thessalonians, they were his

Digitized by Google

" crown of rejoicing in the presence of Jesus Christ at his " coming," 1 Thess. ii. 19. There is a full reward assured by promise to those that labour in this great service, Dan. xii. 3. " And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the " firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the " stars for ever and ever." The wisdom here spoken of, I conceive not to be only that whereby a man is made wise to the salvation of his own soul, but whereby he is also furnished with skill for the saving of other mens souls, according to that, Prov. xi. 30. " He that winneth souls is wise:" And so the latter phrase is exegetical of it, meaning one and the same thing by being wise, and turning many into righteousness: And, to put men upon the study of this wisdom, he puts a very honourable title upon them, calling them מצדיקי רבים, the *justifiers of many*, as in 1 Tim. iv. 16. they are said to save others. Here is singular honour put upon the very instruments employed in this honourable service, and that is not all, but their reward is great hereafter, as well as their honour great at present, they " shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and the stars " for ever and ever." The firmament shines like a sapphire in itself, and the stars and planets more gloriously again; but those that faithfully labour in this work of saving souls shall shine in glory for ever and ever, when the firmament shall be parchedup as a scroll. O what rewards and honours are here to provoke men to the study of saving souls! God will richly recompense all our pains in this work, if we did but only sow the seed in our days, and another enter into our labours, and water what we sowed; so that neither the first hath the comfort of finishing the work, nor the last the honour of beginning it; but one did somewhat towards it in the work of conviction, and the other carried it on to greater maturity and perfection; and so neither the one nor the other began and finished the work singly, yet both shall rejoice in heaven together, John iv. 36.

You see what honour God puts upon the very instruments employed in this work, even the honour to be saviours, under God, of mens soul's, James v. 20. and what a full reward of glory, joy, and comfort, they shall have in heaven, all which speaks the great value of the soul with God. Such encouragements, and such rewards, would never have been propounded, and promised, if God had not a singular estimation of them.

And the more to quicken his instruments to all diligence, in this great work, he works upon their fears as well as hopes; threatens them with hell, as well as encourages them with the hopes of heaven; tells them he will require the blood of all

Digitized by Google

those souls that perish by their negligence: "Their blood (saith "he) will I require at the watchman's hands," Ezek. xxxiii. 6. which are rather thunderbolts, than words, saith Chrysostome. By all which, you see, what a weight God lays upon the saving, or losing of souls: Such severe charges, great encouragements, and terrible threats, had never been proposed in scripture, if the souls of men had not been invaluably precious.

11. It is no small evidence of the precious, and invaluable worth of souls, that God manifests so great, and tender care over them, and is so much concerned about the evil that befals them.

Among many others, there are two things in which the tender care of God, for the good of souls, is manifested.

(1.) In his tenderness over them in times of distress, and danger; as a tender father will not leave his sick child in other hands, but sits up, and watches by himself, and administers the cordials with his own hands; even so the great God expresseth his care, and tenderness. Isa. lvii. 15. "I dwell in the high "and holy place, with him, also, that is of a contrite and humble "spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the "heart of the contrite ones." Behold the condescending tenderness of the highest Majesty! Is a soul ready to faint, and fail, O how soon is God with it, with a reviving cordial in his hand! lest "the spirit should fail before him, and the soul "which he hath made?" as it is ver. 16. Yea, he put it into Christ's commission, "to preach good tidings to the meek, and "to bind up the broken-hearted," Isa. lxi. 1. and not only inserts it in Christ's commission, but gives the same in solemn charge to all his inferior messengers, whom he employs about them. Isa. xxxv. 3. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the "feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be "strong, fear not."

(2.) His special regard to souls, is evidenced in his severe prohibitions to all others to do nothing that may be an occasion of ruin to them. He charges it upon all, "That no man "put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's "way," Rom. xiv. 13. that by the abuse of our own liberty, "we destroy not him for whom Christ died," Rom. xiv. 15. And what doth all this signify, but the precious, and invaluable worth of souls?

12. *Lastly*, It is not the least evidence of the dignity of men's souls, that God hath appointed the whole host of angels to be their guardians, and attendants.

Digitized by Google

"*Are* they not all ministring spirits sent forth to minister for "them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14.

Are they not?] It is not a doubtful question, but the strongest way of affirmation; nothing is surer than that they are.

All] Not one of that heavenly company excepted. The highest angel thinks it no disparagement to serve a soul for whom Christ died; well may they all stoop to serve them, when they see Christ, their Lord, hath stooped, even to death, to save them. They are all of them

Ministring spirits.] Λειτουργικα πνευματα, public officers, to whom their tutelage is committed: To them it belongs to attend, serve, protect and relieve them. The greatest barons, and peers, in the kingdom, think it not below them to wait upon the heir apparent to the crown, in his minority; and no less dignity is here stampt by God upon the souls of men, whom he calls

Heirs of salvation.] And in some respect, nearer to Christ, than themselves are; on this account it is, that the angels delight to serve them. Christ's little ones upon earth have their angels, which always behold the face of God in heaven, Mat. xviii. 10. and therefore saith our Lord there, "Take heed you "despise not one of those little ones;" they are greater persons than you are aware of. Nor is it enough that one angel is appointed to wait upon all, or many of them, but many angels, even a whole host of them, are, sometimes, sent to attend upon one of them. As Jacob was going on his way, the angels of God met him; and when he saw them, he said, "This is "God's host," Gen. xxxii. 1, 2.

The same two offices which belong to a nurse, to whom the father commits his child, belong, also, to the angels of heaven, with respect to the children of God, *viz.* to keep them tenderly whilst they are abroad, and bring them home to their Father's house at last. And how clearly doth all this evince, and demonstrate the great dignity, and value of souls? Was it an argument of the grandeur, and magnificence of king Solomon, that he had two hundred men with targets, and three hundred men with shields of beaten gold, for his ordinary guard, every day? And is it not a mark of far greater dignity than ever Solomon had in all his glory, to have hosts of angels attending us? In comparison with one of this guard, Solomon himself was but a worm, in all his magnificence.

And now lay all these arguments together, and see what they will amount to. You have before you no ordinary creature: For, (1.) It was not produced, as other creatures were, by a

Digitized by Google

mere word of command; but by the deliberation of the great council of heaven. And (2.) Such are the high and noble faculties, and powers found in it, as render it agreeable to, and becoming such a divine Original. Yea, (3.) By reason of these its admirable powers, it becomes a capable subject, both of grace here, and glory hereafter. (4.) Nor is this its capacity in vain; for God hath made glorious preparations for some of them in heaven. (5.) And purchased them for heaven, and heaven for them, at an invaluable price, even the precious blood of Christ. (6.) And stampt immortality upon their actions, as well as natures. (7.) Both worlds contend, and strive for the soul, as a prize of greatest value. (8.) Their conversion to Christ is the triumph of heaven, and rage of hell. (9.) The lamps of gospel-ordinances are maintained over all the reformed Christian world, to light them in their passage to heaven. (10.) Great rewards are propounded to all that shall heartily endeavour the salvation of them. (11.) The care of heaven is exceeding great, and tender over them. And (12.) The heavenly hosts of angels have the charge of them, and reckon it their honour to serve them. These things, duely weighed, bring home the conclusion, with demonstrative clearness, to every man's understanding, *That one soul is of more value than the whole world*; which was the thing to be proved. What remains, is the improvement of this excellent subject, in these following inferences.

Infer. 1. The soul of man appearing to be a creature of such transcendent dignity, and excellency, this truth appears of equal clearness with it; *That it was not made for the body, but the body for it; and therefore it is a vile abuse of the noble, and high born soul, to subject it to the lusts, and enslave it to the drudgery of the inferior, and more ignoble part.*

The very law of nature assigns the most honourable places, and employments, to the most noble, and excellent creatures, and the baser, and inferior, to things of the lowest rank, and quality: The sun, moon, and stars, are placed, by this law, in the heavens; but the *ignis fatuus*, and the glow-worm, in the fens, and ditches. Princes are set upon thrones of glory, the beggars lodged in barns, and stables: and if at any time this order of nature is inverted, and the baser suppress, and perk over the more noble, and honourable beings, it is looked upon as a kind of prodigy, in the civil world. And so Solomon represents it, Eccles. x. 7. "I have seen servants upon horses, "and princes walking as servants upon the earth;" *(i. e.)* I have seen men that are worthy of no better employments than to rub horses heels, in the saddle, with their trappings; and

Digitized by Google

men who deserve to bear rule, and to govern kingdoms; men, who for their great ability, and integrity, deserved to sit at the helm, and moderate the affairs of kingdoms; these have I seen walking as servants upon the earth; and this he calls an evil under the sun, that is, an *ataxy*, confusion, or disorder in the course of nature.

Now there can never be that difference, and vast odds betwixt one man, and another, as there is betwixt the soul and body of every man: A king upon the throne is not so much above a beggar that cries at our doors for a crust, as the soul is above the body; for the soul of a beggar is of the same species, original, and capacity of happiness, with the soul of the most illustrious prince; and sometimes greater excellencies of mind are found in the lowest rank, and order of men. "Bet-"ter is a poor, and wise child, than an old, and foolish king," Eccles. iv. 13. but the soul of the meanest person in the world is better than all the bodies in it; and therefore, to make the noble, and the high-born soul a slave, a mere drudge to the vile body, as the apostle calls it, Phil. iii. 21. "The body of this "vileness;" what is it but to set the beggar on horseback, and make the king lacquey after him on foot?

It was a generous resentment that a * Heathen had of the dignity of his own soul, and a very just abhorrence of so vile an abuse of it, when he said, *I am greater, and born to greater things, than that I should be a slave to my body.*

I know there is a debt of duty the soul owes to its own body, and few souls are to be found too careless, or dilatory, in the discharge thereof; where one soul needs the spur in this case, thousands need the curb. Most souls are over-heated with zeal, for the concerns of the flesh, worn out, and spent in its constant drudgery; their whole life is but a *serving of divers lusts and pleasures*, as the apostle speaks, Tit. iii. 3. Imperious lusts are cruel task-masters, they give the soul no rest; the more provision the soul brings in to satisfy them, the more they rage, like fire, by the addition of more fuel. What a sad sight is it, to see a noble, immortal soul *enslaved*, as the apostle's word is, Tit. i. 7. *to wine? to filthy lucre*, to a thousand sorts of vassalage; like a *tapster* in a common *inn*, now running up-stairs, and then down, at every one's knock, and call.

Μη οινω πολλω δεδουλωμενας.

O what a perpetual hurry, and noise, do thousands of souls

* *Major sum, et ad majora natus, quam ut corporis mei sim mancipium.* Sen.

Digitized by Google

live in: so that they have no time to retire into themselves, and think for what end, and use, they were created, and sent into this world. All their thoughts, all their cares, all their studies, and labours, are taken up about the perishing, clogging, ensnaring body, which must so shortly fall a prey to the worms. How many millions of poor creatures are there that labour, and toil all their life long, for a poor, bare maintenance of their bodies, and never think they have any other business to do in this world!

And how many, of an higher rank, are charmed by a thick succession of fleshly delights, and pleasures, into a deep oblivion of their eternal concerns! So that their whole life is but one entire diversion from the great business, and proper end of it. James v. 5. "Ye have lived in pleasures on earth," living in them, as the fish doth in the water, its proper element, or the eel in the mud. Sometimes it falls out, at the very close of a vain voluptuous life, when they see all their delights, shrinking away at the approaches, and appearance of death, that they begin to be a little startled at the change, which is about to be made upon them; and to cry, O what shall we do now! Ah poor souls! is that a time to think what you shall do, when you are just stepping into the awful state of eternity? O that this had been thought on in season! but you could find no leisure for one such thought. Now you begin to wish time had been rescued out of the hands of the cares, and pleasures of this life, for better purposes; but it is gone, and never more to be recalled.

Infer. 2. *Is the soul so invaluably precious? Then the salvation of the soul is to be the great care, and business of every man in this life.*

Where one thought is spent about this question, *What shall I eat, drink, and put on?* A thousand should be spent about that question, "What shall I do to be saved?" If a treasure of ten, or twenty thousand pounds were committed to your trust, and charge, and for which (in case of loss) you must be responsible; would not your thoughts, cares, and fears, be working night and day about it, till you are satisfied it is safe, and out of danger? And then your mind would be at rest, but not before. Thy soul, O man, is more worth than the crowns, and treasures of all the princes in the world! If all their exchequers were drained, and all their crown-jewels sold to their full value, they could never make up a half ransom for the soul of the poorest and meanest man. This invaluable treasure is committed to your charge;

Digitized by Google

if it be lost, you are lost for ever. That which St. Matthew calls the losing of the soul in my text, St. Luke calls *losing himself*; if the soul be lost, the man is lost: The body is but as a boat fastened to the stern of a stately ship, if the ship sink, the boat follows it.

O, therefore, what thoughts, what fears, what cares should exercise the minds of men, day and night, till their precious souls are out of all danger: Methinks the sound of this text should ring a perpetual alarm in the ears of careless sinners, and make them hasten to the insurance-office, as merchants do, who have great adventures in danger at sea. It was counsel given once to a king, and worthy to be pressed upon all, from the king to the beggar, to ruminate these words of Christ one quarter of an hour every day; "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the "whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man "give in exchange for his soul?" Certainly it would make men slacken their pace and cool themselves in their hot, and earnest pursuit of the trifles of this world, and convince them, that they have somewhat else to do of far greater importance.

It was not without great and weighty reason, therefore, that the apostle Peter exhorts to all diligence to make our calling, and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10. There are two words in this text of extraordinary weight, *Give all diligence*; the word is *study*, the utmost intention of the mind, pondering, and comparing things in the thoughts, valuing reasons for, and objections against the point before us, this is study; and such as calls for all diligence where the subject-matter is (as, to be sure, here it is) of the greatest importance: And what is the subject-matter of all this study, and diligence? Why, it is the most solemn of all works that ever came under the hand of man, to make our calling and election *sure*, firm, stable, or fixed, as a building raised upon a square, and strong foundation; or as a conclusion is sure, when regularly drawn from certain, and indubitable promises: There can never be too much care, too much study, or pains, about that which can never be too well secure.

Σπουδάσατε.

Βέβαιον.

Many souls never spent one solemn hour in a close and serious debate about this matter; others have taken a great deal of pains about it; they have broken many nights sleep, poured out many prayers, made many a deep search into their own hearts, walked with much conscientious watchfulness, and tenderness, proposed many a serious case of conscience to the most judicious, and skilful ministers, and Christians; and, after all,

Digitized by Google

the security is not such as fully satisfies: And probably one reason of it may be the great weight wherewith the matters of their salvation lie upon their spirits. O that these soul concerns did bear upon all, as they do upon some! It requires more time, more thoughts, more prayers to make these things sure, than most are aware of.

Infer. 3. *If the soul be so precious, then certainly it is the special care of heaven, that which God looks more particularly after, than any other creature on earth.*

There is an active, vigilant providence, that superintends every creature upon earth; there is not the most despicable, diminutive creature that lives in the world, left without the line of providence: God is therefore said to give them all their meat in due season, and for that end they all wait upon him, Psal. civ. 27. who, as a great and provident house-keeper orders daily, convenient provisions for all his family, even to the least, and lowest among them: The smallest insects, and gnats which swarm so thick in the air, and of the usefulness of whose Being it is hard to give an account; yet as the incomparably learned * Dr. More well observes, these all find nourishment in the world, which would be lost if they did not, and are again convenient nourishment themselves to others that prey upon them.

But man is the peculiar, special care of God, and the soul of man much more than the body. Hence Christ fortifies the faith of Christians, against all distrusts of divine providence, even from their excellency above other creatures.

Mat. x. 31. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows;" and Mat. vi. 26. your heavenly Father feeds the fowls of the air, "and are ye not much better than they?" and ver. 30. he clothes the grass of the field, "and shall he not much more "clothe you?" and so the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 9. "Doth God "take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes? "For our sakes, no doubt, this is written." In all which places we have the dignity of man above all animals and vegetables, in respect of the natural excellency of his reasonable soul, but especially the gracious endowments of it, which endear it far more to its Maker; this is the very hinge of the argument, and a firm ground for the believer's faith of God's tender care over both parts, but especially the soul. The body of a believer is God's creature, as well as his soul; but that being of less value, hath not such a degree of care and tenderness expressed

* Antidote, &c. p. 82.

Digitized by Google

towards it, as the soul hath: the father's care is not so much for the child's cloaths, as it is for the child himself. Besides, the immediate wants and troubles of the soul, which are *idopathetical*, are far more sharp and pinching, than those it suffers upon the body's account, which are but *sympathetical*; and therefore, whenever such an excellent creature, as a sanctified soul, which is in Christ, or a soul designed to be sanctified, which is moving towards Christ, falls under those heavy pressures and distresses, (as it often does) and is ready to fail; let it be assured, its merciful Creator will not fail to relieve, support, revive, and deliver it, as often as it shall fall into those deep distresses.

Hear how his compassionate tenderness is expressed towards distressed souls. Isa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her suck-"ing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of "her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee."

Sooner shall a *woman*, the more tender sex, forget, (not the nurse-child, that only sucks her breast, but) the child, yea, the son of her womb, and that not when grown and placed abroad, but whilst it hangs upon her breast, and draws love from her heart, as well as milk from her breast; than God will forget a soul that fears him. Let gracious souls fortify their faith, therefore, in the Divine care, by considering with what a peculiar eye of estimation and care, God looks upon them above all other creatures in the world: only beware you so eye not the natural, or spiritual excellencies of your souls, as to expect mercy for the sake thereof, as if your souls were worthy for whose sake God should do this: no, no, sin hath nonsuited that plea, all is of free grace, not of debt: but he minds us to what reputation the new creation brings the soul with its God.

Infer. 4. *If the soul of man be so precious, how precious and dear to all believers, should the Redeemer and Saviour of their precious souls be?*

"Unto you therefore that believe, he is precious," saith the apostle, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Though he be yet out of our sight, he should never be one whole hour together out of our hearts and thoughts. 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom having not seen ye love; whom "though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." "The very name of "Christ," saith † Bernard, "is honey in the mouth, melody "in the ear, and a very jubilee in the heart." The blessed martyr, Mr. Lambert, made this his motto, None but Christ,

† *Mel in ore, melos in aure, jubilum in corde.* Bern.

Digitized by Google

none but Christ. Molinus was seldom observed to mention his name without dropping eyes. Julius Palmer, in the midst of the flames, moved his scorched lips, and was heard to say, Sweet Jesus, and fell asleep. Paul fastens upon his name, as a bee upon a sweet flower, and mentions it no less than ten times in the compass of ten verses, 1 Cor. i. as if he knew not how to leave it.

There is a twofold preciousness of Christ, one in respect of his essential excellency and glory; in this respect he is glorious, as the only begotten Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image or character of his person, Heb. i. the other in respect of his relative usefulness, and suitableness to all the needs, and wants of poor sinners; as he is *the Lord our righteousness*, made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. None discern this preciousness of Christ, but those that have been convinced of sin, and have apprehended the wrath to come, the just demerit of sin, and fled for refuge to the hope set before them; and to them he is precious indeed. Consider him as a Saviour from wrath to come, and he will appear the most lovely and desireable in all the world to your souls: he that understands the value of his own soul, the dreadful nature of the wrath of God, the near approaches of this wrath to his own soul, and the astonishing love of Christ, in delivering him from it, by bearing that wrath in his place and room, in his own person; cannot chuse but estimate Christ above ten thousand worlds.

Infer. 5. *How great a trust and charge lieth upon them to whom the care of souls is committed, and from whom an account for other mens, as well as their own souls shall certainly be required?*

Ministers are appointed of God to watch for the souls of their people, and that as men that must give an account, Heb. xiii. 17. The word here translated *watch* *, signifies such watchfulness, as that of shepherds who keep their flocks by night in places infested by wolves, and watch whole nights together for their safety. If a man were a keeper only of sheep and swine, it were no great matter if the wolf now and then carried away one whilst he slept; but ministers have charge of souls, one of which, as Christ assures us in the text, *is more worth than the whole world.* Hear what one speaks upon this point.

