
THE
CHRISTIAN'S CHARTER,
SHewing
THE PRIVILEGES OF A BELIEVER.

1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

CHAP. I.

The Porch or Entrance into the Words, together with the Proposition.

HAPPINESS is the mark and centre which every man aims at. The next thing that is sought after Being, is being happy; and surely, the nearer the soul comes to God, who is the fountain of life and peace, the nearer it approacheth to happiness; and who so near to God as the believer, who is mystically one with him? he must needs be the happy man: and if you would survey his blessed estate, cast your eyes upon this text, which points to it, as the finger to the dial: 'For all things are yours.' The text may not unfitly be compared to the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; there are many

precious clusters growing out of this text, and being skilfully improved, will yield much excellent fruit.

In the words we have the inventory of a christian, 'All things are yours.' A strange paradox! when a believer can call nothing his, yet he can say, all things are his. I have often thought a poor christian that lives in a prison, or some old cottage, is like the usurer, who, though he goes poor, and can hardly find himself bread, yet hath thousands out at use: so it is with a child of God, 'as having nothing, yet possessing all things.' What once the philosopher said, Only the wise man is the rich man; gave me leave to say, only the believer is the rich man; here is his estate summed up, 'all things are his.'

Obj. Before I come to the words, there is an objection must be removed; If all things are ours, there seems to be a community; what is one man's is another's.

Ans. The apostle doth not speak here of civil possessions; Paul was no leveller, he did not go about to destroy any man's property; for though he saith, 'all things are yours;' yet he doth not say, what any man hath is yours.

Obj. But is it not said, They had all things common? Acts ii. 44.

Ans. It is true: but first, this was purely voluntary; there was no precept for it.

If it be objected, that this was set down as an example to imitate;

1. I answer; Examples in scripture are not always argumentative: the prophet Elijah called for fire from heaven, to consume the captains and their fifties; but it doth not therefore follow, that when one christian is angry with another, he may call for fire from heaven. Thus the primitive saints, out of prudence and charity, had all things common; it

will not therefore follow, that in every age and century of the church, there should be a common stock, and every one have a share.

2. I answer; Though the disciples had all things common, yet still they held their propriety, as is clear by Peter's speech to Ananias, 'Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?' It is true in one sense, what the primitive church had, was not their own; so much as could be spared, was for the relief of the saints; thus all things were common; but still they kept a part of their estate in their own hand. There is a double right to an estate, a right of Propriety, and a right of Charity. The right of charity belongs to the poor, but the right of propriety belongs to the owner. For instance, God made a law, that a man must not put his sickle into his neighbour's corn. We read that the disciples being hungry when they went through the fields on the Sabbath, did pluck the ears of corn, there was Charity; but they must not put the sickle into the corn, here was Propriety. This I the rather speak, because there are some, that when God hath made an enclosure, would lay all common: it was Satan pulled down Job's hedge. The Lord hath set the eighth commandment as a fence about a man's estate; and he that breaks this hedge, a serpent shall bite him. Thus having taken that objection out of the way, I come now to the next.

And it falls into three parts. 1. The inventory, 'all things,' 2. The proprietors, 'all things are yours.' 3. The tenure, 'Ye are Christ's.' Which three branches will make up this one proposition.

Doct. That all things in heaven and earth are the portion and prerogative of a believer. 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things.' A large inventory! 'All things:' we can have but all; and the apostle useth an ingemination, he doubles

it, to take away all hesitancy and doubting from faith.

CHAP. II.

The Arguments proving the Proposition.

THERE are two reasons which will serve to illustrate and confirm the proposition, 'All things are a believers.'

Reason 1. Because the covenant of grace is his. The covenant is our Great Charter, by virtue of which God settles all things in heaven and earth upon us. By sin we had forfeited all; therefore if all things be ours, the title comes in by a covenant: till then we had nothing to hold by. This covenant is the issue and birth of God's love; it is the legacy of free-grace. This covenant is enriched with mercy, it is embroidered with promises: you may read the Charter, 'I will be their God.' And there is a parallel to it, 'I am God, even thy God:' this is a sufficient dowry. If God be ours, then all things are ours.

He is, 1. *Eminently good*. One diamond doth virtually contain many lesser pearls: the excellencies in the creature are single, and want their adjuncts. Learning hath not always parentage; honour hath not always virtue. No individual can be the receptacle and containant of all perfections; but those excellencies that lie scattered in the creature, are all united and centred in God, as the beams in the sun, the drops in the ocean.

2. He is *Superlatively good*. Whatever is in the creature, is to be found in God after a most transcendent manner. A man may be said to be wise, but God is infinitely so; powerful, but God is eternally so; faithful, but God is unchangeably so. Now in the covenant of grace, God passeth him-

self over to us to be our God, 'I am God, even thy God.'

This expression, 'I am thy God,' imports three things: 1. Pacification. You shall find grace in my sight, I will cast a favourable aspect upon you. I will put off my armour, I will take down my standard, I will be no more an enemy. 2. Donation. God makes himself over to us by a deed of gift, and gives away himself to us: he saith to the believer, as the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, 'I am thine, and all that I have:' this is an hive of divine comfort: all that is in God is ours: his wisdom is ours to teach us; his love is ours to pity us; his Spirit is ours to comfort us; his mercy is ours to save us. When God saith to the soul, 'I am thine,' it is enough, he cannot say more. 3. Duration. I will be a God to thee, as long as I am a God.

Reason 2. All things are a believer's, because Christ is his. Jesus Christ is the pillar and hinge upon which the covenant of grace turns. Without Christ, we had nothing to do with a covenant. The covenant is founded upon Christ, and is sealed in his blood. We read of the mercy-seat, Exod. xxv. 17. which was a divine hieroglyphic, typifying Jesus Christ. 'There will I meet thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, ver. 22. to shew that in Christ God is propitious. From above this mercy-seat he communes with us, and enters into covenant. Therefore it is observable, when the Apostle had said, 'All things are yours,' he presently adds, 'Ye are Christ's.' There comes in the title, we hold all *in capite*. This golden chain, 'Things present, and things to come,' are linked to us, by virtue of our being linked to Christ. By faith we have an interest in Christ; having an interest in Christ, we have an interest in

God; having an interest in God, we have a title to all things.

CHAP. III.

The opening of the Charter. Things present are a Believers.

Question. **A**ND now I come to that great question, What are the things contained in the Charter?

Answer. There are two words in the text that express it, 'Things present, and things to come.' I begin with the first.

1. Things present, are a believer's. Amongst these things present, there are three specified in the text; Paul and Apollos, the world, life, &c. Here is, methinks, a row of pearl: I will take every one of these asunder, and shew you their worth; then see how rich a believer is, that wears such a chain of pearl about him.

Sect. 1. Paul and Apollos are yours.

1. Under these words, 'Paul and Apollos,' by a figure are comprehended all the ministers of Christ, the weakest as well as the eminentest. 'Paul and Apollos are yours,' viz. their labours are for edifying the church. They are the helpers of your faith; the parts of a minister are not given for himself, they are the church's. If the people have a taint of error, the ministers of Christ must season them with wholesome words; therefore they are called 'the salt of the earth.' If any soul be fainting under the burden of sin, it is the work of a minister to drop in comfort, therefore he is said to hold forth the breast as a nurse. Thus Paul and Apollos are yours: all the gifts of a minister, all

his graces, are not only for himself, they are the Church's. A minister must not monopolize his gifts to himself, this is 'to hide his talents in a napkin;' such an one makes an enclosure, where God would have all common. 'Paul and Apollos are yours.' The ministers of Christ should be as musk among linen, which casts a fragrancy; or like that box of spikenard, which being broken filled the house with its odour: so should they do by the savour of their ointments. A minister by sending out a sweet perfume in his doctrine and life, makes the church of God as a garden of spices. 'Paul and Apollos are yours:' they are as a lamp or torch to light souls to heaven. Chrysostom's hearers thought they had better be without the sun in the firmament, than Chrysostom in the pulpit. Paul and Apollos are springs that hold the water of life; as these springs must not be poisoned, so neither must they be shut up or sealed. A minister of Christ is both a granary to hold the corn, and a steward to give it out. 'Tis little better than theft to with-hold the bread of life. The lips of Apollos must be as an honey-comb, dropping in season and out of season. The graces of the Spirit are sacred flowers, which though they cannot die, yet being apt to wither, Apollos must come with his water-pot. It is not enough that there be grace in the heart, but it must be poured into his lips. As Paul is a believer, so all things are his; but as Paul is a minister, so he is not his own, he is the church's. There are three corollaries I shall draw from this.

