

1 *John* i. 6, 7. "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 *John* ii. 5, 6. "He that keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith, he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked."

1 *John* iii. 6, 9. "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not.—Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

All these may invite thee to enter into the holy path, and to fight under Christ's banner, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, unto thy life's end.

DIRECTIONS TO A MAN IN THE ACT OF THE NEW BIRTH.

THE OCCASION OF THIS TREATISE.

HITHERTO I have given the doctrine of the new birth; yet one thing is wanting, to wit, the practice of some saint in this one necessary thing: and what man hath writ more on this subject, than T. Hooker? Therefore I thought fit, not only to contract his books in this appendix; but also, to set before you those pathetic expressions of his soul-pangs in the new-birth, as matter for your imitation.

CHAP. I.

The Soul's Preparation.

BEFORE the soul can share in Christ's merits, (to speak in the author's language, without any alteration,) two things are required:

1. A preparation to receive Christ.
2. An implantation of the soul into Christ.

That there must be a preparation, is the first ground we lay; and herein observe we, the matter, the manner, and the means, of this preparation.

1. For matter: the soul of a sinner must be prepared for Christ, before he can entertain him. When kings go to any place, they send, to make readiness, their harbingers before them: if Christ, the King of saints, come into a soul, there must be a preparation before he enter; and good reason, for he

is not a mere man, an ordinary person, but a King, a King of glory.

2. The manner of this preparation consists in these three passages: 1st, the soul breaks that league which formerly it had with corruptions: 2ndly, the soul is willing to give way to Christ Jesus, and to let him overthrow whatsoever shall oppose him: 3dly, the soul is content that God should rule all, not only the eye, or hand, or tongue, or heart, but the whole man; it opens all the gates, and desires Christ to come and take all the keys of the house upon him.

3. The means of this preparation is the powerful ministry, which God hath appointed for this work; and it is discovered in three particulars: 1st, in a particular application of the truth to the souls of men. 2ndly, in a confirmation of the truth by soundness of argument, and plain evidence of scriptures. 3dly, in a kind of spiritual heat in the heart and affections of the minister, answerable to that which he communicates to the people.

If any soul that hath enjoyed these means any while, is not yet fitted and prepared, it is a fearful sign; the state of that soul is extremely dangerous. Go home, then, if there be any such, and plead, saying, "Lord, why am I not yet humbled and prepared? Will exhortations never prevail with me? Will terrors and reproofs never break my heart into pieces? I have heard sermons that would have shaken the very stones; the fire of hell hath flashed in my face; and if any thing can do me any good, why not these exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs?" The Lord turn the heart of such a poor sinner, that he may lay hold on mercy in due time.

CHAP. II.

The general Circumstances of Preparation on God's part.

1. IN this preparation, two things are considerable; the general circumstances, and the substantial parts.

The general circumstances are, some on God's part, some on man's part.

On God's part there are these. 1. The offer of Christ and grace. 2. The condition of this offer. 3. The easiness of this condition.

On man's part, two things are considerable:—1. That corruption doth oppose this grace. 2. That God will remove this corruption.

The first general circumstance of the soul's preparation, is on God's part; wherein is the offer of Christ Jesus, the condition of this offer, and the easiness of this offer. We may have all in this one comparison: As with a malefactor convicted of

high treason, if, after the discovery of all passages, the king make a proclamation, that upon the surceasing of his enterprises, he shall be pardoned; nay, if the king shall send message after message, to tell him, that would he yet lay down his arms, and take a pardon, he shall be graciously accepted: if this traitor now should rather fling away his pardon than his weapons, then should the king raise an army and overcome him, and take him, and execute him without any mercy; I appeal to your own consciences, is he not justly rewarded? Why, this is the condition of every poor soul under heaven; we are all rebels and traitors; and yet, after all our pride and stubbornness, the Lord is pleased to proclaim mercy still to every one that will receive it: "All you that have dishonoured my name, all you that have profaned my sabbaths, and contemned my ordinances, all ye cursed wretches, come; come who will, and take pardon;" therein is the offer: only let them lay aside all their weapons; therein is the condition: and then have Christ for the taking; therein is the easiness of the condition.

Blessed God, may every soul say, if I will not do this for Christ, I will do nothing: had the Lord required a greater matter of me to have attained salvation; had he required thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil; had he required the first-born of my body for the sin of my soul; one drop of mercy at the last gasp would have quit all this cost: but what goodness is this, that the Lord should require nothing of me, but to lay down my weapons, and to receive Christ offered!

Lo, the Lord hath this day sent from heaven, and offered salvation unto you sons of men; the Lord Jesus is become a suitor to you, and I am Christ's spokesman. Shall the Lord and his messengers thus woo and entreat? and will any yet stand out against God, and say, "I will none of Christ, I will try it out to the last." O then, if the great God of heaven and earth shall come with ten thousand thousand of judgments, and execute them upon that man! If he shall bring a whole legion of devils, and say, "Take him, devils, and torment him in hell for ever, because he would not have mercy when it was offered, he shall not have mercy." If God should thus deal with that man, the Lord should be just in so doing.

II. The general circumstances of the preparation on man's part.—The second general circumstance of the soul's preparation, is on man's part; and herein is observable,

1. That corruption opposeth grace.

2. That God will remove this corruption.

The first is clear, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them." Give us a man in the state of nature—and though all the ministers under heaven should preach mercy unto him; though

all the angels in heaven should exhort and entreat him; though all glory and happiness were laid before him, and he were wished only to believe and take it, and it should be his for ever; yet in his natural condition he could have no power to receive so blessed an offer; howsoever, this hinders not but he is to wait upon God in the means. And then,

Secondly, God may remove this corruption, which he himself cannot do: herein observe we, first, the author; and secondly, the time, of this grace

First, the author is God; *I will take away their stony heart, saith God, and give them an heart of flesh.* The taking away of the indisposition of the soul to any duty, and the fitting and disposing it to perform any spiritual service, is the alone work of God.

Quiet then thy soul: thou mayest say, "I have an hard heart, and it will receive no good; the word prevails not, the sacraments have no power over me; all the means, and cost, and charges, that God hath bestowed upon me, is lost, and my heart is not yet humbled, my corruptions are not yet weakened." But in this be thou comforted; though means cannot do it, yet the Lord can do it, there is nothing difficult to him.

Be then exhorted, you that have stony hearts, to have recourse unto this great God of heaven. You wives that have husbands with stony hearts, and you parents that have children with stony hearts, tell them you have heard this day of a physician that will cure them, and exhort them to repair unto him.

Secondly, the time of this grace, is either in regard of the means, or the men.

1. In regard of the means; and that is, when the sons of men have the gospel shining in their faces; if ever God work upon their hearts, it will be then.

This should teach us how thankful we ought to be unto the Lord, that enjoy these liberties in the land of the living. That a man was born in such a time, in such a place, wherein the way of life and salvation is so fully, so plainly, and so powerfully made known, that the sun of the gospel shines full in his face. O how thankful should he be!

And for those that neglect the means of their salvation, how should we pity them! Methinks I see a poor creature, that slighted mercy and salvation when it was offered him, lying upon his death-bed; light is departing from his eyes, and his soul is departing from his body; methinks I hear such a man say at his last gasp, "The day is gone, the gate is shut, and now it is too late to enter:" and thus the soul departs from his body, the body to the grave, and the soul to hell. Oh, what bitter lamentations will that soul make in hell! "Oh, the golden time that I have seen, and not regarded! Oh, the gracious opportunities of salvation that my eyes have beheld,

and yet I neglected! Oh, the mercy and grace, and goodness of God, that have been offered unto me! All these I have contemned, and trampled under my feet, and therefore now must I be tormented with the devil and his angels, from everlasting to everlasting." Now the Lord give us hearts to take notice of these things. If I were now breathing out my last breath, I would breathe out this legacy to all surviving Christians, *This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation.*

2. In regard of the men, on whom God works; that is to say, on some in their tender age, on some in their ripe age, on some in their old age. But however the Lord doth at several times convert several of his servants, yet most, and most usually, before their old age.

O let this provoke us, that while the flower is in prime, we would use all means for our good; let us now, in the summer of our days, improve ourselves in good works, so that when the harvest comes, we may be gathered into God's barn. Oh! would we be exhorted to take the best time and opportunity of salvation, then might we receive the fruits of our labours, the salvation of our souls.

CHAP. III.

The Substantial Parts of Preparation on God's Part.

HITHERTO of the general circumstances of the soul's preparing for Christ. The substantial parts of this preparation are generally two: the dispensation of God's work on the soul, and the disposition of the soul by God's work.

The dispensation of God's work discovers itself in drawing the soul, from sin, to himself.

But because these two are made up by one action and motion, we shall therefore handle them together: and the sum is this, that God *by an holy kind of violence* (which is called *drawing*, John vi. 44.) *doth pluck the soul from those sins that harbour in it, unto himself*: wherein we may consider two things;

1. What the nature of his drawing is.

2. The means whereby God draws.

First, For the nature of this drawing; it is of a double kind:

1. There is a moral drawing, when by reasons propounded, and good things offered, to the understanding and will, a man comes to have his mind enlightened, and his will moved; thus was it with Paul, when he was *constrained by Lydia to abide in her house*, Acts xvi. 15. 2. There is a phisical drawing, when the Lord is pleased to put a new power into the soul of a sinner, and withal to carry the will to the object propounded; when the Lord not only offers good things to the soul, but enables the soul to lay hold on the things offered: and thus the Lord draws a sinner from sin unto himself.

Secondly, For the means whereby he draws; they are these four:

First, the Lord lets in a light into the soul of a poor sinner, and discovers unto him that he is in a wrong way: this the soul marvels at, because usually it comes on a sudden, the sinner perceiving nothing less.