* Αγρυπνια est noctes in somnis agere, quod solent viri βουλιφοροι, pernoxio ilicitudo.

Digitized by Google

'* God purchased the church with his own blood: O what 'an argument is here to quicken the negligent! and what an 'argument to condemn those that will not be quickened up to 'their duty by it! O, saith one of the antient doctors, if Christ 'had but committed to my keeping one spoonful of his blood 'in a fragil glass, how curiously should I preserve it, and how 'tender should I be of that glass! If then he have committed to 'me the purchase of that blood, should I not carefully look to 'my charge?

'What, sirs, shall we despise the blood of Christ? shall we 'think it was shed for them that are not worthy our care? O 'then let us hear those arguments of Christ, whenever we feel 'ourselves grow dull and careless. Did I die for them, and wilt 'thou not look after them? were they worth my blood, and 'are they not worth thy labour? Did I come down from hea'ven to earth, *to seek and to save that which is lost*, and wilt 'not thou go to the next door, or street, or village, to seek 'them? How small is thy labour or condescension to mine? 'I debased myself to this, but it is thy honour to be so em'ployed.'

Let not that man think to be saved by the blood of Christ himself, that makes light of precious souls, who are the purchase of that blood.

And no less charge lieth upon parents, to whom God hath committed the care of their childrens souls; and masters that have the guardianship of the souls, as well as the bodies of their families; the command is laid express upon you, that they sanctify God's sabbaths, Exod. xx. 10. to command your household in the way of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19.

O parents, consider with yourselves what strong engagements ly upon you to do all you are capable of doing for the salvation of the precious souls of your dear children. Remember, their souls are infinitely of more value than their bodies: that they came into the world under sin and condemnation; that you were the instruments of propagating that sin to them, and bringing them into that misery; that you know their dispositions, and how to suit them better than others can; that the bonds of nature give you singular advantages to prevail, and be successful in your exhortations, beyond what any others have; that you are always with them, and can chuse opportunities which others cannot; that you and they must shortly part, and never meet again, till you meet at the judgment-seat

* Gildas Salvian, p. 260.

Digitized by Google

of Christ; that it will be an unconceivably dreadful day to see them stand at Christ's left hand among the cursed and condemned, there cursing the day that ever they were born of such ignorant and negligent, such careless and cruel parents, as took no care to instruct, reprove, or exhort them. O who can think, without horror, of the cries and curses of his own child in hell, cast away by the very instrument of his being!

Is this the love you bear them, to betray them to eternal misery? Was there no other provision to be made but for their bodies? Did you think you had fully acquitted your duty, when you had got an estate for them? O that God would effectually touch your hearts with a becoming sense of the value and danger of their souls, and your own too, in the neglect of that great and solemn trust committed to you with respect to them! And you, masters, consider, though God hath set you above, and your servants below, yet are their souls equally precious with your own: they have another Master that expects service from them, as well as you. Do not only allow them time, but give them your exhortations, and commands, not to neglect their own souls, whilst they attend your business: think not your business will prosper the less because it is in the hand of a praying servant; their souls are of greater concernment than any business of yours can be.

Infer. 6. *Are souls so precious? Then certainly the means and instruments of their salvation must be exceeding precious too, and the removal of them a sore judgment.*

The dignity of the subject gives value to the instruments employed about it. It is ordinary mercy for souls to come into such a part of the world, and in such a time as furnisheth them with the best helps for salvation. Ordinances and ministers receive their value, not from their Author, but from their Object: they that have a dignity stamped upon them, by their usefulness to the souls of men, Acts xx. 32. it is the *seed* of life, 1 Pet. i. 23. the regenerating instrument. It is the *bread of life*, and Job xxiii. 12. more than our necessary food. The word is a *light*, shining in the dark world, to direct our souls through all the snares, laid for them, unto glory. It is the soul's cordial in all fainting fits, Psal. cxix. 50. What shall I say of the word and ordinances of God? The sun that shines in heaven to give us light, the fountains, springs, and rivers, that stream for our refreshment, the corn and cattle on the earth, yea, the very air we breathe in, is not so useful, so necessary, so precious to our bodies, as the word is to our souls.

It cannot therefore but be a sore judgment, and a dreadful

Digitized by Google

token of God's indignation and wrath, to have a restraint, or scarcity of the means of salvation among us; but should there be (which God in mercy prevent) a removal and total loss of these things, wrath would then come upon us to the uttermost. What will the condition of precious souls be, when the means of salvation are cut off from them? when that famine, worse than of bread and water, is come upon them? Amos viii. 11. When the ark of God (the symbol of his presence) was taken, it is said, 1 Sam iv. 13. "That all the city cried out." When Paul took his leave of Antioch, and told them they should see his face no more, how did the poor Christians lament and mourn? as cut at the heart, by that killing word, Acts. xx. 37, 38. It made Christ's bowels to yern, and move within him, when he saw the multitude scattered as sheep having no shepherd, Matth. ix. 36.

Matthew Paris tells us, in the year 1072, when preaching was suppressed at Rome, letters were framed as coming from hell, wherein the devil gave them thanks for the multitude of souls sent to him that year. But we need no letters from hell, we have a sad account from heaven, in what a sad state those souls are left, from whom the means of salvation are cut off: "Where "no vision is, the people perish," Prov. xxix. 18. and Hos. iv. 6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

It is sad, when those stars that guide souls to Christ, (as that which the wise-men saw did) are set, and wandering stars shall shine in their places. O if God remove the golden candlestick out of its place, what but the desolation and ruin of millions of souls must follow?

We account it insufferable cruelty for a man to undertake the piloting of a ship, full of passengers, who never learnt his compass; or an ignorant *Empiric*, to get his living by killing mens bodies; but much more lamentable will the state of souls be, if ever they fall, (which God in mercy prevent) into the hands of Popish guides, or *blind leaders of the blind*.

Infer. 7. *If the soul be of so precious a nature, it can never live upon such base and vile food as earthly things are.*

The Apostle, Phil. iii. 8, 9. calls the things of this world * *Dogs meat*; and judge if that be proper food for such noble, and high-born creatures as our souls are. An immaterial being can never live upon material things; they are no bread for souls, as the prophet speaks, Isa. lv. 2. "Why do ye spend money

* The Greek word Σκυβαλον, for Κυνοβαλον, signifies that which being rejected by us is thrown to dogs.

Digitized by Google

(*i. e.* Time and pains, thought and cares) "for that which is "not Bread?" Your souls can no more live upon carnal, than your bodies on spiritual things. Earthly things have a double defect in them, by reason whereof they are called things of nought, Amos vi. 13. of no worth or value; they are neither suituable nor durable, and therefore, in the soul's eye, not valuable.

1. They are not suitable. What are corn and wine, gold and silver, pleasures and honours, to the soul? The body, and bodily senses, can find somewhat of refreshment in them; but not the spirit: That which is bread to the body, affords no more nourishment to the soul than wind or ashes, Isa. xliv. 20. "He feedeth of ashes." "‡ Ashes are that light, and dry mat-"ter, into which fewel is reduced by the fire;" the fewel, before it was burnt, had nothing in it fit for nourishment; or if the sap or juice, that was in it, might in any respect be useful that way, yet all that is devoured, and licked up by the fire, and not the least nutriment left in the ashes? And such are all earthly things to the soul of man: "I am the bread of life," saith Christ. A soul can feed, and feast itself upon Christ, and the promises; these are things full of marrow and fatness, substantial, and proper soul-nutriment.

2. As earthly things are no way suitable to the soul, so neither are they durable. The apostle reduceth all earthly things to three heads, "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, *and* the "pride of life," 1 John ii. 16. he calls them all by the name of that which gives the lustre, and beauty to them, and pronounceth them all fading, transitory vanities, they all pass away: as time, so these things that are measured by time, are *in fluxu continuo*, always going, and at last will be all gone. Now the soul being of an immortal nature, and these things of a perishing nature; it must necessarily, and unavoidably follow, that the soul must over-live them all; and if it will do so, what a dismal case are those souls in, for whom no other provision is made, but that on which it cannot subsist whilst it hath them, no more than the body can upon ashes or wind? and if it could, yet they will shortly fail it, and pass away for ever. So then it is beyond debate, that there lies a plain necessity upon every man to make provision, in time, of things more suitable, and durable than earthly treasures are, or the soul must perish, as to its comfort, to all eternity.

Hence is that weighty counsel of him that came to save them,

‡ *Cinis est crassior illa materia in quam combustum redigitur.*

Digitized by Google

Luke xii. 33. "Provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a "treasure in heaven, that faileth not," *(i. e.)* a happiness which will last as long as your souls last. Certainly, the moth eaten things of this world are no provision for immortal spirits, and yet multitudes think of no other provision for them, but live as if they had nothing to do in this world but to get an estate.

Alas! what are all these things to the soul? They signify somewhat, indeed, to the body, and that but for a little time; for, after the resurrection, the bodies of the saints become spiritual in qualities, and no more need these material things, than the angels do: It is madness, therefore, to be so intent upon cares for the body, as to neglect the soul; but to ruin the soul, and drown it in perdition, for the sake of these provisions for the flesh, is the height of madness.

Infer. 8. *If the soul be so invaluably precious, then it is a rational, and well advised resolution, and practice, to expose all other things to hazard, yea, to certain loss, for the preservation of the more precious soul.*

It is better our bodies, and all their comfors, should perish, than that our souls should perish for their sakes. Nature teaches us to offer a hand, or arm, to the stock of a sword, to save a blow from the head, or put by a thrust at the heart. It is recorded, to the praise of those three worthies, Dan. iii. 28. "That they yielded their bodies, that they might not serve, nor "worship any God, except their own God." By this rule, all the martyrs of Christ governed themselves, still slighting, and exposing to destruction, their bodies, and estates, to preserve their souls, reckoning to save nothing, by religion, but their souls, and that they had lost nothing, if they could save them; "They loved not their lives unto the death," Rev. xii. 11.

Then do we live like Christians, when the care of our bodies is swallowed up, and subdued by that of our souls, and all creature-loves by the love of Christ. Those blessed souls hated their own bodies, and counted them their enemies, when they would draw them from Christ, and his truths, and plunge their souls into guilt and danger. This was the result of all their debates with the flesh, in the hour of temptation; cannot we live but to the dishonour of Christ, and the ruin of our own souls, by sinful compliance against our consciences; then welcome the worst of deaths, rather than such a life.

Look into the stories of the martyrs, and you shall find this was the rule they still governed themselves by; a dungeon, a stake, a gibbet, any thing, rather than guilt upon the inner-

Digitized by Google

man: death was welcome, even in its most dreadful form, to escape ruin to their precious, and immortal souls. One kissed the apparitor, that brought him the tidings of death. Another being advised, when he came to the critical point, on which his life depended, to have a care of himself: so I will, said he, I will be as careful as I can of my best self, my soul. These men understood the value, and precious worth of their own souls; certainly, we shall never prove courageous, and constant in sufferings, till we understand the worth of our souls, as they did. Consider and compare these sufferings in a few obvious particulars, and then determine the matter in thine own breast.

(1.) How much easier it is to endure the torments of men in our bodies, than to feel the terrors of God in our consciences. Can the creature strike with an arm like God? O think what it is for the wrath of God to come into a man's bowels like water, and like oil into his bones, as the expression is, Psal. cix. 18. Sure there is no compare betwixt the strokes of God and men.

(2.) The sufferings of the body are but for a moment. When the proconsul told Polycarp that he would tame him with fire, he replied, Your fire shall burn but for the space of an hour, and then it shall be extinguished; but the fire that shall devour the wicked will never be quenched. The sufferings of a moment are nothing to eternal sufferings.

(3.) Sufferings for Christ are usually sweetened and made easy by the consolations of the spirits; but hell torments have no relief, they admit of no ease.

(4.) The life that you shall live in that body, for whose sake you have damned your souls, will not be worth the having; it will be a life without comfort, light or joy; and what is there in life, separate from the joy and comfort of life?

(5.) In a word, if you sacrifice your bodies for God and your souls, freely offer them up in love to Christ and his truth, your souls will joyfully receive and meet them again at the resurrection of the just; but, if your poor souls be now ensnared and destroyed by your fond indulgence to your bodies, you will leave them at death despairing, and meet them at the resurrection howling.

Infer. 9. To conclude, *If the soul be so invaluably precious, how great and irreparable a loss, must the loss of a soul to all eternity be!*

There is a double loss of the soul of man, the one in Adam, which loss is recoverable by Christ; the other by final impeni-

Digitized by Google

tence, and unbelief, cutting it off from Christ: and this is irreparable, and irrecoverable. Souls lost by Adam's sin, are within the reach of the arms of Christ; but in the shipwreck of personal infidelity, there is no plank to save the soul so cast away: of all losses, this is the most lamentable, yet what more common; O what a shriek doth the unregenerate soul make, when it sees whither it must go, and that there is no remedy! Three cries are dreadful to hear on earth, yet all three are drowned, by a more terrible cry in the other world; the cry of a condemned prisoner at the bar, the cry of drowning seamen, and passengers, in a shipwreck, the cries of soldiers conquered in the field; all these are fearful cries, yet nothing to that of a soul cast away to all eternity, and lost in the depth of hell.

If a man, as Chrysostom well observes, lose an eye, an arm, a hand, or leg, it is a great loss; but yet if one be lost, there is another to help him: for *omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, God hath given us all those members double; *Animam vero unam*, but we have but one soul, and if that be damned, there is not another to be saved.

And it is no small aggravation to this loss, that it was a wilful loss; we had the offers, and means of salvation plentifully afforded us; we were warned of this danger, over and over; we were intreated, and beseeched, upon the knee of importunity, not to throw away our souls, by an obstinate rejection of Christ, and grace; we saw the diligence, and care of others, for the salvation of their souls, some rejoicing in the comfortable assurance of it, and others giving all diligence to make their *calling and election sure:* we knew that our souls were as capable of blessedness, as any of those that are enjoying God in heaven, or panting after that enjoyment on earth; yea, some souls that are now irrecoverably gone, and many others who are going after them, once were, and now are not far from the kingdom of God: they had convictions of sin, a sense of their loss, and miserable state; they began to treat with Christ in prayer, to converse with his ministers, and people, about their condition, and after all this, even when they seemed to have clean escaped the snares of Satan, to be again entangled, and overcome; when even come to the harbour's mouth, to be driven back again, and cast away upon the rocks. O what a loss will this be!

O thou that createdst souls with a capacity to know, love, and enjoy thee for ever; who out of thine unsearchable grace sentest thine own Son out of thy bosom to seek, and save that

Digitized by Google

which was lost, pity those poor souls that cannot pity themselves: let mercy yet interpose itself, betwixt them, and eternal ruin; awaken them out of their pleasant slumber, though it be at the brink of damnation, lest they perish, and there be none to deliver them.

Doct. 2. *How precious and invaluable soever the soul of man is, it may be lost, and cast away for ever.*

This proposition is supposed, and implied in our Saviour's words in the text, and plainly expressed in Mat. vii. 13. "Wide "is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, "and many there be which go in thereat." The way to hell is thronged with passengers, it is a beaten road, one draws another along with him, and scoffs at those that are afraid to follow; 1 Pet. iv. 4. *Facilis descensus averni;* it is pleasant sailing with wind, and tide. Some derive the word *hell* from a verb which signifies to carry, or thrust in; millions go in, but none return thence: millions are gone down already, and millions more are coming after, as fast as Satan, and their own lusts, can hurry them onward. You read not only of single persons, but whole nations drowned in this gulph. Psal. ix. 17. "The wicked "shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." How rare is the conversion of a soul in the dark places of the earth, where the sound of the gospel is not heard? The devil drives them, in droves, to destruction, scarce a man reluctating or drawing back *.

And though some nations enjoy the inestimable privilege of the gospel of salvation, yet multitudes of precious souls perish, notwithstanding, sinking into hell daily, as it were, betwixt the merciful arms of a saviour stretched out to save them. The light of salvation is risen upon us, but Satan draws the thick curtains of ignorance, and prejudice, about the multitude, that not a beam of saving light can shine into their hearts. 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are "lost: in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds "of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious "gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto "them."

If our gospel.] Ours, not by way of institution, as the authors, but by way of dispensation, as the ministers, and preachers of it; and, certainly, it was never preached with that clear-

* The Latin word *Infernus*, *i. e.* Hell, is derived from a verb signifying to thrust in, because the wicked are so hurried and cast headlong into it, that they can never ascend out of it.

Digitized by Google

ness, authority, and efficacy by any mere man, as it was by Paul, and the rest of the apostles; and yet the gospel so powerfully preached, is by him here supposed to

Be hid.] If not as to the general light, and superficial knowledge of it, yet as to its saving influence, and converting efficacy upon their hearts; this never reacheth home to the souls, and spirits of multitudes that hear it, but it is never finally so hidden, except

To them that are lost.] So that all those to whom the converting, and saving power of the gospel never comes, whatever names, and reputations they may have among men, yet this text looks upon them all as a lost generation: They may have as many amiable, homiletical virtues, as sweet, and lovely natures, as clear and piercing eyes, in all other things, as any others; but they are such, however,

Whose eyes the god of this world hath blinded.] *Satan* is here called the god of this world, not properly, but by a mimesis; because he challenges to himself the honour of a god, and hath a world of subjects that obey him; and, to secure their obedience, he blinds them, that they may never see a better way or state, than that he hath drawn them into. Therefore he is called the ruler of the darkness of this world, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience. The eye of the soul is the mind, that thinking, considering, and reasoning power of the soul; this is, as the philosophers truly call it, the τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, the leading faculty to all the rest, the guide to all the other faculties, which, in the order of nature, follow this their leader: If this be blinded, the will, which is *caeca potentia*, a blind power in itself, and all the affections blindly following the blind, all must needs fall into the ditch. And this is the case of the far greater part of even the professing world. Let us suppose a number of blind men upon an island, where there are many smooth paths, all leading to the top of a perpendicular cliff, and these blind men going on continually, some in one path, and some in another, but all in some one of those many paths which lead to the brink of their ruin, which they see not; it must needs follow, if they all move forward, the whole number will in a short time, be cast away, the island cleared, and its inhabitants dead, and lost in the bottom of the sea. This is the case of the unregenerate world; they are now upon this habitable spot of earth, environed with the vast ocean of eternity; there are multitudes of paths leading to eternal misery; one man takes this way, and another that, as it is Isa. liii. 6. "We have turned every one to his own way;" one to

Digitized by Google

the way of pride, another to the way of covetousness, a third to the way of persecution, a fourth to the way of civility, and morality; and so on they go, not once making a stand, or questioning to what end it will bring them, till at last over they go, at death, and we hear no more of them in this world: And thus one generation of sinners follows another, and they that come after approve, and applaud those miserable wretches that went before them. Psal. xlix. 13. and so hell fills, and the world empties its inhabitants daily into it. Now I will make it my work, out of a dear regard to the precious souls of men, and in hope to prevent (which the Lord in mercy grant) the loss, and ruin of some, under whose eyes this discourse shall fall, to note some of the principle ways in which precious souls are lost, and to put such bars into them, as I am capable to put; and, among many more, I will set a mark upon these following twelve paths, wherein millions of souls have been lost, and millions more are confidently, and securely following after, among which, 'tis likely, some are within one step, one day, or hour, to their eternal downfal, and destruction. There is but one way in all the world, to save, and preserve the precious souls of men, but there are many ways to lose, and destroy them: It is here, as it is in our natural birth, and death, but one way into the world, but a multitude out of it. And first,

The first way to hell discovered.

