

REV. vi. 9, 10, 11.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

HAVING, from the former text, spoken of the nature of the soul, and the tie betwixt it and the body; I shall, from this scripture, evince the *immortality of the soul*, which is a chief part of its excellency and glory; and in this scripture it hath a firm foundation.

This book of the *Revelation* completes and seals up the whole sacred canon, Rev. xxii. 18. It also comprehends all the great and signal events of providence, relating either to the Christian church, or to its antichristian enemies in the several periods of time, to the end of the world; chap. i. 19. All which the Spirit of God discovers to us in the opening of the seven seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets, and the pouring out of the seven vials.

The first *five seals* express the state of the church under the bloody, persecuting, Heathen emperors.

SEAL I.

The first seal opened, ver. 2. gives the church a very encouraging and comfortable prospect of the victories, successes, and triumphs of Christ, notwithstanding the rage, subtlety, and power of all its enemies. He shall ride on conquering, and to conquer, and his arrows shall be sharp in the hearts of his enemies, whereby the people shall fall under him. And this cheering prospect was no more than was needful: For,

SEAL II.

The second seal opened, ver. 3, 4. represents the first bloody persecution of the church under Nero, whom Tertullian calls * *Dedicator damnationis nostræ*: he that first condemned Christians to the slaughter. And the persecution under him is set forth by the type of a *red horse*, and a great sword in the hand of him that rode thereon. His cruelty is by Paul compared to the *mouth of a lion*, 2 Tim. iv. 17. Paul, Peter, Bartholomew, Barnabas, Mark,

• Tertul. Apol. c. 5.

are all said to die by his cruel hand; and so fierce was his rage against the Christians, that at that time, as * Eusebius saith, “a man might see cities lie full of dead bodies, the old and young, men and women, cast out naked, without any reverence of persons or sex, in the open street.” And when the day failed, Christians (saith † Tacitus) were burnt in the night, instead of torches, to give them light in the streets.

SEAL III.

The third seal opened, ver. 5, 6. sets forth the calamities which should befall the church by famine; yet not so much a literal as a figurative famine, as a grave and learned commentator ‡ expounds it, like that mentioned, Amos viii. 11, 12. which fell out under Maximinus and Trajan; the former directing the persecution, especially against ministers, in which many bright lamps were extinguished; the latter expressly condemning all Christian meetings and assemblies by a law. The type by which this persecution was set forth, is a *black horse*. A gloomy and dismal day it was indeed to the poor saints, when they eat the bread of their souls, as it were, by weight; for he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. Then did John hear this sad voice, “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.” The quantity was but the ordinary allowance to keep a man alive for a day, and a Roman penny was the ordinary wages given for a day’s work to a labourer. The meaning is, that in those days, all the spiritual food men should get to keep their souls alive from day to day, with all their travail and labour, should be but sufficient for that end.

SEAL IV.

The fourth seal opened, ver. 7, 8. represents a much more sad and doleful state of the church; for under it are found all the former sufferings, with some new kinds of trouble super-added. Under this seal, Death rides upon the *pale horse*, and Hell, or the Grave, follows him. It is conceived to point at the persecution under Dioclesian, when the church was mowed down as a meadow.

SEAL V.

The fifth seal is opened in my text, under which the Lord Jesus represents to his servant John, the state and condition of those precious souls which had been torn and separated from their bodies, by the bloody hands of tyrants, for his name’s sake, under all the former persecutions. The design whereof is, to support and en-

* *Ad eo ut viderit repletas humanis corporibus civitates, jacentes mortuos, simul cum parvulis senes, faminarumque absque ulla sexus reverentia, in publico rejecta cadavera.*

† Taciti l. xv. Annal.

‡ Durham on the place.

courage all that were to come in the same bloody path. *I saw under the altar, &c.* In which we have an account,

1. Of what John saw.

2. Of what he heard.

1. We have an account of what he saw; "I saw the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

Souls, in this place, are not put for blood, or the dead carcasses of the saints who were slain, as some have groundlessly imagined; but are to be understood properly and strictly, for those * spiritual and immortal substances, which once had a vital union with their bodies, but were now separated from them by a violent death; yet still retained a love and inclination to them, even in a state of separation; and therefore here brought in complaining of the shedding of their blood, and destruction of their bodies.

These souls (even of all that died for Christ, from Abel to that time) John saw, that is, † *in spirit*; for these immaterial substances are not perceptible by the gross external senses. He had the privilege and favour of a spiritual representation of them, being therein extraordinarily assisted, as Paul was when his soul was wrapt into the third heaven, and heard things unutterable, 2 Cor. xii. 2. God gave him a transient visible representation of those holy souls, and that *under the altar*: he means not any material altar, as that at *Jerusalem* was; but as the holy place figured heaven, so the altar figured Jesus Christ, Heb. xiii. 10. And most aptly Christ is represented to John in this figure, and souls of the martyrs at the foot or basis of this altar; thereby to inform us,

(1.) That however men look upon the death of those persons, and though they kill their names by slanders, as well as their persons by the sword; yet, in God's account, they die as sacrifices, and their blood is no other than a drink-offering poured out to God, which he highly prizeth, and graciously accepteth. Suitable whereunto Paul's expression is, Phil. ii. 17.

(2.) That the value and acceptation their death and blood-shed have with God, are through Christ, and upon his account; for it is the altar which sanctifieth the gift, Mat. xxiii. 19. And,

(3.) It informs us, that these holy souls, now in a state of separation from their bodies, were very near to Jesus Christ in heaven. They lay, as it were, at his foot.

Once more, they are here described to us by the cause of their

* Εἶδον τὰς ψυχὰς. i. e. *I saw the souls*; here the word *soul* is taken for the immortal spirit of man, as in Mat. x. 28, in which sense John here says, that he saw the souls, &c. *Marlorat on the place.*

† Souls divested of bodies are invisible to corporeal eyes; therefore John saw them in the Spirit. *Pareus on the place.*

sufferings and death in this world; and that was, “for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;” i. e. They died in defence of the truths, or will of God revealed in his word, against the corruptions, oppositions, and innovations of men. As one of the Martyrs, that held up the Bible at the stake, said, This is it that brought me hither. They died not as malefactors, but as witnesses. They gave a threefold testimony to the truth; a lip-testimony, a life-testimony, and a blood-testimony; whilst the hypocrite gives but one, and many Christians but two. Thus we have an account what John saw.

2. Next he tells us what he heard: and that was,

(1.) A vehement cry from those souls to God.

(2.) A gracious answer from God to them.

(1.) The cry which they uttered with a loud voice was this, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” A cry like that from the blood of Abel. Yet let it be remembered,

1. This cry doth not imply these holy souls to be in a restless state, or to want true satisfaction and repose out of the body; nor yet,

2. That they carried with them to heaven any malevolent or revengeful disposition: that which is principally signified by this cry, is their vehement desire after the abolition of the kingdom of Satan, and the completion and consummation of Christ’s kingdom in this world; that those his enemies, which oppose his kingdom, by slaying his saints, may be made his footstool: which is the same thing Christ waits for in glory, Heb. x. 13.

(2.) Here we find God’s gracious answer to the cry of these souls, in which he speaks satisfaction to them two ways:

1. By somewhat given them for present.

2. By somewhat promised them hereafter.

1. That which he gives them in hand; “White robes were given to every one of them.” It is generally agreed, that these white robes given them, denote heavenly glory, the same which is promised to all sincere and faithful ones, who preserve themselves pure from the corruptions and defilements of the world, Rev. iii. 4. And it is as much as if God should have said to them, Although the time be not come to satisfy your desires, in the final ruin and overthrow of Satan’s tyrannical kingdom in the world, and Christ’s consummate conquest of all his enemies, yet it shall be well with you in the mean time: you shall *walk with me in white, and enjoy your glory in heaven.*

2. And this is not all; but the very things they cry for shall be given them also after a little season; q. d. wait but a little while, till the rest that are to follow, in the same suffering path, be got

through the red-sea of martyrdom, as you are, and then you shall see the foot of Christ upon the necks of all his enemies, and justice shall fully avenge the precious, innocent blood of all the saints which in all ages hath been shed for my sake; from the blood of Abel, to the last that shall ever suffer for righteousness sake in the world. From all which, this conclusion is most fair and obvious.

Doct. *That the souls of men perish not with their bodies, but do certainly over-live them, and subsist in a state of separation from them.* Mat. x. 28. "Fear not them that kill the body, "but are not able to kill the soul."

The bodies of these Martyrs of Jesus were destroyed by divers sorts of torments, but their souls were out of the reach of all these cruel engines; they were in safety under the altar, and in glory clothed with their white robes, when their bodies they lately inhabited on earth, were turned to ashes, or torn to pieces by wild beasts.

The point I am to discourse from this scripture, is the immortality of the soul. For the better understanding whereof, let it be noted that there is a twofold immortality.

I. Simple, and absolute in its own nature.

II. Derived, dependent, and from the pleasure of God.

In the former sense, God only hath immortality, as the apostle speaks, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Our souls have it as a gift from him. He that created our souls out of nothing, can, if he please, reduce them to nothing again; but he hath bestowed immortality upon them, and produced them in a nature suitable to that his appointment, fitted for an everlasting life. So that though God by his absolute power can, yet he never will annihilate them, but they shall, and must live for ever in endless blessedness or misery; death may destroy these mortal bodies, but it cannot destroy our souls. And the certainty of this assertion is grounded upon these reasons, and will be cleared by these following arguments.

