

SEMPER IDEM;

OR,

THE IMMUTABLE MERCY OF JESUS CHRIST.

'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'—HEB. XIII. 8.

By the name of Jehovah was God known to Israel, from the time of the first mission of Moses to them, and their manumission out of Egypt, and not before. For, saith God to Moses, 'I appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them,' Exod. vi. 8. This I AM is an eternal word, comprehending three times: 'that was, that is, and is to come.'

Now, to testify the equality of the Son to the Father, the Scripture gives the same eternity to Jesus that it doth to Jehovah. He is called Alpha and Omega, *primus et novissimus*, 'the First and the Last: which is, which was, and which is to come,' Rev. i.; and here, 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' Therefore he was not only *Christus Dei*, the anointed of God, but *Christus Deus*, God himself anointed; seeing that eternity, which hath neither beginning nor ending, is only peculiar and proper to God.

The words may be distinguished into a centre, a circumference, and a mediate line, referring the one to the other. The immovable centre is Jesus Christ. The circumference, that runs round about him here, is eternity: 'Yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' The mediate line referring them is, ὁ αὐτός, the same: 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

I. The centre is Jesus Christ. Jesus was his proper name, Christ his appellative. Jesus a name of his nature, Christ of his office and dignity; as divines speak.

Jesus, a name of all sweetness. *Mel in ore, melos in aure, júbilus in corde.** A reconciler, a Redeemer, a Saviour. When the conscience wrestles with law, sin, death, there is nothing but horror and despair without Jesus. He is 'the way, the truth, and the life;' without him, *error, mendacium, mors*. *Si scribas, non placet, nisi legam ibi, Jesum*, saith Bernard: If thou writest to me, thy letter doth not please me, unless I read there *Jesus*. If thou conferrest, thy discourse is not sweet, without the name of Jesus. The

* Ber. in Can.

blessed restorer of all, of more than all that Adam lost; for we have gotten more by his regenerating grace than we lost by Adam's degenerating sin.

Christ is the name of his office; being appointed and anointed of God a king, a priest, a prophet.

This Jesus Christ is our Saviour: of whose names I forbear further discourse, being unable, though I had the tongue of angels, to speak aught worthy *tanto nomine, tanto numine*. All that can be said is but a little; but I must say but a little in all. But of all names given to our Redeemer, still *Jesus* is the sweetest. Other, saith Bernard, are names of majesty; *Jesus* is a name of mercy. The *Word* of God, the *Son* of God, the *Christ* of God, are titles of glory; *Jesus*, a Saviour, is a title of grace, mercy, redemption.

This Jesus Christ is the centre of this text; and not only of this, but of the whole Scripture. The sum of divinity is the Scripture; the sum of the Scripture is the gospel; the sum of the gospel is Jesus Christ; in a word, *nihil continet verbum Domini, nisi verbum Dominum*. There is nothing contained in the word of God, but God the word.

Nor is he the centre only of his word, but of our rest and peace. 'I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' 1 Cor. ii. 2. Thou hast made us for thee, O Christ; and our heart is unquiet till it rest in thee. It is natural to everything *appetere centrum*, to desire the centre. But 'our life is hid with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 3. We must needs *amare*, where we must *animare*. Our mind is where our pleasure is, our heart is where our treasure is, our love is where our life is; but all these, our pleasure, treasure, life, are reposed in Jesus Christ. 'Thou art my portion, O Lord,' saith David. Take the world that please, let our portion be in Christ. 'We have left all,' saith Peter, 'and followed thee,' Matt. xix. 27; you have lost nothing by it, saith Christ, for you have gotten me. *Nimis avarus est, cui non sufficit Christus*. He is too covetous, whom Jesus Christ cannot satisfy. Let us seek this centre, saith Augustine: *Queramus inveniendum, queramus inventum. Ut inveniendus queratur, paratus est: ut inventus queratur, immensus est: ** Let us seek him till we have found him; and still seek him when we have found him. That seeking, we may find him, he is ready; that finding, we may seek him, he is infinite. You see the centre.