Secondly, though a man would defeat the power of this light, yet God still follows it with forcible arguments, and draws with the cord of his mercy; *I taught Ephraim to go, saith God, taking him by the arms; I drew them by the cords of love, and with the bands of a man.* This love is made up of four cords:

1. The Lord reveals himself to be ready to receive, and willing and easy to entertain, sinners when they come to him: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* The word in the original is, *he will multiply pardons.* Hast thou multiplied rebellions? the Lord will also multiply pardons; the bowels of compassion are still open, and the arms of mercy are still spread abroad; his pardons are multiplied; there is yet mercy for thee also, and for a thousand thousand more.

2. The Lord is not only ready to forgive when men come to him, but that they may come, he also calls and commands them. "O, but may I," saith a poor sinner, "shall I, dare I, go unto the Lord God for mercy? May I be so bold to press in for favour at the hands of the Lord? I have been a grievous sinner, and have heaped abomination upon abomination; I am afraid, therefore, to approach near unto the Lord's presence." Is it so? Hear what the Lord saith: "Come unto me, ye rebellious people, and I will heal your rebellions. You that never prayed, never came to hear, all rebels, come unto me." And then the people answer, *Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* This is great encouragement to a poor sinner; he begins now to wonder, and say, "Lord, shall all my sins be pardoned? Shall all my abominations be forgiven? I that slighted so many mercies, and committed so many follies, shall I be entertained?" "Yes," saith the Lord, "Come unto me, and thou shalt be forgiven. Come; I command you come."

3. The Lord doth not only command a poor sinner to come, but when he says, "There is mercy with God, but not for me:" the Lord followeth him still, and sends another cord after him, that if it be possible, he may win him, and woo him to receive mercy. If command therefore prevail not, he entreats and beseeches him to come and receive mercy; and this, methinks, should move the hardest heart under heaven. *We, saith the apostle, are ambassadors from Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.* Rather than you should go away from Christ, even

mercy itself will come and kneel down before you, and beseech and entreat you, "for the Lord Jesus's sake, to pity your poor souls, and receive pardon for your sins;" a sinner is not able to comprehend this, but he begins to be at a stand:—"What, that the Lord should beseech him? Oh, that thou wouldst receive pardon for thy sins, and be blessed for ever! Good Lord!" saith the soul, "is this possible, that the great King of heaven should come and beseech such a traitor, such a rebel as I am, to take pardon? That a king on earth should proclaim a pardon to some notorious traitor, this were much; but that the King of heaven should lay down his crown, and beseech me, on his knees as it were, to take mercy; this is a thing beyond all expectation. What, shall heaven stoop to earth? Shall majesty stoop to misery? Shall the great God of heaven and earth, that might have condemned my soul, and if I had perished and been damned, might have took glory by my destruction: is it possible that this God should not only entertain me when I come, and command me to come, but entreat and beseech me to come, and receive mercy from him! Oh, the depth of the incomprehensible love of God!" Imagine you saw God the Father entreating you, and God the Son beseeching you, as he doth this day, "Come now, and forsake your sins, and take mercy, which is prepared for you, and shall be bestowed upon you;" would not this make a soul think thus with itself, "What, for a rebel? Not only to have mercy offered, but to be entreated to receive mercy, it were pity, if I will not take it, but I should go to hell, and be damned for ever." The Lord, he complains, *Why will ye die? As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the death of a sinner: turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* "Mercy is offered ye, the Lord reacheth out his hand to you;" fain would he pluck the drunkard out of the alehouse, and the adulterer from his whore. Oh! if you break this cord, I know not what to say to you: this is able to break mountains in pieces;—*Shake, O mountains,* saith the prophet; why? *because God hath redeemed Jacob:* the redemption of Jacob was enough to break a mountain; let his mercy break our hearts; it is God that begs, the blessing is our own.

4. If yet this prevail nothing at all, the Lord will then wait, and stay in long patience and suffering, to see if at any time a sinner will turn unto him. Our Saviour follows poor sinners from alehouse to alsehouse, and says, "I beseech you, drunkards, take mercy, and have your sins pardoned." The Lord, as we may say, wearieith himself with waiting, one day after another, and one week after another: "It may be," saith Christ, "this week, this sabbath, this sermon, a sinner will turn unto me: what, will it never be?" Are you not ashamed, my friends, that the Lord Jesus should thus wait your leisure, and follow you from place to place; nay, that Christ should every morn-

ing appear to your understanding, and every night come to your bedside, saying, "Let this be the last night of sinning, and the next day the first day of repentance: Oh! when will you be humbled? When will you receive mercy, that it may go well with you, and with your's for ever?" If none of the other will move you, yet, for shame, let this cord draw you to the Lord: hear his pangs; *O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? Oh! when will it once be?* A woman that is in travail, Oh, how she expects and longs for her delivery! now a throb comes, and then she cries; anon comes a second throb, and then she cries again; Oh! when comes deliverance? Thus God the Father takes on him the person of a travailing woman; he travails and travails until he bring forth a son, until some soul be converted, and brought home unto him; *O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When will it once be?* "I have waited; one, ten, twenty, thirty, forty years long, have I waited on this generation; when will it once be?" The Lord thus travails in patience, looking when we will receive mercy. Will our proud hearts never be humbled? Will our stubborn hearts never be softened? Will our profane hearts never be sanctified? When will it once be? Christ hath waited this day, this week, this month, this quarter, this year, these ten, twenty, thirty, forty years, on us: you old sinners, that are grey-headed in your wickedness, how long hath the Lord waited on you? Oh! for shame, let him wait no longer, but turn, turn ye unto him, that ye may receive mercy from him.

Thirdly, if bonds of love move not, the Lord hath iron cords, that will pluck in pieces; to wit, the cords of conscience; which thus disputes, "He that being oftener reprov'd, doth still harden his hearts, shall perish everlastingly." But thou, being often reprov'd, doth still harden thy heart; therefore, thou shalt perish everlastingly.

In the first proposition, conscience gives the sinner a monition, to come from sin upon pain of the heaviest judgment that can be inflicted. It is the Lord that sends the conscience on this errand, "Go to such a man, and tell him, You have spoken against God's saints, and you have broken God's sabbaths, and you have contemned God's ordinances:"—"Be it known unto thee, saith the conscience, that I have a command from heaven, and from God; I charge you, as you will answer at the dreadful day of judgment; take heed of those evils that heretofore you have committed, lest you damn you souls for ever." Will you question his commission? See Prov. xxix. 1. *He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed.* If you are often reprov'd, and will not be bettered, then the Lord says, and conscience from the Lord tells you, "Be it at your own peril, ye shall suddenly be destroyed." No sooner conscience thus speaks, but the sinner hangs the wing, and with-

draws himself from his former lewd courses. But now when wicked persons see their companion is gone, they make after him amain, and then conscience plucks one way, and they pluck another way; at last by carnal company, and cursed persuasions, the soul is drawn back again to its former courses, and so perhaps this twist is broken, and the sinner is gone.

2. If so, conscience, that was a monitor, now turns accuser; before it was only God's herald, to forewarn him, but it is become a sergeant to arrest him: it follows him to the alehouse, and pursues him home; then takes him in his bed, and arrests him in his sleep; there, by a meditation, it hales the soul before the tribunal of God, saying, "Lo, Lord, this is the man, this is the drunkard, the adulterer, blasphemer, this is he, Lord; an enemy to thy servants, an hater of thy truth, a despiser of thy ordinances: at such a time, in such a place, with such a company, this man despised thy truth; this is he, Lord, this is the man." And when conscience hath thus dragged him before God, and accused him, then, "Take him, jailor; take him, devil," saith the Lord, "and imprison him; let vexation, and horror, and trouble, and anguish, lie upon his soul, until he confess his sins, and resolve to forsake them."

In this case was David, when he was forced to say, *My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer: then, said David, I acknowledged my sin unto thee; I confessed my transgressions unto thee, O Lord, and so thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* David folded up his sins at the first, and therefore his bones were consumed, and he roared continually; and when the Lord had him on the rack, he made him roar again, and would never leave tormenting, till David came to confessing; but when he confessed his sin, then the Lord forgave him the iniquity of it. Thus conscience brings the soul of a sinner on the rack, (as traitors are used that will not confess otherwise,) and makes him confess his sins; and then he cries, "Oh! the abominations I have committed, which the sun never saw; in such a place, at such a time." Thus conscience receives some satisfaction, and begins to be quiet; and now, having got some quiet, his cursed companions set upon him again, he listens again, and then he begins to follow his old sins, perhaps with more eagerness than ever, and now is another twist broken.

3. If so, conscience, that was a monitor and accuser, turns executioner. The first proposition admonished, the second accused; if neither of these prevail, then conscience concludes, Thou must to execution, thou shalt perish everlastingly. And now conscience cries, Monitions or accusations could not prevail with this man; come, ye damned ghosts, and take away this drunkard, this blasphemer, this adulterer, and throw him

headlong into the pit of hell; he would not be amended, let him be condemned; he would not be humbled, therefore let him be damned." The man hearing this, is amazed, and thinks himself past hope, past help, past cure: did you ever see or hear a tormented conscience in these pangs? He cries, "Lo there devils stand; the heavens frown; God is incensed; hell's mouth is opened!" and now a minister is sent for, who displays to this despairing soul, the mercy and grace of God in Christ Jesus: "Oh," replies he, "this is my bane, my damnation. If I had never heard of mercy, if I had never lived under the gospel and the means of salvation, then had I been an happy man; alas! it is mercy I have neglected, it is salvation I have contemned, how then should I be saved? O the persuasions of the Lord that I have had! the Lord hath even wept over me, as he did over Jerusalem, *Oh that thou hadst known the things belonging to thy peace!* yet all these persuasions have I contemned, and therefore certainly to hell I must go." The minister replies, Truth it is, you have done thus, but would you do so still? Is it good now to be drunk, or to blaspheme, or to rail on God's saints, or contemn God's ordinances? "O, no, no," saith he, "I now find what the end of these wicked courses will be; God's word could not prevail with me, the minister could not persuade me. O the good sermons that I have heard, but alas! I despised the word, and mocked the minister: woe, unto me for ever!" The minister replies again, The truth is you have done thus; but would you do so now? Would you still blaspheme, and curse, and be drunk, and riotous; or rather would you not now part with these, and take mercy instead of them? Then the poor soul cries out, "Now the Lord for his mercies' sake remove these sins from me: O, I had never so much delight in my sins heretofore, as now I have misery for them; but alas! it is not in my power to help my soul; if the Lord would do this, let him do what he will with it." What, saith the minister, you are then willing to part with your sins: "O yes," saith the soul, "I would rather offend all the world than God; I had rather go to hell than commit a sin; if it would please God to help me, I would forsake my sins with all my heart." Why, now the poor soul is coming again, and God is drawing him again from his corruptions.