Use 1. If 'Paul and Apollos are yours,' every minister of Christ is given for the edifying of the church; take heed that ye despise not the least of these, for all are for your profit. The least star gives light, the least drop moistens, the least minister is no less than an angel. There is some use to

be made even of the lowest parts of men: there are 'gifts differing,' but all are yours. The weakest minister may help to strengthen your faith. In the law, all the Levites did not sacrifice, only the priests, as Aaron, and his sons; but all were serviceable in the worship of God: those that did not sacrifice, yet helped to bear the ark. As in a building, some bring stones, some timber, some perhaps bring only nails; yet these are useful, these serve to fasten the work in the building. The church of God is a spiritual building, some ministers bring stones, are more eminent and useful; others timber; others less, they have but a nail in the work, yet all serve for the good of this building. The least nail in the ministry serves for the fastening of souls to Christ, therefore let none be contemned. Though all are not apostles, all are not evangelists, all have not the same dexterous abilities in their work; yet remember, 'All are yours,' all edify. Oftentimes God crowns his labours, and sends most fish into his net, who though he may be less skilful is more faithful; and though he hath less of the Brain, yet more of the Heart. An ambassador may deliver his message with a trembling lip, and a stammering tongue, but he is honourable for his work's sake, he represents the king's person.

Use 2. If 'Paul and Apollos are yours,' all Christ's ministers have a subserviency to your good, they come to make up the match between Christ and you; then love Paul and Apollos. All the labours of a minister, his prayers, his tears, the pregnancy of his parts, the torrent of his affections, all are yours; then by the law of equity there must be some reflections of love from your hearts towards Paul and Apollos, such as are 'set over you in the Lord.' And shew your love,

1. By honouring them. Manoah would know the angel's name, that he might honour him.

And the apostle calls for this, 'We beseech you, brethren, know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly.' They are co-workers with God. God and his ministers (to speak with reverence) drive one and the same trade; and 'they labour among you,' therefore esteem them very highly. Next to sending out Christ and the Spirit, God never honoured the world more than in sending out his Pauls' and Apollos'. Kings may be your fathers to nurse you up in peace, but ministers are your fathers to beget you to Christ: the earthly father is an instrument of conveying nature, the spiritual father of conveying grace. Therefore Chrysostom wonders how it comes to pass that the ministers are not only more revered than kings and judges, but than our natural parents. What shall we say then to those who make no more reckoning of their ministers, than the Egyptians did of their shepherds? 'Every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians.' 'Know them' (saith the apostle) 'that labour among you;' many can be content 'to know them' in the meanness of their parentage; 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' to know them in their infirmities, but not to know them in the apostle's sense, so as to give them double honour. Surely, were it not for the ministry you would not be a vineyard, but a wilderness; were it not for the ministry, you would be destitute of the two seals of the covenant, baptism and the Lord's supper; you would be infidels, for 'faith comes by hearing,' and 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' O therefore honour Paul and Apollos; though their persons may be mean, yet their office is honourable.

2. Shew your love to the ministers, by pleading their cause, when they are unjustly traduced and calumniated. It is counted by some a piece of their

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religion (as Justin Martyr speaks) neatly and handsomely to defame a minister. Others who would be thought more modest, though they do not raise a report, yet they can receive it as a welcome present. This is contrary to that apostolical rule, 'against an elder' (or minister) 'receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.' Constantine was a great honourer of the ministry; it is reported of him, that he would not read the envious accusations brought in against them, but did burn them. O, if you love Paul and Apollos, stand up in their defence, become their advocates; it was a law the Egyptians made, that if a man found another in the hands of thieves, and did not deliver him when it was in his power, he was condemned to die; when your ministers fall among thieves who would rob them of their good name, do you seek to deliver them. We have too many who labour to clip the credit of God's ministers, to make them weigh lighter: O, do you put some grains into the scales; do they open their mouths to God for you, and will not you open your mouths in their behalf? Certainly if they labour to save your souls, you ought to save their credit.

2. Shew your love to your ministers, by encouraging them, and by being a screen to keep off injuries from them. If they seek your Establishment, you must seek their Encouragement; if they endeavour your Salvation, you must endeavour their Safety; the very name of an ambassador, hath been a protection from wrongs. What an unnatural thing is it, that any should strive to bring them to death, whose very calling is to bring men to life? The minister is a spiritual father; it was a brand of infamy on them, 'For this people are as they that strive with their priest.' Was there none to fall out with but the priest, even he that offered up their sacrifices for them? and what is it think ye,

for men to quarrel with their spiritual fathers? even those whom they once had a venerable opinion of, and acknowledged to be the means of their conversion? Either love your spiritual fathers, or there is ground of suspicion that yours was but a false birth.

Use 3. If 'Paul and Apollos are yours,' they are for the building you up in your faith; then endeavour to get good by the labours of Paul and Apollos, I mean such as labour in the word and doctrine. Let them not plough upon the rock; answer God's end in sending them among you. 'Labour to profit:' you may get some knowledge by the word, such as is discursive and polemical, and yet not profit.

Quest. What is it to profit?

Ans. The apostle tells us, 'When we mingle the word with faith,' that is, when we so hear that we believe, and so believe that we are transformed into the image of the word: 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine into which ye were delivered.' It is one thing for the truth to be delivered to us, and another thing for us to be delivered into the truth: the words are a metaphor taken from lead or silver cast into a mould. This is to profit when our hearts are cast into the mould of the word preached: as the seed is spiritual, so the heart is spiritual. We should do as the bee, when she hath sucked sweetness from the flower, she works it in her own hive, and so turns it to honey: thus when we have sucked any precious truth, we should by holy meditation work it in the hive of our hearts, and then it would turn to honey: we should profit by it. O, let the labours of Paul and Apollos have an influence upon us. A good hearer should labour to go out from the ministry of the word, as Naaman out of Jordan; his leprous flesh was healed, and became as the other: so

though we came to the word proud, we should go home humble; though we came to the word earthly; we should go home heavenly: our leprosy should be healed. Ambrose observes of the woman of Samaria, that came to Jacob's well, she came a sinner, she went away a prophetess. Such a metamorphosis should the word of God make. Let not the ministers of Christ say upon their deathbeds, the bellows are burnt, and the lead consumed; they have spent their lungs and exhausted their strength; but know not whether they have done any thing, unless preached men to hell. It is Austin's note upon those words of the apostle, 'That they may give up their accounts with joy.' When (saith he) doth a minister give up his account with joy, but when he hath been working in the vineyard and sees fruit appear? Brethren, this will be his joy, and your joy too in the day of the Lord. O, labour to grow; some grow not at all, others grow worse for hearing; 'Evil men shall wax worse and worse,' as Pliny speaks of some fish that swim backward: they grow dead-hearted in religion, they grow covetous, they grow apostates. It were far easier to write a book of apostates in this age, than a book of martyrs; men grow riper for hell every day. O, labour to thrive under the spiritual dew that falls upon you. Let not the ministers of Christ be as those 'which beat the air.' Is it not sad when the spiritual clouds shall drop their rain upon a barren heath? When the minister's tongue 'is as the pen of a ready writer, and the peoples' heart is like oiled paper that will take no impression. O, improve in grace: if you have a barren piece of ground, you do all you can to improve it, and will you not improve a barren heart? it is a great encomium and honour to the ministry, when people thrive under it: 'Need we as some others, epistles of commendation? Paul

esteemed the Corinthians his glory and his crown; hence saith he, though other ministers have need of letters of commendation, yet he needed none; for when men should hear of the faith of these Corinthians, which was wrought in them by Paul's preaching; this was sufficient certificate for him, that God had blessed his labours, there should need no other epistle; they themselves were walking certificates, they were his letters testimonial. This was an high commendation; what an honour is it to a minister, when it shall be said of him as once of Octavius when he came to Rome, he found the walls of brick, but he left them walls of marble? So when the minister came among the people, he found hearts of stone, but he left hearts of flesh. On the other side, it is a dishonour to a minister when his people are like Laban's lambs, or Pharaoh's kine. There are some diseases which they call the reproach of physicians; and there are some people who may be called the reproach of ministers: what greater dishonour to a minister, than when it shall be said of him, he hath lived so many years in a parish, he found them an ignorant people, and they are so still; he found them a dull slothful people, (as if they went to the temple as some use to go to the apothecary's shop, to take a recipe to make them sleep) and they are so still; he found them a profane people, and so they are still. Surely there is some fault, or God doth not go forth with his labours; such a people are not a minister's crown, but his heart-breaking. Beloved, when God's stars shine in the firmament of the church, will you still walk in the dark? when for the work of Christ they are 'nigh unto death,' will you be as nigh unto hell as ever? when these golden bells of Aaron sound, shall they not chime in with Christ? I beseech you, 'let your profiting appear to all.' God sends Paul and Apollos as bless-

ings among a people, they are to be helpers of your faith; if they toil all night and take nothing,' 'tis to be feared that Satan caught the fish ere they came at their net.