II. The referring line, proper to this centre, is *Semper idem*, 'The same.' There is no mutability in Christ; 'no variableness, nor shadow of turning,' Jam. i. 17. All lower lights have their inconstancy; but in the 'Father of lights' there is no changeableness. The sun hath his shadow; the 'Sun of righteousness' is without shadow, Mal. iv. 2; that turns upon the dial, but Christ hath no turning. 'Whom he loves, he loves to the end,' John xiii. 1. He loves us to the end; of his love there is no end. *Tempus erit consummandi, nullum consumendi misericordiam*. His mercy shall be perfected in us, never ended. 'In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer,' Isa. liv. 8. His wrath is short, his goodness is everlasting. 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee,' ver. 10. The mountains are stable things, the hills steadfast; yet hills, mountains, yea the whole earth, shall totter on its foundations; yea the very 'heavens shall pass away with a noise, and the elements shall melt with heat,' 2 Pet. iii.

* In Joan.

10; but the covenant of God shall not be broken. 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever,' saith God, Hos. ii. 19. This marriage-bond shall never be cancelled; nor sin, nor death, nor hell, shall be able to divorce us. Six-and-twenty times in one psalm that sweet singer chaunts it; 'His mercy endureth for ever,' Ps. cxxxvi. 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

As this meditation distills into our believing hearts much comfort, so let it give us some instructions. Two things it readily teacheth us: a dissuasive caution, and a persuasive lesson.

1. It dissuades our confidence in worldly things, because they are inconstant. How poor a space do they remain, *Tà αὐτὰ*, 'the same.' To prove this, you have in Jud. i. 7, a jury of threescore and ten kings to take their oaths upon it. Every one had his throne, yet there they lick up crumbs under another king's table; and shortly even this king, that made them all so miserable, is made himself most miserable. Solomon compares wealth to a wild fowl. 'Riches make themselves wings, they fly away as an eagle toward heaven,' Prov. xxiii. 5. Not some tame house-bird, or a hawk that may be fetched down with a lure, or found again by her bells; but an eagle, that violently cuts the air, and is gone past recalling.

Wealth is like a bird; it hops all day from man to man, as that doth from tree to tree; and none can say where it will roost or rest at night. It is like a vagrant fellow, which because he is big-boned, and able to work, a man takes in a-doors, and cherisheth; and perhaps for a while he takes pains; but when he spies opportunity, the fugitive servant is gone, and takes away more with him than all his service came to. The world may seem to stand thee in some stead for a season, but at last it irrevocably runs away, and carries with it thy joys; thy goods, as Rachel stole Laban's idols; thy peace and content of heart goes with it, and thou art left desperate.

You see how quickly riches cease to be 'the same:' and can any other earthly thing boast more stability? Honour must put off its robes when the play is done; make it never so glorious a show on this world's stage, it hath but a short part to act. A great name of worldly glory is but like a peal rung on the bells; the common people are the clappers; the rope that moves them is popularity; if you once let go your hold and leave pulling, the clapper lies still, and farewell honour. Strength, though, like Jero-boam, it put forth the arm of oppression, shall soon fall down withered, 1 Kings xiii. 4. Beauty is like an almanack: if it last a year it is well. Pleasure like lightning: *oritur, moritur*; sweet, but short; a flash and away.

All vanities are but butterflies, which wanton children greedily catch for*; and sometimes they fly beside them, sometimes before them, sometimes behind them, sometimes close by them; yea, through their fingers, and yet they miss them; and when they have them, they are but butterflies; they have painted wings, but are crude and squalid worms. Such are the things of this world, vanities, butterflies. *Vel sequendo labimur, vel assequendo ladamur*. The world itself is not unlike an artichoke; nine parts of it are unprofitable leaves, scarce the tithe is good: about it there is a little picking meat, nothing so wholesome as dainty: in the midst of it there is a core, which is enough to choke them that devour it.