Fourthly, when the soul is thus loosened, the Lord then fully plucks it by the cord of his Spirit; with an almighty hand he cuts the soul off from sin, and takes it into his own hand, that he may govern him, and dispose of him, according to his own good pleasure. Thus much of preparation, for the substance of it, on God's part.

CHAP. IV

The Substantial Parts of Preparation, on Man's Part.

Now are we to observe the disposition of the soul on man's part, which God works on the heart. It is known in two works: 1. Contrition, whereby the soul is cut off from sin. 2. Humiliation, whereby the soul is cut off from itself.

For so it is, that either the soul seeth no need to depart from sin, or else it thinks it can help itself out of sin. The first is called security, when the soul, seeing no need to be better, desires it not: against this the Lord sends contrition, causing men thereby to know the misery of sin, and to see need of a change. The second is carnal confidence, when a sinner begins to seek succour, and to scramble for his own comfort in his self-sufficiency: against this the Lord works humiliation, causing the soul hereby to see the weakness and emptiness of its duties, and that there is enough in his best services to condemn him for ever.

The first is security; when the soul is taken up with a secure course, and therefore never seeth any need of a change. Now, while a man lives thus, and blesses himself in his sin, it is impossible he should receive faith, or by faith repair unto Christ: the Lord, therefore, to remove this let, burdens the soul, and says, "You will live in drunkenness, in covetousness; you will have your sins: then take your sins, and get ye down to hell with them." At this voice the sinner begins to see where he is: "Is this true?" saith he; "then I am the most miserable creature under heaven." So the soul comes to a restless dislike of itself; and saith, "I must be otherwise, or I am a damned man for ever."

Secondly, when the soul seeth his wound and his sin ready to condemn him, it thinks, by Duties, or some such like matters, to succour itself; and it begins to say, "My hearing and my prayer, will not these save me?" Thus the soul in conclusion rests on duties: I will not say but these duties are all good, honourable, and comfortable; yet they are not God, but the ordinances of God. It is the nature of a sinful heart, to make the means as meritorious to salvation: a man that seeth his drunkenness, and his base contempt of God, voweth to take up a new course, and cries, "No more drunkenness, no more scoffing at those that go to hear the word; and then he thinks, what can I do more? to heaven I must go." All this is but a man's self; Christ, who is the substance of all, is forgotten; and therefore the poor soul famisheth with hunger. Mistake not, I pray you; these duties must be used, but a man must not, stay here: prayer saith, there is no salvation in me; and the sacraments and fasting say, there is no salvation in us: all these are helps, no causes of salvation. A man will use his

bucket, but he expects water from the well; these means are the buckets, but all our life and grace is in Christ. If you say your bucket shall help you, you may starve if you let it not down into the well: so, though you boast of praying, and hearing, and fasting, and of your alms; if none of these bring you to, or settle you on Christ, you shall die, though your works were as the works of an angel. As it is with a graft therefore, first it must be cut off from the old stock; secondly, it must be pared, and made fit for implantation into another: so the soul by contrition being cut off from sin, then humiliation pares it (pares away all a man's privileges) and makes it fit for ingrafting into Christ. Thus much of the lets; now for the works of contrition and humiliation.

1. *A Sight of Sin.*

For a further discovery of these two necessary things, we shall enter into particulars, and begin first with Contrition; which contains these steps: A sight of sin; a sense of divine wrath; and, a sorrow for sin.

The first step is a sight of sin: and sin must be seen clearly and convictingly.

First, clearly, it is not a confused sight of sin that will serve the turn; it is not enough to say, It is my infirmity, we are all sinners: no, this is the ground why we mistake our evils, and reform not our ways. A man must search narrowly, and prove his ways, as the goldsmith doth his gold in the fire: *I considered my ways, saith David, and turned away my feet unto thy testimonies; in the original, I turned my sins upside down.* And this clear sight appears in two particulars:

1. A man must see his sin nakedly, in its own colours: we must not look on sin through the mediums of profits and pleasures; but the soul of a true Christian, that would see sin clearly, must strip it of all content and quiet that ever the heart received in it; as the adulterer must not look upon sin in regard of the sweetness of it, nor the covetous man on his sin in regard of the profit of it: you that are such, the time will come, when you must die, and then consider what good these sinful courses will do you; how will you judge of sin then, when it shall leave a blot on your souls, and a guilt on your consciences?

2. A man must look on sin in the venom of it: and that you may do partly, if you compare it with other things; and partly, if you look at it in regard of itself. 1. Compare sin with those things that are most fearful and horrible; as suppose any soul here present were to behold the damned in hell, then propound this to your heart, What are those pains which the damned endure? And your heart shall quake at it; yet the least sin that ever you did commit, is a greater evil, in its own nature, than the greatest pains of the damned in hell. 2. Look at sin simply

as it is in itself, what is it but a profest opposing of God himself? A sinful creature joins side with the devil, and comes in battle array against the Lord God of hosts! I pray you in cold blood consider this, and say, "Good Lord! what a sinful wretch am I? that a poor damned wretch of the earth, should stand in defiance against God: that I should submit myself to the devil, and oppose the Lord God of hosts!"

Secondly, convictingly, that sin may be so to us, as it is in itself; and that discovers itself in these two particulars:

1. When, whatsoever sin is in general, we confess it the same in our own souls: it is the cursed distemper of our hearts, howsoever we hold the truth in general, yet when we come to our own sins, to deny the particulars. The adulterer confesseth the danger and filthiness of that sin in gross, but he will not apply it to himself: the rule therefore is, "Arrest thy soul, whosoever thou art, of those sins particularly whereof thou standest guilty: to this purpose say, "Are pride, and drunkenness, and uncleanness, such horrible sins? O Lord, it was my heart that was proud and vain; it was my eye that was wanton, and my heart that was unclean; Lord, here they are." Thus bring thy heart before God.

2. When the soul sits down with truth, and seeks no shift to oppose it. The minister saith, God hates such and such a sinner: "And the Lord hates me too," saith the soul, "for I am guilty of that sin." Thus many a time, when a sinner comes into the congregation, if the Lord please to work on him, the mind is enlightened, and the minister meets with his corruptions, as if he were in his bosom, and he answers all his cavils, and takes away all his objections: with that the soul begins to be in amaze, and saith, "If this be so, as it is for aught I know, and if all be true that the minister saith, then the Lord be merciful unto my soul, I am the most miserable sinner that ever was born?"

You that know not your sins, that you may see them convictingly, get you home to the law, and look into the glass thereof, and then enumerate all your sins in order thus. "So many sins against God himself in the first commandment, against his worship in the second, against his name in the third, against his sabbath in the fourth: nay, all our thoughts, words, and actions, all of them have been sins, able to sink our souls into the bottom of hell." And, secondly, that you may see them clearly, consider their effect, both in their doom, and in the execution: only to instance in their doom; methinks I see the Lord of heaven and earth, and the attributes of God, appearing before him, "the mercy of God, the goodness of God, the wisdom of God, the power of God, the patience and long-suffering of God;" and they all come to a sinner, and say, Mercy hath relieved you, goodness hath secured you, wisdom hath instructed you, power

hath defended you, patience hath borne with you, long-suffering hath endured you : now all these bid you adieu, “ Farewell, damned souls ; you must go hence to hell, to have your fellowship with damned ghosts : mercy shall never more relieve you, goodness shall never more succour you, wisdom shall never more instruct you, power shall never more defend you, patience shall never more endure you.” And then shall you to endless, easeless, and remediless torments, where you will ever remember you sins, and say, “ My covetousness and pride was the cause of this ; I may thank my sins for this.” Think of these things, I beseech you, seriously, and see your sins here, to prevent this sight hereafter.

2. *A Sense of Divine Wrath.*

The sinner by this time having his eyes so far opened, that he beholds his sins, begins to consider that God hath him in chase ; and this sense of divine wrath discovers itself in these two particulars :

1. It works a fear of some evil to come.

2. It possesseth the soul with a feeling of this evil.

First, the soul considers, that the punishment which God hath threatened, shall be executed on him sooner or later : he cries, therefore, “ What if God should damn me ? God may do it : and what if God should execute his vengeance upon me ? ” Thus the soul fears, that the evil discovered will fall upon him. It is with a soul in this fear, as it was with Belshazzar, when he commanded the cups to be brought out of the house of the Lord ; *An hand-writing came against him on the wall, and when he saw it, his thoughts troubled him, and his knees knocked one against another* : so it is with this fear ; he that runs riot in the way of wickedness, there comes this fear and hand-writing against him, and then he cries, “ These are my sins, and these are the plagues and judgments threatened against them : therefore why may not I be damned ? why may not I be plagued ? ”

Secondly, the Lord pursues the soul, and discharges that evil upon him which was formerly feared ; and now his conscience is all on a flame, and he saith to himself, “ Oh ! I have sinned, and offended a just God, and therefore I must be damned, and to hell I must go.” Now the soul shakes, and is driven beyond itself, and would utterly faint, but that the Lord upholds it with one hand, as he beats it down with the other ; he thinks every thing is against him, he thinks the fire burns to consume him, and that the air will poison him, and that hell’s mouth gapes under him, and that God’s wrath hangs over him, and if now the Lord should but take away his life, that he should tumble headlong into the bottomless hell : should any man, or minister, persuade the soul in this case to go to heaven for mercy, it replies in this manner ; “ Shall I repair to God ? Oh, that’s my trouble

is not he that great God, whose justice and mercy, and patience, I have abused? And is not he the great God of heaven and earth, that hath been incensed against me? Oh! with what a face can I appear before him? and with what heart can I look for any mercy from him? I have wronged his justice, and can his justice pardon me? I have abused his mercy, and can his mercy pity me? What, such a wretch as I am? If I had never enjoyed the means of mercy, I might have had some plea for myself; but Oh! I have refused that mercy, and have trampled the blood of Christ under my feet; and can I look for any mercy? No, no, I see the wrath of the Lord incensed against me, and that's all I look for."