ARGUMENT I.

The first argument for proof of the soul's immortality, may be taken from the simplicity, spirituality, and uncompoundedness of its nature; it is a pure, simple, unmixed being. * Death is the dissolution of things compounded; where therefore no composition or mixture is found, no death or dissolution can follow.

Death is the great divider, but it is of things that are divisible. The more simple, pure, and refined any material thing is, by so

* Death is a separation, dissolving, or tearing asunder of parts that had been joined by some union. *Tullius.*

much the more permanent and durable it is found to be. The nearer it approaches to the nature of spirits, the farther it is removed from the power of death: but that which is not material, or mixed at all, is wholly exempt from the stroke and power of death. It is from the contrariant qualities, and jarring humours, in mixed bodies, that they come under the law and power of dissolution. Matter and mixture, are the doors at which death enters naturally upon the creatures.

But the soul of man is a simple, spiritual, immaterial, and unmixed being, not compounded of matter and form, as other creatures are, but void of matter, and altogether spiritual, as may appear in the vast capacity of its understanding faculty, which cannot be straitened by receiving multitudes of truths into it. It need not empty itself of what it had received before, to make way for more truth; nor doth it find itself clogged or burdened by the greatest multitudes or varieties of truths; but the more it knows, the more it still desires to know. Its capacity and appetite are found to enlarge themselves according to the increase of knowledge. So that to speak, as the matter is, If the knowledge of all arts, sciences, and mysteries of nature, could be gathered into the mind of one man, yet that mind would thirst, and even burn with desire after more knowledge, and find more room for it than it did when it first sipt, and relished the sweetness of truth. Knowledge, as knowledge, never burdens or cloyes the mind; but like fire increases and enlarges, as it finds more matter to work upon. Now this could never be, if the soul were a material being. Take the largest vessel, and you shall find the more you pour into it, the less room is still left for more; and when it is full, you cannot pour in one drop more, except you let out what was in it before*. But the soul is no such vessel, it can retain all it had, and be still receptive of more; so that nothing can fill it, and satisfy it, but that which is infinite and perfect.

The natural appetite after food is sometimes sharp and eager, but then there is a stint and measure beyond which it craves not; but the appetite of the mind is more eager and unlimited; it never saith till it come to rest in God, it is enough†, because the faculty which produceth it, is more active, spiritual, and immaterial. All matter has its limits, bounds, and just measures, beyond which it cannot be extended. But the soul is boundless, and its appetition infinite; it rests not, but in the spiritual and infinite

* *Intus existens prohibet alienum.* i. e. What is already within, refuses access to what is without.

† *Appetitus finis est infinitus.* There is no end of desiring, till we come at the desired end, which is God.

Being, God alone being its adequated object, and able to satisfy its desires; which plainly proves it to be a spiritual, immaterial, and simple being. And being so, two things necessarily follow therefrom.

1. That it is void of any principle of corruption in itself.

2. That it is not liable to any stroke of death, by any adverse power without itself.

1. It cannot be liable to death, from any seeds or principles of corruption within itself; for where there is no composition, there is no dissolution: the spirituality and simplicity of the soul admit of no corruption.

2. Nor is it liable to death by any adverse power without itself; no sword can touch it, no instrument of death can reach it: it is above the reach of all adversaries, Mat. x. 28. "Fear not them that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul." The bounds and limits of creature-power are here fixed by Jesus Christ, beyond which they cannot go. They can wound, torment, and destroy the body, when God permits them: but the soul is out of their reach. A sword can no more hurt or wound it, than it can wound or hurt the light; and consequently it is, and must needs be of an immortal nature.

Object. But there seems to be a decay upon our souls in our old age, and decays argue and imply corruption, and are so many steps and tendencies towards the death and dissolution thereof. The experience of the whole world shews us how the apprehensions, judgments, wit, and memory of old men fail, even to that degree that they become children again in respect of the abilities of their minds: their souls only serving, as it were, to salt their bodies, and keep them from putrefaction for a few days longer.

Sol. It is a great mistake; there is not the least decay upon the soul; no time makes any change upon the essence of the soul: all the alteration that is made, is upon the organs and instruments of the body, which decay in time, and become unapt and unserviceable to the soul.

The soul, like an expert, skilful musician, is as able as ever it was, but the body, its instrument, is out of tune: and the ablest artist can make no pleasing melody upon an instrument whose strings are broken, or so relaxed that they cannot be screwed up to their due height.

Let Hippocrates, the prince of physicians, decide this matter for us. "The soul (saith he) cannot be changed or altered as to its essence, by the access of meat or drink, or any other thing whatsoever; but all the alterations that are made, must be referred either to the spirits with which it mixeth itself, or to the vessels

“and organs through which it streameth*.” So that this proves not its corruptibility: and being neither corruptible in itself, nor vulnerable by any creature without itself; seeing man cannot, and God will not destroy it, the conclusion is strongly inferred, *That therefore it is immortal.*

ARGUMENT II.

The immortality of the souls of men may be concluded from the promises of everlasting blessedness, and the threatenings of everlasting miseries, respectively made in the scriptures of truth, to the godly and ungodly after this life; which promises and threatenings had been altogether vain and delusory, if our souls perish with our bodies.

1. God has made many everlasting promises of blessedness, yea, he hath established an everlasting covenant betwixt himself and the souls of the righteous, promising to be their God for ever, and to bestow endless blessedness upon them in the world to come. Such a promise is that, John viii. 28. “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.” And John iv. 14. “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” And again, John xi. 26. “Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.” And once more, Rom. ii. 7. “To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life;” with multitudes more of like nature.

Now if these be no vain and delusory promises, (as to be sure they are not, being the words of a true and faithful God) then those souls to whom they are made, must live for ever; for if the subject of the promises fail, consequently the performance of the promises must fail too. For how shall they be made good, when those to whom they are made, are perished?

Let it not be objected here, That the bodies of believers are concerned in the promises as well as their souls, and yet their bodies perish notwithstanding.

For we say, though their bodies die, yet they shall live again, and enjoy the fruit of the promises in eternal glory; and whilst their bodies lie in the grave, their souls are with God, enjoying the covenanted blessedness in heaven, Rom. viii. 10, 11. and so the covenant-bond is not loosed betwixt them and God by death, which it must needs be, in case the soul perish when the body doth. And upon this hypothesis, that argument of Christ is built, Mat. xxii.

* *Anima nostra quoad essentiam mutari non potest, aut alterari, sive cibi, sive potus, cujuscunque rei alterius accessu: referenda est enim omnium alterationum causa, aut ad Spiritus, quibus see immiscet, aut ad vasa, sive organa quæ permeat.* Hippocrat. lib. de diæta.

32. proving the resurrection from the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," q. d. If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob be perished in soul as well as in body, how then is God their God; what is become of the promise and covenant-relation? for if one correlate fail, the relation necessarily fails with it. If God be their God, then certainly they are in being; "for God is not the God of the dead," i. e. of those that are utterly perished. Therefore it must needs be, that though their bodies be naturally dead, yet their souls still live; and their bodies must live again at the resurrection by virtue of the same promise.

On the contrary, many threatenings of eternal misery, after this life, are found in the scriptures of truth, against ungodly and wicked persons. Such is that in 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." And speaking of the torments of the damned, Christ thus expresseth the misery of such wretched souls in hell, Mark ix. 44. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." But how shall the wicked be punished with everlasting destruction, if their souls have not an everlasting duration? or how can it be said, *Their worm* (viz. the remorse and anguish of their conscience) *dieth not*, if their souls die? Punishment can endure no longer than its subject endureth. If the being of the soul cease, its pains and punishments must have an end.

You see then, there are everlasting promises and threatenings to be fulfilled, both upon the godly and ungodly, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 16. The believer shall never see spiritual death, viz. the separation of his soul from God; and the unbeliever shall never see life, viz. the blessed fruition of God; but the wrath of God shall abide on him. If wrath must abide on him, he must abide also as the wretched subject thereof, which is another argument of the immortality of souls.

ARGUMENT III.

The immortality of the soul is a truth asserted and attested by the universal consent of all nations and ages of the world. "We give much (said * Seneca) to the presumption of all men," and

* *Multum dare solemus presumptioni omnium hominum: cum de animæ aternitate disserimus, none leve momentem apud nos habet, consensus hominum aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.* Senec. Ep. 17.

that justly; for it would be hard to think that an error should obtain the general consent of mankind, or that God would suffer all the world, in all ages of it, to bow down under an universal deception.