1. And to begin, where, indeed, the ruin of every man doth begin, it will be found, that *an ill education is the high way to destruction:* vice need not be planted; if the gardener neglect to dress, sow, and manure his garden, he need not give the weeds a greater advantage; but if he also scatter the seed of hemloc, docks, and nettles into it, he spoils it, and makes it fit for nothing. Many parents, and those godly too, are guilty of too many neglects, through carelessness, worldly incumbrances, or fond indulgence; and whilst they neglect the season of sowing better seed, the devil takes hold of it; if they will not improve it, he will: If they teach them not to pray, he will teach them to curse, swear and lie; if they put not the bible, or catechism in their hands, he will put obscene ballads into them: And thus the offspring of many godly parents turn into degenerate plants, and prove a generation that know not the God of their fathers. This debauched age can furnish us with too many sad instances hereof. Thus they are spoiled in the bud; simple ignorance in youth, becomes affected, and wilful ignorance in age; blushing sins in children, become impudent in age, and

Digitized by Google

all this for want of a timely, and prudent preventing care. Others, there are, of the rude and ignorant multitude, who are bred themselves, much like the beasts they daily converse withal; and so they are fitly described, Job xxx. 6, 7. Go into their houses, and you may sooner find in the window, or upon the shelf, a pack of cards, than a bible or a catechism; their beds, and tables, differ little, or not at all, from the stalls, and cribs where beasts lie down, and feed in respect of any worship of God among them; or if, for fashion-sake, a few words be huddled over, in the evening, when their bodies are tired, the man saith something, he scarce knows what, the wife is asleep in one corner, the children in another, and the servants in a third. This is the education multitudes of parents give their children all the week, and when the sabbath comes, the most they learn to know at church, is, where their own seatstands, and that it is necessary to speak with such a neighbour after prayers, about such or such a bargain, or business for the next week.

And others there are, who breed their children as profanely, as these do sottishly; teaching them, by their examples, the newest oaths, that were last minted in hell, and to revile, and scoff all serious godliness, and the sincere professors of it, smiling to hear with what an emphasis they can talk in the dialect of devils, and how wittily they can droll upon godly ministers, and Christians.

Such families are nurseries for hell; and though God, by an extraordinary hand of providence, now and then snatches a soul, by conversion, from among them, as a brand out of the fire; yet, generally, they die as they live, going "to the generation "of their fathers, where they shall never see light," Psal. xlix. 19. I know education, and regeneration, are two things; but I also know one is frequently made the "instrument of working "the other, and that the * savour of what first seasons our "youth (generally) abides to old age," Prov. xxii. 6. We may observe, all the world over, how tenacious men are of that which is πατροπαράδοτον, delivered to them by their parents. O what a cut must it be, to the heart of that father whose son's life shall tell his conscience what a profane son's lips once told his father to his face! "If I have done evil, I have learnt it of "you †." Had they felt more of your prudent correction, it might have prevented their destruction. Prov. xxiii. 14. "Thou "shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from

* *Quo semel est imbuta recens, &c.*
† *Si male feci, a te didici.*

Digitized by Google

"hell." That this is a common beaten path to hell, is beyond all question; but how to bar it up, and stop the multitudes that are engaged in it to their own ruin, this is the labour, this is the work. I cannot be large, but I will offer a few weighty considerations.

The first way to hell barred.

1. Let all parents consider, what a fearful thing it is to be the instruments of ruining, for ever, those that received their beings instrumentally from them, and to seek whose good they stand obliged, by all the laws of God, and nature.

In vain are all your cares, and studies for their bodies, whilst their souls perish, for want of knowledge. You rejoiced at their birth, but they will have cause to curse the day they were born of you, and say, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and "the night in which I was conceived." You were sollicitous for their bodies, but careless of their souls; earnest to see them rich, but indifferent whether they were gracious; you neglected to teach them the way of salvation, but the devil did not neglect to teach them the way of sin. You will one day wish you had never been parents, when the doleful cries of your damned children shall ring such notes as these in your ears: 'O cursed father! O cruel, merciless mother! whose examples 'have drawn me after you, into all this misery. You had time 'enough, and motives enough, to have warned me of this 'place, and misery, whilst my heart was tender, and my affec-'tions pliable: Had it not been as easy to have put a bible, as 'a play-book before me? To have chastised me when I pro-'voked God, by sin, as when I provoked you about a trifle? 'One word, spoken in season, might have saved my soul; one 'reproof, wisely given, and set on by your example, might 'have preserved me. Had it not been the same pains to have 'asked me, child, what wilt thou do to be saved? As, what 'wilt thou do to live in the world? Or had I but observed any 'serious religion in you, had I but found, or heard my father, 'or mother upon their knees, in prayer, it might have awaken-'ed me to a consideration of my condtion. In my youth I was 'shame-faced, fearful, credulous, and apt to imitate; had you 'but had wisdom, as other parents have, to have taken hold of 'any of these handles in time, you had rescued my soul from 'hell. Nay, so cruel have you been to your own child, that you 'allowed me no time (if I had had a disposition) for any exercise 'of religion; yea, you have quenched and stifled the sparks of 'convictions, and better inclinations, that sometimes were in

Digitized by Google

'my heart. O happy had it been, if I had never been born of 'you, or seen your faces.' This must be the result, and issue of your negligence, except God, by some other hand (which is no thanks to you) rescue them from their impending ruin.

2. Let all children, whose unhappy lot it is to be born of, and educated by, carnal and irreligious parents, consider, God hath endued them with reason, and a conscience of their own, to enable them to make a better choice than their parents did, and that there is no taking sanctuary from the wrath of God in their parent's examples. We read, in 1 Kings xiv. 13. of a good Abijah, "in whom was found some good thing towards "the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam." Here was a child that would not follow his wicked father to hell, though he had both the authority of a father, and of a king over him. "You must honour your parents, but still you must "prefer your God before them ‡." God will never lay it to your account as your sin, but place it to the account of your duty, and comfort, that you refused to follow them in the paths of sin, and destruction. No law of God, no tie of nature binds you to obey their commands, or tread in their steps, farther than they command in God's authority, and name, and walk in his ways. Your temptations, indeed, are strong, and disadvantages great; but the greater will the mercy of your deliverance be: It will be no plea for you, at the judgment-seat, to say, Lord, my father, or mother did so, and so, before me, and I thought I might safely follow them; or thus, and thus, they commanded me, and I thought I was bound, by thy command, to obey them. Therefore look to your own souls, if they are so desperate as to cast away their own. If some children had not minded their own salvation, more than their parents minded it, they had never been saved.

3. Let this consideration work upon the hearts, and bowels of all feridus Christians, to pity, and help those that are like to perish under this temptation; and if their parents be so ignorant, that they cannot, or so negligent, that they do not instruct and warn their own children; you that at any time have an opportunity to help them, have compassion on them, and do it. 'Tis true, they are none of your children by nature; but would it not be a singular honour, and comfort to you, if God should make them so by grace? Thousands of children (and, it may be some of you) are more indebted to mere strangers, upon this account, than to their nearest relations; you know not how

‡ *Amandus genitor, sed præponendus Creator.*

Digitized by Google

much good an occasional word may do them: All have not ability to be so publicly useful this way, as a late worthy minister of our own nation hath been, who, in compassion to the dark, and barbarous corners in Wales, where ignorance, and poverty shut up the way of salvation to them, at a vast expence procured the translation, and printing of the bible in their own tongue, and freely sent it among them. O you that have the bowels of Christians in you, pity, and help them! What is it, for the saving of a precious soul, to drop a serious exhortation, as you have opportunity, upon them, to bestow a bible, or suitable book upon them? Believe it, these little sums of shillings, and pence, so bestowed, will stand for more, in the *audit day*, than all the hundreds, and thousands, other ways expended.

The second way to hell discovered.

II. A second way to hell, in which multitudes are found hastening to their own damnation, is, the way of affected ignorance. The generality of people, even in a land enlightened with the gospel, are found grosly ignorant of Christ, the true, and only way to heaven, and of repentance, and faith, the only way to Christ; and thus the people perish for want of knowledge, Hos. iv. 6. if the tree of knowledge had been hedged in from the common people, as it is in popish countries; and it had been criminal to find a bible in our houses, there might have been some cloak, and pretence for our ignorance: But to be stupidly ignorant of the most obvious, plain, and necessary truths, and yet bred up among bibles, and ministers! O how ominous a darkness is this, foreboding the blackness of darkness for ever! For if the hiding of the gospel from the hearts of men be a token to them that they are lost souls, how much notional light soever they may have; much more must they be lost to all intents, from whose hearts, and heads too, it is judicially hidden. They that know not God, are in the catalogue of the damned, 2 Thess. i. 8. and if this be life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; then this must be death eternal, to be grosly and affectedly ignorant both of God, the end, and Christ, the way, by the rule of true opposition, John xvii. 3.

Look over the several countries in the professing world; go into the families of country farmers, day labourers, and poor people, and except here and there a family, or person, into whose heart God hath graciously shined; what barbarous, brutish ignorance overspreads them: They converse, from morning to night, with beasts, though they have souls, which are

Digitized by Google

fit companions for angels, and capable of sweet converse with God. The earth hath opened her mouth, and swallowed up all their time, strength, thoughts, and souls, as it did the bodies of Corah, and his company. They know the value of a horse, or cow, but know not the worth of Christ, pardon, or their own souls: They mind daily what work they have to do with their hands, but forget all they have to do upon their knees; their whole care is to pay their fine, or rent to their landlord, but not a thought who shall pay their debts to God. They are so far from putting unnecessary business aside, to make way for the service of God, that God's service is put aside as an unnecessary business, to make way for the world: The world holds them fast till they are asleep, and will be sure to visit them, as soon as their eyes are open, that there may be no vacancy, or door of opportunity left open for a thought of their souls, or another life, to slip in: Or if at any time they think, or speak of these matters, then the world, like Pharaoh, when Israel spake of sacrificing, is sure to speak of more work.

And thus they live, and die, without knowledge; there is no key of knowledge (as it is fitly called, Luke xi. 52.) to open the door of the soul to Christ; he, and his ministers, therefore, must stand without; pity they may, but help they cannot, till knowledge open the door; Satan is ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12. that is, of all blind, and ignorant souls. Ignorance is the chain with which he binds them fast to himself, and till that chain be knocked off, by divine illumination, they cannot be emancipated, and made free of Christ's kingdom; Acts xxvi. 18. "To turn them from darkness to "light, and from the power of Satan to God." Ignorance, indeed, incapacitates a man to commit the unpardonable sin; but what is he the nearer, whilst it disposes him to all other sins which damn, as well as that? By ignorance it is, that all the essays of the gospel, for men's salvation, are frustrated; that naked assent is put in the place of saving faith, morality mistaken for regeneration, a few dead duties laid in the room of Christ, and his righteousness. Indeed it would fill a greater book than this is, to shew the mischievous effects of ignorance, and how many ways it destroys the precious souls of men: but seeing I can speak but little in this place to it, let me bar up this way to hell, if it be possible, by a few serious considerations.

The second way to hell shut up.

1. Let the ignorant consider, God hath created their souls with a capacity of knowing him, and enjoying him, as well as others that are famed in the world for knowledge, and wisdom.

Digitized by Google

There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. The faculty is in man, but the wisdom, and knowledge, that enlightens it, from God; as the dial shews the hour of the day, when the sun-beams fall upon it. If, therefore, God be sought unto, in the use of such helps, and means, as you have, even the weakest, and dullest soul, hath a capacity of being made wise unto salvation. Psal. xix. 7. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the "simple."

Augustine tells us of a man so weak, and simple, that he was commonly reputed a fool, in all the neighbourhood; and yet saith, I believe the grace, and fear of God, was in him: For when he heard any swear, or take the name of God in vain, he would throw stones at them, and shew his indignation against sin, by all the signs he could make.

2. You that are so grosly ignorant in the matter of your salvation, are many of you very knowing, prudent, and subtil persons, in the affairs of the world. Luke xvi. 8. "The chil-"dren of this world are wiser, in their generation, than the chil-"dren of light." Had those parts which you have, been improved, and heightened, by study, and observation about spirituals, as they have been about earthly things; you had never been so ignorant, or dead-hearted, as you are: You might have been as well versed in your bibles, as you are in the almanacs you yearly buy, and study. You might have understood the proper seasons of salvation, as well as of husbandry. The great and necessary points on which your salvation depends, are not so many, or so abstruse, and intricate, but your plain, and inartificial heads might have understood them, and that with less pains than you have been at for your bodies: What though you cannot comprehend the subtilities of schoolmen, you may apprehend the essentials of Christianity. If you cannot strictly, and scholastically define faith; what hinders, if your hearts were set upon Christ, and salvation, but you may feel it? Which is more than many learned men do, that can define, and dispute about it. You cannot put an argument in mood, and figure; no matter, if you can, by comparing your bibles, and hearts together, draw savingly, and experimentally, this conclusion; I am in Christ, and my sins are pardoned. You cannot determine whether faith goes before repentance, or repentance before faith; but for all that, you might feel both the one, and the other, upon your own souls, which is infinitely better. 'Tis not, therefore, your incapacity, but negligence, and worldliness, that is your ruin.

3. How many are there, of your own rank, order, and e-

Digitized by Google

ducation, all whose external advantages, and helps you have, and all your incumbrances, and discouragements they had, who yet have attained to an excellent degree of saving knowledge, and heavenly wisdom? How often have I heard such spiritual, savoury, experimental truths, in conference, and prayer from plain rustics, such spiritual reasonings about the great concerns of salvation, such judicious, and satisfying resolutions of cases depending upon the sensible, and experimental part of religion, as have humbled, convinced, and shamed me, and made me say *surgunt indocti, &c.* these are the men that will take heaven from the proud, and scornful *ingeniosi* of the world; not many wise, not many learned, and acute. Many knowing, and learned heads, are in hell, and many illiterate, and weak ones gone to heaven; and others in the way thither, who never had better education, stronger parts, or more leisure than yourselves: So that you are without excuse.

To conclude, Would you heartily seek it of God, and would the Spirit (which he hath promised to give them that ask him) become your teacher, how soon would the light of the saving knowledge of God, in the face of Christ shine into your hearts! No matter how ignorant, dull, and weak the scholar be, if God once become the teacher. You are not able to purchase, or want time to read many books; but if once you were sanctified persons, the anointing you would receive from the Father, would teach you all things, 1 John ii. 27. your own hearts would serve you for a commentary upon a great part of the bible; it would make you of a quick understanding, in the fear of the Lord: One drop of your knowledge would be more worth than all learned arts and sciences in the world to you. And is God so far from you, and his illuminating Spirit at such a distance, that there is no hope for you to find him? Is there never a private corner, about your houses, or barns, or in the fields, where you can turn aside, if it be but a quarter of an hour at a time, to pour out your souls to God, and beg the Spirit of him? Miserable wretch! Is thy whole life such a cumber, and clutter of cares, and puzzles about the world, that thou hast no leisure to mind God, soul, or eternity? O doleful state! the Lord in much mercy pity, and awaken thee. Wilt thou not once strive, and struggle to save thy soul? What, perish, as it were, by consent! How great then is that blindness!

The third way to hell discovered.

III. A vast multitude of precious souls are lost for ever, by following the examples, and being carried away with the course

Digitized by Google

of this world: 'Tis indeed a poor excuse, a silly argument, That the multitude do as we do; yet, as * Junius rightly observes, men's consciences take sanctuary here, and they think themselves safe in it: For thus they reason, *If I do as the generality do, I shall speed no worse than they speed; and certainly God is more merciful than to suffer the greatest part of mankind to perish.* They resolve to follow the beaten road †, let it lead whither it will.

Thus the Ephesians, in their unregenerate state, "walked according to the course of this world," Eph. ii. 2. and the "Corinthians were carried away unto dumb idols, even as they "were led," 1 Cor. xii. 2. just as a drop of water is carried, and moved according to the course, and current of the tide: For look as every drop of water, in the sea, is of one and the same common nature, so are all carnal, and unsanctified persons; and as these waters being collected into one vast body in the ocean, unite their strength, and make a strong current, this way, or that; so doth the whole collective body of the unregenerate world, all the particular drops move as the tide moveth. Hence, they are said "to have received the spirit of this world," 1 Cor. ii. 12. one common spirit, or principle, acts, and rules them all; and therefore they must needs be carried away in the same course. And there are two special considerations that seem to determine them by a kind of necessity, to do as the multitude do; the one is, that they find it the easiest and most commodious way to the flesh, here they meet with quietness, and safety: hereby they are exempt from reproaches, losses, persecutions, and distresses, for conscience sake: Rest is sweet, and here, only, they think to find it. The other is, the prejudice of singularity, and manifold tribulations, they see that little handful, that walk counter to the course of the world, involved in; this startles them from their company, and fixes them where they are. Against such sensible arguments, it is to no more purpose to oppose spiritual considerations, motives drawn from the safety of the soul, or importance of eternity, than it is for a man to turn the tide, or course of a river, with his weak breath.

Add to this, That as one sinner confirms, and fixes another, wedging in each other, as men in a crowd ‡, who must

* What a poor and mean defence have they who think themselves safe from the example of their superiors *Jud. Paral. b.* 2.

† The example of the multitude is a very poor argument. *Senecæ.*

‡ No man errs to his own hurt only, but spreads madness among his neighbours. *Seneca.*

Digitized by Google

move as it moves; so they make it their business to render all that differ from them, odious and ridiculous: So the apostle notes their practice and Satan's policy in it, 1 Pet. iv. 4. wherein they think it strange, that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, ξενιζονται; they gaze strangely at them. And that is not all; they not only gaze at them as a strange generation, making them signs, and wonders in Israel, as the prophet speaks; but they defame, revile, and speak evil of them, representing them as a pack of hypocrites, as turbulent, factious, seditious persons, the very pests of the times, and places they live in; and all this, not for doing any evil against them, but only for not doing evil with them, because *they run not with them into the same excess of riot.* Thus the world smiles upon its own, and derides those that are afraid to follow them to hell, by which it sweeps away the multitude with it in the same course.

The third way to hell shut up.

But O! if the Spirit of God would please to set on, and follow home the following considerations to your hearts, you would certainly resolve to take a persecuted path to heaven, though few accompany you therein, rather than swim like dead fishes, with the stream, into the dead sea of eternal misery.

1. Though you go with the consent, and current of the world, yet you go against the express law and prohibition of God: He hath laid his command upon you, "not to be conformed to the "world," Rom. xii. 2. "That you live not the rest of your "time to the lusts of men, but to the will of God," 1 Pet. iv. 2. "That you follow not a multitude to do evil," Exod. xxiii. 2. "That you go not in the way of evil men," Prov. iv. 14. "That you have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of "darkness." All these, and many more, are commands flowing from the highest sovereign authority, obliging your consciences to obedience under the greatest penalties; by them your state must be cast to all eternity in the day of judgment: You may make a pish of the precept, but see if you can do so of the penalty.

2. Other men, in all ages of the world, that were as much concerned in the world as you, and valued their lives, liberties, and estates, as well as you, have yet got out of the croud, disengaged themselves from the way of the multitude, and taken a more solitary, and suffering path, out of a due regard to the safety of their souls: And why should not you love them as well, and care for them as much, as ever any that went before you did? Noah walked with God all alone, when all flesh had

Digitized by Google

corrupted their ways; Elijah was zealous for the Lord, when he knew of none to stand by him, but thought he had been left alone; Job was upright with God, in the land of Uz; Lot stood by himself, a godly non conformist, in a vile, debauched Sodom; David was a wonder to many; so was Jeremiah, and those few with him, for signs, and wonders in Israel: I demand of your consciences, what discouragements have you, that these men had not? Or what encouragements had they, that you have not? Why should not the salvation of your souls be as precious in your eyes, as theirs was in theirs? Shall you be impoverished, and persecuted, if you embrace the way of holiness? So were they. Shall you be reproached, scorned, and reviled? So were they. All your discouragements were theirs, and all their motives, and encouragements are yours.

3. Is not the way which you have chosen marked out by Christ, as the way to destruction? And that which you dare not chuse, and embrace, as the way to life? See the marks he has given you of both, in that one text, Mat. vii. 13, 14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad "is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be "which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow "is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that "find it." And where now is your encouragement, and hope that God will be more merciful, than to damn so great a part of the world? If you will do as the Many do, dream not of speeding as well as that little flock, separated by sanctification from the multitude, shall speed. You have your choice, to be damned with many, or saved with few; to take the broad, smooth beaten road to hell, or the difficult, suffering, self-denying path to heaven. O then make a seasonable necessary stand, and pause a while; consider your ways, and turn your feet to God's testimonies: 'Tis a great, and special part of your salvation, to save yourselves from this untoward generation.