Sect. 2. Shewing, *That the World is a Believer's.*

2. The next thing is, the world is yours.

1. The lawful use of the world }
2. The special use of the world } is a believer's.

1. The 'lawful use of the world' is yours.' The gospel doth somewhat enlarge our charter. We are not in all things so tied up as the Jews were; there were several sorts of meat that were prohibited them; they might eat of those beasts only that did chew the cud, and part the hoof; they might not eat of the swine, because though it did divide the hoof, yet it did not chew the cud; nor of the hare, because though it did chew the cud, yet it did not divide the hoof, it was unclean; but to Christians that live under the gospel, there is not this prohibition. 'The world is yours,' the lawful use of it is yours; every creature 'being sanctified by the word and prayer,' is good, and we may eat, asking no question for conscience sake. The world is a garden; God hath given us leave to pick off any flower. It is a paradise; we may eat of any tree that grows in it, but the forbidden, that is sin; yet even in things lawful, beware of excess. We are apt to offend most in lawful things. The world is yours to traffic in; only let them that buy, 'be as if they bought not.' Take heed that you do not drive such a trade in the world, that you are like to break in your trading for heaven.

2. The special use of the world is yours.

1. The world was made for your sake.

2. All things that fall out in the world are for your good.

1. The world 'was made for your sake.' God hath raised this great fabric chiefly for a believer. The saints are 'God's jewels.' The world is the shrine or cabinet where God locks up these jewels for a time. The world is yours, it was made for you. The creation is but a theatre to act the great work of redemption upon. The world is the Field, the saints are the Corn, the ordinances are the Showers, the mercies of God are the Sunshine that ripens this corn, death is the Sickle that cuts it down, the angels are the Harvesters that carry it into the barn. The world is yours; God would never have made this field, were it not for the corn growing in it. What use then is there of the wicked? They are as an hedge to keep the corn from foreign invasions, though oftentimes they are a thorn hedge.

Quest. But alas, a child of God hath oft the least share in the world; how then is the world his?

Ans. If thou art a believer, that little thou hast, though it be but an handful of the world, it is blest to thee. If there be any consecrated ground in the world, that is a believer's. The world is yours; Esau had the venison, but Jacob got the blessing: a little blest is sweet. A little of the world with a great deal of peace, is better than the 'revenues of unrighteousness.' Every mercy a child of God hath, swims to him in Christ's blood, and this sauce makes it relish the sweeter. Whatever he tastes is seasoned with God's love; he hath not only Corn but Money in the mouth of the sack; not only the Mercy but the blessing: so that the world is a believer's. An unbeliever that 'hath the world at will,' yet the world is not his, he doth not taste the quintessence of it. 'Thorns and thistles doth the ground bring forth to him.' He feeds upon the fruit of the curse, 'I will curse your blessings;' he eats 'with bitter herbs:' so that properly the world is a believer's. He only hath a scripture-tenure, and that little he

hath turns to cream: every mercy is a present sent him from heaven.

2. All things that fall out in the world, are for your good.

1. The want of the world } is for your good.
2. The hatred of the world }

1. The Want of the world is for your good. By wanting the honours and revenues of the world, you want the temptations that others have. Physicians observe that men die sooner by the abundance of blood, than the scarcity; it is hard to say which kills most, the sword or surfeit; a glutton with his teeth digs his own grave. The world's beauty tempts, but it is like the *Rhododaphne*, a fair plant to the eye, but pison to the taste. The want of the world is a mercy.

2. The Hatred of the world is for your good. Wicked men are instruments in God's hand for good, (albeit they mean not so;) they are flails to thresh off our husks, files to brighten our graces, leeches to suck out the noxious blood. Out of the most poisonous drug, God distils his glory and our salvation. A child of God is beholden even to his enemies; 'The ploughers ploughed upon my back;' if they did not plough and harrow us, we should bear but a very thin crop: after a man hath planted a tree, he prunes and dresseth it. Persecutors are God's pruning-hooks, to cut off the excrescences of sin, and evermore the bleeding vine is most fruitful; the envy and malice of the wicked shall do us good: God stirred up the people of Egypt to hate the Israelites, and that was a means to usher in their deliverance. The frowns of the wicked make us the more ambitious of God's smile; their incensed rage, at it shall carry on God's decree (for while they sit backward to his command, they shall row forward to his decree) so it shall have a subserviency to our good. Every cross wind

of Providence shall blow a believer nearer to the port of glory. What a blessed condition is a child of God in! kill him, or save him alive, it is all one. The opposition of the world is for his good. The world is yours.

Sect. 3. Shewing, *That Life is a Believers.*

3. The next thing is, 'Life is yours.' Hierom understands it of the life of Christ. It is true, Christ's life is ours; the life which he lived on earth, and the life which he now lives in heaven; his satisfaction and his intercession both are ours, and they are of unspeakable comfort to us. But I conceive by Life in the text, is meant natural life, that which is contradistinguished to death: so Ambrose. But how is life a believer's? Two ways.

1. The Privilege of life is his. 2. The comfort of life is his.

1. The privilege of life is a believer's: that is, life to a child of God is an advantage for heaven: this life is given him to make provision for a better life. Life is the porch of eternity; here the believer dresses himself, that he may be fit to enter in with the Bridegroom. We cannot say of a wicked man (unless catechrestically) that life is his. Though he lives, yet life is not his, he is 'dead while he lives.' He doth not improve the life of nature to get the life of grace; he is like a man who takes the lease of a farm, and makes no benefit of it; he hath been so long in the world, but he hath not lived. He was born in the reign of such a king, his father left him such an estate, he was of such an age, and then he died; there is an end of him, his life was not worth a prayer, nor his death worth a tear. But life is yours; it is a privilege to a believer; while he hath natural life, he lays hold upon eternal life: how doth he work out his salvation? what ado to is there get his evidences

sealed? what weeping? what wrestling? how doth he even take heaven by storm? so that life is yours: it is to a child of God a season of grace, the seed-time of eternity; the longer he lives, the riper he grows for heaven. The life of a believer spends as a lamp, he doth little good. The life of the one is as a figure engraven in marble; the life of the other, as letters written in dust.

2. The comfort of life is a believer's. 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing:' take a child of God at the greatest disadvantage, let his life be over-cast with clouds, yet if there be any comfort in life, the believer hath it. Our life is oft imbecile and weak, but the spiritual life doth administer comfort to the natural. Man (saith Augustine) is compounded of the mortal part, and the rational part; the rational serves to comfort the mortal. So, I may say, a christian consists of a natural life, and a spiritual; the spiritual revives the natural. Observe how the spiritual life destils sweetness into the natural, in three cases.

1. In case of Poverty. This oft eclipses the comfort of life. But what though poverty hath clipped thy wings? 'poor in the world, yet rich in faith,' James ii. 5. The one humbles, the other revives.

2. In case of Reproach. This is an heart-breaking, Ps. lxi. 20. 'Reproach hath broken my heart.' Yet a christian hath his cordial by him, 2 Cor. i. 12. 'For this is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience.' Who would desire a better jury to acquit him than God and his own conscience?

3. In case of Losses. It is in itself sad, to have an interposition between us and our dear relations. A limb as it were pulled from our body, and sometimes our estates strangely melted away; yet a believer hath some gleanings of comfort left, and such gleanings as are better than the world's vintage. 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring

substance,' Heb. x. 34. They had lost their estate, but not their God. Here is you see, the dry rod blossoming. The spiritual life distils comfort into the natural. Take the sourest part of a christian's life, and there is comfort in it. When you hear him sighing bitterly, it is for sin; and such a sigh, though it may break the heart, yet it revives it. The tears of the godly are sweeter than the triumph of the wicked. The comfort that a wicked man hath is only imaginary, it is but a pleasant fancy; as rejoicing, yet always sorrowing: he hath that within spoils his music. But life is yours. When a believer's life is at the lowest ebb, yet he hath a spring-tide of comfort.

CHAP. IV.

The Augmentation of the Charter.

AMONG these 'things present,' there are yet two other eminent privileges which are in the believer's charter.

1. Remission. 2. Regeneration.

Sect. 1. Shewing, *That Remission of Sin is a Jewel of the Believer's Crown.*

1. The remission of his sin. To pardon sin is one of the Royalties belonging only to God. Pope's pardons are like blanks in a lottery, good for nothing but to be torn. Who can forgive sins but God only? Mark ii. 7. Now this remission or pardon is,

1. A costly mercy. 2. A choice mercy.

1. It is a costly mercy. That which enhanceth the price of it is, it is the great fruit of Christ's blood: 'Without shedding of blood is no remission.' Christ did bleed out our pardon: he was not only 'a lamb without spot,' but a lamb slain. Every pardon a sinner hath, is written in Christ's blood.