3. *Sorrow for Sin.*

The next step is, sorrow for sin; concerning which are two questions: 1. Whether it be a work of saving grace? 2. Whether God work it in all alike?

To the first.—There is a double sorrow; one in preparation, the other in sanctification:—they differ thus: sorrow in preparation, is when the word of God leaves an impression upon the heart of a man, so that the heart only bears the blow of the Spirit; and hence come all those phrases of scripture, as wounded, pierced, pricked; so that this sorrow is rather a sorrow wrought on me, than any work coming from any spiritual ability in me; but sorrow in sanctification, flows from a spiritual principle of grace, and from that power which the heart hath formerly received from God's Spirit; so that in this a man is a free worker.

To the second, I answer: Howsoever this work is the same in all for substance, yet in a different manner is it wrought in most: two men are pricked, the one with a pin, the other with a spear; so the Lord deals gently with one soul, and roughly with another. There is the melting of a thing, and the breaking of it with hammers; so there is a difference in persons. For instance, if the person be a scandalous liver, and an opposer of God and his grace; if a man have continued long in sin; if a man have been confident in a formal, civil course; or, if God purpose by some man to do some extraordinary work: in these four cases he lays a heavy blow on the heart; the Lord will bruise them, and make them seek to a faithful minister for direction, and to a poor Christian for counsel, whom before they despised. But if the soul be trained up among godly parents, the Lord may reform this man, and cut him off from his corruptions kindly. But give me a Christian that God doth please to work upon in this extraordinary manner, and to break his heart soundly, and to throw him down to purpose, though it cost him full dear; this man walks usually with care and conscience, hath more comfort himself, and gives more glory unto God.

Is it so, that the soul of a man is thus pierced to the quick, and run through by the wrath of the Almighty? then let this

teach all how to carry themselves towards such as God hath thus dealt with. Are they pierced men? O pity them: O let the bowels of compassion be let out toward them! Let us never cease to do good to them! O pray, and pity these wounds and vexations of spirit, which no man finds nor feels, but he that hath been thus wounded. It is to be feared that soul is wholly devoted to destruction, that hath a disdain against poor wounded creatures. Is it possible there should harbour such a spirit in any man? If the devil himself were incarnate, I cannot conceive what he could do worse.

2. If ever thou wouldest be comforted, and receive mercy from God; never be quiet till thou dost bring thy heart to a right pitch of sorrow: thou hast a little slight sorrow; but oh! labour to have thy heart truly touched, that at last it may break in regard of thy many distempers; remember, the longer seed-time, the greater harvest: *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*, Matt. v. 4.

4. *The Extent of this Sorrow.*

Hitherto of this Contrition; the next work is Humiliation, which differs from the other, not in substance, but circumstance: for humiliation is only the extent of sorrow for sin, of which we have spoken; and it contains these two duties: 1. Submission; 2. Contentedness to be at the Lord's disposal.

The first part of humiliation, is Submission, which is wrought thus: the sinner now having had a sight of his sins, and a sorrow in some measure; he seeks far and wide, improves all means, and takes up all duties, that, if it were possible, he might heal his wounded soul: thus seeking, but finding no succour in what he hath, or doth, he is forced at last to make trial of the Lord: it is true, for the present he apprehends God to be just, and to be incensed against him; yet because he sees he cannot be worse than he is, and that none can help him but God, therefore he falls at the footstool of mercy, and subits himself to the Lord, to do with him as it seemeth good in his eyes.

He saith, "This I know; all the means in the world cannot save me: yet who can tell but the Lord may have mercy on me, and cure this distressed conscience, and heal all these wounds that sin hath made in my soul?"

Or, for a further light, this subjection discovers itself in four particulars:

First, he seeth and confesseth that the Lord may, and, for ought he knows, will proceed in justice against him, and execute upon him those plagues that God hath threatened, and his sins have deserved.

Secondly, he conceives, that what God will do, he cannot avoid it; if the Lord will come, and require the glory of his justice against him, there is no way to avoid it, nor to bear it.

And this crusheth the heart, and makes the soul to be beyond all evasions, whereby it may seem to avoid the dint of the Lord's supper.

Thirdly, he casts away his weapons, and falls down before the Lord, and resigns himself to the sovereign power of God. Thus David, when the Lord cast him out of his kingdom, said to Zadok, "Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: but if he thus say to me, I have no delight in thee; behold here I am, let him do with me as seemeth good in his eyes."

Fourthly, the soul freely acknowledgeth, that it is in God's power to dispose of him as he will; and therefore he lies and licks the dust, and cries, Mercy, mercy, Lord! he thinks not to purchase mercy at the Lord's hands, but only saith, "It is in God's good pleasure to do with him as he will, only he looks for favour, and cries, Mercy, Lord, mercy to this poor distressed soul of mine!" O, replies the Lord, dost thou need mercy? Cannot thy hearing, and praying, and fasting, carry thee to heaven? gird up now thy loins, and make thy ferventest prayers, and let them meet my justice, and see if they can bear my wrath, or purchase mercy. "No, no," saith the sinner, "I know it by lamentable experience, that all my prayers and performances will never procure peace to my soul, nor give satisfaction to thy justice; I only pray for mercy, and I desire only to hear some news of mercy, to relieve this miserable soul of mine; it is only mercy that must help me. O mercy, if it be possible, to this poor soul of mine!"

The second part of humiliation is Contentedness to be at the Lord's disposal; and this point is of an higher pitch than the former. This contentedness discovers itself in these three particulars:

First, the soul reflects on God's mercy, which though he begged when he submitted, yet now he seeth so much corruption in himself, that he acknowledgeth himself unfit for it: "O mercy, mercy, Lord!"—What, saith the Lord, cannot your own duties purchase mercy?—"O no," saith the soul, "it is only mercy that must relieve and succour me; but such is my vileness, that I am not fit for the least mercy; and such is the wickedness of this wretched heart of mine, that whatsoever are the greatest plagues, I am worthy of them all, though never so insupportable: all the judgments that God hath threatened, and prepared for the devil and his angels, they are all due to my wretched soul. Had the devils had such hopes, and such offers of mercy, they would, for aught I know, have given entertainment to it? And what, do I seek for mercy? The least of God's mercies are too good for me, and the heaviest of God's plagues

are too little for me! I only for one sin deserve eternal damnation, for the wages of all sin is death, being committed against divine justice, and against an infinite majesty; and then what do all my sins deserve, committed and continued in, against all checks of conscience, and corrections, and the light of God's word? Hell is too good, and ten thousand hells too little, to torment such a wretch as I am. What, I mercy? I am ashamed to expect it: with what heart can I beg this mercy, which I have trodden under my feet? The Lord hath often wooed me, and when his wounds were bleeding, his side gored, and his cries coming into mine ears, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* then, even then, this Christ have I slighted, and made nothing of his blood; and can this blood of Christ do me any service? Indeed I crave grace, but how do I think to receive any? It is more than I can expect, I am not worthy of any; oh! no, I am only worthy to be cast out for ever."

Secondly, the soul reflects on justice, and now it acknowledgeth the equity of God's dealings, be they never so harsh; he confesseth that he is as clay in the hands of the potter, and the Lord may deal with him as he will! Yea, the soul is driven to an amazement at the Lord's patience, and that he hath been pleased to reprieve him so long, that God hath not cast him out of his presence, and sent him down to hell long ago. Hence it is that the soul will not maintain any kind of murmuring, or heart-rising, against the Lord's dealings: or if nature will be striving sometimes, and say, "Why are not my prayers answered? I see such a soul comforted, and why not I as well as he?" Then the soul stifles, and crushes, and chokes these wretched distempers, and doth also abase itself before the Lord, saying, "What if God will not hear my prayers; what if God will not pacify my conscience; doth the Lord do me any wrong? vile hell-hound that I am, I have my sin and my shame; wrath is my portion, and hell is my place, thither may I go when I will; it is mercy that God thus deals with me." And now the soul clears God in his justice, and saith, "It is just with God that all the prayers which come from this filthy heart of mine, should be abhorred, and that all my labours in holy duties should never be blessed; it is I that have sinned against checks of conscience, against knowledge, against heaven, and therefore it is just that I should carry this horror of heart with me to the grave; it is I that have abused mercy, and therefore it is just that I should go with a tormenting conscience down into hell: and Oh! that if I be in hell, I might have a spirit to justify thy name there; and say, Now I am come down to hell amongst you damned creatures, but the Lord is righteous in all his doings, and I am justly condemned."

