

## S E R M O N X.

LUKE XIV. 23.

The Lord said to the servant, compel them to come in, that my house may be full.

II. **I** Am now to consider the means by which men are wrought on to accept of the invitations of grace in the gospel. The sum of what has been discoursed of sinful and miserable man is this, the understanding, the directing faculty, is in ignorant darkness, and a dead slumber, not apprehensive of his misery. A dead eye does not see its want of sight, nor a dead heart feel its want of life. If the head be obstructed with clammy humours, the whole body is without sense: for the nerves have their root in the brain, and are the channels to convey powerful spirits, to give sense, and vigour, and motion to all the parts. The will is a fierce and free faculty, commanding and active, perverted and stubborn against the holy law of God. The affections are exceedingly disordered, and strongly inclined to sensual things that flatter them with satisfaction, and very tumultuous and fiery against whatever shall cross their natural inclinations. Now how can one so stupid and refractory, be made soft and flexible to the call of mercy? As the Epicurean in Tully objects against

the making of the world, *quæ machinæ qui vectes*, what engines, what levers were used in raising this vast fabric? What he spoke in derision, may be said with wonder. What engines, what instruments are used in craning up a soul sunk below the centre, to the highest heaven! What in making the new creation, that is more glorious and lasting than the first! It is a work respectively impossible, not absolutely, it can only be effected by the power of God.

There is no principle of recovery left in fallen man. The conversion of him from sin to holiness, and from the creature to God, is a miracle of grace: if he converted himself, it were super-miraculous. God can by his commanding power bring light out of darkness; but it is plainly impossible that darkness should produce light.

The external ministration of the gospel, without the concomitant ministry of the Spirit, is ineffective. The divinest preacher cannot soften the iron sinew, nor melt the heart of stone, nor make the rock to tremble. The prophet Isaiah, whose sublime eloquence overcomes all the admired orators of the world, yet complains, "who has believed our report? to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. 53. The angels of light, if they were sent from heaven, and were in this sense "ministering spirits," they could not by their seraphic zeal, and most excellent eloquence change and reform sinners. One evil angel seduced and corrupted the best man, Adam, in the state of innocence and happiness: but a council of good angels cannot restore one man, though the least tainted, to holiness and felicity. No creature can be a creator; the sanctification of a sinner is a new creation. It is only "the word of life" spoken by "the Lord of life," that can raise dead bodies and dead souls. Suppose the word of God be assisted by his rod, yet that will be ineffectual to cleanse and change their hearts without divine grace. It is according to the wise order of God, whom the word does not convert, the rod is made use of to cure; and whom the rod does not cure, the sword cuts off.

Prosperity furnishes the carnal appetites with delightful objects, and men are easily induced to neglect their duty: like children that forget their lesson when they are at play. Sense that reigns in beasts, and should serve in men, is then predominant. But affliction imbitters the carnal sweets, and is a

proper means to fix the thoughts, and restore the mind to its right and jurisdiction: as blows and hard usage bind up the ranging fancy in distracted persons; tames and tires them, and thereby reduces them to sobriety. Thus God is often pleased, by afflictions, "to show men their transgressions, to open their ears to discipline, and effectually command them to return from their iniquities." Job 36. But without the instruction of his Spirit joins with the voice of the rod, the utmost effect of even sharp and long afflictions is a forced and fading repentance. Constrained devotion is like fire struck out of a flint, hardly got, and soon gone. Thus it is said of the Israelites in the wilderness, "when he slew them, they sought him, they returned and sought early after God; but their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." How many open rebels have been awakened by the fear of death? and when they have tasted and seen the terrors of the Lord, what addresses, what submissions, what promises have they made to God? but after their reprieve, how soon have they forgot the past terrors, and broke all the bars of reason, and of their resolutions, and been as unreformed as ever. The wise man tells us, "bray a fool in a mortar, pound him in pieces, his folly will remain in him."

Nay, miracles without the application of them by grace to the spirits of men, are ineffectual to work faith and repentance. The end of them is by the evidence of sense to excite the mind, to consider the power that works them. But they may astonish the sense, and the mind not be convinced; or if convinced, yet they leave no permanent operation upon the hearts of the spectators. Moses charges the Israelites that notwithstanding they had seen all the miraculous strokes of God's power upon Pharaoh and his servants, "yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear to this day." When the Son of God appeared in his own likeness, and did such numerous and conspicuous miracles that compelled the most stubborn devils to acknowledge his Deity, yet the Pharisees remained obstinate and invincible. The soldiers who saw him rising in power and glory, and were almost frightened to death at the sight, yet continued obdurate in their infidelity.