The fourth way of losing the soul opened.

IV. Multitudes of souls are daily lost, by rooted *habits*, and long-continued *custom* in sin. When men have been long settled in an evil way, they are difficultly reclaimed: *Physicians* find it hard to cure a *cachexy*, or ill habit of body; but it is far more difficult to cure an ill custom, and habit in sin. Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the leopard change his spots, or the Ethiopian his skin? "Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." The spots of a *leopard*, and the hue of an *Ethiopian*, are not by way of external, accidental adhesion; if so, washing would fetch

Digitized by Google

them off: But they are innate, and contempered, belonging to the constitution, and not to be altered; so are sinful habits, and customs, in the minds of sinners: By this means it becomes a second nature, as it were, and strongly determines the mind to sin. *A teneris assuescere multum est*, It is a great matter to be accustomed to this way, or that, saith Seneca; yea, *Caput rei est, hoc vel illo modo, hominem assuefieri*, 'Tis the very head, or root of the matter, to be so or so accustomed, saith Aristotle. Very much of the strength of sin rises from customary sinning. A brand that hath been once in the fire, easily catches the second time. Every repeated act of sin lesseneth fear and strengtheneth inclination. A horse that took an ill stroke at first breaking, and hath continued many years in it; is very difficultly, if ever, to be brought to a better way. What men have been accustomed to from their child hood, they are tenacious of in their old age. Hence it is, that so few are converted to Christ in their old age. It was recorded for a wonder, in the primitive times, that Marcus Caius Victorius became a Christian in his old age. Time, and usage, fix the roots of sin deep in the soul. Old trees will not bow, as tender plants do. Hence all essays, and attempts to draw men from the course in which they have walked from their youth, are frustraneous and successless. The drunkard, the adulterer, yea, the self-righteous moralist, are by long continued usage, so fixed in their course, and all this while conscience so stupified, by often repeated acts of sin, that it is naturally, as impossible to remove a mountain, as a sinner's will thus confirmed in his wickedness. However, let the trial be made, and the success left to him to whom no length of time, or difficulty, must be objected, or opposed.

The fourth way to hell shut up, by two considerations.

1. Let it be considered, the longer any man hath been engaged in, and accustomed to the way of sin, the more reason and need that man hath speedily, and without delay, to repent, and reform his course; there is yet a possibility of mercy, a season of salvation left: How far soever a soul is gone on towards hell, none can say it is yet too late. When Mr. Bilney, the martyr, heard a minister preaching thus, *O thou old sinner, that hast gone on in a course of sin these fifty, or sixty years; dost thou think that Christ will accept thee now, or take the devil's leavings?* Good God! said he, what preaching of Christ is here! Had such doctrine been preached to me in my troubles, it had been enough utterly to have discouraged me from repentance, and faith. No, no, sinner, it is not yet too late, if at last thy heart be touched with a real sense of thy sin, and danger. The word is plain, Isa. lv.

Digitized by Google

7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man "his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will "have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly "pardon."

An abundant pardon thou needest; thy sins, by long continued custom and frequent repetitions, have been abundantly aggravated; and an abundant pardon is with God for poor sinners: he will abundantly pardon, but then thou must come up to his terms: thou must not expect pardon or mercy when thy sins have forsaken thee, but upon thy forsaking them; yea, such a forsaking as includes a resolution or decree in thy will to return to them no more, Hos. iv. 8. There must be a change of thy way, and that not from profaneness to civility only, which is but to change one false way to heaven for another, or the dirty road to hell for a cleanlier path on the other side of the hedge; but a total and final forsaking of every way of sin, as to the love and habitual practice of it; yea, and thy thoughts too, as well as thy ways. There must be an internal, as well as an external change upon thee; yea, a positive, as well as a negative change; a turning to the Lord, as well as a turning from sin; and then, how long soever thou hast walked in the road towards hell, there will be time enough, and mercy enough to secure thy returning soul safe to heaven.

2. Canst thou not forbear thy customary sin, upon lesser motives than the salvation of thy soul? And if thou canst, wilt thou not much more do it for the saving of thy precious, immortal soul? Suppose there were but a pecuniary mulct, of an hundred pounds, to be certainly levied upon thy estate for every oath thou swearest, or every time thou art drunk, wouldst thou not rather chuse reformation than beggary? And is not the loss of thy soul a penalty infinitely heavier than a little money? But, as the wise Heathen * observed, *Ea sola emi putamus, pro quibus pecuniam soluimus; ea gratuita vocamus pro quibus nos ipsos impendimus:* We reckon those things only to be bought, which we part with money for; and that we have those things gratis, for which we pay ourselves. Is nothing cheap in our eyes but our selves, our souls! do we call that *gratis*, that will cost us so dear? Darius threw away his massy crown when he fled before Alexander, that it might not hinder him in his flight. Sure

* These things seem cheap to us, which cost very dear, and which we could not purchase, though we should give our house for them. *Sen. Ep.* 42.

Digitized by Google

your souls are more worth than your money, and all the enjoyments you have in this world. It hath been an antient custom among the citizens of Antioch, to wash themselves in the baths; but the king forbidding it, they all presently forbore, for fear of his displeasure: whereupon Chrysostome convinced them of the vanity of that plea for customary sinning. "You see, (saith he), "how soon fear can break off an old custom; and shall not the "fear of God be as powerful to over-master it in us, as the "fear of man *?" O friends, believe it, it "is better for you "to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, than having "two hands, or eyes to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth "not, and the fire is not quenched."

The fifth way of losing the soul opened.

V. The fifth way, by which an innumerable multitude of souls are eternally lost, is by the baits of sensual, sinful pleasures.

Some customary sins have little, or no pleasure in them; as swearing, malice, *&c.* but others allure, and entice the soul, by the sensual delight that is in them: this is the bait with which multitudes are enticed, ensnared, and ruined to all eternity. It is a true, and grave observation of the philosopher †, "That we are impelled, as it were, to that which is evil, by "the alluring blandishments of pleasure." This was the first bait by which Satan caught the souls of our first parents, in innocency. Gen. iii. 6. "The tree was pleasant to the eye." Pleasure quickens the principles of sin in us, and enflames the desires of the heart after it. Every pleasant sin hath a world of customers, and, cost what it will, they resolve to have it. I have read of a certain fruit, which the Spaniards found in the Indies, which was exceeding pleasant to the taste; but nature had so fenced it, and double-guarded it with sharp and dangerous thorns, that it was very difficult to come at it: they tore their cloaths, yea, their flesh, to get it; and therefore called the fruit, *Comfits in hell.* Such are all the pleasures of sin, *comfits in hell;* damnation is the price of them, and yet the sensitive appetite is so outragious and mad after them, that at the price of their souls, they will have them. Thus the wicked are described, Job xxi. 13. "They spend their days in wealth, and "in a moment go down to the grave:" That is, their whole stock of time is spent in cares and labours to get wealth, and when they have gotten it, the rest of their life is spent in those

* Ορας οτι ενθα φοβος ευκολως λυεται συνηθεια, &c. Hom. 14.

† *Voluptatum blanditiis deliniti, ad ea gerenda omnia quae prava sunt impellimur.* Arist. *lib.* 2. *Eth. c.* 3.

Digitized by Google

sensual pleasures that wealth brings in, or in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it. The rich man, in the parable, fared deliciously every day, Luke xvi. where his voluptuous life is described, and in that description, the occasion of his damnation is insinuated. In a pampered and indulged body, is usually found a neglected, and starved soul. But how shall the ruin of souls this way be prevented?

The fifth way to hell shut up, by three considerations.

1. Consider how the mortality of Heathens hath bridled their sensual lusts and appetites, and caused them, with a generous disdain, to repel those brutish pleasures, as things below a man. "What more foolish, what more base," saith Seneca*, "than "to patch up the good of a reasonable soul out of things unreasonable?" "That is the pleasure worthy of a man, not to "glut his body, nor to irritate those lusts in whose quietness is "our safety †." This is the constant doctrine of all the Stoicks.

O what a shame is it, to hear Heathenism out-brave Christianity! and principles of mere Morality enable men to live more soberly, temperately, and abstemiously, than those who enjoy the greatest pattern, and highest motives, in the Christian religion are found to do? 'Thou embracest pleasure, saith the 'Heathen, but I bridle it; thou enjoyest it, I only use it; thou 'thinkest it thy chief good, I esteem it not so much as good; 'thou dost all for pleasure's sake, but I nothing at all on that 'account.' These, therefore, shall be your judges.

2. Always remember, sensual pleasures are but the baits with which Satan angles for the precious soul; there is a fatal hook under them. O if men were but aware of this, they would never purchase pleasure at so dear a rate. "Stolen waters are "sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant; but he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in "the depth of hell," Prov. ix. 17, 18. Pliny tells us that the mermaids have most enchanting, charming voices, and frequent pleasant, green meadows, but heaps of dead mens bones are always found where they haunt; that which tickles the fancy stabs the soul. If the pain, (as Anacreon well observes) were before the pleasure, no man would be tempted by it; but the pleasure being first, and sensible, and the torment coming after, and, as

* *Quid stultius turpiusve quam bonum rationalis animi, ex irrationalibus nectere?* Sen. Ep. 92.

† *Illa est voluptas, et homine et viro digna, non implere corpus, et saginare, nec cupiditas irritare, quarum tutissima est quies.* De Benef. lib. 7. c. 11.

Digitized by Google

yet invisible, this allures so many to destruction. "At last it "bitteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder," Prov. xxiii. 32. If sin did sting and bite at first, none would touch it; but it tickles at first, and wounds afterward. O what man, that is in his wits, would purchase eternal torments for the sensual, brutish pleasures of a moment! † The pleasures of sin bewitch the affections, blind the judgment, stupify the heart, so that sober and impartial judgment finds no place. The heart is enticed, the lusts are enraged; cost what it will, sinners will gratify their lusts.

3. If you are for pleasure, certainly you are out of the way to it, who seek it in the fulfilling of your lusts. If your hearts were once sanctified, and brought under the government of the Spirit, you would quickly find a far more excellent pleasure in the crucifying of your lusts, than now you seek in the gratification and fulfilling of them. Rom. viii. 13. "If ye, thro' the "Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;" *i. e.* ye shall live the most joyful, peaceful, and comfortable life of all persons in the world, a life of highest delight, and true pleasure; for so far as your lusts are mortified, the vigorous, healthful frame, and due temper of your soul is restored, and your evidences for heaven cleared; both which are the springs of all spiritual delight and pleasure. Can any creature-enjoyment, or any beastly lust, afford a pleasure like this? Do not you find the life you live, in sinful pleasures, quite beneath the dignity of a man? and are they not followed with bitter after-reckonings, gripes, and flashes of conscience: *Even in the midst of laughter the heart is sad, and the end of that mirth is heaviness:* O ponder seriously what a trifle it is you sell your precious souls for! Is it not a goodly price you value them at? the fugitive, empty, beastly pleasures of a moment, for the torments of eternity.

The sixth way of losing the soul, opened.

VI. There are also innumerable souls lost for ever, by the distracting cares of this world, which eat up all their time, thoughts, and studies; so that there is no room for Christ, or one serious hour about salvation. It is too true an observation, which Sir Walter Ralegh makes upon the common mechanics, and poor labourers, their bodies are the anvils of pain, and their souls the hives of unnumbered cares and sorrows, whilst the voluptuous and rich spend their time and studies in purveying

† *Breve est quod delectat, eternum quod cruciat; i. e.* The pleasure is short-lived, but the torment is perpetual.

Digitized by Google

for new pleasures, and filling their heads with projects of that nature. The poorer sort have their heads and hearts filled, day and night, with anxious thoughts and cares, how to get bread, pay their rents or debts, and struggle through the miserable necessities that pinch them on every side; many children, it may be, to provide for, and little or nothing out of which to make it: here is brick that must be made, and no straw to make it of: he borrows here, to pay there: debts increase, and abilities decrease; he toils his body all the day, and when his tired carcass calls for rest, to enable him for new work to-morrow; the cares of the world invade him on his bed, and keep him sighing or musing there, when, poor man! he had load enough before for one.

And now what room is there left for salvation-work? or how can any spiritual seed, that is cast into such a brake of thorns, prosper? "The cares of this life, (saith Christ) spring up, and "choak it," Mark iv. 19. Tell not them of heaven and Christ, they must have bread; talk not to them of the necessity, or comfort of a pardon, they must pay their debts to men. O the confused buz and clutter, that these thoughts and cares make in their head! so that no other voice can be heard. And thus multitudes spend their whole lives in a miserable servitude in this world, and by that are cast upon a more miserable and restless state for ever, in the world to come; one hell here, and another hereafter. And what shall be done for them? Is there no way for their deliverance? O that God would direct, and bless the following considerations to them, if it may be expected they may atany time get through the brake in which they are involved, and find them at leisure to bethink themselves!

The sixth way to hell shut up, by five considerations.

1. Bethink thyself, poor soul! as much as thou art involved and plunged in the necessities and distracting cares of this life; others, many others, as poor and necessitous, and every way as much embroiled in the cares of the world as you are, have minded their souls, and taken all care and pains for their salvation, notwithstanding: yea, though millions of your rank and order are destroyed by the snares of the devil, yet God hath a very great number, indeed the greatest of any rank of men, among those that are low, poor, and necessitous in the world. The church is called the "congregation of the poor," Psal. lxxiv. 20. because it consisteth mostly of men and women of the lowest and most despicable condition in this world; they are all poor in spirit, and most of them poor in purse. "Hearken, "my beloved brethren, (saith James) hath not God chosen the

Digitized by Google

" poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom ?" James ii. 5.

Now, if others, many others, as much entangled in the neceſſities, cares, and troubles of the world, as you, have yet ſtruggled through all thoſe difficulties and diſcouragements to heaven; why ſhould you not ſtrive for Chriſt and ſalvation as well as they? your ſouls are as valuable as theirs, and their diſcouragements and hindrances as great and as many as yours.

2. Conſider, your poor and neceſſitous condition in the world, hath ſomething in it of motive and advantage, to excite and quicken you to a greater diligence for ſalvation, than is found in a more full, eaſy, and proſperous ſtate; for God hath hereby imbittered this world to you, and made you drink deeper of the troubles of it than other men: they have the honey, and you the gall; they have the flower, and you the bran; but then, as you have not the pleaſures, ſo you have not the ſnares of a proſperous condition; and your daily troubles, cares and labours in it, do even prompt you to ſeek reſt in heaven, which you cannot find on earth. Can you think you were made for a worſe condition than the beaſts? What, to have two hells! one here, and another hereafter? Surely, as low, miſerable, and deſpicable as you are, you are capable of as much happineſs as any of the nobles of the world; and, in your low and afflicted condition, ſtand nearer to the door of hope, than they do. Ah! methinks theſe thoughts do even put themſelves upon you, when your ſpirits are overloaded with the cares, and your bodies tired with the labours of this life. Is this the life of troubles I muſt expect on earth? Hath God denied me the pleaſures of this world? O then let it be my care, my ſtudy, my buſineſs to make ſure of Chriſt, to win heaven, that I may not be miſerable in both worlds. How can you avoid ſuch thoughts, or put by ſuch meditations, which your very ſtation and condition even forceth upon you?

3. Conſider how all the troubles in this world would be ſweetened, and all your burdens lightened, if once your ſouls were in Chriſt, and in covenant with God. O what heart's eaſe would faith give you! what ſweet relief would you find in prayer! Theſe things, like the opening of a vein, or tumour when ripe, would ſuddenly cool, relieve, and eaſe your ſpirits; could you but go to God as a Father, and pour out your hearts before him, and caſt all your cares and burdens, wants and ſorrows upon him: you would find a ſpeedy out-let to your troubles, and an in-let to all peace, all comforts, and all refreſhments; ſuch as all the riches, honours, and fulneſs of this

Digitized by Google

world cannot give: you would then find Providence engage itself for your supply, and issue all your troubles to your advantage; you would suck the breasts of those promises in the margin *, and say, all the dainties in the world cannot make you such another feast; you would then see your bread, your cloaths, and all provisions for you and yours, in God's promises, when you are brought to an exigence, and would certainly find performances, as well as promises, all along the course of your life.

4. Say not you have no time to mind another world: God hath not put any of you under such an unhappy necessity; you have one whole day every week, allowed you by God and man, for your souls; you have some spare time every day, which you know you spend worse than in heavenly thoughts and exercises; yea, most callings are such as will admit of spiritual exercises of thoughts, even when your hands are exercised in the affairs of this life: besides, there are none of you but have, and must have daily some relaxations and rest from business; and if your hearts were spiritual, and set upon heaven, you would find more time than you think on, without prejudice to your callings, yea, to the great furtherance of them, to spend with God. I can tell you when, and where I have found poor servants, hard at work for salvation, labouring for Christ, some in the fields, others in barns, and stables, where they could find any privacy to pour out their souls to God in prayer. As lovers will make hard shifts to converse together, so will the soul that is devoted to God, and in earnest for heaven; and though your opportunities be not so large, they may be as sweet, as successful, and to be sure sincere, as those whose condition affords them more time, and greater external conveniencies than you enjoy: more business is sometimes dispatched in a quarter of an hour in prayer, yea, let me say, in a few hearty ejaculations of soul to God, in a few minutes, than in many long and elaborate duties. If thou cast in thy two mites of time into the treasury of prayer, having no more, thou mayest, as Christ said of the poor widow, *give more than those that cast in of their great abundance of time and talents.*

5. Lastly, Consider, Jesus Christ is no respecter of persons, the poorest and vilest on earth, are as welcome to him as the greatest. He chose a poor and mean condition in this world

* Heb. xiii. 5. Isa. xli. 17. Psal. xxxiv. 9, 10. Psal. xci. 15. Rom. viii. 28.

Digitized by Google

himself, conversed mostly among the poor, never refused any because of his poverty: "God accepteth not the persons of "princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor: for they "are all the work of his hands," Job xxxiv. 19. and that, both in respect of their natural constitution, as men, and their civil conditions, as rich or poor men. Riches and poverty make a great difference in the respects of men, but none at all with God. If thou be one of God's poor, he will accept, love, and honour thee above the greatest (if graceless) person in the world. Poverty is no bar to Christ, or heaven, though it be to the respects of men, and pleasures of this life. Away, then, with all vain pretences against a life of godliness, from the meanness of your outward condition; heaven was not made for the rich, and hell only for the poor: no, no; how hard soever you find the way thither, I am sure Christ saith, *It is hard for a rich man to enter into that kingdom.*

The seventh way of losing the soul, discovered.

VII. The seventh beaten path to destruction, is by groundless presumption; *praesumendo sperant, et sperando pereunt*, by presumption they have hope, and by that hope they perish.

There are divers objects of presumption, amongst which, these three are most usual, and most fatal, *viz.* that they have,

1. That grace which they have not.
2. That mercy in God they will not find.
3. That time before them which will fail them.

1. Many presume they have that grace in them, which God knoweth they have not: So did Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. "Thou "sayest, I am rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest "not that thou art wretched, and miserable, poor, blind, and "naked." Here is a dangerous conspiracy betwixt a cunning devil, and an ignorant, proud heart, to ruin the soul for ever; they stamp their common grace for special; they put the old creature by a general profession, into the new creature's habit, and lay a confident claim to all the privileges of the children of God.

2. They presume upon such mercy in God, as they will never find; they expect pardoning, and saving mercy out of Christ, in an unregenerate state, when there is not one drop of mercy dispensed in any other way. The whole oeconomy of grace is managed by the Mediator, Jude, verse 21. all saving mercies come through him, upon all that are in him, and upon no others. God is, indeed, a merciful God, and yet presumptuous sinners will find judgment without mercy, because they are not found in the proper way, and method of mercy. Thou-

Digitized by Google

sands, and ten thousands carve out, and dispose the mercy of God at their own pleasure, write their own pardons, in what terms they think fit, and if they had God's seal to confirm, and ratify them, it were all well: but, alas! it is but a night-vision, a dream of their own brain.