Thirdly, hence the soul comes to be quiet under the heavy

hand of God in that helpless condition: it takes the blow, and lies under the burden, and goes away quietly and patiently: O this is an heart worth gold! "O," saith he, "it is fit that God should glorify himself, though I be damned for ever: whatsoever I have, it is the reward of my own works, and the end of my own ways: if I be damned, I may thank my pride, and my stubbornness, and my peevishness of spirit: what shall I repine against the Lord, because his wrath and his displeasure lies heavy upon me? Oh no, let me repine against my sin, the cause of all; let me grudge against my base heart, that hath nourished these adders in my bosom, but let me not speak one word against him." Thus you see what is the behaviour of the soul in this contentedness to be at the Lord's disposal.

But some may object, Ought the soul to be thus content to be left in this damnable condition?

I answer, This contentedness implies two things; first, a carnal security, and this is a cursed sin: secondly, a calmness of soul, not murmuring against the Lord's dispensation towards him: and this contentedness (opposed against quarrelling with the Almighty) every humbled soul doth attain to, although in every one it is not so plainly seen. A thief taken for robbery, on whom the sentence of death hath passed, should not neglect the means to get a pardon; yet if he cannot procure it, he must not murmur against the judge for condemning him: so we should not be careless in using all means for our good; but still seek to God for mercy: yet we ought to be contented with whatsoever mercy shall deny, because we are not worthy of any favour. The soul, in a depth of humiliation, first stoops to the condition that the Lord will appoint; he dares not fly away from God, nor repine against the Lord, but lies down meekly. 2. As he is content with the hardest measure, so he is content with the longest time, saying, "Although the Lord hide his face, and turn away his loving countenance from me, yet I will look towards heaven, so long as I have an eye to see, and an hand to lift up; the Lord may take his own time:" nay, the poor broken heart resolves thus; "If I lie and lick the dust all my days, and cry for mercy all my life long; if my last words might be Mercy, mercy, it were well." 3. As he is content to stay the longest time, so he is content with the least pittance of mercy: "Let my condition be never so hard," saith the soul, "do, Lord, what thou wilt with me, let the fire of thy wrath consume me here, only recover me hereafter; if I find mercy at the last, I am content; and whatsoever thou givest, I bless thy name for it." He quarrels not, saying, "Why are not my graces increased? and why am I not thus and thus comforted?" No, he looks for mercy, and if he have but a crumb of mercy, he is comforted and quieted for ever.

Hence we collect: 1. That they which have the greatest parts,

and gifts, and honour, are, for the most part, hardly brought home to Christ; they that are most hardly humbled, are most hardly converted: what is humiliation, but the emptying of the soul from whatsoever makes it swell? The heart must not joy in any thing, nor rest upon any thing, but only yield to the Lord, to be at his disposing. Now these parts, and abilities, and means, are great props for the heart of a carnal man to rest upon; whence the apostle, *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called*; indeed, blessed be God, some are, but not many: few, that have so much of themselves, are brought to renounce themselves.

2. That an humble heart makes all a man's life quiet, and marvellously sweeteneth whatsoever estate he is in: indeed sometimes he may be tossed and troubled, yet he is not distracted, because he is contented; as it is with a ship on the sea, when the billows begin to roar, and the waves are violent, if the anchor be fastened deep, it stays the ship: so this work of humiliation is the anchor of the soul; and the deeper it is fastened, the more quiet is the heart. When Job, in his extremity, gave way to his proud heart, he quarrelled with the Almighty, his friends, and all; but when the Lord had humbled him, then, *Behold I am vile; once have I spoken, yea twice, but now no more*. And this humiliation quiets a man both in the fiercest temptations, and in the heaviest oppositions.

1. In the fiercest temptations: when Satan begins to besiege the heart of a poor sinner, and lays a battery against him, see how the humbled heart runs him out of breath at his own weapons! Dost thou think, says Satan, to get mercy from the Lord? God will not respect the prayers of such vile sinners. "True," saith the poor soul, "I have often denied the Lord when he called upon me, and therefore he may justly deny me all the prayers I make; yet thus he hath commanded, that seek to him for mercy I must, and if the Lord will cast me away, and reject my prayers, I am contented therewith: what then, Satan?" What then? saith the devil; I thought this would have made thee to despair; but this is not all, for God will give thee over, and leave thee to thyself, to thy lusts and corruptions, and thy latter end shall be worse than thy beginning. To this answers the humbled soul, "If the Lord will give me up to my base lusts, and if the Lord will leave me to my sins, because I have left his gracious commands; and if I shall fall one day, and be disgraced and dishonoured, yet let the Lord be honoured, and let not God lose the praise of his power and justice, and I am contented therewith: what then, Satan?" What then? saith the devil; I sure thought now thou wouldst have despaired: but this is not all, for when God hath left thee to thy sins, then will he break out in vengeance against thee, and make thee an example of his heavy vengeance to

all ages; and therefore it is best for thee to prevent this timely judgment by some untimely death. To this replies the soul, "Whatsoever God can or will do, I know not, yet so great are my sins, that he cannot, or, at least, will not do so much against me as I have justly deserved: come what will come, I am contented still to be at the Lord's disposal: what then, Satan?" And thus he runs Satan out of breath.

So in all temptations of Satan, lie low, and be contented to be at God's disposing, and all these fiery temptations shall not be able to hurt you.

2. In the heaviest oppositions: when Satan is gone, then comes troubles and oppositions of the world, in all which humiliation will quiet the soul. Cast disgrace upon the humble heart, and he cures it thus: he thinks worse of himself than any man else can do, and if they would make him vile and loathsome, he is more vile in his own eyes than they can make him: O that I could bring your hearts to be in love with this blessed grace of God!

Is there any soul here that hath been vexed with the temptations of Satan, oppositions of men, or with his own distempers? and would he now arm himself, that nothing should disquiet him, but in all, to be above all, and to rejoice in all? Oh! be humbled, and then be above all the devils in hell; certainly they shall not so disquiet you, as to cause you to be misled, or uncomforted, if you would but be humbled.

What remains then? Be exhorted, as you desire mercy and favour at God's hands, to this humiliation. And for motives, consider the good things that God hath promised, and which he will bestow upon all that are truly humbled: I shall reduce all to these three:

First, by humiliation we are made capable of all those treasures of wisdom, grace, and mercy, that are in Christ.

Secondly, humiliation gives a man the comfort of all that is good in Christ. To be truly humbled, is the next way to be truly comforted; the Lord will look to him that hath an humble contrite heart, and trembles at his word. The Lord will give him such a gracious look, as shall make his heart dance in his breast. Thou poor humble soul, the Lord will give thee a glimpse of his favour, when thou art tired in thy trouble; when thou lookest up to heaven, the Lord will look down upon thee, and will refresh thee with mercy: Oh! be humbled then every one of you, and the Lord Jesus, who comes with healing under his wings, will comfort you, and you shall see the salvation of our God.

Thirdly, humiliation ushers glory: *Whosoever humbles himself as a little child, shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* He shall be in the highest degree of grace here, and of glory hereafter: for as thy humiliation, so shall be thy faith and sanctification, and obedience, and glory.

Now the Lord make me, and thee, and all of us humble, that we may have this mercy. Who would not have the Lord Jesus to dwell with him? Who would not have the Lord Christ, by the glory of his grace, to honour and refresh him? Methinks your hearts should yearn for it, and say, O Lord, break my heart, and humble me, that mercy may be my portion for ever: then might you say with comfort on your death-beds, "Though I go away, and leave wife and children behind me, poor and mean, in the world, yet I leave Christ with them:" when you are gone, this will be better for them than all the gold or honours in the world. What can I say? Since the Lord offers so kindly, now kiss the Son, be humble, yield to all God's commands, take home all truths, and be at God's disposing; let all the evil that is threatened, and all the good that is offered, prevail with your hearts: or if means cannot, yet the Lord prevail with you; the Lord empty you, that Christ may fill you; the Lord humble you, that you may enjoy happiness and peace, and be lifted up to the highest glory, there to reign for ever and ever.

CHAP. V.

The Call on God's Part, for the Soul to close with, and to rely on Christ.

HITHERTO of our first general, the preparation of the soul for Christ: the next is, the implantation of the soul into Christ; and that hath two parts, 1. The putting of the soul into Christ; 2. The growing of the soul with Christ.

As a graft is first put into the stock, and then it grows together with the stock: these two things are answerable in the soul, and when it is brought to this, then a sinner comes to be partaker of all spiritual benefits.

The first part is, the putting in of the soul: when the soul is brought out of the world of sin, to lie upon, and to close with, the Lord Jesus Christ: and this hath two particular passages; the call on God's part, and the answer on man's part.

The call on God's part is this: when the Lord by the call of his gospel, and the work of his Spirit, doth so clearly reveal the fulness of mercy, that the soul, humbled, returns answer.

In which observe the means, and the cause whereby God doth call.

1. The means is the ministry of the Gospel; the sum thereof is this, That there is fulness of mercy, and grace, and salvation, brought unto us through the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the phrase of scripture calls this gospel, or this mercy, *A treasury: All the treasures of wisdom and holiness are in Christ*: not one treasure, but all treasures: where the gospel comes, there is joy

for the sorrowful, peace for the troubled, strength for the weak, relief seasonable and suitable to all wants, miseries, and necessities, both present and future.

If then sorrow assail thee when thou art come thus far, look not on thy sins, to pore upon them; neither look into thy own sufficiency, to procure any good there. It is true, thou must see thy sins and sorrow for them, but this is for the lower form, and thou must get this lesson before-hand; and when thou hast gotten this lesson of contrition and humiliation, look then only to God's mercy, and the riches of his grace in Christ.

2. For the cause: the Lord doth not only appoint the means, but by the work of the Spirit, he doth bring all the riches of his grace into the soul truly humbled. If you ask, how? First, with strength of evidence the Spirit presents to the broken-hearted sinner, the freeness of God's grace to the soul: and secondly, the Spirit by an over-piercing work, doth leave a supernatural and spiritual virtue on the heart.