2. It is a choice mercy. This jewel God hangs up on none but his elect. It is put into the charter; 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' This is an enriching mercy, it entitles us to blessedness; 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin.' Of all the debts we owe, our sins are the worst; now to have the book canceled and God appeased; to hear God whisper by his Spirit, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven;' I will not blot thy Name out of my book, but I will blot thy Sins out of my book: this is a mercy of the first magnitude. 'Blessed is that man;' in the original it is in the plural, 'blessednesses.' Hast thou but one blessing, my father, saith Esau; Lo, here is a plurality, a whole chain of blessings. Pardon of sin draws the silver link of grace, and the golden link of glory after it. It is a voluminous mercy, there are many mercies bound up with it. You may name it Gad, for behold 'a troop cometh.' When God pardons a sinner, now he puts on (if I may so speak) his brightest robe: therefore when he would proclaim himself in his glory to Moses, it was after this manner, 'The Lord, the Lord merciful.' Exod. xxxiv. 6. His mercy is his glory: and if you read a little further, you shall see it was no other than pardoning mercy: 'Forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin,' &c. This is an high act of indulgence. God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. This made David put on his best clothes and anoint himself. It was strange his child newly dead, and God had told him, that the sword should not depart from his house, yet now he falls anointing himself: the reason was, David had heard good news, God sent him his pardon by Nathan the prophet; 'The Lord hath put away thy sin.' This oil of gladness which God had poured into his heart, made way for the anointing oil.

Quest. How shall I know that this privilege is mine?

Ans. He whose sins are pardoned, hath something

to shew for it. There are three scripture-evidences; 1. The pardoned sinner is a weeping sinner. Never did any man read his pardon with dry eyes: look upon that weeping penitent, 'She stood behind Christ weeping.' Her heart was a sacred limbeck, out of which those tears were distilled. O, how precious were Mary's tears! surely more costly in Christ's esteem than her ointment: they dropped from her as so many pearls. Her amorous eyes, whose sparkles had so oft set on fire all her lovers, she now seeks to be revenged on them, and washeth Christ's feet with her tears. Her embroidered hair, which with its curling and crisping had so oft as a net ensnared others, she now takes penance of it, and makes it a towel to wipe Christ's feet; here was a pardoned penitent. A pardon will make the hardest heart relent, and is able to turn the stone into a spring. O sinner, ask thyself the question, Is thy heart dissolved into tears? doth it melt for sin? God seals his pardons only upon melting hearts.

Quest. But to what purpose is all this cost? what needs weeping after pardon?

Ans. Because now sin and mercy are drawn forth in more lively colours than ever. The Spirit comes thus to a sinner; Thou hast sinned against God, who never intended thee evil, thou hast abused that mercy that saves thee; all this thou hast done, yet behold, here is thy pardon; I will set up my mercy above thy sin, nay, in spite of it. The sinner being sensible of this, falls a weeping, and wisheth himself even dissolved into tears. He looks upon a bleeding Christ with a bleeding heart. Nothing can so melt the heart of a sinner as the love of God, and the blood of Christ. 2. He whose sins are pardoned, his heart burns in a flame of love. Thus we read of Mary Magdalene, as her eyes were broached with tears, so her heart was red with love to Christ; 'for she loved much.' God's love in pardoning a sinner is attractive: the law hath

a driving power, but love hath a drawing power. 3. He whose sins are pardoned, is willing to pardon others; he doth forbear and forgive those that have offended him, Eph. iv. 32. Some will pray, go to church, give alms, &c. any thing but Forgive; it is the brand set upon the heathens, 'implacable,' Rom. i. 31. Those who live out of charity, cannot pray the Lord's prayer, or if they do, they must pray against themselves; they pray that God will forgive them 'as they forgive others,' which is in effect to pray that God will not forgive them. Surely he that hath tasted of pardon will think it but rational and christian, that he should forgive his offending brother.

Sect. 2. Shewing, *That Regeneration goes along with Remission, and is a Branch of the Charter.*

Privilege 2. Regeneration; which is nothing else but the transforming the heart, and casting it into a new mould: you have a pregnant place for this, Rom. xii. 2. 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.' In the Incarnation, Christ did assume our human nature; and in Regeneration, we partake of his divine nature.

This blessed work of regeneration, is in scripture called sometimes the 'new birth,' because it is begotten of a new seed, the Word, Jam. i. 18. and sometimes the 'new creature;' new, not in substance but in quality. This is the great promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 'A new heart also will I give you.' Observe, remission and regeneration are two twins: when God pardons he takes away the rebel's heart. Where this work of regeneration is wrought, the heart has a new bias, and the life a new edition. How great a privilege this is, will appear two ways. Till this blessed work of regeneration, we are in a spiritual sense,

1. Still-born. 2. Illegitimate.

1. Still-born; 'dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. ii. 1. A man in his pure naturals is dead;

1. In respect of working. 2. In respect of honour:

1. In respect of Working. A dead man cannot work. The works of a sinner in scripture are called 'dead works;' bid a natural man do any thing, you had as good set a dead man about your work; bring him to a sermon, you do but bring a dead corpse to church; bring him to the sacrament, he poisons the sacramental cup; he may receive the elements, but nothing concocts: it is as if you should put bread and wine into a dead man's mouth. 'Reprove him sharply for sin;' to what purpose do you strike a dead man?

2. He is dead in respect of Honour. He is dead to all privileges; he is not fit to inherit mercy. Who sets the crown upon a dead man? The apostle calls it the crown of life, Rev. ii. 10. It is only the living christian shall wear the crown of life.

2. A man unregenerate is spiritually Illegitimate; the Devil is his father: 'Ye are of your father the Devil.' Thus it is till Christ be formed in the heart of a sinner; then his reproach is rolled away from him. Regeneration doth ennoble a person; therefore such an one is said to be 'born of God,' 1 John iii.

9. O how beautiful is that soul! I may say with Bernard, O divine soul, invested with the image of God, espoused to him by faith, dignified with the Spirit! A person regenerate is embroidered with all the graces; he hath the silver spangles of holiness, the angels' glory shining in him: he hath upon him the reflex of Christ's beauty. The new creature is a new paradise set full of the heavenly plants. An heart ennobled with grace (to speak with reverence) is God's lesser heaven.

CHAP. V.

Shewing that Things to come are a Believer's.

AND so I slide into the second part of the text, 'Things to come,' are yours: here is portion enough! It is a great comfort that when things pre-

sent are taken away, yet things to come are ours. Methinks the very naming this word, 'things to come,' should make the spirits of a christian revive. It is a sweet word; our happiness is in reversion, the best is behind, all is not yet come that is promised. Truly if we had nothing but what we have here, we were miserable; here are disgraces, martyrdoms; we must taste some of that gall and vinegar which Jesus Christ drank upon the cross; but, O christian, be of good cheer, there is something to come: the best part of our portion is yet unpaid: 'all things to come are yours.' God deals with us as a merchant that shews the worst piece of cloth first. We meet sometimes with coarse usage in the world; that piece which is of the finest spinning, is kept till we come at heaven. It is true, God doth chequer his work in this life, white and black; he gives us something to sweeten our pilgrimage here, the prelibations and tastes of his love: these are the earnest and first-fruits; but what is this to that which is to come? 'Now we are the sons of God, 1 John iii. 2. But it doth not yet appear what we shall be:' expect that God should keep his best wine till last; 'things to come are yours.'

CHAP. VI.

The First Prerogative; to come.

BUT what are those things that are to come?

Ans. There are twelve things yet to come, the which I call twelve prerogatives royal, wherewith the believer shall be invested. The first is set down in the text, which I will begin with. 1. 'Death is yours.' 1. Death in scripture is called an enemy, 1 Cor. xv. 26. Yet here it is put in a Christian's inventory, 'death is yours.' It is an enemy to the mortal part, but a friend to the spiritual: it is one of our best friends next to Christ; death is a part of the jointure. When

Moses saw his rod turned into a serpent, it did at the first affright him, and he fled from it; but when God bade him take hold of it, he found by the miraculous effects which it wrought, it did him and the people of Israel much good; so death at the first sight is like the rod turned into a serpent; it affrights, but when by faith we take hold of it, then we find much benefit and comfort in it. As Moses' rod divided the waters, and made a passage for Israel into Canaan; so death divides the waters of tribulation, and makes a passage for us into the 'land of promise.' Death is called the king of terrors, but it can do a child of God no hurt; this snake may hiss and wind about the body, but the sting is pulled out: the bee by stinging loseth its sting. While death did sting Christ upon the cross, it hath quite lost its sting to a believer; it can hurt the soul no more than David did king Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment. Death to a believer is but like the arresting of a man for debt, after the debt is paid; death, as God's serjeants at arms, may arrest us, and carry us before God's justice; but Christ will shew our discharge: the debt-book is crossed in his blood.