O then set not your hearts upon these things: *calcanda sunt*, as Jerome observes on Acts iv. 'They that sold their possessions, brought the prices, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet,' Acts iv. 35. At their feet, not at

* Anselm, Medit.

their hearts; they are fitter to be trodden under feet, than to be waited on with hearts. I conclude this with Augustine. *Eccē turbat mundus, et amatur: quid si tranquillū esset? Formosū quomodo hāereres, qui sic amplecteris fādum? Flores ejus quā colligeres, qui sic a spinis non revocas manū? Quā confideres aeternū, qui sic adhāeres caduco?* Behold, the world is turbulent and full of vexation, yet it is loved; how would it be embraced if it were calm and quiet? If it were a beauteous damsel, how would they dote on it, that so kiss it being a deformed stigmatic? How greedily would they gather the flowers, who would not forbear the thorns? They that so admire it being transient and temporal, how would they be enamoured on it if it were eternal? But 'the world passeth,' 1 John ii. 17, and God abideth. 'They shall perish, but thou remainest: they all shall wax old as doth a garment: and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail,' Heb. i. 11, 12. Therefore, 'trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God,' 1 Tim. vi. 17. And then, 'they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever,' Psā. cxxv. 1. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

2. This persuades us to an imitation of Christ's constancy. Let the stableness of his mercy to us work a stableness of our love to him. And howsoever, like the lower orbs, we have a natural motion of our own from good to evil, yet let us suffer the higher power to move us supernaturally from evil to good. There is in us indeed a reluctant flesh, 'a law in our members warring against the law of our mind,' Rom. vii. 23. So Augustine confesseth: *Nec planē nolebam, nec planē volebam.* And, *Ego eram qui volebam, ego qui nolebam.** I neither fully granted, nor plainly denied; and it was I myself that both would and would not. But our ripeness of Christianity must overgrow fluctuant thoughts.

Irresolution and unsteadiness is hateful, and unlike to our master Christ, who is ever the same. 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways,' James i. 8. The inconstant man is a stranger in his own house: all his purposes are but guests, his heart is the inn.' If they lodge there for a night, it is all; they are gone in the morning. Many motions come crowding together upon him; and like a great press at a narrow door, whiles all strivē, none enter. The epigrammatist wittily,

Omnia cūm facias, miraris cur facias nil?

Posthume, rem solam qui facit, ille facit.†

He that will have an oar for every man's boat, shall have none left to row his own. They, saith Melancthon, that will know *aliquid in omnibus*, shall indeed know *nihil in toto*. Their admiration or dotage of a thing is extreme for the time, but it is a wonder if it outlive the age of a wonder, which is allowed but nine days. They are angry with time, and say the times are dead, because they produce no more innovations. Their inquiry of all things is not *quā bonum*, but *quā novum*. They are almost weary of the sun for continual shining. Continuance is a sufficient quarrel against the best things; and the manna of heaven is loathed because it is common.

This is not to be always the same, but never the same; and whiles they would be every thing, they are nothing: but like the worm Pliny writes of, *multipoda*, that hath many feet, yet is of slow pace. Awhile you shall have him in England, loving the simple truth; anon in Rome, grovelling before an image. Soon after he leaps to Amsterdam; and yet must he still be

* Confess. lib. viii. cap. 10.

† Martial, Epig. lib. 8.

turning, till there be nothing left but to turn Turk. To winter an opinion is too tedious; he hath been many things. What he will be, you shall scarce know till he is nothing.

But the God of constancy would have his to be constant. Stedfast in your faith to him. 'Continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel,' Col. i. 23. Stedfast in your faithfulness to man, promising and not disappointing, Psalm xv. 4. Do not *aliud stantes, aliud sedentes*, lest your changing with God teach God to change with you. *Nemo potest tibi Christum auferre, nisi te illi auferas*.* No man can turn Christ from thee, unless thou turn thyself from Christ. For 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday,' &c.

III. We now come to the circumference, wherein is a distinction of three times; past, present, future. *Tempora mutantur*: the times change, the circumference wheels about, but the centre is 'the same for ever.'

We must resolve this triplicity into a triplicity. Christ is the same according to these three distinct terms, three distinct ways:—1. *Objective*, in his word; 2, *subjective*, in his power; 3, *effective*, in his gracious operation.