This doctrine sticks close to the nature of man; it springs up easily, and without force from his conscience. It hath been allowed as an unquestionable thing, not only among Christians who have the oracles of God to teach and confirm this doctrine, but among Heathens also, who had no other light but that of nature to guide them into the knowledge and belief of it. Learned Zanchius * cites out of Cicero an excellent passage to this purpose. "*In every thing saith he, the consent of all nations is to be accounted the law of nature*;" and therefore, with all good men, it should "be instead of a thousand demonstrations; and to resist it, (as he there adds) what is it, but to resist the voice of God?" and how much more, when, with his consent, the word of God doth also consent? As for the consent of nations, in this point, the learned author last mentioned, hath industriously gathered many great and famous testimonies from the ancient Chaldeans, Grecians, Pythagoreans, Stoics, Platonists, &c. which evidently shew they made no doubt of the immortality of their souls. How plain is that of Phocylides? *Ψαχη δε αθανατος και αγηρος ζη δια παντος*. Speaking of the soul, in opposition to the body, which must be resolved into dust, he saith, "But for the soul, that is immortal, and never grows old, but lives for ever." And Tresmegistus, the famous and celebrated Philosopher†, gives this account of man, "That he consists of two parts, being mortal in respect of his body, but immortal in respect of his soul, which is the best and principal part." Plato‡ not only asserts the immortality of the souls of men, but disputes for it: and among other arguments, he urges this; "That if it were not so, wicked men would certainly have the advantage of righteous and good men, who, after they have committed all manner of evils, should suffer none." But what speak I of philosophers? the most barbarous nations in the world constantly believe it §. The Turks acknowledge it in their Alcoran; and though they grossly mistake the nature of heaven, in

* *In omni re consensio omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est: coque instar mille demonstrationum talis consensio apud bonos esse debet.* Zanchius de immortalitate animarum. p. 644.

† *Ανθρώπος διπλῆς, διὰ τὸ σῶμα θνητὸς, ἀθανάτος ἢ διὰ ψυχὴν, τὸν εἰσὼδὴ ἀνδρώεον.*

‡ *Εἰ μὲν γὰρ, &c. Si enim mors dissolutio esset utriusque (corporis sc. et anima) luctum foret malis cum moriantur.* Plato in Epist.

§ Why do I speak of the Turks, Tartars, Muscovites, Indians, Persians, and all other nations which are at this day barbarous? None is so barbarous and

fancying it to be a paradise of sensual pleasures, as well as the way thither, by their impostor Mahomet; yet it is plain they believe the soul's immortality, and that it lives in pain or pleasure after this life.

The very savage and illiterate Indians are so fully persuaded of the soul's immortality, that wives cast themselves cheerfully into the flames to attend the souls of their husbands; and subjects, to attend the souls of their kings into the other world.

Two things are objected against this argument.

1. That some particular persons have denied this doctrine, as Epicurus, &c. and by argument maintained the contrary.

To which I answer, That though they have done so, yet (1.) This no way shakes the argument from the consent of nations, because some few persons have denied it: we truly say, the earth is spherical, though there be many hills and risings in it. If Democritus put out his own eyes, must we therefore say all the world is blind?

(2.) It is worth thinking on, whether they that have questioned the immortality of the soul, have not rather made it the matter of their option and desire, than of their faith and persuasion. We distinguish Atheists into three classes, such as are so in *practice*, in *desire*, or in *judgment*; but of the former sorts there may be found multitudes, to one that is so in his settled judgment. If you think it strange that any man should wish his soul to be mortal, Hierocles* gives us the reason of it: "A wicked man (saith he) is afraid of his Judge; and therefore wishes his soul and body may perish together by death, rather than it should come to God's tribunal."

Object. 2. Nor can the strength of the argument be eluded, by saying, "All this may be but an universal tradition," one nation receiving it from another.

Sol. For as this is neither true in itself, nor possible to be made good; so if it were, it would not invalidate the argument: for if it were not a truth agreeable to the light of nature, and so easily received by all men upon the proposal of it, it were impossible that all the nations in the world should embrace it so readily, and hold it so tenaciously as they do.

ARGUMENT IV.

The immortality of the soul may be evinced from the everlasting

wicked, but he is convinced, that, after death, there are places in which souls are either punished for their bad actions, or rewarded and blest with delights for their good actions. *Zanch.*

* Ο κακος αθανατον ειναι την αυτη ψυχην να μη υπολεινη τιμωρουμενος και φθανετον εκει δικασην. Hieroc.

habits which are subjected, and inherent in it. If these habits abide for ever, certainly so must the souls in which they are planted.

The souls of good men are the good ground, in which the seed of grace is sown by the Spirit, Mat. xiii. 23. i. e. the subjects in which gracious properties and affections do inhere and dwell, (which is the formal notion of a substance) and these implanted graces are everlasting things. So John iv. 14. "It shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life," i. e. the graces of the Spirit shall be in believers, permanent habits, fixed principles, which shall never decay. And therefore that seed of grace, which is cast into their souls at their regeneration, is in 1 Pet. i. 23. called "incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever:" and it is incorruptible, not only considered abstractly, in its own simple nature, but concretely, as it is in the sanctified soul, its subject: for it is said, 1 John iii. 9. "The seed of God remaineth in him." It abideth for ever in the soul. If then these two things be clear unto us, viz.

1. That the habits of grace be everlasting;
2. That they are inseparable from sanctified souls;

It must needs follow, That the soul, their subject, is so too, an everlasting and immortal soul. And how plainly do both these propositions lie before us in the scriptures? As for the immortal and indeterminable nature of saving grace, it is plain to him that considers, not only what the forecited scriptures speak about it, calling it *incorruptible seed, a well of water springing up into everlasting life*; but add to these, what is said of these divine qualities in 2 Pet. i. 4. where they are called the *divine nature*; and Eph. iv. 18. *the life of God*, noting the perpetuity of these principles in believers, as well as their resemblance of God in holiness, who are endowed with them.

I know it is a great question among divines, *An gratia in renatis sit natura et essentia sua interminabilis?* Whether these principles of grace in the regenerate be everlasting and interminable in their own nature and essence? For my own part, I think that God only is naturally, essentially, and absolutely interminable and immortal. But these gracious habits, planted by him in the soul, are so by virtue of God's appointment, promise, and covenant. And sure it is, that by reason hereof they are interminate, which is enough for my purpose, if they be not essentially interminable. Though grace be but a creature, and therefore hath a *posse mori*, yet it is a creature begotten by the Word and Spirit of God, which live and abide for ever, and a creature within the promise and covenant of God, by reason whereof it can never actually die.

And then as for the inseparableness of these graces from the

souls in whom they are planted, how clear is this from John ii. 27. where sanctifying grace is compared to an unction, and this unction is said to abide in them? And 1 John iii. 9. it is called the seed of God, which remaineth in the soul. All our natural and moral excellencies and endowments go away when we die; Job iv. 21. "Doth not their excellency that is in them go away?" Men may outlive their acquired gifts, but not their supernatural graces. These stick by the soul, as Ruth to Naomi, and where it goes they go too: so that when the soul is dislodged by death, all its graces ascend up with it into glory; it carries away all its faith, love, delight in God, all its comfortable experiences, and fruits of communion with God, along with it to heaven. For death is so far from divesting the soul of its graces, that it perfects in a moment all that was defective in them; 1 Cor. xiii. 10. "When that which is perfect shall come, then that which is in part shall be done away," as the twilight is done away when the sun is up, and at its zenith. So then, grace never dieth, and this never-dying grace is inseparable from its subject; by which it is plain to him that considers, that as graces, so souls, abide for ever.

Object. But this only proves the immortality of regenerate souls.

Sol. It doth so. But then consider, as there be gracious habits in the regenerate that never die, so there are vicious habits in the unregenerate that can never be separated from them in the world to come. Hence, John viii. 24. they are said to "die in their sins;" and Job xx. 11. "Their iniquities lie down with them in the dust;" and Ezek. xxiv. 12. "They shall never be purged." Remarkable is that place, Rev. xxii. 11. "Let him that is filthy be filthy still." And if guilt sticks so fast, and sin be so deeply engraven in impenitent souls, they also must remain for ever, to bear the punishment of them.

ARGUMENT V.

The immortality of the soul of man may be evinced from the dignity of man above all other creatures, (angels only excepted) and his dominion over them all.

In this, the scriptures are clear, that man is the master-piece of all God's other works; Psal. viii. 5, 6. "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hand, thou hast put all things under his feet." Other creatures were made for his service, and he is crowned king over them all. One man is of more worth than all the inferior creatures.

But wherein is his dignity and excellency above all other crea-

tures, if not in respect of the capacity and immortality of his soul? Sure it can be found no where else; for as to the body, many of the creatures excel man in the perfections of sense, greatness of strength, agility of members, &c.

*Nos aper auditu praecllit, aranea tactu,
Vultur odoratu, lynx visu, simia gustu*.*

And for beauty, *Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies of the field.* The beasts and fowls enjoy more pleasure, and live divested of all those cares and cumbers which perplex and wear out the lives of men. It cannot be in respect of bodily perfections and pleasures, that man excels other creatures.

If you say, He excels them all in respect of that noble endowment of reason, which is peculiar to man, and his singular excellency above them all.

It is true, this is his glory: but if you deprive the reasonable soul of immortality, you despoil it of all, both of its glory and comfort, and put the reasonable into a worse condition than the unreasonable and brutish creatures. For if the soul may die with the body, and man perish as the beast, happier is the life of the beast, which is perplexed with no cares nor fears about futurities: our reason serves to little other purpose but to be an engine of torture, a mere rack to our souls.