Our Saviour assures us, "no man can come to him, except

the Father which hath sent me, draw him." John 6. 44. The words are full of emphasis, "no man:" the negation is universal; not only the act is denied, "no man comes," but the power, "can come;" no less than omnipotent grace draws him. A carnal man will "not come to Christ for life:" and he cannot will to come: for his mind is so forelaid with prejudice, and his will is so depraved and entangled with the love of sin, that he cannot sincerely \* desire to be set free. Every delightful sin is like a charmed circle out of which the sinner cannot move.

We are not to conceive of this disability, as if sinners had not deliberative and elective faculties to consider and choose what is best: such a disability would be an argument for their innocence and justification: neither as if men had a will to forsake sin, and wanted power; like a miserable slave that sighs after liberty, but is fastened by heavy fetters: but the perverse will keeps them in bondage: "they serve divers lusts and pleasures," and delight in their fetters. It is a voluntary culpable impotence joined with a strong reluctancy to grace: it is the impudent imperious weakness of the whorish woman charged upon the Israelites, and admits of no apology and defence: nay, it aggravates the sin and sentence of such depraved creatures. As there is in virtue and holiness a divine degree of perfection, that makes persons not capable of departing from their duty: so there is a diabolical degree in sin, when the soul is so depraved, that it cannot abstain from doing evil. And as consummate virtue is most worthy of esteem and praise; so when a vicious habit contracted by a long custom in sin, absolutely possesses the soul, it is most worthy of abhorrence.

Now only divine grace "compels sinners to come to Christ," and to partake of saving mercies: that is, changes the bias of the will, and makes it obedient to the heavenly call. God is the supreme mover, and turns all occurrences in the world to his purpose and praise: and the hearts of men are not exempt from his dominion, but he "turns them as the rivers of waters." The effectual operation of grace does not violate the native freedom of the will, but is congruous to it. God's "drawing is by teaching: every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, comes to me." When the Author of the gospel is a teacher of

\* *Nec te posse carere velim.*

it, the most stupid and obstinate sinners shall be convinced and obedient. To make this more clear, I will briefly consider the intellectual frame of man, and the natural subordination of the faculties in their various operations. As the spring in a watch, so the understanding is the first mover in the reasonable creature: the understanding has a double faculty; the apprehensive, to discover the good and evil in objects presented to it; and the judicative, to compare and ponder the good and evil discerned in things; and accordingly to esteem or disvalue, to approve or dislike. The will chooses what the understanding commends, and rejects what the judgment condemns. The affections of desire and delight are from the choice of the will, the affections of aversion and flight are from the rejection of the will. The pursuit or neglect of things, the application or opposition we make in our actions and practice to them, is from the delight or distaste of things in our affections. But when lust entered into the soul, it perverted this order. As the strong tide of the sea pouring into rivers, turns them back to their springs, in a course contrary to their natural motion: thus the heart overflowing with a strong tide of corruption, empties itself into the head the spring of actions: the unholy affections work upon the will to reject the offers of grace in the gospel; and the corrupt will works upon the mind to vilify them. It is to be observed, that the tempter works upon men's minds in the unnatural way; he makes use of the disordered affections to pervert the will, and of the perverted will to divert the understanding from due consideration of objects, and to corrupt its judgment. But God works by the understanding on the will and affections, according to the regular dependance of those faculties.

The first beam of saving grace shines into the mind with so strong a light, discovering spiritual and eternal things in their reality and glory, that the will and affections are drawn to choose, and embrace, and to follow them with zeal and constancy. In this blessed work, we are to consider the revelation of the object, and the irradiation of the mind. As in the discerning of corporeal things, there must be light in the eye, or there can be no seeing, and light in the air, or there can be no sight: so the great mysteries of godliness, which are of impossible discovery without revelation, are made known in the gospel; and the understanding is illuminated to see them in their

reality and transcendent goodness, as the apostle expresses, "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners." He prays for the Ephesians, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Ephes. 1. Although the evidence of faith be not so clear as that of sense, yet it is so sure, that the adherence of faith is more firm to its objects, though future, than of sense to things present. With the irradiation of the mind there is such a determining influence on the will and the affections, that Christ and heaven are joyfully chosen before all things. In converting sinners there is not a bare proposal of the objects of faith, with the motives to believe and accept them, and men are left to their own discretion and choice: the Holy Ghost who certainly knows the manner and efficacy of his own operations, expresses converting grace "by the exceeding greatness of his power toward them that believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in heaven." Ephes. 1. It is true, the principle of resistance in corrupt nature is not quite extinguished; but actual resistance is overcome by the Holy Spirit, who works "to will and to do of his good pleasure."