Quest. How is death ours?

Ans. Two ways,

1. It is the out-let to sin. 2. It is the in-let to happiness.

1. Death to a believer, is an out-let to sin. We are in this life under a sinful necessity; even the best saint: 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.' Evil thoughts are continually arising out of our hearts, as sparks out of a furnace. Sin keeps house with us whether we will or not; the best saint alive is troubled with inmates; though he forsakes his sins, yet his sins will not forsake him. 1. Sin doth indispose to good: 'How to perform that which is good I find not,' Rom. vii. 18. When we would pray, the heart is a viol out of tune: when we

would weep, we are as clouds without rain. 2. Sin doth irritate to evil; 'The flesh lusts against the spirit.' There needs no wind of temptation, we have tide strong enough in our hearts to carry us to hell. Consider sin under this three-fold notion.

1. Sin is a 'body of death,' and that not impertinently. First, it is a body for its weight. The body is an heavy and weighty substance: so is sin a body, it weighs us down. When we would pray, the weights of sin are tied to our feet that we cannot ascend. Anselm, seeing a little boy playing with a bird, he let her fly up, and presently pulls the bird down again by a string: so, saith he, it is with me as with this bird; when I would fly up to heaven upon the wings of meditation, I find a string tied to my leg; I am overpowered with corruption; but death pull off these weights of sin, and lets the soul free. Secondly, sin is a body of death, for its annoyance. It was a cruel torment that one used, he tied a dead man to a living, that the dead man might annoy and infest the living. Thus it is with a child of God, he hath two men within him, flesh and spirit, grace and corruption; there is the dead man tied to the living; a proud sinful heart is worse to a child of God than the smell of a dead corpse. Indeed to a natural man sin is not offensive; for, being 'dead in sin,' he is not sensible: but where there is a vital principle, there is no greater annoyance than the body of death: in-somuch that the pious soul oft cries out, as David, 'Wo is me, that I dwell in Mesech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar.' So saith he, Wo is me, that I am constrained to abide with sin! How long shall I be troubled with inmates? How long shall I offend that God whom I love? When shall I leave these tents of Kedar?

2. Sin is a tyrant, it carries in it the nature of a law; the apostle calls it the 'law in his members.' Rom. vii. 14. There is the law of pride, the law of unbelief; it hath a kind of jurisdiction, as Cæsar over the senate.

‘What I hate, that do I;’ ver. 15. The apostle was for the present like a man carried down the stream, and was not able to bear up against it. Whence are our carnal fears? whence our passions? whence is it that a child of God doth that which he allows not? yea, sometimes against knowledge? The reason is, he is captivated under sin; but be of good cheer, where grace makes a combat, death shall make a conquest.

3. Sin is a leprous spot. It makes every thing we touch unclean: we read that, when the leprosy did spread in the walls of a house, the priests commanded to take away the stones in the wall in which the plague was, and take other stones, and put in the place of those stones, and take other mortar, Levit. xiv. +2. But when the plague spread again in the wall, then he must break down the house with the stones and timber thereof, ver. 45. Thus in every man naturally, there is a fretting leprosy of sin, pride, unbelief, impenitency, &c. These are leprous spots; now in conversion, here God doth, as it were, take away the old stones and timber, and put new in the room; he makes a change in the heart of a sinner, but still the leprosy of sin spreads; then at last death comes and pulls down the stones and timber of the house, and the soul is quite freed from the leprosy. Sin is a defiling thing, it makes us red with guilt, and black with filth; it is compared to a ‘menstruous cloth;’ we need carry it no higher. Pliny tells us that the trees with touching of it would become barren; and Hierom saith, there was nothing in the law more unclean than the menstruous cloth: this is sin. Sin draws the Devil’s picture in a man; malice is the Devil’s eye; oppression is his hand; hypocrisy is his cloven foot; but behold death will give us our discharge; death is the last and best physician, which cures all diseases; the aching head and the unbelieving heart. Sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and death shall be the grave to bury sin; O the privilege of a believer! he is not taken

away in his sins; but he is taken away from his sins. The Persians had a certain day in the year, wherein they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures: such a day as that will the day of death be to a man in Christ. This day the old serpent dies in a believer, that hath so often stung him with his temptations: this day the sins of the godly, these venomous creatures, shall all be destroyed; they shall never be proud more; they shall never grieve the Spirit of God more; the death of the body shall quite destroy the body of death.

2. Death to a believer is an inlet to happiness: Samson found an honey-comb in the lion's carcase; so may a child of God suck much sweetness from death. Death is the gate of life; death pulls off our rags, and gives us change of raiment: all the hurt it doth us, is to put us into a better condition. Death is called in scripture a sleep, 1 Thess. iv. 14. 'Those that sleep in Jesus;' as after sleep the spirits are exhilarated and refreshed, so after death, 'the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord.' Death is yours. Death is a believer's ferryman, to ferry him over to the land of rest; it opens the portal into heaven, (as Tertullian speaks.) The day of a christian's death is the birth-day of his heavenly life; it is his ascension-day to glory; it is his marriage-day with Jesus Christ. After his funeral begins his marriage: well then might Solomon say, 'Better is the day of a man's death, than the day of his birth.' Death is the spiritual man's preferment, why then should he fear it? Death, I confess, hath a grim visage to an impenitent sinner; so it is ghastly to look upon; it is a pursuivant to carry him to hell: but to such as are in Christ, 'death is yours:' it is a part of the jointure. Death is like the 'pillar of cloud,' it hath a dark side to a sinner: but it hath a light side to a believer. Death's pale face looks ruddy, when the 'blood of sprinkling' is upon it; in short, faith gives us a propriety in hea-

ven, death gives us a possession: fear not your privilege, the thoughts of death should be delightful. Jacob, when he saw the waggons, his spirits revived: death is a waggon or chariot to carry us to our Father's house. What were the martyrs' flames but a fiery chariot to carry them up to heaven? How should we long for death? this world is but a desert we live in; shall we not be willing to leave it for paradise? We say, 'it is good to be here; we affect an earthly eternity: but grace must curb nature. Think of the privileges of death. The planets have a proper motion and a violent; by their proper motion they are carried from the west to the east; but by a violent motion they are over-ruled by the *primum mobile*, and are carried from the east to the west. So, though naturally we desire to live here, as we are made up of flesh? yet grace should be as the *primum mobile*, or master wheel, that sways our will, and carries us in a violent motion, making us long for death. Saint Paul desired to be dissolved; 2 Cor. v. 2. 'In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: we would put off the earthly clothes of our body, and put on the bright robe of immortality. 'We groan,' it is a metaphor taken from a mother, who being pregnant, groans and cries out for delivery. Austin longed to die, that he might see that head which was once crowned with thorns. We pray, 'Thy kingdom come;' and when God is leading us into his kingdom, shall we be afraid to go? The times we live in should, methinks, make us long for death; we live in dying times, we may hear, as it were, God's passing bell ringing over these nations. As Hierom said in his time, Nepotian is an happy man that doth not see the evils which befall us: they are well that are out of the storm and are gotten already to the haven.

Quest. But who shall have this privilege?

Ans. Death is certain; but there are only two sorts

of persons to whom we may say 'Death is yours.' It is your preferment.

1. Such as die daily: we are not born angels; die we must, therefore we had need carry always a death's head about us. The basilisk if it see a man first, it kills him; but if he see it first, it doth him no hurt. The basilisk death, if it sees us first, before we see it, it is dangerous; but if we see it first by meditating upon it, it doth us no hurt; study death, often walk among the tombs. It is the thoughts of death before-hand, that must do us good. In a dark night, one torch carried before a man is worth many torches carried after him: one serious thought of death before-hand, one tear shed for sin before death is worth a thousand shed after, when it is too late. It is good to make death our familiar, and in this sense to be in deaths oft: that if God should presently seal a lease of ejectment, if he should send us a letter of summons this night to surrender, we might have nothing to do but to die.