Certainly, the privilege of man doth not consist in reason, as abstracted from immortality. But in this, it properly consists, that he enjoys not only a reasonable, but also rejoiceth in an immortal soul, which shall over-live the world, and subsist separate from the body, and abide for ever, when all other souls, being but a material form, perish with that matter on which they depend. This is the proper dignity of man, above the beast that perisheth; and to deprive him of immortality, and leave him his reason, is but to leave him a more miserable and wretched creature than any that God hath put under his feet. For man is a prospecting creature, and raiseth up to himself vast hopes and fears from the world to come: by these he is restrained from the sensual pleasures, which other creatures freely enjoy, and exercised with ten thousand cares, which they are unacquainted with; and to fail at last of all his hopes and expectations of happiness, in the world to come, is to fall many degrees lower than the lowest creature shall fall; even so much lower as his expectations and hopes had lifted him higher.

ARGUMENT VI.

The souls of men must be immortal, or else the desires of immortality are planted in their souls in vain.

* The bear excels man in hearing, the spider in feeling, the vulture in smelling, the lynx in seeing, and the ape in tasting.

That there are desires of immortality found in the hearts of all men, is a truth too evident to be denied or doubted*. Man cannot bound and terminate his desires within the narrow limits of this world, and the time that measures it. Nothing that can be measured by time is commensurate to the desires of man's soul. No motto better suits it than this, *Non est mortale quod opto*; I seek for that which will not die, Rom. ii. 7. And his great relief against death lies in this, *Non omnis moriar*: That he shall not totally perish. Yea, we find in all men, even in those that seem to be most drowned and lost in the love and delights of this present world, a natural desire to continue their names and memories to posterity after death. Hence it is said, Psal. xlix. 11. "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names."

And hence is the desire of children, which is, as one saith, *nodosa aternitas*, a knotty eternity; when our thread is spun out and cut off, their thread is knit to it; and so we dream of a continued succession in our name and family.

Absalom had no children to continue his memory; to supply which defect, he reared up a pillar, 2 Sam. xviii. 18. Now it cannot be imagined that God should plant the desire of immortality in those souls, that are incapable of it; nor yet can we give a rational account how these apprehensions of immortality should come into the souls of men, except they themselves be of an immortal nature. For, either these notions and apprehensions of immortality are impressed upon our souls by God, or do naturally spring out of the souls of men: If God impress them, those impressions are made in vain, if there be no such thing as immortality to be enjoyed; and if they spring and rise naturally out of our souls, that is a sufficient evidence of their immortality. For we can no more conceive, and form to ourselves, ideas and notions of immortality, if our souls be mortal, than the brutes which are void of reason, can form to themselves notions and conceptions of rationality. So then the very apprehensions and desires that are found in men's hearts of immortality, do plainly speak them to be of an immortal nature†.

* I beseech men, for God's sake, that if any time there arise in them a desire, or a wish that others should speak well of them rather than evil after their death, then at that time they would seriously consider whether these notions are not from some spirit, to continue a spirit after it leaves its earthly habitation, rather than from an earthly spirit, a vapour, which cannot act, or imagine, or desire, or fear things beyond its continuance. *Hale de anima*, p. 72.

† It forms conceptions of things spiritual and abstract from matter, and discerns objects which have no dimensions, figure, colour, or affection of matter. If the soul itself is the fountain or idea of immortality, it must be immortal; because what is

ARGUMENT VII.

Moreover, the account given us in the scripture of the return of several souls into their own bodies again after death, and real separation from them, shews us that the soul subsists and lives in a separate state after death, and perisheth not by the stroke of death: For if it were annihilated or destroyed by death, the same soul could never be restored again to the same body. A dead body may indeed be acted by an assisting form, which may move and carry it from place to place; so the devil hath acted the dead bodies of many; but they cannot be said to live again by their own souls, after a real separation by death, unless those souls over-lived the bodies they forsook at death, and had their abode in another place and state. You have divers unquestionable examples of the soul's return into the body recorded in scripture: As that of the Shunamite's son, 2 Kings iv. 18, 19, 20, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. That of the ruler's daughter, Mat. ix. 18, 23, 24, 25. That of the widow's son, Luke vii. 12, 13, 14, 15. And that of Lazarus, John xi. 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45. "These are no other * but the very same" souls, their own souls which returned to them again; which, as "Chrysostom well observes, is a great proof of their immortality" against them that think the soul is annihilated after the death of "the body."

It is true, the scripture gives us no account of any sense or apprehension they retained after their re-union of the place or state they were in during their separation. There seemed to be a perfect *αμνησία*, forgetfulness of all that they saw or felt in the state of separation. And indeed it was necessary it should be so, that our faith might be built rather upon the sure promises of God, than such reports and narratives of them that come to us from the dead, Luke xvi. 31. And if we believe not the word, neither would we believe *if one came from the dead*.

ARGUMENT VIII.

Moreover, *Eighthly*, The supposition of the soul's perishing with the body, is subversive of the Christian religion in the principal doctrines and duties thereof: take away the immortality of the soul, and all religion falls to the ground. I will instance in

1. The doctrines
 2. The duties
- } of religion.

First, It overthrows the main principles and doctrines of the

momentary, cannot form an idea of an immortal nature, for the soul which is void of reason cannot form a conception of rationality. *Stern on death*, p. 198.

* *Non aliam, sed ipsam priorem animam corpori mortuo restitutam esse, contra eos qui outaverunt et bodie putant animam post mortem corporis nihil esse.*

Christian religion, upon which both our faith and comfort is founded; and consequently it undoes and ruins us as to all solid hope and true joy. The doctrines or principles it overthrows, are, among many other, such as follow.

1. It nullifies and makes void the great design and end of God's eternal election. The scriptures tells us, That from all eternity God hath chosen a certain number in Christ Jesus, to eternal life, and to the means by which they shall attain it, out of his mere good pleasure, and for the praise of his grace. This was (1.) An eternal act of God, Eph. i. 4. long before we had our being, Rom. ix. 11. (2.) This choice of God, or his purpose to save some, is immutable, 2 Tim. ii. 19. James i. 17. (3.) This choice he made in Christ, Eph. i. 4. Not that Christ is the cause of God's choosing us: For we were not elected because we were, but that we might be in Christ. Christ was ordained to be the *Medium* of the execution of this decree. And all the mercies which were purposed and ordained for us, were to be purchased by the blood of Christ. He was not the *cause* of the decree, but the purchaser of the mercies decreed for us. (4.) This choice was of a certain number of persons who are all known to God, 2 Tim. ii. 19. and all given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, John xvii. 2, 6. So that no elect person can be a reprobate, no reprobate an elect person. (5.) This number was chosen to salvation, 1 Thess. v. 9. No less did God design for them that glory and happiness, and that for ever. (6.) The same persons that are appointed to salvation as the end, are also appointed to sanctification as the way and means by which they shall attain that end, 1 Pet. i. 1, 2. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14. (7.) The impulsive cause of this choice was the mere good pleasure of his will, 2 Tim. i. 9. Rom. ix. 15, 16. Eph. i. 9. (8.) The end of all this is the praise of his glorious grace, Eph. i. 5, 6. to make a glorious manifestation of the riches of his grace for ever. This is the account the scripture gives us of God's eternal choice.

But if our souls be mortal, and perish with our bodies, all this is a mistake, and we are imposed upon, and our understandings are abused by this doctrine: For to what purpose are all these decrees and contrivances of God from everlasting, if our souls perish with our bodies? Certainly, if it be so, he loses all the thoughts and counsels of his heart about us; and that counsel of his will, which is so much celebrated in the scriptures, and admired by his people, comes to nought. For this is evident to every man's consideration, that if the soul (which is the object about which all those counsels and thoughts of God were employed and laid out) fail in its being, all those thoughts and counsels that have been employed about it, and spent on it, must necessarily fail and come to nothing with it. The thoughts of his heart cannot stand fast, as it is said, Psal. xxxiii.

11. if the soul slide, about which they are conversant. In that day the elect soul perisheth, the eternal consultations and purposes of God's heart perish with it. Keckerman tells us, that “* Albertus Magnus, with abundance of art, and the study of thirty years, made a vocal statue in the form of a man. It was a rare contrivance, and much admired; the cunning Artist had so framed it, that by wheels and other *machines* placed within it, it could pronounce words articulately.” Aquinas being surprized to hear the statue speak, was affrighted at it, and brake it all to pieces; upon which Albertus told him he had at one blow destroyed the work of thirty years. Such a blow would the death of the soul give to the counsels and thoughts, not of man, but of God, not of thirty years, but from everlasting.

If the souls of men perish at death, either God never did appoint any souls to salvation, as the scriptures testify he did, 1 Thess. v. 9. or else the foundation of God stands not sure, as his word tells us it doth, 2 Tim. ii. 19. So then this supposition overturns the eternal decrees and counsels of God, which is the first thing.

2. It overthrows the covenant of redemption betwixt the Father and the Son before this world was made. There was a federal transaction betwixt the Father and the Son from eternity, about our salvation, 2 Tim. i. 9. Zech. vi. 13. In that covenant Christ engaged to redeem the elect by his blood; and the Father promised him a reward of those his sufferings, Isa. liii. 12. Accordingly he hath poured out his soul to death for them, finished the work, John xvii. 4. and is now in heaven, expecting the full reward and fruits of his sufferings, which consist not in his own personal glory, which he there enjoys, but in the completeness and fulness of his mystical body, John xvii. 24.