Now the word of the gospel, and the work of the Spirit, always go together; not that God is tied to any means, but that he tieth himself to the means: hence the gospel is called, the power of God to salvation, because the power of God ordinarily, and in common course, appears therein: the waters of life and salvation run only in the channel of the gospel; nay, observe this, when all arguments fail to persuade the heart to go to God, one text of scripture will stand a man in stead, above all human learning and inventions; because the Spirit goes forth in this, and none else.

CHAP. VI.

The Answer on Man's Part, for the Soul to close with, and to rely on Christ.

HITHERTO of the call on God's part; now we are come to the answer on man's part. No sooner hath the gospel and God's Spirit clearly revealed the fulness of God's mercy in Christ, but the soul gives answer to the call of God. Mercy is a proper object of the mind to be enlightened, of hope to be sustained, of desire to be supported, of love to be cheered; nay, there is a full sufficiency of all good in Christ, that so the will of man may take full repose and rest in him; therefore the Lord saith, *Come unto me, all that are weary and heavy laden*; come, mind, and hope, and desire, and love, and will, and heart. They all answer, We come: the mind saith, let me know this mercy above all, and desire to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified: let me expect this mercy, saith hope, that belongs to me, and will befall me: desire saith, let me long after it: oh! saith love, let me embrace and welcome

it: oh! saith the heart, let me lay hold on the handle of salvation; here we will live, and here we will die, at the footstool of God's mercy.

2. *A Sight of Christ, or of Mercy in Christ.*

But for a further discovery of these works of the soul, we shall enter into particulars: and for their order; first, the Spirit lets in a light into his heart, and discovers unto him, that God will deal graciously with him. It is with a sinner, as with a man that sits in darkness, haply he seeth a light in the street out of a window, but he sits still in darkness, and is in the dungeon all the while, and he thinks, "How good were it, if a man might enjoy that light!" So, many a poor sinner seeth God's mercies at a distance: "Ah!" thinks he, "I am in darkness still, and never had a drop of mercy vouchsafed unto me." At last the Lord lets a light into his house, and puts the candle into his own hand, and makes him see by particular evidence, thou shalt be pardoned.

The manner how the Spirit works this, is discovered in three passages:

First, the Spirit of the Lord meeting with an humble, broken sinner, (he that is a proud, stout-hearted wretch, knows nothing of this matter,) opens the eye, and now he begins to see some glimmering, that he can look into the things of God.

2. Then the Lord lays before him all the riches of the treasure of his grace; no sooner hath he given him an eye, but he lays colours before him, (the unsearchable riches of Christ,) that he may look, and fall in love with those sweet treasures; and then saith the soul, "Oh, that mercy, and grace, and pardon, were mine! Oh, that my sins were done away!" The Lord saith, "I will refresh them that are heavy-laden." Then saith the soul, "Oh, that I had that refreshing!" You shall have rest, saith God. "Oh, that I had rest too!" saith the soul: and now the soul looks after mercy and compassion.

3. The Spirit of the Lord doth witness thoroughly and effectually to the soul, that this mercy in Christ belongs to him: observe, none in heaven or in earth, but only God's Spirit, can make this certificate; when it is night, all the candles in the world cannot take away the darkness: so, though all the means of grace and salvation, all the candle-light of the ministry, are good helps, yet the darkness of the night will not be gone, before the Sun of righteousness arise in our hearts. Hence it is that it proves so difficult a matter to comfort a distressed soul; "I shall one day go down to hell," saith the soul. Let all the ministers under heaven cry, "Comfort ye, comfort ye;" still he replies, "Will the Lord pardon me?" Let me speak therefore to you that are ministers: You do well to

labour to give comfort to a poor fainting soul; but always say, "Comfort, Lord: O Lord, say unto this poor soul, that Thou art his salvation."

3. *Hope in Christ*

The mind being enlightened, the Lord calls on the affections; come desire, come love; but the first voice is to hope. Now this affection is set out to meet mercy afar off, it is the looking out of the soul: "Oh, when will it be, Lord? Thou sayest mercy is prepared, thou sayest mercy is approaching; Oh, when will it come, Lord?"

The manner how God's Spirit works this, is discerned in three particulars: the Lord doth sweetly stay the heart, and fully persuade the soul, that a man's sins are pardonable, and that all his sins may be pardoned, and that all the good things he wanteth may be bestowed: when a poor sinner seeth no rest in the creature, nor in himself, though all means, all help, all men, all angels, should join together; then the Lord lifteth up his voice, and saith from heaven, Thy sins are pardonable in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Lord doth sweetly persuade the soul that all his sins are pardonable; the Lord persuades his heart that he intendeth mercy; by this means hope comes to be assured, knowing the promise shall be at the last accomplished: the former only sustained the heart, but this comforts the soul, that undoubtedly it shall have mercy: the Lord Jesus came to seek, and to save, that which was lost: now saith the broken and humble sinner, God saith, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden*: "I am weary, and unless the Lord intend good unto me, why should he invite me, and bid me come? surely he means to shew me mercy, nay, he promiseth to relieve me when I come, therefore he will do good unto me."

3. The Lord lets in some taste of the sweetness of his love, so that the soul is deeply affected with it; it is the letting in the riches of his love, that turneth the expectation of the soul another way, yea, it turneth the whole stream of the soul thitherward.

I desire you, I entreat you, if you have any hope of heaven, if you have any treasure in Christ, labour to quicken this affection above all; the means are these: 1. Labour to be much acquainted with the precious promises of God, to have them at hand, and upon all occasions: these are thy comforts, and will support thy soul.

2. Maintain in thy heart a deep and serious acknowledgment of that supreme authority of the Lord, to do what he will, and how he will, according to his pleasure. Alas! we think too often to bring God to our bow; "We have hoped thus long, and God hath not answered; and shall we wait still?" Wait! ay, wait,

and bless God that you may wait: if you may lie at God's feet, and put your mouths in the dust, and at the end of your days have one crumb of mercy, it is enough. Therefore, check those distempers. "Shall I wait still?" It is a strange thing, that a poor worm, worthy of hell, should take state, and stand upon terms with God; "he will not wait upon God:" Who must wait then? Must God wait, or man wait? It was the apostles' question, *Wilt thou now restore the kingdom to Israel?* To whom our Saviour answered, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons;* as who should say, It is for you to wait, and to expect mercy, it is not for you to know. If you begin to wrangle, and say, "How long, Lord?—When, Lord?—And why not now, Lord?—Why not I, Lord?" now check thy own heart, and say, "It is not for me to know, it is for me to be humble, and abased, and wait for mercy."

4. *A Desire after Christ.*

When the soul is humbled, and the eye opened, then he begins thus to reason; "Oh, happy I that see mercy; but miserable I, if I come to see this, and never have a share in it! O why not I, Lord? My soul now thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land; my affections now hunger after righteousness, both infused and imputed." Now this desire is begotten thus:

When the soul is come so far, that after a thorough conviction of sin, and sound humiliation under God's mighty hand, it hath a seasonable revelation of the glorious mysteries of Christ, of his excellencies, invitations, truth, tender-heartedness, of the heavenly splendour of the pearl of great price; then doth the soul conceive, by the help of the Holy Ghost, this desire and vehement longing: and lest any cozen themselves by any misconceits about it;—it is then known to be saving,

1. When it is joined with an hearty willingness and unfeigned resolution, to sell all, to part with all sin, to bid adieu for ever to our darling delight. If thou desirest earnestly, thou wilt work accordingly; for as the desire is, so will thy endeavour be.

2. When it is earnest, vehement, extreme thirsting after Christ, as the parched earth for refreshing showers, or the hunted hart for the water-brooks. We read of a Scottish penitent, who, a little before his confession, freely confessed his fault, to the shame, as he said, of himself, and of the devil, but to the glory of God: he acknowledged it to be so heinous and horrible, that had he a thousand lives, and could die ten thousand deaths, he could not make satisfaction. "Notwithstanding," saith he, "Lord, thou hast left me this comfort in thy word, that thou hast said, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you:' Lord, I am weary; Lord, I am heavy-laden with my sins, which are innumerable; I am ready to sink, Lord, even into hell, unless thou in thy mercy

put to thine hand, and deliver me: Lord, thou hast promised, by thine own word out of thy mouth, that thou wilt refresh the weary soul." And with that he thrust out one of his hands, and, reaching as high as he could towards heaven, he with a louder voice cried, "I challenge thee, Lord, by that word, and by that promise thou hast made, that thou perform and make it good to me, that call for ease and mercy at thy hands." Proportionably, when heavy-heartedness for sin hath so dried up the bones, and the angry countenance of God so parched the heart, that the poor soul begins now to gasp for grace, as thirsty land for drops of rain; then the poor sinner, though dust and ashes, with an holy humility thus speaks unto Christ, "O merciful Lord God, thou art Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; thou sayest it is done, of things that are yet to come, so faithful and true are thy promises. Thou hast promised by thine own word out of thine own mouth, that unto him that is athirst, thou wilt give of the fountain of the water of life freely. O Lord, I thirst, I faint, I languish, I long for one drop of mercy: as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God, and after the yearning bowels of thy compassions: had I now in possession the glory, the wealth, and pleasures, of the whole world; nay, had I ten thousand lives, joyfully would I lay them down, to have this poor trembling soul received into the bleeding arms of my blessed Redeemer. O Lord, my spirit within me is melted into tears of blood, my heart is shivered into pieces; out of the very place of dragons, and shadow of death, do I lift up my thoughts heavy and sad before thee. The remembrance of my former vanities and pollutions, is a vomit to my soul, and it is sorely wounded by the grievous representation thereof; the very flames of hell, Lord, the fury of thy just wrath, the scorplings of my own conscience, have so wasted and parched mine heart, that my thirst is insatiable, my bowels are hot within me, my desire after Jesus Christ, pardon, and grace, is greedy as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame; and, Lord, in thy blessed book thou callest and criest, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.* In that great day of the feast, thou stoodest, and criest with thine own mouth, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;* and these are thine own words, *Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be filled.* I challenge thee, Lord, in this my extremest thirst after thine own blessed self, and spiritual life in thee, by that word and by that promise which thou hast made, that thou make it good to me, that lies grovelling in the dust, and trembling at thy feet: Oh! open now that promised well of life, for I must drink, or else I die."