Alas, how do we adjourn the thoughts of death! It is almost death to think of it. There are some that are in the very threshold of the grave, who have one leg in the earth, and another leg in hell; yet 'put far from them the evil day.' I have read of one Lysicrates, who in his old age died his gray hairs black, that he might seem young again. When we should be building our tombs, we are building our tabernacles: die daily, lest you die eternally. The holy patriarchs in purchasing for themselves a burying place, shewed us what thoughts they still had of death. Joseph of Arimathea erected his sepulchre in his garden: we have many that set up the trophies of their victories; others that set up their scutcheons, that they may blaze their honour: but how few that set up their sepulchres; who erect in their hearts the serious thoughts of death: O remember when you are in your gardens, in places

most delicious and fragrant, to keep a place for your tomb-stone; die daily. There is no better way to bring sin into a consumption, than by oft looking on the pale horse, and him that sits thereon. By thinking on death, we begin to repent of an evil life; and so we disarm death before it comes, and cut the lock where its strength lies.

2. Such as are in heaven before they die; death is yours. If we will needs be high-minded, let it be in setting our mind upon heavenly things. Heaven must come down into us before we go up thither. A child of God breathes his faith in heaven; his thoughts are there: 'when I awake I am still with thee,' Psal. cxxxix. 17. David awaked in heaven; his conversation is there; Philip. iii. 20. 'For our conversation is in heaven.' The believer often ascends mount Tabor, and takes a prospect of glory. O that we had this celestial frame of heart! When Zaccheus was in the croud, he was too low to see Christ; therefore he climbed up into the Sycamore tree: When we are in a croud of worldly business, we cannot see Christ: Climb up into the tree by divine contemplation: If thou wouldest get Christ into thy heart, let heaven be in thy eye: 'Set your affections upon things above,' Col. iii. 2. There needs no exhortation to set our hearts on things below. How is the curse of the serpent upon most men? 'Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.' Those that feed only upon dust, golden dust, will be unwilling to return to dust: Death will be terrible.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad desired Moses, that they might stay on this side Jordan, and have their portion there; it being a place convenient for their cattle: It seems they minded their cattle more than their passage into the holy land: So many Christians, if they may have but a little grazing here in the world, in their shops, and in their farms, they are content

to live on this side the river, and mind not their passage into the land of promise: you that are in heaven before you die, death is yours.

An earthly saint is a contradiction. The Greek word for saint signifies a man refined and separated from the earth: if an astronomer, instead of observing the planets, and the motions of the heavens, should take a reed in his hand, and fall a measuring of the earth, would not this be counted a solecism? and is not it as great a solecism in religion, when men that pretend to have Christ and heaven in their eye, yet mind earthly things? Phil iii. 19. Our souls, methinks should be like to a ship, which is made little and narrow downwards, but more wide and broad upwards: So our affections should be very narrow downwards to the earth, but wide and large upwards towards heavenly things. Thus we see death is a privilege to believers; death is yours. The heir while he is under age, is capable of the land he is born to: but he hath not the use or the benefit of it, till he comes of age; be as old as you will, you are never of age till you die: Death brings us of age, and then the possession comes into our hands.

CHAP. VII.

The Second Prerogative Royal of a Believer.

NOW I proceed to the second prerogative, which is yet to come: what holy David saith of Sion, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God,' Psal. lxxxvii. 3. I may apply to these blessed things in reversion.

2. The second prerogative royal of a Christian, is, he shall be carried up by the angels. In this life, a believer is carried by the saints; they lift him upon the wings of their prayers; and when they can carry

him no longer, after death the angels take him, and carry him up: wicked men, who are of the devil's life-guard, when they die, they shall have a black guard of angels to carry them: thou who art an old sinner (that hast an hoary head, but thy heart is as young in sin as ever) I may say to thee as Christ said in another sense to Peter: 'When thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.' So I say, Thou old sinner, the time is shortly coming, when thou shalt stretch forth thy hands on thy death-bed, and another shall bind thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not; thou shalt be carried by a black guard: but a believer shall be carried by the angels into heaven: 'The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.' Abraham's bosom is a figurative speech, representing the seat of the blessed: thither was he carried by the angels: poor Lazarus, when he was upon earth, he had no friends but dogs to come at him; but when he was dead, he had a convoy of angels. After our fall, the angels (as well as God) fell out with us, and became our enemies; hence we read that the angels (set out by the cherubims) stood with a flaming sword, to keep our first parents out of Paradise, Gen. iii. 24. but being at peace with God, we are at peace with the angels: therefore the angel comes with an olive-branch of peace in his mouth, and proclaims with triumph the news of Christ's incarnation, Luke ij. 11. 'For unto you is born, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord: the angels bless God for man's redemption, ver. 13. 'And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, glory be to God in the highest. The angels love mankind (especially where there is the new man) and are ready to do all friendly offices for us. As in our

life-time, they are our supporters, Psal. xci. 11. 'He shall give his angels charge to keep thee:' so after death they are our porters: Lazarus was carried by the angels. The angels are called ministering spirits; they are willing to minister for the good of the saints. Hence some observe, it is said, Lazarus was carried by the angels, in the plural, not by one angel: as if the angels had been ambitious to carry Lazarus, and every one strived which should have a part: wicked men do not strive more, who shall have a part in the death of the godly, than the angels do who shall bear a part in their ascension. O in what pomp and triumph did Lazarus's soul now ride! never was Dives so honoured in his life, as Lazarus was at his death. For a king to help to carry the hearse of one of his subjects, were an high honour; but a believer shall have a guard of angels to conduct him. Amasis king of Egypt, that he might set forth his magnificence, would have his chariot drawn by four princes, which he had conquered in the war: but what was all this to the chariot in which Lazarus, and the soul of every believer, shall be drawn at their death? they shall be carried by the angels of God.

CHAP. VIII.

The Third Prerogative Royal of a Believer.

THE next great prerogative is, the believer shall be with Christ in glory,' Phil. i. 23. I desire to be dissolved, or loosen anchor, and to be with Christ. This is a privilege of the first magnitude: surely we can be no losers by being with Christ. A graft or scion, though it be taken out of the tree, it doth not perish, but is set into a better stock: thus it is with a Christian, while he is here, (even after conversion) there is much of the wild olive still in

him; now when this scion, by death is cut off, he doth not perish, but is set into a more noble and generous stock, he is with Christ, which is far better: and well might the apostle say, 'it is far better.' Is not a state of perfection better than a state of imperfection, our graces are our best jewels, but they are imperfect, and do not give out their full lustre; grace is but in its infancy and minority here, it will not be of full growth till we are with Christ: the best christian is like a child put out to nurse. Here we have but some imperfect buddings of grace; when we are with Christ our graces shall be fully ripe and blown; in this life we are said to receive but 'the first fruits of the Spirit.' We must not expect a full crop till we are with Christ: grace while we are here is mingled with corruption. It is like gold in the ore, or as the pillar of cloud, it hath its dark side as well as its light; our faith is mingled with unbelief; our humility is stained with pride: the flame of grace is not so pure but it hath some smoky vapours. Our life of grace is said to be hid; it is hid indeed under much corruption, as the sun is hid under a cloud, as the corn is hid under chaff, or as a pearl may be hid in the mire. Though grace cannot be lost, yet it may be hid. David so clouded his graces by sin, that others could hardly see the cloth of gold under the filthy garments. Is it not far better to be with Christ? our graces then shall shine forth in their perfection. This is a glorious privilege, we shall be with Christ.

It is a blessed thing to be with Christ while we are here. 'I am ever with thee.' What is it the pious soul desires in this life? is it not to have the sweet presence of Christ? he cares for nothing but what hath something of Christ in it; he loves duties only as they are manuductions to Christ: why is prayer so sweet, but because the soul hath private conference with Christ? why is the word precious

but because it is a means to convey Christ? he comes down to us upon the wings of the Spirit; and we go up to him upon the wings of faith: an ordinance without Christ, is but feeding upon the dish instead of the meat. Why doth the wife love the letter, but because it brings news of her husband? Here we enjoy Christ by letters, and that is sweet; but what will it be to enjoy his presence in glory? Here is that which may amaze us, we shall be with Christ; Christ is all that is desirable: nay, he is more than we can desire. A man that is thirsty, he desires only a little water to quench his thirst; but bring him to the sea, and here he has more than he can desire. In Christ there is not only a fulness of sufficiency, but a fulness of redundancy; it overflows all the banks: a christian that is most sublimated by faith, hath neither a head to devise, nor an heart to desire all that which is in Christ; only when we come to heaven, God will enlarge the vessel of our desire, and will fill us as Christ did the water-pots with wine, 'up to the brim.' Now this privilege of being with Christ, hath six privileges growing out of it.