But certainly, if our souls perish with our bodies, Christ would be greatly disappointed: Nor can that promise be ever made good to him; Isa. liii. 11. “He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.” He hath done his work, but where is his reward? See how this supposition strikes at the justice of God, and wounds his faithfulness in his covenant with his Son. He hath as much comfort and reward from the travail of his soul, as a mother that is delivered after many sharp pangs of a child that dies almost as soon as born.

3. It overthrows the doctrines of *Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession* in heaven for us. And these are the main pillars both of our faith and comfort. Take away

* *Albertus Magnus statuum hominis construxit, quæ cum libramentis quibusdam, rotis atque aliis machinis intra latentibus peritissime compositis, linguam quadam ratione et disciplina moventibus, articulata verba pronunciaret.*

these, and take away our lives too, for these are the springs of all joy and comfort to the people of God, Rom. viii. 34.

His *incarnation* was necessary to capacitate him for his mediatorial work: It was not only a part of it, but such a part, without which he could discharge no other part of it. This was the wonder of men and angels, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A God incarnate is the world's wonder; no condescension like this, Phil. ii. 6, 7.

The *death* of Christ hath the nature and respect of a ransom, or equivalent price laid down to the justice of God for our redemption, Matth. xx. 28. Acts xx. 28. It brought our souls from under the curse, and purchased for them everlasting blessedness, Gal. iv. 4, 5.

The *resurrection* of Christ from the dead hath the nature both of a testimony of his finishing the work of our redemption, and the Father's full satisfaction therein, John vi. 10. and of a principle of our resurrection to eternal life, 1 Cor. xv. 20.

The *ascension* of Christ into heaven was in the capacity and relation of a forerunner, Heb. vi. 20. it was to prepare places for the redeemed, who were to come after him to glory in their several generations, John xiv. 2, 3.

The *intercession* of Christ in heaven, is for the security of our purchased inheritance to us, and to prevent any new breaches which might be made by our sins, whereby it might be forfeited, and we divested of it again, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

All these jointly make up the foundation of our faith and hope of glory: But if our souls perish, or be annihilated at death, our faith, hope, and comforts, are all delusions, vain dreams, which do but amuse our fond imaginations. For,

(1.) It was not worth so great a stoop and abasement of the blessed God, as he submitted to in his incarnation, when he appeared in flesh, yea, in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. and made himself of no reputation, Phil. ii. 7. An act that is, and ever will be admired by men and angels: I say, it was not worth so great a miracle as this, to procure for us the vanishing comfort of a few years, and that short-lived comfort no other than a deluding dream, or mocking phantasm: For seeing it consists in hope and expectation from the world to come, as the scriptures every where speak, 1 Thess. v. 8. and 2 Cor. iii. 12. Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. if there be no such enjoyments for us there (as most certainly there are not, if our souls perish) it is but a vanity, a thing of nought, that was the errand upon which the Son of God came from the Father's bosom, to procure for us.

(2.) And for what, think you, was the blood of God upon the cross? What was so vast and inconceivable a treasure expended to purchase? What! the flattering and vain hopes of a few years, of

which we may say, as it was said of the Roman consulship, *unius anni volaticum gaudium*; the fugitive joy of a year: Yea, not only short-lived and vain hopes in themselves, but such for the sake whereof we abridge ourselves of the pleasures and desires of the flesh, 1 John iii. 3. and submit ourselves to the greatest sufferings in the world, Rom. viii. 18. For the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain, &c. Acts xxviii. 20. Was this the purchase of his blood? Was this it for which he sweat, and groaned, and bled, and died? Was that precious blood no more worth than such a trifle as this?

(3.) To what purpose did Christ rise again from the dead? Was it not to be the *first-fruits of them that sleep*? Did he not rise as the common head of believers, to give us assurance we shall not perish, and be utterly lost in the grave? Col. i. 18. But if our souls perish at death, there can be no resurrection; and if none, then Christ died and rose in vain, *we are yet in our sins*, and all those absurdities are unavoidable, with which the apostle loads this supposition, 1 Cor. xv. 13, &c.

(4.) And to as little purpose was his triumphant ascension into heaven, if we can have no benefit by it. The professed end of his ascension was “to prepare a place for us,” John xiv. 2. But to what purpose are those mansions in the heavens prepared, if the inhabitants for whom they are prepared be utterly lost? And why is he called the *forerunner*, if there be none to follow him? as surely there are not, if our souls perish with our bodies. Those heavenly mansions, that city prepared by God, must stand void for ever if this be so.

(5.) To conclude; in vain is the intercession of Christ in heaven for us, if this be so. They that shall never come thither, have no business there to be transacted by their advocate for them. So that the whole *doctrine of redemption by Christ* is utterly subverted by this one supposition.

4. As it subverts the *doctrine of redemption by Christ*, and all the hopes and comforts we build thereon, so it utterly destroys all the works of the spirit, upon the hearts of believers, and makes them vanish into nothing.

There are divers acts and offices of the Spirit of God about, and upon our souls; I will only single out three, *viz.* his *sanctifying, sealing and comforting work*: all things of great weight with believers.

(1.) His *sanctifying work*, whereby he alters the frames and tempers of our souls, 2 Cor. v. 17. “Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.”

The declared and direct end of this work of the Spirit upon our souls, is to attemper and dispose them for heaven, Col. i. 12. For seeing “nothing that is unclean can enter into the holy place,”

Rev. xxi. 27. "and without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. it is necessary that all those that have this hope in them, should expect to be partakers of their hopes in the way of purification, 1 John iii. 3. And this is the ground upon which the people of God do mortify their lusts, and take so much pains with their own hearts, Mat. xviii. 8. counting it better (as their Lord tells them) "to enter into life halt and maimed, than having two eyes or "hands to be cast into hell." But to what purpose is all this self-denial, all these heart-searchings, heart-humblings, cries, and tears, upon the account of sin, and for an heart suited to the will of God, if there be no such life to be enjoyed *with God, after this animal life is finished* ;

Object. If you say there is a present advantage resulting to us in this world, from our abstinence and self-denial; we have the truer and longer enjoyment of our comforts on earth by it; debauchery and licentiousness do not only flatten the appetite, and debase and alloy the comforts of this world, but cut short our lives by the exorbitances and abuses of them.

Solut. Though there be a truth in this worth our noting, yet (1.) morality could have done all this without sanctification; there was no need for the pouring out of the Spirit, for so low an use and purpose as this. (2.) And therefore as the wisdom of God would be censured and impeached, in sending his Spirit for an end which could as well be attained without it; so the veracity of God must needs be affronted by it, who, as you heard before, hath declared our salvation to be the end of our sanctification.

(2.) His *sealing, witnessing, and assuring* work. We have a full account in the scriptures, of these offices and works of the Spirit, and some spiritual sense and feeling of them upon our own hearts, which are two good assurances that there are such things as his bearing witness with our spirit, Rom. viii. 16. "his sealing us to "the day of redemption," Eph. iv. 30. "his earnest given into "our hearts," 2 Cor. i. 22. All which acts and works of the Spirit have a direct and clear aspect upon the life to come, and the happiness of our souls in the full enjoyment of God to eternity; for it is to that life we are now sealed; and of the full sum of that glory, that these are the pledges and earnest. But if our souls perish by death, these witnesses of the Spirit are delusions, and his earnest are given us but in jest.

(3.) His *comforting work* is a sweet fruit and effect sensibly felt and tasted by believers in this world. He is from this office stiled the *Comforter*, John xvi. 7. *signanter, et eminenter*. He so comforts as none other doth, or can. And what is the matter of his com-

forts, but the blessedness to come, the joys of the coming world? John xvi. 13. *Eye hath not seen, &c.*

Upon the account of these unseen things, he enableth believers to glory in tribulation, Rom. v. 4. to despise present things, whether the smiles or the frowns of the world, Heb. xi. 24. and ver. 26. But if the being of our souls fail at death, these are but the fantastic joys of men in a dream, and the experiences of all God's people are found but so many fond conceits, and gross mistakes.

5. This supposition overthrows the doctrine of the resurrection, which is the consolation of Christians. We believe, according to the scripture, that after death hath divorced our souls and bodies for a time, they shall meet again, and be re-united, and that the joy at their re-union will be to all that are in Christ, greater than the sorrows they felt at parting. This seems not incredible to us, whatever natural improbabilities and carnal reasons may be against it, Acts xxvi. 8. and that because the Almighty Power, which is able to subdue all things to himself, undertakes this task, Phil. iii. 21.

We believe this very same numerical body shall rise again, Job xxi. 27. by the return of the same soul into it, which now dwelleth in it; and that we shall be the same persons that now we are: the remunerative justice of God requiring it to be so.