The means to obtain this desire, are these three:

1 Be acquainted thoroughly with thine own necessities, with

that emptiness that is in thyself. A groundless presumption makes a man careless; see into thine own necessities, confess the want of this desire after the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Labour to spread forth the excellency of all the beauty and glory that is in the promises of God: couldest thou but view them in their proper colours, they would even ravish thee, and quicken thy desires.

3. After all this, know it is not in thy power to bring thy heart to desire Christ; thou canst not hammer out a desire upon thy own anvil, hew thy own rock as long as thou wilt; nay, let all the angels in heaven, and all the ministers on earth, provoke thee, yet if the hand of the Lord be wanting, thou shalt not lift up thine heart, nor step one step towards heaven: then go to him who is able to work this desire in thy soul. Remember, desires grow not in thy garden, they spring not from the root of thy abilities: O seek unto God, and confess, "In truth, Lord, it is thou from whom come all our good desires, it is thou must work them in us; and therefore, Lord, quicken thou this soul, and enlarge this heart of mine, for thou only art the God of desire." Thus hale down a desire from the Lord, and from the promise, for there only must thou have it; the smoking flax God will not quench. Flax will not smoke, but a spark must come into it, and that will make it catch fire and smoke. Thus lay your hearts before the Lord, and say, "Good Lord, here is only flax, here is only a stubborn heart, but strike thou by the promise one spark from heaven, that I may have a smoking desire after Christ, and after grace.

5. *A Love of Christ.*

We have run through two affections, Hope and Desire, and the next is Love. A possible good stirs up hope; a necessary excellency in that good, settleth desire; and a relish in that good settled, kindles love. This is the order of God's work; if the good be absent, the understanding saith, it is to be desired, O that I had it! Then it sends out hope, and that waits for good, and stays till he can see it; and yet if that good cannot come, then desire hath another work; it goes up and down-wandering, and seeketh and sueth for Christ Jesus. After this, if the Lord Jesus be pleased to come himself into the view of the heart which longeth thus after him, then love leads him into the soul, and tells the will of him, saying, Lo! here is Jesus Christ the Messiah, that hath ordered these great things for his saints and people.

The ground of this love is God's Spirit in the promise, letting in some intimation of God's love into the soul. We love him, because he loved us first: the burning glass must receive heat of the beams of the sun, before it burn any thing; so there must be a beam of God's love to fall upon the soul, be-

fore it can love God again; *I drew them with the cords of a man, even with the bands of love.* God lets in the cords of love into the soul, and that draws love again to God.

This love of God doth beget our love in three particulars:

First, there is a sweetness and a relish which God's love lets into the soul, and warms the heart with. A fainting sinner is cold at heart, and therefore the Lord lets in a drop of his loving-kindness, and this warms the heart, and the soul is even filled with the happiness of the mercy of God.

Secondly, as that sweetness warms the heart, so the freeness of the love of God begins to kindle this love in the soul, that it sparkles again: God setteth out his love towards us, seeing that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. This commends the love of God, the Lord sends to poor and miserable sinners, and saith, Commend my mercy to such a one, and tell him, that though he hath been an enemy to me, yet I am a friend to him; and though he hath been rebellious against me; yet I am a God and a Father to him. When a poor sinner considers this with himself, he saith, "Is the Lord so merciful to me? I that loved my sins, and continued in them, had it not been just that I should have perished in them? But will the Lord not only spare his enemy, but give his Son for him? O let my soul for ever rejoice in this unconceivable goodness of God!" Be thy heart never so hard, if it have but the sense of this, it cannot but stir thee to love.

Thirdly, the greatness of the freeness of this mercy of God, being settled upon the heart, inflames it; the sweetness warms the heart, this freeness kindles the fire; and when the greatness of the sweetness comes to be valued, this sets the heart all on a flame. This will make the soul say, What! I that have done all that I could against this good God! O, it breaks my heart to think of it! There was no name under heaven that I did blaspheme more than this; no command under heaven I so much despised, as the command of God and of Christ; no spirit that I grieved so much as the good Spirit of God; and therefore had the Lord only given me a look, or spoken a word to me, it had been an infinite mercy; but to send his Son to save me, it is incomparable: I could not conceive to do so much evil against him, as he hath done good to me: O the breadth of that mercy beyond all limits! O the length of that mercy beyond all time! O the depth of that mercy below a man's misery! O the height of that mercy above the height of my understanding! If my hands were all love, that I could work nothing but love; and if mine eyes were able to see nothing but love; and my mind to think of nothing but love; and if I had a thousand bodies, they were all too little to love that God, that hath thus unmeasurably loved me, a poor sinful hell-hound. O Lord, my strength, O how should I but love thee!

But how may I know whether my love be a true love, or a false love? How may I know that my love is of the right stamp?

Let every man put his love upon the trial, and examine thus, whether thou dost welcome Christ and grace according to the worth of them? If thou dost, it will appear in these particulars:

1. Observe the root from whence thy love came. Canst thou say, I love the Lord, because he hath loved me? Then thy love is right. God cannot but like that love which came from himself. Is thy soul affected and enlarged in love to the Lord because thou hast felt the sweetness of his grace? Canst thou say, the Lord hath let in a glimpse of his favour? And the Lord hath said in his truth, he looks to him that trembles at his word; the minister said it, and the Spirit saith it, that my mercy is registered in heaven: O how should I love the Lord! My sins are many, which I have bewailed; my sighs I have put up to heaven, and at the last the Lord hath given me a gracious answer: O how shall I love the Lord my strength? If it be thus with thee, thy love is sound.

2. If thou entertain thy Saviour as it beseems him, thou must entertain him as a king, give up all to him, and entertain none with him, but such as are attendants upon him; love all in Christ, and for Christ, but express thy love and joy to Christ above all: he is a king, and all the rest are but as retainers. He that loves any thing equal with Christ, doth not rightly love Christ.

3. The soul that rightly entertains Christ is marvellously weary and watchful that he may not sadden that good Spirit of God, to grieve him, and cause him to go away. The spouse sought long for her beloved, and at last brought him home; and when she had welcomed him, she gives a charge to all the house not to stir, nor awake her love. When a prince comes into the house of a great man, what charge is there given to make no noise in the night! The soul, when it hath received the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, doth thus; he gives a peremptory charge to keep watch and ward, and gives a charge to hope, and desire, and love, and joy, and the mind, and all, not to grieve or molest the good Spirit of God; let there be no motion but to entertain it, no advice but to receive it, and do nothing that may work the least kind of dislike unto it.

And now let me prevail with your hearts to this duty; love the Lord, all ye his saints. Whom will you love, if you love not him? Oh! you poor ones, love ye the Lord, for you have need; and all you rich ones, love ye the Lord, for you have cause; and you little ones too:—he knocks at every man's heart, and persuades every man's soul; love ye the Lord.

The means are these: 1. Give attendance daily to the pro-

mise of grace, and Christ; drive away all other suitors from the soul, and let nothing come between the promise and it.

2. Labour to be thoroughly acquainted with the beauty and sweetness of Christ in the promise.

Christ is worthy in himself: if we had a thousand hearts to bestow, we were not able to love him sufficiently. What would you love? Wouldst thou have beauty? then thy Saviour is beautiful; *Thou art fairer than the children of men*, Psal. xlv. 2. Wouldst thou have strength? then thy Saviour is strong; *Gird thy sword on thy thigh, O most mighty*, Psal. xlv. 3. Wouldst thou have riches? thy Saviour is more rich, if it be possible, than he is strong; *He is heir of all things*, Heb. i. 1. Wouldst thou have wisdom? then thy Saviour is wise, yea, wisdom itself; *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. Wouldst thou have life eternal? Christ is the author of life and happiness to all that have him.

And Christ deserves our love, in regard of benefits to us. Be man never so worthy in himself, yet if he have expressed the part of an enemy, a woman saith, I will not have him though he have all the world. This takes off the affection. It is not so with the Lord Jesus: as he is worthy of all love in himself, so he hath dealt mercifully with you. In your sickness, who helped you? in wants, who supplied you? in anguish of heart, who relieved you? It was Jesus Christ. Oh! therefore love him; deal with him as he deserves; enlarge your hearts to him for ever.

Yea, Christ seeks our love: here is the admiration of mercy, that our Saviour, who hath been rejected by a company of sinful creatures, should seek their love! For shame, refuse him not, but let him have love ere he go. Had the Lord received us when we had come to him and humbled our hearts before him, had he heard when we had spent our days and all our strength in begging and craving, it had been an infinite mercy: but when the Lord Jesus Christ shall seek to us by his messengers, (it is all the work we have to do, to woo you for the Lord Jesus Christ,) when he shall come and wait upon us, and seek our love; Oh, this is the wonder of mercies! He looks for no portion, he will take thee and all thy wants. Get you home then; and every one, in secret, labour to deal truly with your own hearts; make up a match in this manner, and say, "Is it possible that the Lord should look so low? that a prince should send to a poor peasant? that majesty should stoop to meanness? heaven to earth? God to man? Hath the Lord offered mercy to me? and doth he require nothing of me but to love him again?" Call upon your hearts, I charge you, and say thus, "Lord, if all the light of mine eyes were love, and all the speeches of my tongue were love, it were all too little to love thee: Oh, let me love thee!"

6. A Relying on Christ.

We are now come to the work of the will, which is the great wheel of the soul. The former affections were but as handmaids to usher in Christ. The mind saith, "I have seen Christ;" Hope saith, "I have waited:" Desire saith, "I have longed:" Love saith, "I am kindled:" Then saith the will, "I will have Christ, it shall be so:" and this makes up the match. The seeds of faith went before; now faith is come to some perfection; now the soul reposes itself upon the Lord Jesus.