SECT. 1. *The First Privilege of being with Christ.*

1. Vision, Job xix. ver. 26. 'In my flesh shall I see God;' the sight of Jesus Christ will be the most sublime and ravishing object to a glorified saint. When Christ was upon earth, his beauty was hid. 'He hath no form or comeliness:' the light of the divine nature was hid in the dark lanthorn of the human: it was hid under reproaches, sufferings; yet even at that time there was enough of beauty in Christ to delight the heart of God. 'My Elect in whom my soul delighteth:' his veil was then upon his face; but what will it be when the veil shall be taken off, and he shall ap-

pear in all his embroidery? It is heaven enough to see Christ. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' There are, saith Musculus, angels and arch-angels: aye, but they do not make heaven: Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory.

SECT 2. *The Second Privilege of being with Christ.*

The next privilege is Union; our bring with Christ is not only local, but conjugal: we shall so behold him, as to be made one with him. What nearer than union? what sweeter? Union is the spring of joy, the ground of privilege; by virtue of this blessed union with Christ, all those rare beauties wherewith the human nature of the Lord Jesus is bespangled shall be ours. Let us compare two scriptures, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.' That is, the glory of the human nature; but this is not all, ver. 22. 'The glory that thou hast given me I have given them.' Christ hath not his glory only for himself, but for us; we shall shine by his beams: here Christ puts his graces upon his spouse, and in heaven he will put his glory upon her. No wonder then the king's daughter is 'all glorious within,' and 'her clothing of wrought gold.' How glorious will the spouse be, when she hath Christ's jewels upon her? Judge not of the saints by what they are, but by what they shall be: 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be,' 1 John iii. 1. Why, what shall we be? 'we shall be like him.' The spouse of Christ shall not only be made one with Christ, but she shall be made like Christ; in other marriages, the spouse changeth her condition, but here she changeth her complexion: not that the saints in glory shall receive of Christ's essence, they shall

have as much glory as the human nature is capable of; but though Christ conveys his image, yet not his essence. The sun shining upon a glass, leaves a print of its beauty there; and it is hard to distinguish between the glass and the sun-beam: but the glass is not the beam, the sun conveys only its likeness, not its essence.

SECT. 3. *The Third Privilege of being with Christ.*

The next privilege is Nobility; which consists in two things.

1. The saints shall sit with Jesus Christ when he judgeth the world: 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' The saints shall sit with Christ in judicature, as the justices of peace with the judge: the saints are Christ's assessors; they shall be with him upon the bench, applauding his righteous sentence. O what a glorious tribunal will that be! here the world judgeth the saints, but there the saints shall judge the world.

2. They shall sit nearer the throne than the angels. The angels are noble and sublime spirits, but by virtue of our marriage union, Christ having taken our flesh, and the knot being tied between the divine and human nature in the virgin's womb, we shall be ennobled with greater honour than the angels: the angels are Christ's friends, but not his spouse: this honour have all his saints. As the saints' robes in glory shall be brighter than the angels' theirs being only the righteousness of creatures, but these having upon them the righteousness of God) so their dignity shall be greater. O infinite! here we are prisoners at bar, but there favourites at court: the saints shall sit down in glory above the angels.

SECT. 4. *The Fourth Privilege of being with Christ.*

The next privilege is Joy. This joy of the saints proceeds from union; when our union with Christ is perfect, then our joy shall be full, Rev. xxi. 4. 'And God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more sorrow.'

1. There shall be no weeping. Jesus Christ hath provided a handkerchief to wipe off the tears of the saints. Here the spouse is in sable, it being a time of absence from her husband: but in heaven Christ will take away the spouse's mourning; he will put off all her black and bloody apparel, and will clothe her in white robes, Rev. vii. 13. White, as it is an emblem of the saints purity, so it is a type of their joy; heaven would not be heaven if there were weeping there; hell indeed is called a place of weeping; they that would not shed a tear for their sins while they lived, shall have weeping enough; but we never read of weeping in heaven. Christ will take down our harps from the willows; there he will call for his heralds and trumpeters: the angels, those blessed choiristers, shall sing the divine anthems of praise, and the saints shall join in that heavenly concert. If it were possible that any tears could be shed when we are with Christ, they should be the tears of joy, as sometimes we have seen a man weep for excessive joy: Christ will turn all our water there into wine.

2. There 'shall be no sorrow; one smile from Christ's face will make us forget all our afflictions: sorrow is a cloud gathered in the heart, upon the apprehension of some evil: and weeping is the cloud of grief dropping into rain: but in heaven the sun of righteousness shall shine so bright, that there shall not be the least interposition of any cloud; there shall be no sorrow there, nor any thing to breed it:

there shall be no sin to humble : heaven is such a pure soil that the viper of sin will not breed there : there shall be no enemy to molest. When Israel had conquered Canaan, yet they could not get rid of all the Canaanites, they would live among them ; ‘ But the Canaanites would dwell in that land : ’ but when we are with Christ, we shall never be troubled with Canaanites more. ‘ In that day (I may allude to that of the prophet) there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord.’ God will keep the heavenly paradise with a flaming sword, that none shall come near to hurt : ‘ Upon all that glory shall be a defence.’ There shall be nothing to breed sorrow in heaven. There are two things that usually raise the clouds of sorrow, and both shall be removed when we are with Christ.

1. The frowns of great men : how ambitious are men of the Prince’s smile ? but alas, that quickly sets in a cloud, and then their comforts are in the wain, they are sad ! but when we are with Christ, we shall have a perpetual smile from God : the saints shall never be out of favour, Jesus Christ is the great favourite at court ; and as long as God smiles upon Christ, so long he will smile upon the saints, they having on Christ’s beauty ; and being part of Christ.

2. The loss of dear friends : a friend imparts secrets ; friendship is the marriage of affections, it makes two become one spirit. David and Jonathan took sweet counsel together, their heart was knit in one : now here is the grief, when this precious knot must be untied : but be of good cheer, if thy friend belong to the election, after thou hast parted with thy sins, thou shalt meet with him and never part. If thy friend be wicked, though he were thy friend on earth, thou wilt cease to be his friend in heaven. The pious wife will not complain she hath lost her husband, nor the religious parent,

that he hath lost his child; all relations are infinitely made up in Christ, as the whole constellation in the sun, that great lamp of heaven. When a man comes to the sea, he doth not complain that he wants his cistern of water: Though thou didst suck comfort from thy relations; yet when thou comest to the ocean, and art with Christ, thou shalt never complain that thou hast left thy cistern behind: there will be nothing to breed sorrow in heaven; there shall be joy, and nothing but joy. Heaven is set out by that phrase, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Here joy enters into us, there we enter into joy: the joys we have here are from heaven; those are in heaven: the joys that we shall have with Christ, are without measure and without mixture. 'In thy presence is fulness of joy,' Ps. xvi. 11. *fountain*

1. The heart shall be filled. Nothing but Christ can replenish the heart with joy: the understanding, will, affections, are such a triangle, that none can fill but the Trinity. As Christ's beauty shall amaze the eye, so his love shall ravish the heart of a glorified saint: must it not needs be joy to be with Christ? what joy when a christian shall see the great gulf shot between heaven and hell? what joy when Christ shall take a believer into the wine cellar, and kiss him with the kisses of his lips? what joy when the match shall be at once made up, and solemnized between Christ and the soul? these are the more noble and generous delights.

2. All the senses shall be filled with joy; and, at once: the eye shall be filled; what joy to see that orient brightness in the face of Christ? there you may see the lilly and the rose mixed, white and ruddy, Cant. v. 10. The ear shall be filled; what joy to the spouse to hear Christ's voice? the voice of God was dreadful to Adam, after he had listened to the serpent's voice? 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and was afraid,' Gen. iii. 10. But how

sweet will the bridegroom's voice be? What joy to hear him say, My love, my dove, my undefiled? What joy to hear the music of angels, even the heavenly host praising God? If the eloquence of Origin, the golden mouth of Chrysostom, did so affect and charm the ears of their auditors, O then what will it be to hear the glorious tongues of saints and angels, as so many divine trumpets sounding forth the excellencies of God, and singing hallelujahs to the lamb? The smell shall be filled; what joy to smell that fragrancy and perfume that comes from Christ? all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia. The sweet breath of his Spirit blowing upon the soul, shall give forth its scent as the wine of Lebanon. The taste shall be filled; Christ will bring his spouse into the banqueting-house, and she shall be inebriated with his love; O what joy to be drinking in this heavenly nectar! This is the water of life: This is the wine on the lees well refined. The touch shall be filled; the saints shall be ever in the embraces of Christ; 'Behold my hands and my feet; handle me, and see me,' Luke xxiv. 39. That will be our work in heaven; we shall be ever handling the Lord of life: Thus all the senses shall be filled with joy. Well might the apostle say, to be with Christ is far better. If Christ's sufferings are full of joy, what then are his embraces? If the dew of Hermon hill be so sweet, the first fruits of Christ's love; what will the full crop be? In short, there will be nothing in heaven but what shall add infinitely to the joy of the saints. The very torments of the damned shall create matter of joy and triumph. I may allude to that of the Psalmist, 'The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance;' the Elect shall rejoice upon a double account to see God's justice magnificently exalted, and to see themselves miraculously delivered. There shall be no unpleasant object represented; nothing but joy.