We believe the souls of the righteous shall be much better accommodated, and have a more comfortable habitation in their bodies than now they have, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. seeing they shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body, Phil. iii. 22. and that then we shall live after the manner of angels, Luke xx. 36. without the necessities of this animal life. These are the things we look for according to promise; and this expectation is our great relief against (1.) The fears of death, 1 Cor. xv. 55. (2.) Against the death of our friends and relations, 1 Thes. iv. 14. (3.) Against all the pressures and afflictions of this life, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

But if the being of our souls fall at death, all hopes and comforts from the resurrection fail with it; for it is not imaginable that the body should rise till it be revived, nor how it should be revived, but by the re-union of the soul with it: and if it be not the same soul that now inhabits it, we cannot be the same persons in the resurrection we are now; and consequently, this supposition subverts not only the doctrine of the resurrection, but,

6. It overthrows also the faith of the judgment to come. For if the soul perish, the body cannot rise; or if it rise by a new-created soul, the person raised is another, and not the same that lived and died in this world; and consequently the rewards and punishments to be bestowed and awarded to all men in that day

cannot be just and equal : for we believe, according to the scriptures, that,

(1.) The actions which men perform in this life, are not transient, but are filed to their account in the world to come : Gal. vi. 7. *here we sow, and there we reap.* Actions done in this world are two ways considerable, viz. physically, or morally ; in the first consideration they are transient, in the last permanent and everlasting. A word is spoken, or an act done in a moment, but though it be past and gone, and perhaps by us quite forgotten, God registers it in his book, in order to the day of account.

(2.) We believe that God hath appointed a day in which all men shall appear before his judgment-seat, to give an account of all they have done in the body, whether it be good or evil, 2 Cor. v. 10.

(3.) And that in order hereunto, the very same persons shall be restored by the resurrection, and appear before God, the very same bodies and souls, which did good or evil in this world : Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? Justice requires that the rewards and punishments be then distributed to the same persons that did good or evil in this world : which strongly infers the immortality of the soul, and that it certainly overlives the body, and must come back from the respective places of their abode, to be again united to them, in order to their great account.

By all which you see the clearest proof of the soul's immortality, and how the contrary supposition overthrows our faith, duties, and comforts. Yet notwithstanding all this, how apt are we to suspect this doctrine, and remain still dissatisfied and doubting about it, when all is said ? Which comes to pass partly from the subtlety of Satan, who knows he can never persuade men to live the life of beasts, till he first persuade them to think they shall die as the beasts do.

(2.) And partly from the influence of sense and reason upon us, whereby we do too much suffer ourselves to be swayed and imposed upon in matters of the greatest moment in religion. For these being proper arbiters and judges in other matters within their sphere, they are arrogant, and we easy enough to admit them to be arbiters also in things that are quite above them. Hence come such plausible objections as these :

Object. 1. The soul seems to vanish and die, when it leaves the body : for when it hath struggled as long as it can to keep its possession in the body, and, at last, is forced to depart, we can perceive nothing but a puff of breath, which immediately vanishes into air, and is lost.

Solut. We cannot perceive, therefore it is nothing but what we do and can perceive, viz. a puff of vanishing breath. By this argument the being of the soul in the body is as questionable as after its

departure out of the body; for we cannot discern it by sight in the body: yea, by this argument we may as well deny the existence of God and angels as of the soul; for it is a spiritual and invisible being as they are; our gross senses are incapable of discerning spirits, which are immaterial and invisible substances.

Object. 2. But you allow the soul to have a rise and beginning, it is not eternal *a parte ante*; and it is certain, whatever had a beginning, must have an end.

Solut. Every thing which had a beginning may have an end, and what once was nothing, may by the power that created it, be reduced to nothing again. But though we allow it may be so, by the absolute power of God, we deny the consequence, that therefore it shall, and must be so. Angels had a beginning, but shall never have an end. And indeed, their immortality, as well as ours, flows not so much from the nature of either as from the will and pleasure of God, who hath appointed them to be so. He can, but never will, annihilate them.

Object. 3. But the soul depends upon matter in all its operations, nothing is in the understanding which was not first in the senses; it useth the natural spirits, as its servants and tools in all its operations, and therefore how can it either subsist or act in a state of separation?

Sol. 1. The hypothesis is not only uncertain, but certainly false. There are acts performed by the soul, even whilst it is in the body, wherein it makes no use at all of the body. Such are the acts of self-intuition and self-reflection: and what will you say of its acts, in raptures and extasies, such as that of Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2. and John, Rev. xxi. 10. what use did their souls make of the bodily senses or natural spirits then?

Solut. 2. And though in its ordinary actions in this life, it doth use the body as its tool or instrument in working, doth it thence follow that it can neither subsist or act separate from them in the other world? Whilst a man is on horseback in his journey, he useth the help and service of his horse, and is moved according to the motion of his horse; but doth it thence follow, he cannot stand nor walk alone, when dismounted at his journey's end? We know angels both live and act, without the ministry of bodies, and our souls are spiritual substances as well as they.

Object. 4. But many scriptures seem to favour the total cessation of the soul's actions, if not of its being also, after separation, as that in 2 Sam. xiv. 14. We must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up; and Psal. lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12. with Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19. The dead cannot praise thee.

Solut. These words of the woman of Tekoah, are not to be un-

derstood absolutely, but respectively : and the meaning is, that the soul is in the body as some precious liquor in a brittle glass, which being broken by death, the soul is irrecoverably gone, as the water spilt on the ground, which by no human power or art of man can be recovered again. All the means in the world cannot fetch it back into the body again. She speaks not of the resurrection, or what shall be done in the world to come, by the Almighty power of God, but of what is impossible to be done in this world by all the skill and power of man.

And for the expressions of Heman and Hezekiah, they only respect and relate unto those services their souls were now employed about for the praise of God, with respect to the conversion or edification of others, as Psal. xxx. 8, 9. or at most, to that mediate service and worship which they give God, in and by their attendance upon his ordinances in this world, and not of that immediate service and praise that is performed and given him in heaven by the spirits of just men made perfect ; such was the sweetness they had found in these ordinances and duties, that they express themselves as loth to leave them.

The same answer solves also the objections grounded upon other mistaken scriptures, as that of Psal. lxxviii. 39. where man is called a wind that passeth away and cometh not again. It is only expressive of the frailty and vanity of the present animal life we live in this world, to which we shall return no more after death ; it denies not life to departed souls, but affirms the end of this animal life at death : the life we live in the other world is of a different nature.

Inf. 1. Is the soul immortal ? Then *it is impossible for souls to find full rest and contentment in any enjoyments on this side heaven.* All temporary things are inadequate, and therefore unsatisfying to our souls. What gives the soul rest and satisfaction, must be as durable as the soul is ; for if we could possibly find in this world a condition and state of things most agreeable in all other respects to our desires and wishes, yet if the soul be conscious to itself, that it shall, and must overlive and leave them all behind it, it can never reach true contentment in the greatest affluence and confluence of them. Man being an immortal, is therefore a prospecting creature, and can never be satisfied with this, that it is well with him at present, except he can be satisfied that it shall be so for ever. The thoughts of leaving our delightful and pleasant enjoyments embitters them all to us whilst we have them. All outward things are *fluxu continuo*, passing away as the waters, 1 Cor. vii. 31. Riches are uncertain, 1 Tim. vi. 17. “ They fly away as an eagle “ towards heaven, and with wings of their own making,” Prov. xxiii. 5. i. e. As the feathers that enable a bird to fly from us, grow

out of its own substance, so doth that vanity that carries away all earthly enjoyments. This alone will spoil all contentment.

Inf. 2. Then see the ground and reason of Satan's envy and enmity against the soul, and his restless designs and endeavours to destroy it. It grates that spirit of envy, to find himself, who is by nature immortal, sunk everlastingly and irrecoverably into misery, and the souls of men appointed to fill up those vacant places in heaven from which the angels fell. No creature but man is envied by Satan, and the soul of man much more than his body: it is true, he afflicts the bodies of men when God permits him, but he ever aims at the soul when he wounds the body, Heb. x. 37. This roaring lion is continually going about, "seeking whom he may devour," 1 Pet. v. 8. It is the precious soul he hunts after; that is the *Morsus diaboli*, the bit he gapes for, as the wolf tears the fleece to come at the flesh. All the pleasure those miserable creatures find, is from the success of their temptations upon the souls of men. It is a kind of delight to them to plunge souls into the same condemnation and misery with themselves. This is the trade they have been driving ever since their fall. By destroying souls he at once exercises his revenge against God, and his envy against man, which is all the relief his miserable condition allows him.

Inf. 3. Do the souls of men out-live their bodies? Then it is the height of madness and spiritual infatuation, to destroy the soul for the body's sake; to cast away an immortal soul for the gratification of perishing flesh; to ruin the precious soul for ever, for the pleasures of sin which are but for a moment; yet this is the madness of millions of men. They will drown their own souls in everlasting perdition, to procure necessary things for the body, 1 Tim. vi. 9. "They that will be rich," &c. Every cheat and circumvention in dealing, every lie, every act of oppression, is a wound given the immortal soul, for the procuring some accommodations to the body.