In the human will we are to consider the faculty of choosing and refusing, which includes in it freedom and liberty, without which it ceases to be a will. 2. The depravation of it: and this consists in a necessity of choosing the evil of sin, represented as pleasing to the carnal affections, and rejecting the law of God, which is holy and good. The sinning will contracted this necessity. Now grace does not destroy the nature of the will, but changes its quality: of carnal and earthly makes it holy and heavenly: this is expressed "by a new heart, and a new spirit." And "when the spirit of the mind is renewed by" illuminating grace, and the will and affections of the heart are renewed by purifying grace, the will does as freely and necessarily choose spiritual and eternal things, as in the state of nature it chose things pleasing to the corrupt appetites. God draws sinners to

himself with "the cords of a man," in a rational way, without violence to their faculties, and fastens them "by bands of love." He instructs the soul, and infuses such a principle and disposition as is suitable to the doctrine. When the will is directed and drawn, by the illuminating guidance of the mind, to choose and embrace the most excellent good, and the other faculties to obey, this is man's true liberty. In heaven the invariable fixing the will upon God our supreme good, is its perfection and felicity.

The outward means of inducing men to comply with God's call, is the preaching of the word. If it were the will of God, he can immediately create men as Adam, in complete stature, and with the perfection of reason; but he makes use of second causes, forms them in the womb, brings them into the world by the ordinary way of the earth, and raises them from infancy to a mature state, according to the rules of nature. Thus God could by one act sanctify sinners in perfection; but he is pleased by the preaching of the word to convert sinners, and gradually perfect the saints: the gospel is the ministry of reconciliation, and of regeneration. And this is very congruous to the human nature; 2 Cor. 5. James 1. for the sinner is not converted, as a stone ascends by a forced and blind motion, but is instructed and affected by proposing objects to his mind and will, and acts according to the impression he received from them. Now the natural man being "a servant to corruption," the external propounding of the most powerful objects and motives cannot change him: the converting efficacy of the word is from Jesus Christ. To make this more evident, let us consider, in every action where an instrument is used, the action is properly ascribed to the agent. God is a pure spirit, without any composition of bodily organs of speech; yet when he formed a voice in the air for the proclaiming the law, "he spake;" Exod. 20. 1. Deut. 5. 4. and whether by any created voice, or by the voice of men appointed for preaching the gospel, he speaks. In human speaking, the voice is from the tongue, but the sense and meaning is from the mind that directs it. From hence it is that the gospel preached is of admirable efficacy, and works above the power of any creature. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is

a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4. 12. It subdues open rebels, and makes their pride and confidence fall as low as hell; it mollifies the most obdurate, and makes them compliant to the invitations of grace. And although the minister be never so mean in his person and appearance, yet a weak instrument in an almighty hand does wonders.

Our blessed Saviour in his person was the first preacher of the gospel; and in his sermons we are directed how to work upon the reason, and the affections of sinners, by which alone they are capable to be moved. The substance of his several sermons was, "repent ye, and believe the gospel." Mark 1.

1. The order and progress of converting grace is by the conviction of the mind, to turn the will and affections. Sin prevails in men by the love of pleasure; and till there be a mixture of what is more bitter than sin is sweet, they will not forsake it. "The world corrupted by lust," is an imaginary paradise, wherein there is nothing but "forbidden fruit;" and the fruit is so pleasant to the eyes and taste, that only flaming terrors will expel them out of it. No man will cut off his right hand till an incurable gangrene has seized on it. The light neglected notions of heaven are ineffective to reform sinners; till the terrors of the Lord are set in array against them, they are fastened in their sins. Of this there is visible and frequent experience: how many that have lived in a careless contempt of God till their last sickness, and when they feel themselves sinking to the grave and hell, and conscience is an exact remembrancer and terrible accuser of all their inward wickedness and notorious sins, then what furious reflections do they make upon themselves? and what promises do they make if they might be spared? It is therefore the first duty of ministers by clearing light and convincing strength to work on conscience, and by the mediation of it to apply guilt and wrath to the sinner, that he may be restless in his sins. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men:" Rom. 1. it is decreed before the world was, it is denounced in the word, and shall be fully executed in the "day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God:" nothing is more certain than that day, and nothing so heavy as that wrath. It is a burden so insupportable, that the Son of God was ready to sink under its weight: he meekly and silently endured all the cruel rage of