1. Objectively.—Jesus Christ is the same in his word; and that (1) Yesterday in pre-ordination; (2) To-day in incarnation; (3) For ever in application.

(1.) Yesterday in pre-ordination.—So St Peter, in his sermon, tells the Jews, that 'he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,' Acts ii. 23. And in his epistle, that 'he was verily preordained before the foundation of the world,' 1 Pet. i. 20. He is called the 'Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8. *Prius profuit, quam fuit*. His prophets did foretell him, the types did prefigure him, God himself did promise him. *Ratus ordo Dei*: the decree of God is constant.

Much comfort I must here leave to your meditation. If God preordained a Saviour for man, before he had either made man, or man marred himself,—as Paul to Timothy, 'He hath saved us according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,' 2 Tim. i. 9;—then surely he meant that nothing should separate us from his eternal love in that Saviour, Rom. viii. 39. *Quos elegit increatos, redemit perditos, non deseret redemptos*. Whom he chose before they were created, and when they were lost redeemed, he will not forsake being sanctified.

(2.) To-day in incarnation.—'When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman,' Gal. iv. 4. 'The Word was made flesh,' John i. 14; which was, saith Emissenus,† *Non deposita, sed seposita majestate*. Thus he became younger than his mother, that is as eternal as his Father. He was yesterday God before all worlds, he is now made man in the world. *Sanguinem, quem pro matre obtulit, antea de sanguine matris accepit*.‡ The blood that he shed for his mother, he had from his mother. The same Eusebius, on the ninth of Isaiah, acutely, 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,' Isa. ix. 6. He was *Datus ex Divinitate, natus ex virgine*. *Datus est qui erat; natus est qui non erat*. He was given of the Deity, born of the Virgin. He that was given, was before; he, as born, was not before. *Donum dedit Deus æquale sibi*: God gave a gift equal to himself.

So he is the same yesterday and to-day, objectively in his word. *Idem qui velatus in veteri, revelatus in novo*. *In illo predictus, in isto prædicatus*. Yesterday prefigured in the law, to-day the same manifested in the gospel.

(3.) For ever in operation.§—He doth continually by his Spirit apply to our consciences the virtue of his death and passion. 'As many as receive

* Ambr. in Luc. lib. 5.

† Hom. 2, de Nat. Christ.

‡ Euseb. Emiss. ubi supra.

§ Application.—Ed.

him, to them gives he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,' John i. 12. 'By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' Heb. x. 14. This is sure comfort to us; though he died almost 1629 years ago, his blood is not yet dry. His wounds are as fresh to do us good, as they were to those saints that beheld them bleeding on the cross. The virtue of his merits is not abated, though many hands of faith have taken large portions out of his treasury. The river of his grace, 'which makes glad the city of God,' runs over its banks, though infinite souls have drank hearty draughts, and satisfied their thirst. But because we cannot apprehend this for ourselves of ourselves, therefore he hath promised to send us the 'Spirit of truth, who will dwell with us,' John xiv. 17, and apply this to us for ever. Thus you have seen the first triplicity, how he is the same objectively in his word. Now he is

2. Subjectively, in his power the same; and that (1) Yesterday, for he made the world; (2) To-day, for he governs the world; (3) For ever, for he shall judge the world.

(1.) Yesterday in the creation. 'All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made,' John i. 3. 'By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him,' Col. i. 16. All things, even the great and fair book of the world, of three so large leaves, *cælum, solum, salum*; heaven, earth, and sea. The prophet calls him 'the everlasting Father,' Isa. ix. 6; Daniel, the 'Ancient of days,' Dan. vii. 9. Solomon says, that 'the Lord possessed him in the beginning of his way, before his works of old,' Prov. viii. 22. So himself told the unbelieving Jews, 'Before Abraham was, I am,' John viii. 58.

We owe, then, ourselves to Christ for our creation; but how much more for our redemption? *Si totum me debeo pro me facto, quid addam jam pro me refecto? In primo opere me mihi dedit: in secundo se mihi dedit.** If I owe him my whole self for making me, what have I left to pay him for redeeming me? In the first work, he gave myself to me; in the second, he gave himself to me. By a double right, we owe him ourselves; we are worthy of a double punishment, if we give him not his own.