O what soul-undoing bargains do some make with the devil! Some sell their souls out-right for the gratification of their lusts, 1 Kings xxi. 20. Many pawn their souls to Satan in a conditional bargain; so do all that venture upon sin, upon a presumption of pardon and repentance. The devil is a great trader for souls, he hath all sorts of commodities to suit all men's humours that will deal with him. He hath profits for the covetous, honours for the ambitious, pleasures for the voluptuous: but a soul is the price at which he sells them; only he will be content to sell at a day, and not require present pay: so that it be paid on a death-bed, in a dying hour, he is satisfied. But oh! what an undoing bargain do sinners make, to part with a treasure for a trifle! Matt. xvi. 26. the precious soul for ever, "for the pleasures of sin, which are but

Prov. xx. 17. for a season ! Heb. xi. 25. We are charmed with
 Prov. xxiii. 31, the present pleasure and sweetness there is in sin ;
 32. Job xx. 12, but how bitter will the after-fruits thereof be !—See
 13. James i. 15. the texts in the margin. You will say hereafter as
 Jonathan did, 1 Sam. xiv. 31. “ I tasted but a little honey, and I
 “ must die,”

Inf. 4. *Then the exposing of the body to danger, yea, to certain destruction, for the preservation of the soul, is the dictate of spiritual wisdom, and that which every Christian is bound to chuse and practise, when both interests come in full opposition,* Heb. xi. 35. Dan. iii. 28. Rev. xii. 11. No promises of preferment, no threats of torments, have been able to prevail with the people of God to give the least wound, or do the least wrong to their own souls. When Secundus was commanded to deliver his bible, he answered, *Christianus sum, non traditor* : I am a Christian, I will not deliver it : then they desired him to deliver *aliquam ecvolam*, a chip, a straw, any thing that came to his hand in lieu of it : he refused to redeem his life by delivering the least trifle on that account to save it.

That is a great word of our Lord's, Luke ix. 24. “ He that will “ save his life, shall lose it : and he that loseth it for my sake “ shall find it.” Christians, this is your duty and wisdom, and must be your resolution and practice in the day of temptation, to yield your bodies to preserve your souls, as we offer our arm to defend the head. Oh ! better thy body had never been given thee, than that it should be a snare to thy soul, and the instrument of casting it away for ever. Oh ! how dear are some persons like to pay for their tenderness and indulgence to the flesh, when the hour of temptation shall come ! mortify your irregular affections to the body, and never hazard your precious immortal souls for their sakes. It is the character of an hypocrite to chuse sin rather than affliction, Job xxxvi. 21. But if ever thou hast been in the deeps of spiritual troubles for sin, if God have opened thine eyes to see the evil of sin, the immense weight and value of thy soul, and of eternity, “ Thou wilt not count thy life dear to thee, to finish thy “ course with joy,” Acts xx. 24.

Inf. 5. If the soul be an immortal being, that shall have no end, *Then it is the great concern of all men to strive to the utmost for the salvation of their souls, whatever become of all lesser temporary interests in this world,* Luke xiii. 24. There is a gate, i. e. an introductive means of life and salvation ; This gate is strait, i. e. there are a world of difficulties to be encountered in the way of salvation : but he that values and loves his never-dying soul, must, and will be diligent and constant in the use of all those means that have a tendency to salvation, be they never so difficult or unpleasant to flesh and blood. There be difficulties from within ourselves, such

as mortification, self-denial, contempt of the world, parting with all at the call of Christ; and difficulties from without, the reproaches, persecutions, and sufferings for Christ, which would not be so great as they are, were it not for our unmortified lusts within; but be they what they will, we are bound to strive through them all, for the salvation of our precious and immortal souls.

(1.) For it is the greatest concernment of the soul, yea, of our own souls; we are bound to do much for the saving of another's soul, 2 Tim. ii. 10. much more for our own; this is our darling, Psal. xxii. our only one.

(2.) Others have done and suffered much for the saving of their souls; and are not ours, or ought they not to be, as dear to us, as the souls of any others have been to them? Mat. xxi. 32.

(3.) The utmost diligence is little enough to save them. Do all that you can do, and suffer all that you can suffer, and deny yourselves as deeply as ever any did, yet you shall find all this little enough to secure them, 1 Pet. iv. 18. The righteous themselves are scarcely saved, 1 Cor. ix. 24.

(4.) The time to strive for salvation is very short and uncertain, Luke xiii. 25. John xii. 35. It will be to no purpose, when the seasons and opportunities of salvation are once over. There is no striving in hell, a death-pang of despair hath seized them, hope is extinguished, and endeavours fail.

(5.) Doth not reason dictate and direct you to do now, whilst you are in the way, as you will wish you had done, and repent with rage, and self-indignation, because you did it not, when you come to the end, and behold the final issues of things? Suppose but thyself now either, (1.) Upon a death-bed launching into eternity; (2.) Or at the bar of Christ; (3.) Or in view of heaven; (4.) Or in the sight and hearing of the damned: what think you? will not you then wish, Oh! that I had spent every moment in the world that could possibly be redeemed from the pure necessities of life, in prayer, in hearing, in striving for salvation? From a prospect of this it was, that one spent many hours daily on his knees to the macerating of his body; and being admonished of the danger of health, and advised to relax, he answered, *I must die, I must die.*

Objection 1. Do not say, you have many incumbrances, and other employments in the world: for (1.) "One thing is necessary," Luke x. 42. Those are conveniences, but this is of absolute necessity. (2.) They will strive the better for this, Mat. vi. 33. "Seek this, and they shall be added." (3.) Do but *redeem the time* that can be redeemed to this purpose; let not so much precious time run waste as daily doth.

Objection 2. Say not, no man can save his soul by his own striving, and therefore it is to little purpose; for "it is not of him that

“willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth
“mercy,” Rom. ix. 16.

True, this in itself cannot save you ; but what then ? must we oppose those things which God hath subordinated ? Bring this home to your natural or civil actions, eating, drinking, ploughing, or sowing, and see how the consequence will look.

Objection 3. Say not, it is a mercenary doctrine, and disparages free grace ; for, are not all the enjoyments and comforts of this life confessedly from free grace, though God hath dispensed them to you in the way of your diligence and industry.

Objection 4. To conclude ; Say not, the difficulties of salvation are insuperable ; it is so hard to watch every motion of the heart, to deny every lust, to resist a suitable temptation, to suffer the loss of all for Christ, that there is no hope of over-coming them.

For (1.) God can, and doth make difficult things easy to his people, who work in the strength of Christ, Phil. iv. 13. (2.) These same difficulties are before all others that are before you, yet it discourageth not them, Phil. iii. 11. Others strive to the uttermost. There are extremes found in this matter : some work for salvation, as an hireling for his wages, so the Papists ; these disparage grace, and cry up works. Others cry down obedience as legal, as the Antinomians, and cry up grace to the disparagement of duties. Avoid both these, and see that you strive : But (1.) Think not heaven to be the price of your striving, Rom. iv. 3. (2.) Strive, but not for a spurt ; let this care and diligence run throughout your lives ; whilst you are living, be you still striving : your souls are worth it, and infinitely more than all this amounts to.

Inf. 6. Doth the soul out-live the body, and abide for ever ? *Then it is a great evil and folly to be excessively careful for the mortal body, and neglective of the mortal inhabitant.* In a too much indulged body, there ever dwells a too much neglected soul.

The body is but a *vile thing*, Phil. iii. 21. the soul *more valuable than the whole world*, Matth. xvi. 26. To spend time, care, and pains for a vile body, whilst little or no regard is had to the precious immortal soul, is an unwarrantable folly and madness. *To have a clear and washed body, and a soul all filth, (as one speaks) a body neatly clothed and dressed, with a soul all naked and unready : a body fed, and a soul starved ; a body full of the creature, and a soul empty of Christ ; these are poor souls indeed.* We smile at little children, who in a kind of laborious idleness take a great deal of pains to make and trim their babies, or build their little houses of sticks and straws : And what are they but children of a bigger size, that keep such ado about the body, a house of clay, a weak pile, that must perish in a few days. It is admirable, and very convictive of

most Christians, what we read in a Heathen. "I confess (saith * Seneca) there is a love to the body implanted in us all; we have the tutelage and charge of it; we may be kind and indulgent to it, but must not serve it; but he that serves it, is a servant to many cares, fears, and passions. Let us have a diligent care of it, yet so as when reason requires, when our dignity or faith require it, we commit it to the fire."

It is true, the body is beloved of the soul, and God requires that it moderately care for the necessities and conveniences of it; but to be fond, indulgent, and constantly solicitous about it, is both the sin and snare of the soul. One of the fathers being invited to dine with a lady, and waiting some hours till she was dressed, and fit to come down; when he saw her, he fell a weeping; and being demanded why he wept, *Oh!* said he, *I am troubled that you should spend so many hours this morning in pinning and trimming your body when I have not spent half the time in praying, repenting and caring for my own soul.* Two things a master commits to his servant's care, (saith one) the child, and the child's clothes: It will be but a poor excuse for the servant to say, at his master's return, Sir, here are all the child's clothes neat and clean, but the child is lost. Much so will be the account that many will give to God of their souls and bodies, at the great day, *Lord, here is my body, I was very careful for it, I neglected nothing that belonged to its content and welfare: But for my soul, that is lost and cast away for ever, I took little care and thought about it.* It is remarkable what the apostle saith, Rom. viii. 12. We owe nothing to the flesh, we are not in its debt, we have given it all, more than all that belongs to it: But we owe many an hour, many a care, many a deep thought to our souls, which we have defrauded it of for the vile body's sake. You have robbed your souls to pay your flesh. This is madness.