his enemies, but mournfully broke forth, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" Who can understand the consequence of that complaint? Who can support himself under the apprehension of an absent and angry God? When the convinced person ponders his sins, what indignities he has offered to the glorious God his maker and preserver, his lawgiver and judge; that he has abused his mercies, perverted his benefits, and employed them in the service of satan; that he has despised his justice, and ventured upon his inflamed anger for transient pleasure and trifling profits; when these killing aggravations are duly considered and laid close to the heart, how are all the sorrowful affections moved? serious grief that springs from the depth of the soul, confounding shame, anxious inquiring fear, to stop the execution of the fatal sentence passed against him? Thus it is related of those converts at the first sermon of St. Peter, that being convinced of their crimson guilt in their crucifying the Lord Jesus, "they were pricked in their heart, and said to the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then sinners will humbly sue for peace by the blessed peacemaker Jesus Christ: then salvation will be so much the sweeter, by how much the danger was more threatening. The recovery from death to life is a double life.

2. The Lord Jesus must be proposed as an all-sufficient and compassionate Saviour, who invites the weary and heavy laden to come to him for rest. This is the order of the Spirit's operations, "first to convince of sin, then of righteousness." It is true, there are diversities of workings; the Spirit instructs and terrifies sinners by his office of bondage, but not always in the same manner and degrees: but the soul is so humbled by the sight of sin, and impendent wrath, as it sees and feels the necessity of a Saviour, and is willing to comply with the terms of mercy offered in the gospel. "The whole need not a physician, but those who are sick." A condemned man values a sheet of paper wherein his pardon is written and sealed, more than the conveyance of a rich estate. One near drowning values a cord thrown out for his rescue, more than a crown. Thus when the guilty are deeply sensible they have lost the favour of God, and cannot fly from his power, and there is but a step between them and eternal death, then a Saviour will be infinitely precious, and

they will entirely close with him. Now the gospel represents the Son of God incarnate.

1st. An all-sufficient Saviour by his propitiation, and intercession. The excellency of his obedience, and the excellency of his person were influential to obtain the pardon of sin. His propriety in the sacrifice, and the value of it, was requisite to atone the just displeasure of God for our offences. It is said, he "offered his own body on the tree:" his peculiar right in it was requisite to make it a proper and acceptable sacrifice. It is true, the Father and Holy Spirit had the same right in the human nature of Christ as the Son had, with respect to the making it: but the Son by assuming it into a personal union with himself, has a peculiar right in it, and offered his own in a strict sense. And in consequence of this, his sacrifice was of infinite value: he did not compound with God, but paid a ransom equivalent to what was due for sinners. He bled a fountain from his wounded side, "that cleanses from all sin." 1 John 2.

2dly. By his intercession. "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, for he ever lives to make intercession for them." God pardons sin as a sovereign upon the throne: his authority is preserved entire without any condescension of his person; therefore the blood of Christ shed on the cross, is pleaded in heaven to reconcile God to us: he satisfied justice, and solicits mercy: "his blood speaks still," and its voice is as powerful as ever. The prevalency of his intercession depends upon the dignity of his sacrifice; the dearness of his person to the Father, does also assure us of his favourable audience. He declared on earth, "I know thou always hearest me."

3dly. The gospel sets forth his willingness to save us. Faith has an aspect upon Christ as able and willing to save: for power without a will to save is unprofitable, and the will without power is fruitless and ineffectual. For the begetting of faith we are to consider the proposal and offer of grace in the gospel, and the promise of it.

1. In the gospel there is a proposal of grace to all: the invitation is universal; "whoever will, let him come to the waters of life freely." Our Saviour gave this command to the apostles, "Preach the gospel to every creature." Neither the number

nor quality of men's sins are a bar against their coming to Christ for life. None are excluded but those who exclude themselves. In the parable those were earnestly invited by the command of the master of the feast, who refused to come. This offer of grace and life to all that will humbly receive it, is the first foundation of faith, and induces our acceptance of it: for without this, the self-condemned sinner sinks into misery bottomless and helpless. The most miserable despair is drawn from impossibility. If men think it is impossible to obtain what they desire, they will not endeavour to obtain. It is easily cleared by the scriptures, if men will believe the scriptures when they are clear, that as the brazen serpent, the sign of salvation, was lifted up on high, and made obvious to every eye, to convey healing virtue to those who were stung by the fiery serpents; so our crucified Saviour is lifted up in the gospel for every soul wounded sinner to regard. The belief of inviting mercy opens the springs of godly sorrow: a natural sorrow arises from the sense of oppressing evils, and is terminated upon ourselves: a spiritual sorrow proceeds from the sense of our unworthiness, and the divine goodness, that is so ready and desirous to save us.