3. But especially, men presume upon time enough for repentance hereafter: they question not but there are as fit, and as fair opportunities of salvation to come, as are already past; and in this snare of the devil, thousands are taken, in the very prime, and vigour of their youth: that age is voluptuous, and loves not to be interrupted with severe, and serious thoughts, and courses; and here is a salvo fitted exactly to suit their inclination, and quiet them in their way, that they may pursue their lusts without interruption.

I cannot follow the sin of presumption, at present, in all these its courses, and ways; and therefore will apply myself to the case last mentioned, which is so common to the world.

The seventh way to destruction shut up by five weighty considerations.

1. I would beg all those young, voluptuous sinners, whose feet are fast held in the snare of this temptation, seriously to bethink themselves, whether they are not old enough to be damned, whilst they judge themselves too young to be seriously godly. There are multitudes in hell of your age, and size; you may find graves in the church-yard, of your own length, and, skulls of your own size: men will not spare a nest of young snakes, because they are little. If you die christless, and unregenerate, 'tis the same thing, whether you be old, or young; there is abundance of young spray, as well as old logs, burning in the flames of hell.

2. If you knew the weight and difficulty of salvation work, you would never think you could begin too soon. Religion is a business which will take up all your time; many have repented they began so late, none that they began so soon *. Say not, *the penitent thief found mercy at the last hour*, for his conversion was extraordinary, and we must not hope for miracles: besides, he could never encourage himself in sin, with the hope, and expectation of such a miraculous conversion; he was the only example of a sinner that was ever so recovered, in scripture, and this was recorded, not to nourish presumption, but to prevent despair. If ten thousand persons died of the plague, and one,

* I repent, O Lord, that I loved thee too late. Aug.

Digitized by Google

only, of the whole number infected with it escaped, it is no great encouragement that you shall make the second. O think, and think again, how many thousands, now on earth, have been labouring, and striving, forty or fifty years together, *to make their calling and election sure;* and yet, to this day, it is not so sure as they would have it: they are afraid, after all, time will fail them for finishing, and you think it is too early for beginning so great a work.

3. Others have begun sooner than you, and finished the great, and main work, before you have done any thing. Abijah was very young, scarce got out of his childhood, "when the grace of "God was found in him," 1 Kings xiv. 13. The fear of God was in Obadiah, when but a youth, 1 Kings xviii. 12. Timothy was not only a Christian, but a preacher of the gospel, "in the mor-"ning of his life," 2 Tim. iii. 15. What have you to plead for yourselves, which they had not? Or what arguments, and motives to Godliness had they which you have not? You shall be judged *per pares*, by those of your own age, and size; their seriousness shall condemn your vanity.

4 The morning of your life is the flower of your time, the freshest, and fittest of all your life for your great work; now your hearts are tender, and impressive, your affections flowing, and tractable, your heads clear of distracting cares, and hurries of business, which come on, afterwards, in thick successions: "Remember, now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, whilst "the evil days come not," Eccles. xii. 1. 2. If a man has an important business to do, he will take the morning for it, knowing if that be slipped, a crowd, and hurry of business will come on afterwards, to distract, and hinder him. I presume, if all the converts in the world were examined in this point, it would be found, that at least ten to one were wrought upon in their youth; that is the moulding age.

5. And if this proper hopeful season be elapsed, it is very unlikely that ever you be wrought upon afterwards: how thin, and rare in the world, are the instances, and examples of conversion, in old age! long-continued customs in sin, harden the heart, fix the will, and root the habits of vice so deep in the soul, that there is no altering of them; your ears then are so accustomed to the sounds of the word, that *Christ* and *sin*, *heaven* and *hell*, *soul* and *eternity*, have lost their awful sound, and efficacy with you. But it is a question only to be decided by the event, Whether ever you shall attain to the years of your fathers. It is not the sprightly vigour of your youth that can secure you from death. What a madness, then, is it, to put your souls, and e-

Digitized by Google

ternal happiness, upon such a blind adventure? What if your presumption of so many fair, and proper opportunities hereafter, fail you, as it hath failed millions, who had as rational, and hopeful a prospect of them as you can have; where are you then? And if you should have more time, and means, than you do presume upon, are you sure you hearts will be as flexible, and impressive, as now they are? O beware of this sin of vain presumption, to which the generality of the damned owe their everlasting ruin!

The eighth way of losing the soul, opened.

VIII. The eighth way of ruining the precious soul, is, by drinking in the principles of Atheism, and living without God in the world.

Atheism stabs the soul to death at one stroke, and puts it quite out of the way of salvation; other sinners are worse than beasts, but Atheists are worse than devils, for they believe, and tremble; these banish God out of their thoughts, and, what they can, out of the world, living as *without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. It is a sin that quencheth all religion in the soul. He that assents not to the being of a God, destroys the foundation of all religious worship; he cannot fear, love, or obey him, whose being he believes not: this sin strikes at the life of God, and destroys the life of the soul.

Some are Atheists in opinion, but multitudes are so in practice: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," Psal. xiv. 1. though he hath engraven his name upon every creature, and written it upon the table of their own hearts; yet they will not read it: or if they have a slight, fluctuating notion, or a secret suspicion of a Deity, yet they neither acknowledge his presence, nor his providence. *Fingunt Deum talem qui nec videt, nec punit, i. e.* They make such a God who neither sees nor punishes. They say, "How doth God know? Can he judge "through the dark clouds? Thick clouds are a covering to "him, that he seeth not," Job xxii. 14.

Others profess to believe his being, but their lives daily give their lips the lie; for they give no evidence in practice, of his fear, love or dependance on him: if they believe his being, they plainly shew they value not his favour, delight not in his presence, love not his ways, or people; but lie down and rise, eat and drink, live and die without the worship, or acknowledgment of him, except so much as the law of the country, or custom of the place extorts from them. These dregs of time produce abundance of Atheists, of both sorts; many ridicule, and hiss religion out of all companies into which they come,

Digitized by Google

and others live down all sense of religion; they customarily attend, indeed, on the external duties of it, hear the word; but when the greatest, and most important duties are urged upon them, their inward thought is, This is the preacher's calling, and the man must say something to fill up his hour, and get his living. If they dare not put their thoughts into words, and call the gospel *Fabula Christi*, the fable of Christ, as a wicked Pope once did; or say of hell, and the dreadful sufferings of the damned, as Galderinus the Jesuit did, *Tunc credam eum illuc venero*; I will believe it when I see it: yet their hearts, and lives, are of the same complexion with these men's words: they do not heartily assent to the truth of the gospel which they hear, and though bare assent would not save them, yet their assent, or non-assent, will certainly damn them, except the Lord heal their understandings, and hearts, by the light and life of religion. To this last sort I shall offer a few things.

The eight way to hell shut up by six weighty considerations.

1. You that attend upon the ordinances; but believe them no more than so many devised fables, nor heartily assent to the truth of what you hear; know assuredly, that the word shall never do your souls good, it can never come to your hearts and affections in its regenerating and sanctifying efficacy, whilst it is stopt and obstructed in your understandings in the acts of assent. And thus you may sit down under the best ordinances all your lives, and be no more the better for them, than the rocks are for the showers of rain that fall upon them; Heb. iv. 2. "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed "with faith in them that heard it." This is Satan's chief strength and fastness, wherein he trusteth; he fears no argument, whilst he can maintain his post: the devil hath no surer prisoner than the Atheist; there's no escaping out of his possession and power, whilst this bolt of unbelief is shut home in the mind or understanding. An unbelieved truth never converted or saved one soul from the beginning of the world, nor never shall to the end of it. Those bodies that have the *Boulema*, or dog-appetite, whatever they eat, it affords them no nourishment or satisfaction, they thrive not with the best fare: just so it is with your souls, no duties, no ordinances can possibly do them good; as in argumentation, no conclusion, be it never so regularly drawn, and strongly inferred, is of any force to him that denies principles.

2. If you assent not to the truth of the gospel, you not only make God speak to your souls in vain, which is fatal to them; but you also make God a liar, which is the greatest affront a

Digitized by Google

creature can put upon his Maker; 1 John v. 10. "He that be-
"lieveth not God, hath made him a liar." Vile dust, dareſt thou riſe up againſt the God that made thee, and give him the lie? An affront which thy fellow creature cannot put up, or bear at thy hands. Dareſt thou at once ſtab his honour, and thy own ſoul? Are not the things that thou lookeſt on as *romances* and golden dreams, a mere artifice, neatly contrived to cheat and awe the world? Are they not all built upon the veracity of God, which is the firmeſt foundation and greateſt ſecurity in the world? Hath he not intermingled, for our ſatisfaction, not only frequent aſſertions, but his aſſeverations and oath to put all beyond doubt? and yet dare any of you lift up your ignorant blind underſtandings againſt all this, and give him the lie? Surely the wrath of God ſhall ſmoke againſt every ſoul of man that doth ſo, and his own bitter, lamentable, doleful experience ſhall be his conviction ſhortly, except he repent.

3. Dare any of you give the thoughts of your hearts as certain concluſions under your hands, and ſtand by them to the laſt, and venture all upon them.

Wretched Atheiſt! bethink thy ſelf, pauſe a while, examine thine own breaſt; whatever thy vile atheiſtical thoughts ſometimes are, is there not at other times a fear of the contrary? A jealouſy that all theſe things which thou derideſt and ſporteſt thy wicked fancy with, may, and will prove true at laſt? When thou readeſt, or hearеſt that text, John iii. 18. "He that be-
"lieveth not is condemned already;" his mittimus is already made for hell: doth not thy conſcience give thee a ſecret gird, like a ſtitch in thy ſide? Dare you venture all upon this iſſue, that if thoſe things you find in the word be true, you will ſtand to the hazard of them? If that be a truth, Mark xvi. 16. "He that
"believeth not ſhall be damned," you will be content to be damned? Or if, Rom. viii. 13. be a truth, That "they who
"live after the fleſh ſhall die," you will run the hazard, and bear the penalty of eternal death? If Heb. xii. 14. prove true, That "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God," you will be content to be baniſhed from his preſence for evermore? Speak your hearts in this matter, and tell us, don't you live betwixt atheiſtical ſurmiſes, that all theſe are but cunning artifices, and fears that at laſt they will prove the greateſt verities?

4. Hath not God given you all the ſatisfaction you can reaſonably deſire, of the undoubted truth and certainty of this world? What would you have, which you have not already? Would you have a voice from heaven? the ſcriptures you read, or hear are a more ſure word than ſuch a voice would be, 1 Pet.

Digitized by Google

i. 19. Or would you have a messenger from hell? He that believeth not the written word, neither would believe "if one "should rise from the dead," Luke xvi. 31. View the innate characters of the scripture, is it not altogether pure and holy, full of divine wisdom and awful majesty, and in every respect, such as evidenceth its author to be the wise, holy, and just God, who searcheth the hearts and reins? Look upon the seals and confirmations of it; hath not God confirmed it by divers miracles from heaven, a seal which neither men or devils could counterfeit? And do not you see the blessing and power of God accompanying it in the conversion and wonderful change of men's hearts and lives, which can be done by no other hand than God's? Say not, the miracles, which confirm the gospel, are but uncertain traditions, and except you yourselves see them wrought, you cannot believe them. There are a thousand things which you do believe, though you never saw them; and what you require for your satisfaction, every man may require the same for his; and so Christ must live again in all parts of this world, and repeat his miracles over and over, in all ages, to satisfy the unreasonable incredulity of those that question their truth, after the fullest confirmation and seal hath been given, that is capable to be given, or the heart of man can desire should be given; and if all this should be done, you might be as far from believing, as now you are; for many of those that saw and heard the things wrought by Christ, contradicted and blasphemed, and so might you.

5. Satan, who undermines your assent to these things, is forced to give his own: he that tempts you to look on them as fables, himself knows, and is convinced that they are realities; "The "devils also believe and tremble," James ii. 19. they know and feel the truth of these things, though it be their great design, and interest, to shake your assent to them: they know Christ is the Son of God, and that there will be a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, and that there are torments prepared for themselves, and all whom they seduce from God, Matth. viii. 29. If you ungod God, you must unman yourselves; yea, not only make yourselves less than men, but worse than devils.

6. In a word, let thy own heart, O Atheist, be judge, whether these be real doubts still sticking in your minds, after you have done all that becomes men to do for satisfaction in such important cases? Or whether they be not such principles as you willingly foment and nourish in your hearts, as a protection to your sensual lusts, whose pleasures you would fain have, without in-

Digitized by Google

terruptions and over-awings by the fears of a judgment to come, and a righteous retribution from a just and terrible God! Examine your hearts in that point, and you will soon find the cheat to be in that I here point you to: you have not studied the word impartially, nor brought your doubts and scruples with an humble, unbiassed, teachable spirit to those that are wise and able to resolve them, much less prayed for the Spirit of illumination; but willingly entertained whatever atheistical wits invent, or the devil suggests, as a defensative against the checks of conscience, and fears of hell, in the way of sin. You are loath those things should be true, which the scriptures speak, and are glad of any colourable argument or pretence to still your own consciences. Is not this the case? The Lord stop your desperate course; your paths lead to hell.

The ninth way of losing the precious soul opened.

IX. Precious souls are daily plunged into the gulph of perdition by *profaneness* and *debauchery*. How many every where lie wallowing in this puddle? glorying in their shame, and running into all excess of riot? The hypocrite steals to hell in a private close way of concealed sin; but the profane gallop along the public road at noon-day; "They declare their sin as Sodom, "and hide it not;" Isa. iii. 9. "The shew of their countenance "testifieth against them." The hypocrite hath devotion in his countenance, and heaven in his mouth; you know not by his words and countenance, whither he is going; but the profane hide it not, they are past shame, and above blushing at the most horrid impieties. Look, as God hath some servants more eminent, forward, and couragious in the ways of godliness than others, men that will not hide their principles, or be ashamed of the ways of godliness in the face of danger; so the devil hath some servants as eminent for wickedness, who scorn to sneak to hell by concealment of their wickedness, but avow and own it, without fear or shame, in the open sight of heaven and earth. Wherever they come, they defile the air they breathe in with horrid blasphemies and obscene discourses not to be named, and leave a strong scent of hell behind them.

This age hath brought forth multitudes of these monsters, the reproach and shame of the nation that bred them. I have little hope to stop any of them in their career and full speed to hell. They have lost the *sense of sin*, the restraints of *shame* and *fear*; and then what is left to check them in their course? I cannot hope that such a discourse as this shall ever come into their hands, except it be to sacrifice it to the flames; yet not knowing the ways of providence, which are unsearchable, and

Digitized by Google

what use God may make upon one occasion or another of these following considerations, I will adventure to drop a few words upon these forlorn sinners, as far as they seem to be gone beyond recovery; beseeching the Lord to make way for these things to their hands and hearts, and make them the instruments of pulling some of them as brands out of the burning.

The ninth way to hell, by profaneness, stopt.

1. And first, let it be laid to heart, that though the case and state of many thousand souls be doubtful and uncertain, so that neither themselves, nor any other know what they are, or to whom they belong! yet thy condition, O profane sinner, is without controversy, miserable and forlorn; all men know whose you are, and whither you are going. The apostle appeals, in this case, to the bar of every man's reason and conscience, as a thing allowed and yielded by all, Eph. v. 5. "For this ye know (saith "he,) that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous "man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom "of Christ and of God." This is a clear case, there is no controversy about it. Many there be in a doubtful case, but no doubt of these, they are fast and sure in the power of Satan; and as sure as God is a God of truth, they that die in this condition shall never see his face. And to the same purpose again, 1 Cor. vi. 9. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the "kingdom of God? be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor "idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, "nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom "of God." *Know ye not?* saith he, *q. d.* "Sure you cannot "be so ignorant and blind to think that there is any room in "heaven for such wretches as these. If the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear? If all "strictness, holiness, self-denial, diligence, be all little enough "to win heaven, what hope can there be of those that not only "cast off all duties of religion, but also cast themselves into all "the opposite ways and courses which directly lead to damnation?" He that refuseth his food endangers his life; but he that drinks poison, certainly and speedily destroys it.

2. As far as you are gone in a course of profaneness, you are not yet gone beyond the reach of mercy and all hopes of salvation; if now at last, after all your debaucheries and profaneness, the Lord touch your hearts with the sense of your sinful and miserable estate, and turn your feet to his testimonies. When the apostle, in 1 Cor vi. 9, 10. had told us the doom of such men, upon the supposition of their perseverance in that course,

Digitized by Google

yet presently he adds, as a motive to their repentance, an example of mercy upon such wretches as these, "And such were "some of you, but ye are washed," ver. 11. The golden sceptre of free grace hath been held forth to many, as prophane, and notorious sinners as you, to blaspheming Saul, to a Mary Magdalen, to a Manasseh. 'Tis not the greatness of the sin, but the impenitence, and infidelity of the sinner, that ruins him. Well, then, there is a certainty of damnation, if you go on, and yet a possibility of forgiveness, and mercy before you; a mercy invaluable.

3. Nay, this is not all; but in some respect, there is more probability, and hope of your return, and repentance, than there is of many others who have led a more sober, smooth, and civil life, than you have done. Your profaneness hath more dishonoured God, but the morality, and civility of some men, secures them faster in the snare of the devil: They have many things in themselves, to build up their presumptuous hopes upon, but you have nothing. It is hard for conviction to reach that man's conscience that hath righteousness of his own to trust in; but methinks it should have an easier access to yours, whose notorious courses lay your consciences naked, and bare before the word, to be wounded by it. Christ's ministry had little success among the Pharisees, who were righteous in their own eyes, but it wrought effectually upon *Publicans* and *sinners*. Hence Christ told them, Matth. xxi. 31. that "Publicans, and Har-"lots, go into the kingdom of God before them." Publicans were esteemd the worst of men, and Harlots the worst of women; yet the one, and the other, as vile as they were, stood fairer for conviction, and consequently for salvation, than those that thought they needed *no repentance*. All this is matter of hope, and runs into a powerful motive, and loud call to repentance. "He that "hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

The tenth way leading to destruction, marked.

X. Deep, and fixed prejudices against godliness, and the sincere professors thereof, precipitate thousands of souls into their own ruin, and damnation.

It was not without a weighty reason, that Christ denounced that wo upon the world, Matth. xviii. 7. "Wo unto the "world, because of offences." The poor world will be ruined by scandals, and prejudices; they will take such offences at the ways of godliness, that they will never have good thoughts of them any more. "This sect is every where spoken against," Acts xxviii. 22. and so Christians are condemned, διὰ τὸ ὄνομα,

Digitized by Google

becauſe of the common reproach, as Juſtin Martyr complained. All the ſcandals which fall out in the church, are ſo many ſwords, and daggers, put into the hands of the wicked world to murder their own ſouls withal. Some have ſucked in ſuch opinions of the ways of godlineſs, as make them irreconcileable enemies to them, and fierce oppoſers of them. And from hence are moſt of the perſecutions that befal the people of God. When you ſee ſhowers of ſlanders, and reproaches, going before, expect ſtorms of perſecutions coming after. Slanders beget prejudices, and theſe prepare for perſecutions. O how keen, and fierce, are the minds of many, againſt the upright, and innocent ſervants of God, whom they have firſt repreſented to themſelves in ſuch an odious dreſs, and character, as the devil hath drawn them in, upon their fancies, and imaginations! So the primitive Chriſtians were repreſented to the Heathens as monſters, and their conventions in the night, occaſioned by the fury of perſecutors, were reported to be for laſcivious, and barbarous ends, to deflower virgins, and murder innocent children: And by this artifice the Heathens were ſecured againſt converſion to Chriſt. This hath been the policy of hell from the beginning, and it hath proſpered ſo much in the world, that Satan hath no reaſon to change his hand. But how may this plot of hell be defeated, and the ruin of ſouls prevented?

The tenth way of deſtroying ſouls ſhut up, by two counſels.