Inf. 7. How great a blessing is the gospel which brings life and immortality to light, the most desirable mercies to immortal souls! This is the great benefit we receive by it, as the apostle speaks, 2 Tim. i. 10. "Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel." Life and immortality by a *εν δια θυαν*, is put for immortal life, the thing which all immortal souls desire and long for. These desires are found in souls that enjoy not the gospel light; for, as I said before, they naturally spring out of the very nature of all immortal souls: But how and

* *Fateor insitam esse nobis corporis nostri charitatem. Fateor nos hujus gerere tutelam, nes ego indulgendum illi, serviendum nego. Multis enim serviet qui corpore servit, qui pro illo nimium timet, qui ad illud omnia refert; hujus nos nimius amor timoribus inquietat, solitudinibus onerat, contumeliis oljicit: honestum ei vile est cui corpus nimis charum est, agatur ejus diligentissima cura; ita tamen ut cum exiget ratio, cum dignitas, cum fides, mittendum in ignem sit.* Senec. Ep. 14. p. 545.

where it is to be obtained, that is a secret for which we are entirely beholden to the gospel-discovery. It lay hid in the womb of God's purpose, till by the light of gospel-revelation it was made manifest. But now all men may see what are the gracious thoughts and purposes of God concerning men, and what that is he hath designed for their immortal souls, even an immortal life; and this life is to be obtained by Christ, than which no tidings can be more welcome, sweet, or acceptable to us.

O therefore study the gospel. "This is life eternal, to know Thee " the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3. And see that you prize the gospel above all earthly treasure. *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.* You have two inestimable benefits and blessings by it. (1.) It manifests and reveals eternal life to you, which you could never have come to the knowledge of any other way; those that are without it are groping or feeling after God in the dark, Acts xvii. 27. Poor souls are conscious to themselves, that there is a just and terrible God, and that their sins offend and provoke him; but how to atone the offended Deity they know not, Micah vi. 6, 7. But the way of reconciliation and life is clearly discovered to us by the gospel. (2.) As it manifests and reveals eternal life to us, so it frames and moulds our hearts, as God's sanctifying instrument for the enjoyment of it. It is not only the instrument of revelation, but of salvation; the word of life, as well as the word of light, Phil. ii. 16. It can open your hearts, as well as your eyes, and is therefore to be entertained as that which is in the first rank of blessings, a peerless and inestimable blessing.

Inf. 8. If our souls be immortal, *certainly our enemies are not so formidable as we are apt, by our sinful fears, to represent them.* They may, when God permits them, destroy your bodies, they cannot touch or destroy your souls, Mat. x. 28. As to your bodies, no enemy can touch them till there be leave and permission given them by God, Job i. 10. The bodies of the saints, as well as their souls, are within the line or hedge of Divine Providence: They are securely fenced, sometimes mediately by the ministry of angels, Psal. xxxiv. 7. and sometimes immediately by his own hand and power, Zech. ii. 5. As to their souls, whatever power enemies may have upon them, (when Divine permission opens a gap in the hedge of providence for them) yet they cannot reach their souls to hurt them, or destroy them, but by their own consent. They can destroy our perishing flesh, it is obnoxious to their malice and rage; they cannot reach home to the soul: No sword can cut asunder the band of union between them and Christ: they would be dreadful enemies indeed if they could do so. Why then do we tremble and fear at this rate, as if soul and body were at their mercy,

and in their power and hand? The souls of those *martyrs* were in safety under the *altar* in heaven, they were clothed with *white robes*, when their bodies were given to be meat to the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth. The devil drives but a poor trade by the persecution of the saints; he tears the *nest*, but the *bird* escapes; he cracks the *shell*, but loseth the *kernal*. Two things make a powerful defensative against our fears: (1.) That all our enemies are in the hand of Providence. (2.) That all providences are steered by that promise, Rom. viii. 28.

Inf. 9. If souls be immortal, *Then there must needs be a vast difference betwixt the aspects and influences of death upon the godly and ungodly.*

Oh! if souls would but seriously consider what an alteration death will make upon their condition, for evil or for good, how useful would such meditations be to them! (1.) They must be disseized and turned out of these houses of clay, and live in a state of separation from them; of this there is an inevitable necessity, Eccl. viii. 8. It is in vain to say, I am not ready; ready or unready, they must depart when their lease is out. It is as vain to say, I am not willing; for willing or unwilling, they must be gone; there is no hanging back, and begging, *Lord, let death take another at this time, and spare me*; for no man dies by a proxy. (2.) The time of our soul's departure is at hand, 2 Pet. 1, 13, 14. Job xvi. 22. The most firm and well-built body can stand but a few days; but our ruinous tabernacles give our souls warning, that the days of their departure is at hand. The lamp of life is almost burnt down, the glass of time is almost run; yet a few, a very few days and nights more, and then time, nights and days shall be no more. (3.) When that most certain and near-approaching time is come, wonderful alterations will be made on the state of all souls, godly, and ungodly.

(1.) A marvellous alteration will then be made on the souls of the godly. For, (1.) No sooner is the dividing stroke given by death, and the parting pull over, but they shall find themselves in the arms of angels, mounting them through the upper regions in a few moments, far above all the aspectable heavens, Luke xvi. 22. The airy region is, indeed, the place where devils inhabit, and have their haunts and walks; but angels are the saints' convoy through Satan's territories. They pass from the arms of mourning friends, into the welcome arms of officious and benevolent angels. (2.) From the sight and converses of men, to the sight of God, Christ, and the general assembly of blessed and sinless spirits. The soul takes its leave of all men at death, Isa. xxxviii. 11. Farewell vain world, with all the mixed and imperfect comforts of it, and welcome the more sweet, suitable, and satisfying company of Father,

Son, and Spirit, holy angels, and perfected saints, Heb. xii. 23. "The spirits of just men made perfect." (3.) From the bondage of corruption to perfect liberty and everlasting freedom; so much is implied, Heb. xii. 23. "The spirits of just men made perfect." (4.) From all fears, doubtings, and questionings of our conditions, and anxious debates of our title to Christ, to the clearest, fullest, and most satisfying assurance; for what a man sees, how can he doubt of it? (5.) From all burdens of affliction, inward and outward, under which we have groaned all our days, to everlasting rest and ease, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3. Oh what a blessed change to the righteous must this be!

(2.) A marvellous change will also be then made upon the souls of the ungodly, who shall then part from (1.) All their comforts and pleasant enjoyments in the world; for here they had their consolation; Luke xvi. 25. here was all their portion, Psal. xvii. 14. and, in a moment, find themselves arrested and seized by Satan, as God's gaoler, hurrying them away to the prison of hell, 1 Pet. iii. 19. "there to be reserved to the judgment of the great day," Jude 6. (2.) From under the means of grace, life, and salvation, to a state perfectly void of all means, instruments, and opportunities of salvation, John ix. 4. Eccl. ix. 10. never to hear the joyful sound of preaching or praying any more; never to hear the wooing voice of the blessed bridegroom, saying, Come unto me, come unto me, any more. (3.) From all their vain, ungrounded, presumptuous hopes of heaven, into absolute and final desperation of mercy. The very sinews and nerves of hope are cut by death, Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death." These are the great and astonishing alterations that will be made upon our souls, after they part with the bodies which they now inhabit. Oh that we, who cannot but be conscious to ourselves that we must over-live our bodies, were more thoughtful of the condition they must enter into, after that separation which is at hand.

Inf. 10. If our souls be immortal, *then death is neither to be feared by them in heaven, nor hoped for them in hell.* The being of souls never fails, whether they be in a state of blessedness or of misery. "In glory they are ever with the Lord," 1 Thes. iv. 17. There shall be no death there, Rev. xxi. 4. And in hell, though they shall wish for death, yet death shall flee from them*. Though there be no fears of annihilation in heaven, yet there be many wishes for it in hell, but to no purpose; there never will be an end put, either to their being, or to their torments. In this respect no other creatures are capable of the misery that wicked men

* O death thou art sweet to those to whom thou wast formerly bitter: They desire thee alone, who did hate thee alone. *August.*

are capable of: When they die, there is the end of all their misery; but it is not so with men. Better therefore had it been for them, if God had created them in the basest and lowest order and rank of creatures; a dog, a toad, a worm, is better than a man in endless misery, ever dying, and never dead. *And so much of the soul's immortality.*

EPH. v. 29.

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

HAVING given some account of the nature and immortality of the soul, we next come, from this text, to discourse of its *love and inclination to the body*, with which it is united. The scope of the apostle is, to press Christians to the exact discharge of those relative duties they owe to each other; particularly, he here urgeth the mutual duties of husbands and wives, ver. 22. wives to an obedient subjection, husbands to a tender love of their wives. This exhortation he enforceth from the intimate union, which, by the ordinance of God, is betwixt them, they being now one flesh. And this union he illustrates by comparing it with,

1. The mystical union of Christ and the church.
2. The natural union of the soul and body.

And from both these, as excellent examples and patterns, he, with great strength of argument, urgeth the duty of love: ver. 28. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself." Self-love is naturally implanted in all men, and it is the rule by which we measure out and dispense our love to others.—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

This self-love he opens in this place, by,

- (1.) The universality of it.
- (2.) The effects that evidence it.

1. The universality of it. *No man ever yet hated his own flesh.* By *flesh*, understand the body by an usual *metonymy* of a part for the whole, called flesh. By *hating* it, understand a simple hatred, or hatred itself. It is usual for men to hate the deformities and diseases of their own bodies, and upon that account to deal with the members of their own bodies as if they hated them; hence it is, they willingly stretch forth a gangrened leg or arm to be cut off for the preservation of the rest: but this is not a simple hatred of a man's self, but rather an argument of the strength of the soul's love to the body, that it will be content to endure so much pain and anguish for its sake. And if the soul be at any time weary of,