2. There is a promise of grace to all that repent and believe. Our Saviour encourages us, "come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Those who feel sin as an intolerable burden, and their fainting souls are without support, let them devolve their burden upon him, and trust entirely in him, they shall obtain blessed rest. The timorous sinners that tremble under the weight of their guilt, are encouraged; for in this condition Christ invites them to come to him, and promises rest. Let them aggravate their sins to the highest, yet St. Paul challenges the precedence as the chief of sinners, and obtained mercy. When the heart is broken for sin, and from it, not to believe the promise of mercy, is dishonourable to our Saviour's love, and the value of his blood, as if not sufficient to save poor souls that would fain live in him. We have the strongest testimony of his love, in dying for us when we were enemies. Christ came with this intention to save sinners; and when they come to him, will he reject them? He cannot deny himself, he is truth, and he has most expressly declared, "whoever comes to me, I will in no wise cast out:"

and this promise is confirmed by the will of his Father that sent him. Christ invites thirsty souls to partake of the waters of life, and when he has inspired them with ardent desires, and they come, will he send them away empty? It is absolutely impossible for him who is incarnate love and mercy, to despise and reject the soul that looks to him, that longs and languishes after him, and will be ever unsatisfied without him.

In short, the precious promises in the gospel, of the pardon of sin, and eternal salvation, are so proposed to us, that the hope of returning sinners may be cherished and confirmed, and the presumption of secure sinners may be dashed and controlled. While we are in this middle state, the fear of caution, joined with the lively hope of mercy, is the most congruous temper, and becoming the breast of a christian. The presumer is like a ship without ballast, floating so lightly in his own folly, that every gust of temptation oversets him. The fearful spirit is like a ship overladen; and if not lightened, will certainly sink and perish. Fearless security exposes to all the temptations that gratify the carnal appetites: desponding fear causes a neglect of the remedy. If there be no fear of punishment, or no hope of pardon, the consequences are equally fatal.

3. It is necessary in order to the bringing men to Christ, to remove their carnal prejudices. The first and most feared difficulties are, that serious religion will be a damp to all their joys, a harsh and unreasonable restraint of their liberties, a bar against all the advantages of the world: the sickly fancy is frightened at the thoughts of this. If the way to heaven were short and fair, men would like it; but it is long and deep, and they are discouraged, as the Israelites with the tedious and troublesome wilderness, before their arrival at the Land of Promise. Accordingly carnal men cast a slanderous shade upon religion, as a melancholy, severe and joyless discipline. Now we may rectify these mistakes by the light of scripture, of reason, and of experience.

(1.) The scripture declares "that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Prov. 3. 17. The entrance, the progress, and continuance in these ways, is joyful to the renewed soul. Let us take a right view of the divine commands, the sum of them is this, that men would be happy here, and for ever. We are commanded "to know God

and Jesus Christ, this is our life:" John 17. 3. to trust in him, this is our strength: Isa. 30. 15. to love him and delight in him: Psal. 37. and are not love and joy the most pleasant affections? and is not God the most amiable and pleasing object? We are commanded to fear him: and is it not most reasonable to fear the loss of his favour, which is heaven, and the incurring his wrath, that is the deepest hell? We are commanded to obey his laws; and our Saviour assures us, "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light:" it is an easy and easing yoke, that frees us from the most cruel bondage of sin and satan. And will not men believe the testimony of eternal truth, rather than their fond fancies and corrupt appetites? We are commanded to hear his word? and is it not a happiness to be directed in the way to everlasting life? We are commanded "to pray continually;" is it not a blessed privilege that poor dust may address their requests to the "Lord Almighty, the possessor of heaven and earth," with an assurance, that those petitions are most pleasing to him, that are for his most excellent blessings?

Besides this, nothing is forbid but sinful pleasures that will end in eternal torments: sinful profits, the gaining of the world, with the loss of the soul: the gain is nothing, and the loss is infinite. Now where are the chains and fetters that are so hard and heavy as carnal men complain of? all his commands are precepts of happiness.