1. It will be impoſſible to prevent the ruin of a great part of the world by prejudices againſt the ways of godlineſs, except thoſe who profeſs them, walk more holily, and conformably to the rule, and pattern of Chriſt, whoſe name is called upon by them. I ſhall therefore firſt addreſs my diſcourſe to the profeſſors of religion, beſeeching them, in the bowels of Chriſt, to take pity upon the multitudes of ſouls which are daily ruined, and deſtroyed by their ſcandals, and miſcarriages. Did you live according to the rules you profeſs, "your well-doing "would put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men," 1 Pet. ii. 15. and conſequently the ruin of many might be prevented. I remember * Bernard, ſpeaking of the lewd, and looſe life of the prieſts of his time, ſighs out this juſt, and bitter complaint to God about it; *Miſera eorum converſatio plebis tuae miſerabilis ſubverſio eſt:* O Lord! ſaid he, their miſerable converſation is the miſerable ſubverſion of thy people. O! of how many, who glory in the title of ſons of the church, may Chriſt ſay, as Jacob did of his two lewd ſons, Simeon and Levi, "You have

* Bern. in Converſ. *Pauli*, Ser. 1.

Digitized by Google

"troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the "land." Gen. xxxiv. 30.

And how many professors, who pretend to more than ordinary reformation, and holiness, do shed soul blood, by their scandalous conversations. * Salvian brings in the wicked of his age upbraiding the looseness of Christians, in this manner; "Behold, those men who boast themselves redeemed from the "tyranny of Satan, and profess themselves dead to the world, "yet are conquered by the lusts of it." And † Cyprian, long before his day, brings in the Heathens thus insulting over loose Christians: "Where is that catholic law which they believe? "Where are the examples of piety, and chastity, which they "should learn? They read the gospel, yet are immodest; they "hear the apostles, yet are drunk." O professors! where are your bowels to the poor souls of sinners? If your neighbour's ox, or ass fall into the pit, you are bound to deliver him, if you can; and will you not do as much for a precious soul, as you would do for a beast? Nay, you dig pits, by your scandalous lives, to destroy them. If you sin, there are instruments enough to spread it, and multitudes of souls ready prepared to take the infection. Say not, if they do, the fault is theirs; for though they are principals in the murder of their own souls, by taking the scandal, yet you are accessories in giving it: He is a mad man that will kill himself with a sword, and he no better that will put it into his hand.

O therefore, if you have any regard to the precious souls of men, live up to the rules of your profession! O be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a perverse, and froward generation! let the heavenliness of your conversation stop those mouths that accuse you as men of a worldly spirit; let them see, by your moderation in seeking it, your patience in losing it, your readiness in distributing it, that it is a groundless calumny, under which your names suffer. Let them see, by your apparel, company, and discourses, you are not such proud, lofty spirits, as you are represented to be. Convince them, by your flexibleness to all things that are lawful, and expedient, by manifesting, as much

* *Ecce qui jactant se redemptos a tyrannide Satanae, qui praedicant se mortuos mundo, nihilominus a cupiditatibus suis vincuntur.* Salvian.

† *Ubi est catholica lex quam credunt? Ubi pietatis et castitatis exempla quae discant? Evangelia legunt, et impudici sunt; Apostolos audiunt, et inebriantur.* Cyp.

Digitized by Google

as in you lieth, that it is the pure bond, and tie of conscience, which keeps you from compliance in all other things, and by your meekness in suffering for such non-compliance, that you are not such turbulent, factious incendiaries, as the wicked world slanderously reports you to be. Convince the world, by your exact righteousness in all your civil dealings, and by the lip of truth in all your promises, and engagements, that you have the fear of God in your hearts, as well as the livery of Christianity upon your backs. In a word, so live, that none may have just ground to believe the impudent slanders the devil raises in the world against you. Let your light so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven. Without your care, and circumspection, the shedding of a world of precious soul blood can never be prevented.

2. Let me advise, and beseech all men to be so just to others, and merciful to their own souls, as not to cast them away for ever, by receiving prejudices against godliness, from the miscarriages of some, who make more than a common profession of it. To prevent this fatal effect of scandal, and prejudice at religion, I desire a few particulars may be impartially weighed.

First, Very many of those scandals, bandied up and down the world against the professors of godliness, are devised, and forged in hell, as so many traps, and snares to catch, and destroy men's souls, to beget an irreconcileable aversion, and enmity in men to the ways of God. "They devise deceitful "matters (saith the Psalmist) against them that are quiet in the "land," Psal. xxxv. 20. So Jer. xviii. 18. "Come, say they, "let us devise devices against Jeremiah, and smite him with "the tongue." And there is as little equity in the credulous receiver, as there is honesty in the wicked forger of these slanders: with one arrow of censure, you wound no less than three, *viz.* the honour of God, your innocent brother, and your own souls: As to the two former wounds, they will, in due time, be healed; God will vindicate his own name fully, and the reputation of his innocent servants shall be cleared, and repaired abundantly; but, in the mean time, your souls may perish, by the wounds, prejudices have given, so that you may never be reconciled to godliness, and its professors, whilst you live, but turn scoffers, and persecutors of them.

Secondly, Examine whether the matters that are charged upon them as their crimes, be not their duties. Sometimes it falls out to be so, and if so, you fight more immediately, and directly against God, than men. This was David's case, Psal.

Digitized by Google

lxix. 10. "When I wept, and chastened my soul, that was "to my reproach;" my piety was turned to reproach. They called his tears crocodile's tears, and his fastings hypocritical shadows of devotion, and humility. Thus the very matter of his duty was turned into scorn, and reproach. And so it was with the primitive Christians, their very owning of themselves to be Christians, was crime enough to condemn them.

Thirdly, If professors of religion do in some things act unbecoming their holy profession, yet every slip, and failing in their lives, is no sufficient warrant for you to censure their persons as hypocrites, much less to fall upon religion itself, and condemn it for the faults of them that profess it. There's many an upright heart overtaken by temptation. You see their miscarriages, but you see not their humiliations, and self-condemnations, before God for them. 'Foul, and fearful (saith a * grave di-'vine) was the scandal of David; and what was the issue? Pre-'sently the enemies of God, and godliness, began to lift their 'heads, and fall foul upon David's religion, 2 Sam. xii. they 'blasphemed the name of God. O this is he that was so grand 'a zealot, that the zeal of God's house did eat him up. This 'is the man, that, out of his transcendent zeal, danced before 'the ark; this is he that prayed thrice a day, at morning, 'noon, and night: This is he that was so precise, and strict in 'his family, that a wicked person should not dwell in his house. 'This your great, precise zealot, hath defiled the wife, and 'murdered the husband. Now you see what his religion is, 'now you see what comes of this profession of so much holiness, 'and godliness.'

O that men would seriously consider their evil in such censures as these! what is all this to religion? Doth religion any way countenance, or patronize such practices? Nay, doth it not impartially and severely condemn them? It is the glory of the Christian religion, that it is pure, and undefiled, James i. 27. These practices flow from no principle of religion, nor are chargeable upon it, for it teacheth men the very contrary, Tit. ii. 11, 12. If I see a Papist sin boldly, or an Arminian slight grace, I justly condemn their principles, in, and with their practices, because Popery sets pardons to sale, and Arminianism exalts nature into the place of grace: But doth the doctrine of the gospel lead to any immoralities? Charge it, if you can.

Fourthly, And as senseless a thing it is, to condemn all, for the miscarriages, and faults of some; which, yet, is the com-

* Jer. Dyke, of Scandal, p. 53.

Digitized by Google

mon practice of the world. Are all, that profess godliness, loose, and careless? No, no: many are an ornament to their holy profession, and the glory of Christianity. And why must the innocent be condemned for the guilty? What is your reason, and ground for that? Why might not the enemies of Christianity have condemned the eleven apostles, upon the fall of Judas? Had they not as good a warrant for it, as you have for this?

To conclude, You little know what a snare of the devil is laid for your souls, in all those prejudices, and offences, you take, at the ways, and professors of godliness; and what a wo you bring upon your own souls by them. You speak evil of persons, and things, you know not, and prejudice is like still to keep you in ignorance of them. "Wo to the world (saith "Christ) because of offences; *and* blessed is he that is not of-"fended at me."

The eleventh way of ruining the precious soul, opened.

XI. The eleventh way, wherein abundance of precious souls perish, in the christianized, and professing world, is the way of formal hypocrisy in religion, and zeal about the externals of worship. Such a generation of men have, in all ages, mingled themselves with the sincere worshippers of God; and the inducement to it is obvious, the form of godliness is an honour, but the power of it a burden. By the former, earthly interests are accommodated; by the latter, they are frequently exposed, and hazarded.

We find, in the Jewish church, abundance of such chaff intermixed with the wheat, which the doctrine of Christ discovered, and purged out of the flour, Mat. iii. 9, 12. such were the Pharisees, who were exceeding zealous for traditions, and the external rites, and ceremonies of the law, but inwardly full of all filthiness, Mat. xv. 7, 8, 9. Men that honoured the dead, and persecuted the living saints; that reverenced the material temple, and destroyed the living temples; that strained at gnats of ceremonies, and swallowed down the grossest immoralities.

And well had it been, if this generation had ended with that state, and time of the church; but we find a prophecy of the increase of these men in the latter days, 2 Tim. iii. 5. which is every where sadly verified. Religion runs into stalk, and blade, into leaves, and suckers, which should be concocted into pith and fruit: Yea, it is of sad consideration, that, amongst many high pretenders to reformation, their zeal, which should nourish the vitals of religion, and maintain their daily work of mortification and communion with God, spends itself in some

Digitized by Google

by-opinion, whilst practical godliness visibly languisheth in their conversations. How many are there that hate doctrinal errors, who yet perish by practical ones? who hate a false doctrine; but, in mean time perish by a false heart? 'Tis very difficult to reclaim this sort of men from the error of their way; and thereby save their souls from hell. However, let the means be used, and the success left with God.

The eleventh way to hell, by formality, barred up.

1. No sin entangles the souls of men faster, or damns them with more certainty, and aggravation, than the sin of formal hypocrisy: it holds the soul fastest on earth, and sinks it deepest into hell. There was no sort of men upon whom the doctrine of Christ, and the apostles, had so little success, and effect, as the Scribes and Pharisees; they derided him, when *publicans*, and *sinners*, trembled, and believed, Luke xvi. 14, 15. The form of Godliness wards off all convictions; their zeal for the externals of religion secures them against the fears of damnation, whilst, in the mean time, their hypocrisy plunges them deeper into hell, than others that never made such shews of sanctity, and devotion: "He shall appoint him his portion with "hypocrites;" Mat. xxiv. 51. that is, he shall be punished in hell, as hypocrites are punished, *viz.* with the greatest, and sorest punishment. Hypocrisy is a double iniquity, and will be punished with double destruction: their ungrounded hopes of heaven serve but to pully up their wretched souls to a greater height of vain confidence, which gives them the more dreadful jerk in their lamentable, and eternal disappointment.

2. Blind, superstitious zeal, which spends itself only about the externals of religion, usually prepares, and engageth men in a more violent persecution of those that are really godly, and conscientious. The Lord opened a great door of opportunity at Antioch, to Paul; the whole city came together to attend the discoveries of Christ in the first publication of the gospel, and the poor Gentiles began to taste the sweetness of the gospel; but the devil perceiving his kingdom begin to totter, immediately stirred up his instruments to persecute the apostles, and drive them out of the country: and who more fit for that work, than the devout, and honourable women? Acts xiii. 15. These stirred up their husbands, and all they had influence upon, under a fair pretence of zeal for the law, to obstruct the progress of the gospel. *No bird* (saith one) *like the living bird, to draw others into the net.* Men of greatest names, and pretensions to religion; if graceless, are the most dangerous instru-

Digitized by Google

ments the * devil can employ to the ruin, and extirpation of true godliness. Such a zealot was Paul, in his unregenerate state.

3. Nothing is more common, than to find men hot, and zealous against false worship, whilst their hearts are as cold as a stone, in the *vitals*, and *essentials*, of *true religion*. Many can dispute warmly against *adorations of images, praying to angels; and saints departed*, who all the while are like those dead images which others worship. Jehu was a zealot against idolatry; and yet the vital power of true godliness was a stranger to his soul, 2 Kings x. 15, 16. The Pharisees spared no pains to make a *proselyte*, and yet all the while were the children of the devil themselves, Mat. xxiii. 15.

This is a sad case, yet what more common? The Lord open the eyes of these men, and convince them, in season, that their zeal runs in the wrong channel, and spends itself upon things which shall never profit them. O if they were but as much concerned to promote the love of God, and life of Godliness in themselves, and others, as they are about some external accidents, and appendages of religion, what blessings would they be to the world, and what evidence would they have of their own sincerity?

The twelfth way to hell, opened.

XII. The twelfth way to hell, in which many souls are carried on smoothly, and securely, to their own destruction, is, the way of *mere civility*, and *moral honesty*, wherein men rest as in a safe state, never doubting but a civil life will produce an issue into an happy death. *Moral honesty* is a lovely thing, and greatly tends to the peace, and order of the world; but it is not saving grace, nor gives any man a good title to Christ, and salvation. Indeed there can be no grace in that soul in which civility, and moral honesty are not found: but these may be found in thousands that have no grace.

That which ruins souls, is not the exercise of moral virtues, but their reliance upon them: they use their morality as a shield to secure their consciences from the convictions of the word, which would shew them their sinful, and miserable state by nature. Thus the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12. "God, I thank "thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, "adulterers, or even as this publican;" he blesseth himself in the conceits of his own safety, and happiness. Let debauched, and prophane persons look to it, I am well enough; though,

† Satan ascends by the rib, as by a ladder to the heart. *Gregor.*

Digitized by Google

alas! poor man, his being less evil, at best, could but procure him a cooler hell, or a milder flame. This was the case of the young man, Mat. xix. 28. and like a young man, indeed, he reasons. He sums up all the stock of his civil life, and thinks it strange if that be not enough to make a purchase of eternal life. *What lack I yet?* Alas! poor soul, every thing necessary to salvation; the very first stone was not laid, when he thought the building was finished: And this is the case of multitudes, both young and old; and that which greatly confirms, and settles them in this their dangerous security, is the general, indistinct doctrine of some, who pretend to be guides to the souls of others, the scope of whose ministry aims at no higher mark, than to civilize the people, and press moral duties upon them, as if this were all that were necessary to salvation: Nay, it is well if some do not industriously pull down the pale of distinction betwixt morality, and regeneration, and tell the world, in plain English, *That there is no reason to put a difference betwixt such as are baptized, and live morally honest, and those that have saving grace; and they that do so, are only a few, who are highly conceited of themselves, and censorious of all others, whom they please to vote formal, and moral.*

This, indeed, is the way to fix them where they are; if Christ had not taken another method with Nicodemus, and his ministers had not pressed *the necessity of regeneration*, and *the insufficiency of moral honesty to salvation*, how thin had the number of true converts been, though, at most, they are but a handful, in comparison of the *unregenerate!*

O that God would bless what follows, to undeceive, and save some poor soul out of this dangerous snare of the devil!

The twelfth way to damnation barred, by three considerations.

1. Blind not yourselves with the lustre of your own moral virtues, a life smoothly drawn with civility through the world: for though it must be acknowledged there is a loveliness, and attracting sweetness in morality, and civility, yet these things rather respect earth, than heaven, and are designed for the conservation of the order, and peace of this world, not for your salvation, and title to the world to come. Without justice, and truth, *kingdoms*, and *commonwealths* would become *mountains of prey*, and *dens of robbery*. Where there is no trust, there can be no traffic; and where there is no truth, there can be no trust. Civility is the very basis of human society, a world of good accrues to man by it, and abundance of mischief is prevented by it; but it never gave any man *an interest in Christ*,

Digitized by Google

or *a title to salvation.* The Romans and Lacedemonians, who perished in the darkness of Heathenism, excelled in morality; there is nothing of Christ, or regeneration, in these things, how much of excellency soever be ascribed to them. Paul, the Pharisee, was a blameless person, touching the law, and yet, at the same time, not only utterly ignorant of Christ, but a bitter enemy to him, and all that were his. Till you can find another way to heaven than by regeneration, repentance, and faith, never lean upon such a deceitful, and rotten prop, as mere civility is.

2. *Civilized nature* is *unsanctified nature* still; and without *sanctification* there is no *salvation*, Heb. xii. 14. Civility adorneth nature, but doth not change it. Moral virtues are so many sweet flowers strewed over a dead corpse, which hide the lothsomeness of it, but inspire not life into it. "* Morality hides, "and covers, but never mortifies, nor cures the corruptions of "nature;" and mortified they must be, or you cannot be saved: take the best nature in the world, and let it be adorned with all the ornaments of morality (which they call *homiletical virtues*) and add to these all the common gifts of the Spirit, which are for assistance, and ministry; yet all this cannot secure that soul from hell, or be the ground-work for a just claim to any promise of salvation: all this is but nature improved, not regenerated. Morality is neither produced as saving grace is, nor works such effects as grace worketh; there are no pangs of repentance introducing it, it may cost many an aking head, but no aking heart for sin; no such distressed outcries as that, Acts ii. 37. "Men, and brethren, what shall we do?" Nor doth it produce such humility, self abasement, heavenly tempers, and tendencies of soul, as grace doth. Cheat not yourselves, therefore, in so important a concern as salvation is, with an empty shadow.

3. Civility is not only found in multitudes that are out of Christ, but may be the cause, and reason why they are christless: mistake not, I am not pleading the cause of prophaneness, nor disputing civility out of the world; I heartily wish there were more of it to be found in every place, it would exceedingly promote the peace, order, and tranquillity of the world: but yet it is certain, that the eyes of thousands are so dazzled with the lustre of their own morality, that they see no need of Christ, nor feel any want of his righteousness, and this is the ruin of their souls. Thus Christ brings in the Pharisee with his proud

* *Abscondit, non abscondit vita.* Lactans.

Digitized by Google

boast, that he is "no extortioner, adulterer, nor unjust, or such "an one as that publican," Luke xviii. 11. O what a saint doth he vote himself, when he compared his life with the other's! Well, then, beware you be not deceived by thinking you are safe, because you are got out of the dirty road to hell, when, all the while, you are only stepped over the hedge into a cleaner path to damnation. *You have had a short account of some few of those many ways in which the precious souls of men are eternally lost: Let us briefly apply it in the following inferences.*

Infer. 1. If there be so many ways of losing the soul, and such multitudes of souls lost in every one of them, *then the number of saved souls must needs be exceeding small.*

The number of the saved may be considered, either *absolutely* or *comparatively*: In the first consideration they appear great, and many, even a great multitude, which no man can number, Rev. vii. 9. but if compared with those that are lost, they make but *a small remnant* Isa. i. 9. *a little flock*, Mat. xii. 32. For when we consider how vastly the kingdom of Satan is extended, who is called *the god of this world*, from the world of people who are in subjection to him: how small a part of this earthly globe is enlightened with the beams of gospel-light, and that Satan is the acknowledged ruler of all the rest, Eph. vi. 12. But when it shall be farther considered, that out of this spot, on which the light of the gospel is risen, the far greatest part are lost, also: O what a poor handful remains to Jesus Christ, as the purchase of his blood!

It is of trembling consideration, how many thousands of families, amongst us, are mere nurseries for hell, parents bringing forth and breeding up children for the devil; not one word of God (except it be in the way of blasphemy, or prophaneness) to be heard among them. How naturally their ignorant and wicked education puts them in the course and tide of the world, which carries them away irresistibly to hell; how one sinner confirms and animates another, in the same sinful course, till they are all past hope, or remedy: how the rich are taken with the baits of sensual pleasures, and the poor lost in the brake of distracting, worldly cares, except here and there a soul plucked out of the snare of the devil, by the wonderful power, and arm of God. On the one side, you may see multitudes drowned in open prophaneness, and debauchery; and, on the other side, many thousands securely sleeping, in the state of civility, and morality: some key-cold, and without the least sense of religion; others hell-hot, with blind zeal, and superstitious madness, against true godliness, and the sincere practisers of it. Some

Digitized by Google

living all their days under the ordinances of God, and never touched with any conviction of their sin, or misery; others convinced, and making some faint offers at religion; but their convictions (like blossoms nipt with a frosty morning) fall off, and no fruit follows. And as *rubies, sapphires,* and *diamonds,* are very few, in comparison of the *pebbles,* and *common stones* of the earth; so are true Christians, in comparison of multitudes that perish in the snares of Satan.