(2.) To-day in the governing. 'He upholdeth all things by the word of his power,' Heb. i. 8. He is *pater familias*, and disposeth all things in this universe with greater care and providence than any householder can manage the business of his private family. He leaves it not, as the carpenter having built the frame of an house, to others to perfect it, but looks to it himself. His creation and providence are like the mother and the nurse, the one produceth, the other preserveth. His creation was a short providence; his providence a perpetual creation. The one sets up the frame of the house, the other keeps it in reparation.

Neither is this a disparagement to the majesty of God, as the vain Epicures imagined, *curare minima*, to regard the least things, but rather an honour, *curare infinita*, to regard all things. Neither doth this extend only to natural things, chained together by a regular order of succession, but even to casual and contingent things. Oftentimes, *cum aliud volumus, aliud agimus*, the event crosseth our purpose; which must content us, though it fall out otherwise than we purposed, because God purposed as it is fallen out. It is enough that the thing attain its own end, though it miss ours; that God's will be done, though ours be crossed.

* Bern. de dilig. Deo.

But let me say, Hath God care of fowls and flowers, and will he not care for you, his own image? Matt. vi. 26-30. Yea, let me go further; hath God care of the wicked? Doth he pour down the happy influences of heaven on the 'unjust man's ground?' Matt. v. 45. And shall the faithful want his blessing? Doth he provide for the sons of Belial, and shall his own children lack? He may give meat and raiment to the rest, but his bounty to Benjamin shall exceed. If Moab, his wash-pot, taste of his benefits, then Judah, the signet on his finger, cannot be forgotten. The king governs all the subjects in his dominions, but his servants that wait in his court partake of his most princely favours. God heals the sores of the very wicked; but if it be told him, 'Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick,' (John xi. 8), it is enough, he shall be healed. The wicked may have outward blessings without inward, and that is Esau's pottage without his birth-right; but the elect have inward blessings, though they want outward, and that is Jacob's inheritance without his pottage.

(8.) For ever: because he shall judge the world. 'God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained,' Acts xvii. 31. 'In the day that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ,' Rom. ii. 16. Let the wicked flatter themselves that all is but talk of any coming to judgment; *non aliud videre patres, aliudve nepotes aspicient*; all is but *terriculamenta nutricum*, mere scare-babes. *Scribarum penna mendaces*; they have written lies, there is no such matter. But when they shall see that Lamb 'whom they have pierced' and scorned (Rev. i. 7), 'they shall cry to the mountains and rocks, Fall upon us, and cover us,' Rev. vi. 16. Now they flatter themselves with his death; *Mortuus est*, he is dead and gone; and *Mortuum Cæsarem quis metuit*? Who fears even a Cæsar when he is dead? But 'He that was dead, liveth; behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen,' Rev. i. 18. 'Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' *Quæsitoe scelerum veniet, vindæque reorum*.

Here is matter of infallible comfort to us: 'Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh,' Luke xxi. 28. Here we are imprisoned, martyred, tortured; but when that great assize and general jail-delivery comes, *mors non erit ultra*, 'There shall be no more death nor sorrow, but all tears shall be wiped from our eyes,' Rev. xxi. 4. 'For it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you. And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels,' 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. We shall then find him the same;—the same Lamb that bought us shall give us a *Venite beati*, 'Come, ye blessed, receive your kingdom.' 'Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,' Rev. xxii. 20.

8. Effectually in his grace and mercy. So he is the same, (1) Yesterday to our fathers; (2) To-day to ourselves; (3) For ever to our children.

(1.) Yesterday to our fathers.—All our fathers, whose souls are now in heaven, those 'spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. xii. 23, were, as the next words intimate, saved 'by Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and by the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Whether they lived under nature, or under the law, Christ was their expectation; and they were justified *credendo in venturum Christum*, by believing in the Messiah to come. So Luke ii. 25, Simeon is said to 'wait for the consolation of Israel.'