(2.) This testimony of scripture, carnal men esteem a notorious paradox: they can taste no pleasures but what are steeped in sense. Take away the enticings and blandishments of the carnal appetites, they understand no other pleasure: which is such a deceit, as if a sick person who feels no pleasure but in the soft and easy intermissions of his disease, should conclude if he were entirely freed from it, he should be deprived of all pleasure. Whereas the pleasure of health is far more desirable and constant. The angels are absolutely exempt from the desires of our carnal faculties, and without carnal fruitions, but are ever blessed and joyful in the direct possession of what is good, not in the relief from evils either natural or accidental, as hunger and thirst, or sickness and pain.

Pleasure results from the suitableness between the preceptive faculties and the objects that affect them: if there be no harmonious proportion, there will be no music, no delight. Now it is

true, while flesh is the prevailing ingredient in a man, he only relishes the satisfactions of the senses : he cannot enjoy God, he cannot delight in doing his will, no more than a swine can in clean pasture, whose natural property strongly inclines it to wallow in the mire. But when the soul is clarified and purged by the great Refiner, how sublime and satisfying a pleasure does it feel in the love of God, and in his service ! As in natural feeding, when the palate is in its due temper, the taste commends our proper food to the appetite, and the appetite to the stomach ; but a foul stomach disaffects the appetite, vitiates the palate, and the most savoury and wholesome meat is loathsome when the disease is the taster ; thus if the soul be in its due temper, the doing the will of God would be our "meat and drink," mixed with a sweeter pleasure than those natural operations are : but the soul is so corrupt and carnalized, that it has no taste of the pure delights of blessed spirits in communion with God : like the Israelites who despised the bread of angels, and impatiently longed for the onions and garlic and flesh-pots of Egypt. Till men die to sin, the supper of the Lamb will be insipid and nauseous.

The carnal mind as grossly mistakes about liberty. It is horrible folly to think true freedom consists in doing whatever the vicious affections require, in conversing with such persons as foment and gratify them. Is that person free that is fettered with as many chains of hell, as he has predominant lusts ? Was the possessed person free who lived among the tombs, among contagious carcasses ? Then a sinner, that without the fear of hell obeys his depraved appetites, and associates with those who are corrupt, and corrupters by their wicked example, is free. But it is evident that the mind, the superior leading faculty, is in bondage while the passions reign, and the sensual worldly wretch with his imaginary liberty, is the most accursed slave. Till the Son makes us free from the tyrannous power of sin, we are not free indeed. Till reason enlightened by the word, resumes its right and jurisdiction, and leads the will to choose what is best for a spiritual immortal creature, and the other faculties to obey, we are the slaves of satan. "When we are made free from sin, and become the servants of righteousness," Rom. 6. and yield an ingenuous delightful subjection to God's laws, we enjoy a state of liberty. Nay, the service of God is

our glory. "He that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, has made us kings and priests to God." The most eminent acts of royal authority are to govern the subjects by equal laws, and to subdue the enemies of the peace and prosperity of the kingdom: and when divine grace reigns in the heart, and regulates all the thoughts and affections, the inward and outward faculties, according to the holy, just and good law of God, and subdues these rebellious lusts that disturb the order and tranquillity of the soul.

(3.) Experience proves that a state of religion is most delightful. Whenever the captive soul is rescued from the bondage of his lusts, and preferred to the service of God, how sweet is the change? and how bitterly will he complain, "other lords have had dominion over me," but thy service is the truest freedom? Did ever any of the saints complain that God is an austere master, that his service is a melancholy joyless condition? No, in their esteem and affections, his law is the most pure, precious, sweet and profitable good. "His commands are not grievous:" Psal. 19. they obey them from choice and complacence. They love the Lawgiver, and like the laws. Communion with God in his holy ordinances, is a heaven upon earth to them. "One day in thy courts is better than a thousand" Psal. 84. in the vanities and business of the world. "In the presence of God is fulness of joy;" and the more we are admitted into his presence here, the more we are admitted into his joy: all the blessed means of our drawing near to God, and his drawing near to us, are the gate of heaven, and entrance into glory. David, who was so acquainted with God, declares, "there be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. Thou hast put more joy into my heart, than when their corn and wine increased." A joy more solid and satisfying than carnal men receive in the spring-tide of their fruitions. As one spark of God's wrath firing the conscience, is more terrible than the most fearful evils in the world: so one beam of his favour enlightening the soul, is more sweet and ravishing, than all the most valued and desired things in the world.