Infer. 2. *How little reason have the unregenerate to glory, and boast themselves in their earthly acquisitions and successes, whilst in the mean time, their souls are lost!* they have gotten other things, but lost their souls. It is strange to see how some men, by rolling a small fortune up and down the world (as boys do a snow-ball) have increased the heap, and raised a great estate; they have attained their design and aim in the world, and hug themselves in the pleased thoughts of their happiness; but, alas, among all the thoughts of their gains, there is not one thought of what they have lost. O if such a thought as this could find room in their hearts, 'I have, indeed, gotten an estate, but I 'have lost my soul; I have much of the world, but nothing of 'Christ; gold and silver I have, but grace, peace and pardon I 'have not; my body is well provided for, but my soul is na-'ked, empty, and destitute.' Such a thought, like the sentence written on the wall, would make their hearts fall within them. What a rapture, and transport of joy did the sight of a full barn cast that worldling into! Luke xii. 19, 20. "Soul, take thine "ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" little dreaming that death was just then at the door, to take away the cloth, guest, and all together; that the next hour his friends would be scrambling for his estate, the worms for his body, and the devil for his soul.

O how many have not only lost their souls, whilst they have been drudging for the world, but have sold their souls to purchase a little of the world! parted, by consent, with their best treasure for a very trifle, and yet think they have a great bargain of it! Surely, if poor sinners did but apprehend what they have lost, as well as what they have gained, their gains would yield them as little comfort as Judas's money did, for which he sold both his soul and Saviour. Instead of those pleasing frolics of wanton worldlings, what a cold shiver would run through all their bones and bowels, did they but understand what it is to lose a gracious God, and a precious soul, and both eternally, and irrecoverably!

The just God remains still to avenge and punish the sinner;

Digitized by Google

but the favour of God, that friendly look, is gone; the peace of God, that heaven upon earth, is gone; the essence of the soul remains still, but its purity, peace, joy, hope, and happiness, these are gone; and these being gone, what can remain, but a tormenting, piercing sight of those things, for which you have sold them?

Infer. 3. *Hence let us estimate the evil of sin, and see what a dreadful thing that is, which men commonly sport themselves with, and make so light of: it is not only a wrong and injury to the soul, but the loss and utter ruin of the soul for ever.*

It is said, Prov. viii. 36. "He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul." And if this were all the mischief sin did us, it were bad enough; a wrong to the soul is a greater evil than the ruin of the body or estate, and all the outward enjoyments of this life can be; but to lose the precious soul, and destroy it to all eternity, O what can estimate such a loss! Now the result and last effect of sin, is death, the death of the precious soul. Rom. vi. 21. "The end of those things is death." So Ezek. xviii. 4. "The soul that sinneth shall die."

Sin doth not destroy the being of the soul by *annihilation*, but it doth that which the damned shall find, and acknowledge to be much worse; it cuts off the soul from God, and deprives it of all its felicity, joy, and pleasure, which consists in the enjoyment of him. Such is the dolefulness and fearfulness of this result and issue of sin, that when God himself speaks of it, he puts on a passion, and speaks of it with the most feeling concernment. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" *q. d.* Why will ye wilfully cast away your own souls? Why will ye chuse the pleasures of sin for a season, at the price of my wrath and fury, poured out for ever? O think of this, you that make so light a matter of committing sin! we pity those, who, in the depth of melancholy or desperation, lay violent hands upon themselves, and, in a desperate mood, cut their own throats; but certainly, for a man to murder his own soul, is an act of wickedness as much beyond it, as the value of the soul is above the body.

Infer. 4. *What an invaluable mercy is Jesus Christ to the world, who came on purpose to seek, and to save such as were lost?*

In Adam all were shipwrecked and cast away: Christ is the plank of mercy, let down from heaven to save some. The loss of souls, by the fall, had been as irrecoverable, as the loss of the fallen angels, had not God, in a way above all human thoughts,

Digitized by Google

and counsels, contrived the method of their redemption. It is astonishing to consider the admirable harmony and glorious triumph of all the divine attributes, in this great project of heaven, for the recovery of lost souls: It is the "wonder of "angels," 1 Pet. i. 12. the "great mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16. the matter and subject of the triumphant song of redeemed saints, Rev. i. 5. and well it may, when we consider a more noble species of creatures finally lost, and no Mediator of reconciliation appointed betwixt God and them: this is to save an earthen pitcher, whilst the vessel of gold is let fall, and no hand is stretched out to save it.

But what is most astonishing, is, that so great a person, as the Son of God, should come himself, from the Father's bosom, to save us, by putting himself into our room and stead, being made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. He leaves the bosom of his Father, and all the ineffable delights of heaven, disrobes himself of his glory, and is found in fashion as a man, yea, becomes a worm, and no man; submits to the lowest step and degree of abasement, to save lost sinners. What a low stoop doth Christ make, in his humiliation, to catch the souls of poor sinners out of hell! Herein was love, that God sent his own Son, "to be "the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. "and so God "loved the world," John iii. 16. at this rate he was content to save lost sinners.

How seasonable was this work of mercy, both in its general exhibition to the world, in the incarnation of Christ, and in its particular application of it to the soul of every lost sinner, by the Spirit! When he was first exhibited to the world, he found them all lost sheep gone astray, every one turning to his own way, Isa. liii. 6. he speaks of our lost estate by nature, both collectively, or in general: "we all went astray:" and distributively, or in particular, "Every one turned to his own way;" and in the fulness of time, a Saviour appeared.

And how seasonable was it, in its particular application? How securely were we wandering onwards, in the paths of destruction, fearing no danger, when he graciously opened our eyes by conviction, and pulled us back by heart turning-grace! No mercy like this; it is an astonishing act of grace, that stands alone.

Infer. 5. *If there be so many ways to hell, and so few that escape it, how are all concerned to strive, to the utmost, in order to their own salvation?*

In Luke xiii. 23. a certain person proposed a curious question to Christ; "Lord, are there few that be saved?" He saw a multitude flocking to Christ, and thronging with great zeal to

Digitized by Google

hear him; and he could not conceive but heaven must fill, proportionably to the numbers he saw in the way thither. But Christ's answer, ver. 24. at once rebukes the curiosity of the questionist, fully resolves the question propounded, and sets home his own duty and greatest concernment upon him. It rebukes his curiosity, and is, as if he should say, Be the number of the saved more or less, what is that to thee? Strive thou to be one of them. It fully solves the question propounded, by distinguishing those that attend upon the means of salvation, into seekers, and strivers. In the first respect there are many, who by a cheap and easy profession, seek heaven; but take them under the notion of strivers, *i. e.* persons heartily engaged in religion, and who make it their business, and so they will shrink up into a small number; and he presseth home his great business, and concern upon him, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate.*

By *gate* understand whatsoever is introductive to blessedness and salvation: by the epithet *strait*, understand the difficulties and severities attending religion; all that suffering and self-denial, which those that are bound for heaven should reckon upon, and expect: and by *striving*, understand the diligent and constant use of all those means and duties, how hard, irksome, and costly soever they are. The word ἀγωνίζεσθε hath a deep sense and emphasis, and imports striving, even to an agony; and this duty is enforced two ways upon him, and every man else: First, by the indisputable sovereignty of Christ, from whom the command comes; and also from the deep interest and concern every soul hath in the commanded duty. It is not only a simple compliance with the will of God, but what also involves our own salvation and eternal happiness in it: our great duty, and our great interest are twisted together in this command; your eternal happiness depends upon the success of it. A man is not crowned, except he strive lawfully, *i. e.* successfully and prevalently. O therefore, so run, so strive, that ye may obtain! if you have any value for your souls, if you would not be miserable to eternity, strive, strive! Believe it, you would find that the assurance of salvation drops not down from heaven in a night-dream, as the Turks fable their Alcoran to have done in that *lailato banzili*, night of demission, as they call it; no, no; the righteous themselves are scarcely saved: many seek, but few find. Strive, therefore, as men and women that are heartily concerned for their own salvation; sit not, with folded arms, like so many heaps of stupidity and sloth, whilst the door of hope is yet open, and such a sweet

Digitized by Google

voice from heaven calls to you, saying, Strive, souls, strive, if ever you expect to be partakers of the blessedness that is here to be enjoyed; strive, to the utmost of your abilities and opportunities. Such an heaven is worth striving to obtain, such an hell is worth striving to escape, such an invaluable soul is worth striving to save.

I confess, heaven is not the purchase or reward of your striving: no soul shall boastingly say there, Is not this the glory which my duties and diligence purchased for me? and yet, on the other side, it is as true, that without striving you shall never set foot there. Say not, it depends upon the pleasure of God, and not upon your diligence; for it is his declared will and pleasure, to bring men to glory in the way, though not for the sake of their own striving. As in the works of your civil calling, you know all the care, toil, and sweat of the husbandman, avails nothing of itself, except the sun and rain quicken and ripen the fruits of the earth; and yet no wise man will neglect ploughing and harrowing, sowing and weeding, because these labours avail not, without the influences of heaven, but waits for them in the way of his duty and diligence. Rational hope sets all the world to work. Do they plough in hope, and sow in hope, and will you not pray in hope, and hear in hope? You that know your souls to be hitherto strangers to Christ and the regenerating work of the Spirit; how is it, that you take them not aside, sometimes, out of the distracting noise, and hurries of the world, and thus bemoan them?

'O my poor, graceless, christless, miserable soul, how sad a 'case art thou in! Others have, but thou never feltest the burden 'of sin; thousands in the world are striving and labouring, 'searching and praying, to make their calling and election sure; 'whilst thou sittest still with folded hands, in a supine regard-'lessness of the misery that is hastening upon thee. Canst thou 'endure the devouring wrath of God? Canst thou dwell with 'everlasting burnings? Hast thou fancied a tolerable hell? 'Or, is it easy to perish? Why dost thou not cast thyself at 'the feet of Christ, and cry, as long as breath will last, Lord, 'pity a sinful, miserable, undone, and self-condemning soul? 'Lord, smite this rocky heart, subdue this stubborn will, heal and 'save an undone soul ready to perish: The characters of death 'are upon it, it must be changed or condemned, and that in a 'little time. Bowels of pity, hear the cry of a soul distressed, 'and ready to perish.'

And you that do not understand the case, and state your souls are in, have you never a bible near you? O turn to those

Digitized by Google

places, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. where you will presently find the more obvious marks, and characters, God hath set upon the children of perdition; and if you find not yourself in that catalogue, among the unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, *&c.* then turn to John iii. 3. and solemnly ask thy own soul this question, Am I born again? Am I a new creature, or still in the same condition I was born in? What solid evidence, of the new birth, have I to rely upon, If I were now within a few gasps of death? Am not I the man, or woman, who lives in the very same sins which the word of God makes the symptoms and characters of damnation? And doth not my *conscience* witness against me, that I am utterly void and destitute of all that saving grace, and a mere stranger to the regenerating work of the Spirit, without which there can be no well-bottom'd hope of salvation? And if so, are not the tokens of death upon me? Am not I a person marked out for misery? And shall I sit still in a state of so much danger, and not once strive to make an escape from the wrath to come? Is this vile body worth so much toil and labour to support and preserve it? And is not my soul worth as much care and diligence to secure it from the everlasting wrath of the great, just, and terrible God? O that the consideration of the wrath to come, the multitudes all the world over preparing as fuel for it, and the door of opportunity yet held open to souls by the hand of grace to escape that wrath, might prevail with thy heart, reader, to strive, and that to the uttermost, to secure thy precious soul from the impending ruin.

* *

EPH. v. 16.—*Redeeming the time* (or opportunity) *because the days are evil.*

TIME is deservedly reckoned among the most precious mercies of this life; and that which makes it so valuable are the commodious seasons and opportunities for salvation which are vouchsafed to us therein: opportunity is the golden spot of time, the sweet and beautiful flower, growing upon the stalk of time *. If time be a *ring* of gold, opportunity is the rich *diamond* that gives it both its value and glory. The apostle well knew the value of time; and seeing how prodigally it was wast-

* Καιρος αντος χρονου.

Digitized by Google

ed by the most, doth therefore in this place, earnestly press all men to redeem, save, and improve it with the utmost diligence. In this, and the former *verse*, we have,

1*st*, The duty injoined, *Walk circumspectly.*

2*dly*, The *injunction* explained;

1. More generally, *Not as fools, but as wise.*

2. More particularly, *Redeeming the time.*

3. The exhortation strongly inforced with a powerful motive, *Because the days are evil.*

Among these particulars, my discourse is principally concerned about the redemption of time, or opportunities, which in this life, are graciously vouchsafed us, in order to that which is to come: And here it will be needful to inquire,

1. What the apostle means by *time.*

2. What by the *redemption of time.*

1. Time is taken more largely or strictly according to the double acceptation of the Hebrew word עת which signifies sometimes *time*, and sometimes *occasion, season*, or *opportunity*, and accordingly is expresst by χρονος and καιρος, *tempus* and *tempestivitas*: the latter is the word here used, and denotes the commodiousness and fitness of some parts of time above others, for the successful and prosperous management and accomplishment of our main and great business here, which is to secure our interest in Christ, and glorify God in a course of fruitful obedience. For these great and weighty purposes our time is graciously lengthened out, and many fit opportunities presented us in the revolutions thereof.

2. By the *redemption of time* †, we must understand the study, care, and diligence of Christians, at the rate of all possible pains, at the expence of all earthly pleasures, ease and gratifications of the flesh, to rescue their precious seasons, both of salvation and service, out of the hands of temptations, which so commonly rob unwary souls of them. Satan trucks with us for our time, as we did at first with the silly Indians for their gold and diamonds, who were content to exchange them for glass-beads and tinsel-toys. Many fair seasons are forced, or cheated out of our hands, by the importunity of earthly cares, or deceitfulness of sensual pleasures: at the expence and loss of these, we must redeem and rescue our time for higher and better uses and purposes. We must spend these hours in prayer, meditation, searching our hearts, mortifying our lusts; which others do, and our flesh fain would spend in sensual pleasures, and gratifications of

† Εξαγοραζομενοι τον καιρον.

Digitized by Google

the fleshly appetite. If ever we expect to win the port of glory, we must be as diligent and careful as seamen are, to take every gale, that blows directly or obliquely to set them forward in their voyage. The note from hence is this;

Doct. *That the wisdom of a Christian is eminently discovered in saving and improving all opportunities in this world, for that world which is to come.*

God hangs the great things of eternity upon the small wires of times and seasons in this world: that may be done, or neglected in a day, which may be the ground-work of joy or sorrow to all eternity. There is a nick of opportunity which gives both success and facility to the great and weighty affairs of the soul as well as body; to come before it, is to seek the bird before it be hatched; and to come after it, is to seek it when it is fled. There is a twofold season, or opportunity of salvation.

1. One was Christ's season for the purchase of it.

2. The other is ours for the application of it.

1. Christ had a season assigned him for the impetration and purchase of our salvation; so you hear his Father bespeaking him, Isa. xlix. 8. "Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time "have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped "thee," בְּעֵת רָצוֹן, *in tempore opportuno voluntatis, vel placito*. It was the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ to set in with the Father's time, to comply with his season: and it became a day of salvation, because it was the acceptable time which Christ took for it.

2. Men have their seasons and opportunities for the application of Christ, and his benefits, to their own souls: 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2. "We then as workers together with God, beseech you "also, that you receive not the grace of God in vain; for he "saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of "salvation have I succoured thee. Behold, now is the accepted "time, now is the day of salvation." He exhorts the Corinthians not to dally or trifle any longer in the great concerns of their salvation; for now, saith he, is your day. Christ had his day to purchase it, and he procured a day also for you to apply it, and this is that day: you enjoy it, you live under it: that golden day is now running: O! see that you frustrate not the design thereof, by receiving the gospel-grace in vain.

Now two things concur to make a fit season of salvation to the souls of men.

1. The external means and instruments.

2. The agency of the Spirit internally by, or with those external means.

Digitized by Google

1. Men have a season of salvation, when God sends the means and instruments of salvation among them. When the gospel is powerfully preached among a people, there is a door opened to them; 2 Cor. ii. 12. "When I came to Troas to preach the "gospel, a door was opened to me of the Lord." God as it were unlocks the door of heaven by the preaching of the gospel: Souls have then an opportunity to step in and be saved.

2. But yet it is not a *wide and effectual door* (as the apostle phrases it, 1 Cor. xvi. 9.) till the Spirit of God joins with, and works upon the heart by those external means and instruments; as the waters of the pool of Bethesda had no inherent sanative virtue in themselves, until the angel of the Lord descended and troubled them: but both together make a blessed season for the souls of men. Then he stands at the door, and knocks, by convictions and persuasions, Rev. iii. 20. strives with men, as he did with the old world by the ministry of Noah, Gen. vi. 3. Now the door of opportunity is indeed opened; but this will not always last; there is a time when *the Spirit ceases to strive*, and when *the door is shut*, Luke xiii. 25.

There is a season, when by the fresh impression of some *ordinance* or *providence* of God, mens hearts are awakened, and their affections stirred. It is now with the souls of men as it is with fruit trees in the spring, when they put forth blossoms; if they knit and set, fruit follows, if they be nipt and blasted, no fruit can be expected. For all convictions and motions of the affections are to grace, much the same thing as blossoms are to fruit, which are but the rudiments thereof, *fructus imperfectus et ordinabilis*, somewhat in order to it; and look as that is a critical and hazardous season to trees, so is this to souls. I do not say it is in the power of any soul to make the work of the Spirit effectual and abiding, by adding his endeavours to the Spirit's motions; for then conversion would not be the free and arbitrary act of the Spirit, as in Job iii. 8. neither would souls be born of God, but of the will of man, contrary to John i. 13. And yet it is not to be thought or said, that mens endeavours and strivings are altogether vain, needless, and insignificant; because, though they cannot make God's grace effectual, his grace can make them effectual; they are our duty, and God can bless them to our great advantage. Now there are, among others, five remarkable essays, efforts, or strivings of a soul under the impression and hand of the Spirit, that greatly tend to the fixing, settling, and securing of that great work on the soul; and it is seldom known any soul miscarries in whom these things are found.

Digitized by Google

1. Deep, serious, and fixed consideration, which lets conviction deep into the soul, and settles it, and roots it fast in the heart, Psal. cxix. 59. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet "unto thy testimonies." There are close and anxious debates in those souls in whom convictions prosper to full conversion: they sit alone, and think close to their great and eternal concerns: they carry their thoughts back to the evils of their life past, then smite on the thigh, and cry, *What have I done?* They run their thoughts forward into eternity, and that to a great depth, and then cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" They deliberate and weigh, in their most advised thoughts, what is to be done, and that speedily, for escaping wrath to come; thus they fix those tender, weak and hazardous motions, which die away in multitudes of souls; and, in the loss of them, the seasons of salvation are also lost.

2. The first stirrings and motions of the Spirit, upon mens hearts, do then become a season of salvation to them, when they are accompanied with spiritual, fervent, and frequent prayer: so it was with Paul, Acts ix. 11. "Behold he prayeth." It is a good sign when souls get alone, and effect privacy and retirement, to pour out their fears, sorrows, and requests unto God: It is in the espousals of a soul to Christ, as it is in other marriages; a third person may make the motion, and bring the parties together, but they only betwixt themselves must conclude and agree the matter. Prayer is the first breath which the new creature draws in, and the last (ordinarily) it breaths out in this world. This nourishes and maturates those weak, tender, and first motions after God, and brings them to some consistence and fixedness in the soul.