And this reposing or resting itself, discovers a five-fold act: First, it implies a going out of the soul to Christ: when the soul seeth this, that the Lord Jesus is his aid, and must ease him, and pardon his sins, then, "Let us go to that Christ," saith he; "it is the Lord's call, *Come to me, all ye that are weary:*" this voice coming home to the heart, and the prevailing sweetness of the call overpowering the heart, the soul goes out, and flings itself upon the riches of God's grace.

Secondly, it lays fast hold upon Christ: when the Lord saith, Come, my love, come my dove, O come away! "Behold I come," saith she; and when she is come, she fasteneth upon Christ, saying, "My beloved is mine, and I am his:" faith lays hold on the Lord, and will not let mercy go, but cleaves unto it, though it conflict with the Lord; *Should he slay me,* saith Job, *yet will I trust in him.*

Thirdly, it flings the weight of all its troubles, guilt, and corruptions, upon the Lord Jesus Christ. As when a man cannot go of himself, he lays all the weight of his body upon another; so the soul goes to Christ, and lays all the weight of itself upon Christ, and saith, "I have no comfort, O Lord; all my discomfords I lay upon Christ, and I rely on the Lord for comfort and consolation:" *Who is this,* saith Solomon, *that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?* Cant. viii. 5. The party coming is the church, the wilderness is the troubles and vexations the church meets with, and the beloved is the Lord Jesus Christ; now the church leans herself all upon her husband, she walks along with him, but he bears all the burden: *Cast all your cares upon him,* saith Peter, *for he careth for you,* 1 Pet. v. 7.

Fourthly, it draws virtue, and derives power, from the Lord Jesus Christ for succour and supplies; and here is the especial life of faith, it goes for mercy, and grace, and comfort in Christ; he knows 'tis to be had from him, and therefore he fetched all from him: *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,* Isa. xii. 3: The fountain of salvation is Christ, and all the waters of life, of grace and mercy, are in Christ Jesus: now it is not enough to let down the bucket into the well, but it must be drawn out also; it is not enough

to come to Christ, but we must draw the water of grace from Christ to ourselves.

Fifthly, faith leaves the soul with the promise; yea, notwithstanding all delays, denials, discouragements from God, faith brings on the heart still; it will be sure to lie at the gate, and keep the soul with the promise, whatever befalls it. The faithful soul lays hold upon the Lord for mercy, pardon, power, and grace, and though the Lord seem to give him up to the torment of sin and corruption, yet the soul saith, "Though my soul go down to hell, I will hold here for mercy, till the Lord comfort and pardon, and subdue graciously these cursed corruptions, which I am not able to master myself."

Hast thou gottem faith? then labour to husband this grace well. It is a shame to see those that have a right and title to grace and Christ, yet live at such an under-rate: I would have you to live above the world, for the Lord doth not grudge his people comfort, but would have them live cheerfully, and have strong consolations, and mighty assurance of God's love. Is there not cause? surely there is. Why, faith, if it be right, will make the life of a Christian most easy, most comfortable. Unfaithful souls sink in their sorrows upon every occasion, but faith gives ease to a man in all his conversation: 1. Because faith hath a skill to put over all cares to another. We take up the cross, but faith casts all the care on Christ: an easy matter it is to lie under the burden, when another bears all the weight of it. Look how it is with two ferry-men, the one hales his boat about the shore, and cannot get off, but tugs and pulls, and never puts her forth to the tide; the other puts his boat upon the stream, and sets up his sail, and then he may sit still, and the wind will carry him whither he is to go:—just thus is it with a faithful soul and an unbeliever; all the care of the first, is to put himself upon the stream of God's providence, and set up the sail of faith, and take the gale of God's mercy; so he goes cheerfully, because it is not he that carries himself, but the Lord Jesus: whereas every unfaithful soul tugs and pull at the business, and can find neither ease nor success. 2. Because faith sweetens all afflictions: howsoever it apprehends all troubles and afflictions, yet withal it apprehends the faithfulness of God, ordering all for our good; and that's the reason why all our troubles are digested comfortably, without any harshness at all.

You will say, If faith brings such ease, how may a man that hath faith, improve it, to have such comfort by it? I answer, the rules are four:

1. Labour to gain some evidence to thy own soul, that thou hast a title to the promise: the reason why poor Christians go drooping, and are overwhelmed with their sins and miseries, is because they see not their title to mercy, nor their evidence of God's love.

2. Labour to set an high price on the promises of God: one promise, and the sweetness of God's mercy in Christ, is better than all the honours or riches in the world; prize these at this rate, and thou canst not choose but find ease and be contented.

3. Labour to keep the promises ever at hand. What is it to me, though I have a thing in the house, if I have it not at my need? Now, for the Lord's sake, let me entreat thee be wise for thy poor soul. There is many a fainting-fit comes over the heart of many a poor Christian, persecutions without, and sorrows and corruptions within; therefore keep thy cordials about thee, and be sure to have them within reach; take one, and bring another, and be refreshed by another, and go singing to the grave, and to heaven for ever.

CHAP. VII.

The growing of the Soul with Christ.

HITHERTO of the first part of the soul's implantation; to wit, of the putting the soul into Christ. We are now come to the second, which is, the growing of the soul with Christ. These two take up the nature of ingrafting a sinner into the stock, Christ Jesus. Now this growing is accomplished by two means:

1. By an union of the soul with Christ.

2. By a conveyance of sap or sweetness (all the treasures of grace and happiness) that is in Christ, to the soul.

First: Every believer is joined unto Christ, and so joined and knit, that he becomes one spirit. 1. He is joined, as a friend to a friend, as a father to a child, as a husband to a wife, as a graft to a tree, as a soul to a body. So is Christ to a believer; "I live, yet not I, but the Lord Jesus liveth in me." 2. So joined, that the believer comes to be one spirit with Christ: this mystery is great, and beyond the reach of that little light I enjoy; only I shall communicate what I conceive, in these three conclusions: 1. That the Spirit of God, the third person in the Trinity, doth really accompany the word, but more especially the precious promises of the gospel. 2. The Spirit, accompanying the promise of grace and salvation, doth thereby leave a supernatural power, a spiritual and overpowering virtue, upon the soul, and thereby brings it unto Christ: it is not so much any thing in the soul, as a spiritual assisting, and moving, and working upon the soul, by virtue whereof it is moved and carried to the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. The Spirit of grace in the promise, working thus upon the heart, causeth the heart to close with the promise, and with itself in the promise; and this is to be one spirit.

This may shew us that the sins of the faithful are grievous to the blessed Spirit; not only because of mercies, bonds, and engagements, which the believer hath received, but because a man is come so near to Christ and the Spirit, as to be one spirit with Christ. What, lodge an unclean spirit with a clean spirit of the Lord! The Holy Ghost cannot endure this: *Let no fleshly communication come out of your mouth*, Ephes. iv. 29. Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, because by it you are sealed unto the day of redemption: the good Spirit of the Lord hath sealed you unto redemption, and knit you unto himself; and will you rend yourselves from him, and grieve him? O grieve not the holy Spirit.

Secondly: As there is an union with Christ, so there is a conveyance of all spiritual grace from Christ, to all those that believe in him: 1. There is fully enough in the Lord Jesus Christ for every faithful soul. 2. As there is enough in Christ, so Christ doth supply or communicate whatsoever is most fit. 3. As the Lord doth communicate what is fit, so he doth preserve what he doth bestow and communicate. 4. As the Lord doth preserve what he communicates, so he quickens the grace that he now doth preserve; and in the end he crowns it all.

Hence we see whither the saints of God should go, to fetch supply of whatsoever grace they want, yea, increase and perfection of what they have already. Christ is made all in all to his servants: why then, away to the Lord Jesus; he calls and invites, "I counsel thee to buy of me eye-salve." If thou be an accursed man, buy of Christ justification; if thou be a polluted creature, buy of Christ sanctification: *With thee is the well-spring of life*, saith David, *and in thy light we shall only see light*. It is not with us, but with thee; it is not in our heads, or hearts, or performances, 'tis only in Christ to be found, only from Christ to be fetched. I deny not but we should improve all means, and use all helps; but in the use of all, seek only to Christ; with him is the well of life. Away to Christ; wisdom, righteousness, all is in him, and there we must have them.

You will say, What are the means to obtain these graces from Christ? I answer: First, eye the promise daily, and keep it within view. Secondly, yield thyself, and give way to the stroke of the promise, and to the power of the Spirit. For instance, imagine thy heart begins to be pestered with vain thoughts, or with a proud haughty spirit; you must not be discouraged; no, but eye the promise, and hold fast thereon, and say, Lord, thou hast promised all grace unto thy servants, take therefore this heart, and these affections, and let thy Spirit frame them aright according to thy own good will: by that Spirit of wisdom, Lord, inform me; by that Spirit of sanctification, Lord, cleanse me from all my corruptions; by

that Spirit of grace, Lord, quicken and enable me to the discharge of every holy service. Thus carry thyself by the power of the Spirit of the Lord, and thou shalt find thy heart strengthened upon all occasions.

For conclusion, to dart this use deeper into your hearts: If every believer be joined with Christ, and from Christ there be a conveyance of all spiritual graces unto every believer; then above all labour for Christ in all things: never let thy heart be quieted, never let thy soul be contented, until thou hast obtained Christ. Grace indeed is good, and duties are good: seek for all, we should do so; perform all, we ought to do so; but oh! Christ in all, above all, more than all. Thus I have shewed you the way to the Lord Jesus; I have shewed you also how you may come to be implanted into the Lord Jesus: and now I leave you in the hands of a Saviour, in the bowels of a Redeemer; and I think I cannot leave you better.