(2.) To-day to ourselves.—His mercy is everlasting; his truth endureth from generation to generation. The same gracious Saviour that he was

yesterday to our fathers, is he to-day to us, if we be to-day faithful to him. All catch at this comfort, but in vain without the hand of faith. There is no deficiency in him; but is there none in thee? Whatsoever Christ is, what art thou? He forgave Mary Magdalene many grievous sins; so he will forgive thee, if thou canst shed Mary Magdalene's tears. He took the malefactor from the cross to Paradise; thither he will receive thee if thou have the same faith. He was merciful to a denying apostle; challenge thou the like mercy, if thou have the like repentance. If we will be like these, Christ, assuredly, will be ever like himself. When any man shall prove to be such a sinner, he will not fail to be such a Saviour.

To-day he is thine, if to-day thou wilt be his: thine to-morrow, if yet to-morrow thou wilt be his. But how if dark death prevent the morrow's light? He was yesterday, so wert thou: he is to-day, so art thou: he is to-morrow, so perhaps mayest thou not be. Time may change thee, though it cannot change him. He is not (but thou art) subject to mutation. This I dare boldly say: he that repents but one day before he dies, shall find Christ the same in mercy and forgiveness. Wickedness itself is glad to hear this; but let the sinner be faithful on his part, as God is merciful on his part: let him be sure that he repent one day before he dies, whereof he cannot be sure, except he repent every day; for no man knows his last day. *Latet ultimus dies, ut observetur omnis dies.* Therefore (saith Augustine) we know not our last day, that we might observe every day. 'To-day, therefore, hear his voice,' *Psa. xcv. 7.*

Thou hast lost yesterday negligently, thou lovest to-day wilfully; and therefore mayest lose for ever inevitably. It is just with God to punish two days' neglect with the loss of the third. The hand of faith may be withered, the spring of repentance dried up, the eye of hope blind, the foot of charity lame. To-day, then, hear his voice, and make him thine. Yesterday is lost, to-day may be gotten; but that once gone, and thou with it, when thou art dead and judged, it will do thee small comfort that 'Jesus Christ is the same for ever.'

(8.) For ever to our children.—He that was yesterday the God of Abraham, is to-day ours, and will be for ever our children's. As well now 'the light of the Gentiles,' as before 'the glory of Israel,' *Luke ii. 32.* I will be the God of thy seed, saith the Lord to Abraham. 'His mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation,' *Luke i. 50.*

Many persons are solicitously perplexed, how their children shall do when they are dead; yet they consider not how God provided for them when they were children. Is the 'Lord's arm shortened?' Did he take thee from thy mother's breasts; and 'when thy parents forsook thee,' (as the Psalmist saith), became thy Father? And cannot this experienced mercy to thee, persuade thee that he will not forsake thine? Is not 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever?' 'I have been young,' saith David, 'and am now old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken'—that is granted, nay—'nor his seed begging bread,' *Ps. xxxvii. 25.*

Many distrustful fathers are so carking for their posterity, that while they live they starve their bodies, and hazard their souls, to leave them rich. To such a father it is said justly: *Dives es heredi, pauper inopasque tibi.* Like an over-kind hen, he feeds his chickens, and famisheth himself. If usury, circumvention, oppression, extortion, can make them rich, they shall not be poor. Their folly is ridiculous; they fear lest their children should be miserable, yet take the only course to make them miserable; for

they leave them not so much heirs to their goods as to their evils. They do as certainly inherit their father's sins as their lands: 'God layeth up his iniquity for his children; and his offspring shall want a morsel of bread,' Job xxi. 19.

On the contrary, 'the good man is merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed,' Ps. xxxvii. 26. That the worldling thinks shall make his posterity poor, God saith shall make the good man's rich. The precept gives a promise of mercy to obedience, not only confined to the obedient man's self, but extended to his seed, and that even to a thousand generations, Exod. xx. 6. Trust, then, Christ with thy children; when thy friends shall fail, usury bear no date, oppression be condemned to hell, thyself rotten to the dust, the world itself turned and burned into cinders, still 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' Now then, as 'grace and peace are from him which is, and which was, and which is to come;' so glory and honour be to him, which is, and which was, and which is to come; even to 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' Rev. i. 4.