3. Then do those motions of the Spirit on mens hearts make a season of salvation to them, when they remain and settle in the heart, and are in them *per modum quietis*, by way of rest and abode, following the man from place to place, from day to day; so that whatever unpleasing diversions the necessities and incumbrances of this world at any time give, yet still they return again upon the heart, and will not vanish, or suffer any longer suspension: but in others, who lose their blessed advantage and season, it is quite contrary; James i. 23, 24. "They are as one that "seeth his natural face in a glass, and goeth away and forgetteth "what manner of man he was:" He sees some spot on his face, or disorder in his band, which he purposeth to correct; but, by one occurrence or another, he forgets what he saw in the glass, and so goes all the day with his spot upon him. This was an evanid light purpose, which came to nothing for want of a

Digitized by Google

present execution; just so it is with many in reference to their great concerns: but if the impression abide in its strength, if it return, and follow the soul, and will not let it be quiet, it is like then to prosper, and prove the time of mercy indeed to such souls.

4. An anxious sollicitude, and inquisitiveness, about the means and ways of salvation, speaks an effectual door of salvation to be set open to the souls of men, Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 30. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Men and brethren, what "shall we do?" *q. d.* we are in a miserable condition; oh you the ministers of Christ, instruct, counsel, and shew us what course to take: Is there no balm in Gilead? no door of hope in this valley of Achor? Alas! we are not able to dwell with our own fears, terrors, and presages of wrath to come. Oh for a messenger, one among a thousand, to teach us the way of salvation. Thus the Lord rivets and fixes those motions in some souls, that vanish like a morning mist, or dew.

5. Lastly, That which secures and completes this work, is the execution of those purposes and convictions, by falling, without delay, to the work of faith and repentance in good earnest, dallying no more with so great a concern, standing no longer at *shall I? shall I?* when mean while time flies away, and opportunities may be lost: but bring their thoughts and debates to peremptory resolution, as the *Lepers* at Samaria did; and seeing themselves shut up to one only door of hope, there they resolve to take their station, lying at the feet of Jesus Christ, and casting their poor burdened souls upon him, whatever be the issue. When the Spirit of God ripens the first motions to this, and carries them through that critical season thus far, there is an effectual door of opportunity opened indeed; this is an acceptable time, a day of salvation: but oh! how many thousands miscarry in this season, and like trees removed from one soil to another, die in the removal!

But certainly, it is the most solemn and important concern of every soul to watch upon all these seasons of salvation, when God comes nigh to them by convictions and motions of his Spirit; and to put the same value upon these things that they do upon their souls, and the salvation of them. This is the door of hope set open, a fresh gale to carry you home to your port of glory. Salvation is now come nigh to your souls; there is but a little betwixt you and blessedness. Wise and happy is that soul which knows and improves its season. To persuade and press men to discern and improve such seasons as these, is the principal work of the preachers of the gospel,

Digitized by Google

and that special work to which I now address myself, in the following motives and arguments.

Arg. 1. And first, who, that hath the free exercise of reason, and the sense of a future eternal estate, would carelessly neglect any season of salvation, whilst he seeth all the rational world so carefully attending, and watching all opportunities to promote, and secure their lower concerns, and designs for the present life?

Is not the saving a man's soul as weighty a concern, as the getting of an estate? You cannot but observe how careful merchants are, to nick the opportunity which promiseth them a good turn; how do poor seamen look out for a wind, to waft them to their port, and industriously shift their sails, to improve every flaw that may set them on their voyage; how many miles tradesmen will travel to be in season at a fair, to put off, or purchase goods, to their advantage: No entertainments, recreations, or importunities of friends, can prevail with any of these, to lose a day, on which their business depends; all things must give way to their business; they all understand their seasons, and will not be diverted. But, alas! what childish toys are all these, compared with their salvation! what is the loss of a little money, to the loss of a man's soul? If a man's life depended upon his being at such a place, by such a precise hour, sure he would not over-sleep his time that morning; and had he but the least fear of coming too late, every stroke of the clock would strike to his heart; and yet remissness, and carelessness, in such a case as this, is infinitely more excusable, than in the matter of salvation. Certainly the sollicitude, and care of all the world for the interests thereof, yea, your own diligence, and circumspection in temporal things, will be an uncontroulable, and confounding self-conviction to you in the day of your account, and leave you without plea, or apology, for your supine neglects of the seasons of salvation.

Arg. 2. The consideration of the uncertainty, and slippery nature of these spiritual seasons, must awaken in us all care, and diligence to secure, and improve them: This nick of opportunity is *tempus labile*, a slippery season; it is but short in itself, and very uncertain: "To day, whilst it is said to day "(saith the apostle) if ye will hear his voice," Heb. iii. 15. *q. d.* You have now a short, uncertain, but most precious, and valuable season for your souls, lay hold on it, whilst it is called *to-day*; for, if this season be let slip, the time to come is called

Digitized by Google

by another name, that is, not *to-day*, but *to-morrow*. Your time is the *present time*; take heed of procrastinating and putting it off, till that which is called *to-day* (which is your *only season*) be past, and gone. The precious inch of time, though it be more worth than all the other greater parts, and portions of your time, yet it is as much *in fluxu*, in hasty motion, and spending, as other parts of time are; and being once lost, is never more to be recalled, or recovered. Few men know, or understand it, whilst it is current; other seasons for natural, or civil actions, are known, and stated, but the time of grace is not so easily discerned, and therefore commonly mistaken, and lost: And this comes to pass, partly through,

1. Presumptuous hopes.
2. Discouraging fears.

1. Presumptuous hopes, which put it too far forth, and persuade us this season is yet to come; that we have time before us, and that *to-morrow* shall be as *to-day*. "Thus through "presumption *, men hope, and by their presumptuous hopes "they perish." This is the ruin of most souls that perish.

2. Discouraging fears put it too far back, and represent it as long since past, and gone, whilst it is yet in being, and in our hands. By such pangs of desperation, Satan cuts the nerves of industry, and diligence, and causes souls to yield themselves as by consent, for lost, and hopeless, even whilst the gospel is opening their eyes, to see their sin and misery, which is a part of the work, in order to their recovery. Thus the eyes of thousands are dazzled, that they cannot discern the season of mercy, and so it slides from them, as if it had never been.

God came near them in the means of their conversion, yea, and nearer in the motions of his Spirit upon their consciences, and affections; but they knew not the time of their visitation, and now the things of their peace are hid from their eyes. Had those convictions been obeyed, and those purposes that were begotten in their hearts, been followed by answerable executions of them, happy had they been to all eternity: But their careless neglects have quenched them, and the door is shut; and who knows whether it may be opened any more? O dally not with the Spirit of God, resist not his calls! his motions on the soul are tender things; they may soon be quenched, and never recovered.

Arg. 3. Neglect not the seasons of mercy, the day of grace,

* *Praesumendo sperant, et sperando pereunt.*

Digitized by Google

because opportunity facilitates the great work of your salvation; it is much easier to be done in such a season, than it can be afterwards: An impression is easily made on wax, when melted, but stay till it be hardened, and if you lay the greatest weight on the seal, it leaves no impression upon it. Much so it is with the heart, there is a season when God makes it soft, and yielding, when the affections are thawed, and melted under the word; conscience is full of sense, and activity, the will palpable: Now is the time to set in with the motions of the spirit; there is now a gale from heaven, if you will take it, and if not, it tarries not for man, nor waits for the sons of men: Neglect of the season, is the loss of the soul. The heart, like melted wax, will naturally harden again, and then to how little purpose are your own feeble essays? Heb. iii. 15. 'Tis both easy and successful striving, when the Spirit of God strives in you, and with you; you are now workers together with God, and such work goes on smoothly, and sweetly; that which is in motion is easily moved; but if once the heart is set, you may labour to little purpose.

Arg. 4. The infinite importance, and weight of salvation, is alone, instead of all motives, and arguments, to make men prize, and improve every proper season for it. It is no ordinary concern, it is your life, yea, it is your eternal life; the solemnity, and awfulness of such a business as this, is enough to swallow up the spirit of man. O what an awful sound have such words as these, ever with the Lord! Suppose you saw the glory of heaven, the full reward of all the labours, and sufferings of the saints, the blessed harvest of all their prayers, tears, diligence, and self-denial in this world; or suppose you had a true representation of the torments of hell, and could but hear the wailings of the damned, for the neglect of the season of mercy, and their passionate, but vain wishes for one of those days which they have lost: Would you think any care, any pains, any self-denial too much, to save, and redeem one of these opportunities? Surely had would have a far higher estimation of them, than ever you you in your lives.

A trial for a man's whole estate, is accounted a solemn business, among men; the cast of a dye for a man's life, is a weighty action, and seldom done without anxiety of the mind, and trembling of the hand: Yet both these are but children's play compared with savation-work.

Three things put an unspeakable solemnity upon this matter; it is the precious soul, which is above all valuation, that lies at

Digitized by Google

stake, and is to be saved, or lost. The saving or losing of it, is not for a time, but for ever; and this is the only season in which it will be eternally saved or cast away: All hangs upon a little inch of time, which being over-slipt, and lost, is never more to be recalled, or recovered. *Lord! with what serious spirits, deep, and weighty consideration, fears, and tremblings of heart, should men and women, attend the seasons of their salvation!*

Believe it, reader, since thy soul projected its first thought, there never was a more weighty, and concerning subject than this presented to thy thoughts. O! therefore, let not thy thoughts trifle about it, and slide from it, as they use to do in other things, of common concernment.

Arg. 5. If we set any value on the true pleasure of life, or solid comfort of our souls at death, let us by no means neglect the special seasons, and opportunities of salvation we now enjoy.

These two things, the pleasure of life, and comforts in death, should be prized, by every man more than his two eyes; certainly no being at all is more desirable, than a being without these: Take away the true, spiritual pleasure of life, and you level the life of man with the beast that perisheth; and take away the hope, and comfort of the soul in death, and you sink him infinitely below the beasts, and make him a being only capable of misery for ever.

Now there can be no true, spiritual pleasure, found in that soul that has neglected, and lost his only season of salvation: All the solid delight, and comfort of life, results from the settlement, and security of a man's great concern in the proper season thereof. The true mirth of the *converted Prodigal* bears date from the time of his return, and *reconciliation to his father*, Luke xv. 24. Two things are absolutely pre-requisite to the comfort of life, *viz. a change of the state by justification, and a change of the frame and temper of the heart, by sanctification.* To be in a pardoned state, is a matter of all joy, Mat. ix. 2. and "to be spiritually minded, is life and peace," Rom. viii. 6. No good news comes to any man, before this; and no bad news can sink a man's heart, after this.

And for hope, and comfort in death, let none be fond to expect it, till he has first complied with, and obeyed God's call in the time thereof: A careless life never did, nor never will produce a comfortable death. What is more common among all that die, not stupid, and senseless, as well as unregenerate, and Christless, than the bitter, dolorous complaints of their misspent time, and losing their seasons of mercy? *Reader, if thou wouldst not feel that anguish thou hast seen, and heard, others to*

Digitized by Google

be in on this account, know the time of thy visitation, and finish thy great work, whilst it is day.

Arg. 6. Neglect no season of salvation which is graciously afforded you, because your time is short; death and eternity, are at the door. "You know that you must shortly put off these "tabernacles," 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. that when a few years are come, "you shall go the way whence you shall not return," Job xvi. 22. All the living are listed soldiers, and must conflict, hand to hand, with that dreadful enemy death, and there is no discharge in that war, Eccles. viii. 8. It will be in vain to say, You are not willing to die; for willing, or unwilling, away you must go, when death calls you. It will be as vain to say, You are not ready; for, ready, or unready, you must be gone, when death comes. Your readiness to die, would, indeed, be a cordial to your hearts in death; but then, you must improve and ply the time of life, and husband your opportunities diligently; carelesness of [illegible] and readiness for death are inconsistent, and exclusive of each other. The bed is sweeter to none than the hard labourer, and the grave comfortable to none but the laborious Christian. You know nothing can be done by you after death; the *compositum* is then dissolved; you cease to be what you were, to enjoy the means you had, and to work as you did. O therefore slip not the only season you have, both of attaining the end of life, and escaping the danger and hour of death.

The USE.

I shall close all with a word of exhortation, persuading (if possible) the careless and unthinking neglecters of their precious time and souls, to awake out of that deep and dangerous security in which they ly fast asleep on the very brink of eternity, and "to-day, whilst it is yet called to-day," to hear God's voice calling them to repentance and faith, and thereby to Christ and everlasting blessedness. "Behold, he yet stands at the "door, and knocks," Rev. iii. 20. The door of hope is not yet finally shut, there are yet some stirrings at certain times in mens consciences; God comes near them in his word, and in some rouzing acts of providence, the death of a near relation, the seizure of a dangerous disease, the blasting and disappointment of a man's great design and project for this world, a fall into some notorious sin; these, and many such like methods of providence, as well as the convincing voice of the word, have the efficacy of an awakening voice to mens drowsy consciences; and if careless sinners would but attend to them, and follow home those motions they make upon their hearts, who knows to what these weak beginnings might arise and prosper?

Digitized by Google

The souls of men are, as it were, imbarked in the calls of God, your life is bound up in them; if these are lost, your souls are lost; if these abide upon you, and grow up to sound conversion, you are saved by them. More particularly consider,

1. What a mercy it is, to have your lot providentially cast under the gospel; to be born under, and bred up with the means and instruments of conversion and salvation. We have lived from our youth up, under the calls of God, and within the joyful sound of the gospel: "God hath not dealt so with other "nations," Psal. cxlvii. 20. Though others should seek the means of life, they cannot find them; and though you seek them not, you can hardly miss them.

2. How great a mercy is it, to have your lives lengthened out hither to by God's patience, under the gospel! that neither that golden lamp, nor the lamp of your life, (both which are liable to be extinguished every moment) are yet put out. Thousands and ten thousands, your contemporaries, are gone out of the hearing of the voice of the gospel, they shall never hear another call; the treaty of God is ended with them; the master of the house is risen up, and the doors are shut. Your neglects and provocations have not been inferior to theirs; but the patience and goodness of God has exceeded and abounded to you beyond whatever it did to them.

3. Bethink yourselves what an aggravation of your misery it will be, to sink into hell with the calls of God sounding in your ears! to sink into eternal misery, betwixt the tender, out-stretched arms of mercy! this is the hell of hell, the emphasis of damnation, the racking engine on which the consciences of the damned are tortured. "And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to hea-"ven, shall be brought down to hell," Matth. xi. 23. Such a fall, after so high an exaltation, is the very strappado which will torment your consciences. Hell will prove a cooler and milder place to the Heathens that never enjoyed your light, means, and mercies in this world, than it will to you. None sink so deep into misery in the world to come, as they that fall from the fairest opportunities of salvation in this world.

4. Let no man expect that God will hear his cries and intreaties in time of misery, who neglects and slights the calls of God in time of mercy. God calls, but men will not hear; the day is coming, "when they shall cry, but God will not hear," Prov. i. 24, 25. "Will God hear his cry, when trouble cometh "upon him?" Job xxvii. 9. No, no; he will not: and this is but a just retribution from the righteous God, whose calls and counsels men have set at nought. But whatever men now think

Digitized by Google

of it, it is certainly the greatest misery incident to men in all the world: for as no words can make another fully sensible what a privilege it is to have the ear, favour, pity, and help of God in a day of straits; so it is impossible for any words to express the doleful state and case of that soul whom God casts off in trouble, and whose cries he shuts out.

5. Beware of neglecting any call of God, because that call you are now tempted to neglect, may be the last call that God ever intends to give your soul. Sure I am, there is a call which will be the last call of God to rebellious sinners, and after that no more calls, but an eternal deep silence; *his Spirit shall not always strive with man*; and the more motions and calls you have already slighted, the more probable it is that this may be the last voice of God in a way of mercy to thy soul: and what if, after this, God should seal up thy heart, and judicially harden it; make thy will utterly inflexible, and thine ears deaf, as he threatens, Isa. vi. 10. What an undone miserable man or woman art thou then! Oh! beware of provoking the sorest of all judgments, by persisting any longer in a course of rebellion against light and mercy.

6. Whilst your hearts put off and neglect the calls of God, you can by no means arrive to the evidence and assurance of your election; for your election is only secured to you by your effectual calling, 2 Pet. i. 10. There is no way for men to discern their names written in the book of life, but by reading the work of sanctification in their own hearts, Rom. x. 8. I desire no miraculous voice from heaven, no extraordinary signs, or unscriptural notices and informations in this matter: Lord, let me but find my heart complying with thy calls, my will obediently submitting to thy commands; sin my burden, and Christ my desire: I never crave a fairer or surer evidence of thy electing love to my soul: and if I had an oracle from heaven, an extraordinary messenger from the other world, to tell me thou lovest me, I have no reason to credit such a voice, whilst I find my heart wholly sensual, averse to God, and indisposed to all that is spiritual.

9. What reason have you why you should not presently embrace the call of God, and thankfully lay hold only on the first opportunity and season of salvation? Have you any greater matters in hand than the salvation of your precious souls? Is there any thing in this world that more concerns you? If the affairs of this life be so indispensably necessary, and those of the world to come so indifferent; if you think that meat and drink, trade and business, wife and children are such great things, and Christ,

Digitized by Google

the soul, and eternity, such little things; or if you think salvation to be a work of the greatest necessity, and yet may safely enough be put off to an uncertain time, I may assure you, you will not be long of this mind. How soon are all the mistakes of men in these matters rectified in a few moments after death! Rectified, I say, but not remedied; your opinion will be changed, but not your condition.

8. Do you not every day easily and readily obey the calls of Satan and your own lusts, whilst God and conscience are suffered to call and strive with you in vain? If Satan or your lusts call you to the tavern, to the world, and sinful pleasures, you speedily comply with their call, and yield a ready obedience; if pride or covetousness call, or passion and revenge call, they need not call twice; and shall God and conscience call only in vain? Lord, what a creature is man become! If a vain companion call, you have no power to deny him; if God call, you have no ear to hear him.

9. You cannot but observe the obedience and diligence of many others, how seriously, painfully, and assiduously they ply, and follow on the work of their own salvation, and yet are no more concerned in the events and consequences of these things than you are. Doth it not trouble you when you compare yourselves with them? Do not such thoughts as these sometimes arise in your hearts upon such observations? 'Lord, what a difference 'is there like to be betwixt their end and mine, when there is 'so apparent a difference in our course and conversation? Doth 'not God distinguish persons in this world by the frames of 'their hearts, and tenor of their lives, in order to the great 'distinction he will make betwixt one and another in the day 'of judgment? Have not I as precious a soul to save or lose 'as any of them? What is the matter that I sit with folded 'arms, whilst they are working out their salvation with fear and 'trembling? Why should any man or woman in the world be 'more careful for their souls, than I for mine? Surely its capacity and excellency is equal with theirs, though my care and 'diligence be so unequal.'

10. To conclude, God will shortly give you an irresistible call to the grave, and after that his voice shall call to you in your graves, *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment:* But wo be to you, wo and alas that ever you were born, if you should hear the call of God to die, before you have heard and obeyed his call to Christ! Will your death-bed be easy to you? Can you with any hope or comfort shoot the gulph of eternity, before you have done one act for the security of your souls from the wrath to come?

Digitized by Google

It is a dreadful thing for a poor Christless soul to sit quivering upon the lips of a dying sinner, not able to stay, nor yet endure a parting pull from the body, in such a case as it is.

In a word; If that God that made, and will shortly judge you; if the Redeemer that shed his invaluable blood, and now offers you the purchases and benefits of it; if you have any love to, or care of your own souls, which are more worth than the whole world; if you have any value for heaven, or dread of hell, then, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for your precious soul's sake, trifle with heaven and hell no longer, but be in earnest to *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*. Could I think of any other means or motives to secure your souls from danger, I would surely use them: could I reach your hearts effectually, I would deeply impress this great concern upon them: But I can neither do God's part of the work, nor yours; it is some ease to me, I have in sincerity, (though with much imperfection and feebleness) done part of my own: The Lord prosper it by the blessing of his Spirit in the hearts of them that read it. *Amen.*

The End of the third Volume.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

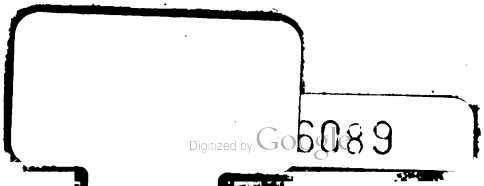
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

14.155.164.5.







Digitized by Google

Google