Such will that joy be, when we are with Christ, that it is not possible, so neither is it fit for a man to speak, 2 Cor. xii. 4. We read that Joseph gave his brethren money and provisions for the way; but the full sacks were kept till they came to their Father's house; God gives us something by the way; some of the hidden manna: some taste of his heavenly joy in this life, but the full sacks of corn are kept for heaven. O what joy to be with Christ! surely if there were such joy and triumph at Solomon's coronation, that all the earth rang with the sound of it, what joy will be on the saints' coronation-day, when they shall be eternally united to Jesus Christ?

SECT. 5. The Fifth Privilege of being with Christ.

I proceed to the next privilege which is Rest. A Christian in this life is like quick-silver, which hath a principle of motion in itself, but not of rest: we are never quiet, but as the ball upon the racket, or the ship upon the waves. As long as we have sin this is like the quick-silver: A child of God is full of motion and disquiet; 'I have no rest in my bones by reason of my sin,' Psal. xxxviii. 3. While there are wicked men in the world, never look for rest. If a man be poor, he is thrust away by the rich: if he be rich, he is envied by the poor; sometimes losses disquiet, sometimes law-suits vex; it is only the prisoner lives in such a tenement as he may be sure none will go about to take from him: the saints in this life are in a pilgrim condition: the apostles had no certain dwelling place, 1 Cor. iv. 11. We are here in a perpetual hurry, in a constant fluctuation: our life is like the tide, sometimes ebbing, sometimes flowing: here is no rest: and the reason is, because we are out of centre; every thing is in motion till it comes at the centre; Christ is the centre of the soul: the needle

of the compass trembles, till it turns to the North pole. Noah's dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, till she came at the ark. This ark was a type of Christ; when we come to heaven, the kingdom that cannot be shaken, we shall have rest, Heb. iv. 9. 'There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. Heaven in scripture is compared to a granary, Matt. iii. 12. an emblem of rest. Wheat, while it stands on the ground, is shaken to and fro with the wind, but when it is laid up in the granary it is at rest: The elect are spiritual wheat, who while they are in the field of this world are never quiet, the wind of persecution shakes this wheat. and every one that passeth by will be plucking these sacred ears of corn, but when the wheat is in the heavenly garner, it is at rest; There remains a rest, &c. Not but that there shall be motion in heaven, (for spirits cannot be idle) but it shall be without lassitude and weariness. It shall be a labour full of ease, a motion full of rest. When a believer is in heaven, he hath his *Quietus est*. The lower region is windy and tempestuous; when we are once gotten into the upper region of glory, there are no winds or noxious vapours, but a serene calmness; this is to be with Christ.

SECT. 6. *The Sixth Privilege of being with Christ.*

The last is *Security*. It is possible a man may have a few minutes of rest; but he is not secure; he knows not how soon eclipses and changes may come: he is still in fear, and fear makes a man a servant, (saith the philosopher) though he know it not. There is torment in fear, 1 John iv. 18. He that hath great possessions thinks thus: but how soon may I fall from this pinnacle of honour? how soon may the plunderer come? Nay, a believer that hath dur-

able riches, yet is still pendulous and doubting concerning his condition.

1. He sometimes questions whether he be in the state of grace or no; and thus he thinks with himself; perhaps I believe, perhaps I do not believe: I have something that glisters, perhaps it is but a counterfeit chain of pearl; my faith is presumption, my love to Christ is but self-love; and when the Spirit of God hath wrought the heart to some sound persuasion, he is soon shaken again; as a ship that lies at anchor, though it be safe, yet it is shaken and tossed upon the water; and these fears leave impressions of sadness upon the heart.

2. But secondly, he fears that though he be in the state of grace, yet he may fall into some scandalous sin, and so grieve the Spirit of God, sadden the hearts of the righteous, wound his own conscience, harden sinners, discourage new beginners, put a song into the mouth of the profane, and at last God hide his face in a cloud. A child of God after a sad declension, having by his sin put black spots in the face of religion, though I deny not but he hath a title to the promise; yet he may be in such a condition, that he cannot for the present apply any promise, he may go weeping to his grave.

These sad fears like black vapours, are still arising out of a gracious heart; but when once a believer is with Christ, there is full security of heart; he is not only out of danger, but out of fear. Take it thus; a man that is upon the top of a mast, he may sit safe for the present, but not secure. Perhaps the pirates may shoot at the ship, and take it; perhaps the winds may arise suddenly, and the ship may be cast away in the storm; but a man that is upon a rock, he stands impregnable; his heart is secure. A christian in this life is like a man upon the top of a mast; sometimes the pirates come aboard, viz. cruel persecutors, and they shoot at his ship,

and oft, though the passenger (the precious soul) escapes, yet they sink the ship; sometimes the winds of tentation blow; those northern winds; and now the christian questions whether God loves him, or whether his name be enrolled in the book of life; and though being in Christ, there is no danger, yet his heart doth hesitate and tremble: but when he is with Christ, off from the top of the mast, and is planted upon the rock, his heart is fully secure; and you shall hear him say thus, now I am sure I have shot the gulf, I am now passing from death unto life, and none shall pluck me out of my Saviour's arms.

CHAP. IX.

The Fourth Prerogative Royal.

LET the Lucianists and Epicures place their happiness in this life; a believer's is in reversion; the golden world is yet to come. I pass to the next prerogative, which is:

4. The blessed inheritance, Col. i. 12. 'Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' This world is but a tenement, which we may be soon turned out of; heaven is an inheritance, and a glorious one. Heaven hath no hyperbole; if the skirts and suburbs of the palace, viz. the stars and planets be so glorious, that our eyes cannot behold the dazzling lustre of them; what glory then is there in the chamber of presence? What is the sanctum sanctorum? Of this blessed place we have a figurative description, Rev. 21. John was carried away in the Spirit, and had a vision of heaven, ver. 2. That it was the Hierusalem above, is clear, if we consult with ver. 22. 'And I saw no temple therein:' while we dwell upon earth, there is need

of a temple, we shall not be above ordinances till we are above sin; but in heaven, God will be instead of a temple, 'he shall be all in all.' And ver. 25. 'there shall be no night there:' no city is to be found, not the most glorious metropolis under heaven, where it is always day: for though some regions which lie immediately under the pole, have light for several months together; yet when the sun withdraws from the horizon, they have as long a night as before they had a day: but saith the text, 'There shall be no night there.' In hell it is all night, but in heaven the day will be ever lengthening. Now this blessed inheritance which the saints shall possess, hath eight properties, or rather privileges worth our serious thoughts.

1. Sublimeness. It is set out by a great and high mountain, Rev. xxi. 10. It is placed above the aery and starry heaven, saith Musculus; it is the empyræan heaven which Saint Paul calls the third heaven. For the situation of it; it is far above all heavens, where Christ himself is: this is the royal palace where saints shall dwell. The men of this world are high in power and in pride; but if they could build their nests among the stars, the elect shall shortly be above them; they shall take their flight as high as Christ: here is a preferment worth looking after.

2. Magnificence. It is set out by pearls and precious stones, the richest jewels. If the streets are of gold, what is the furniture and hangings? what is the cabinet of jewels? I wonder not that 'the violent take it by force,' Mat. xi. 12. I rather wonder others are not more violent: what are all the rarities of the world to this? The coasts of pearl, the islands of spices, the rocks of diamonds? what a rich place must that needs be, where God will lay out his cost? where wisdom doth contrive, and bounty doth disburse?

Fulgentius beholding the pomp and splendour of the Roman senate-house, cried out, O how beautiful is the celestial Hierusalem, if the terrestrial senate-house be so glorious! In this blessed inheritance there is nothing but glory; there is the king of glory; there are the vessels of glory; there are the thrones of glory; there is the weight of glory; there are the crowns of glory; there is the kingdom of glory; there is the brightness of glory: this is a purchase worth getting. What will not men adventure for a kingdom? the worst come to the worst, it is but venturing our blood, we need not venture our conscience.

3. Purity. Heaven is set forth under the metaphor of 'pure gold, and transparent glass,' Rev. xxi. 11. the apostle calls it 'an inheritance undefiled.' Heaven is a pure place; it is compared to the sapphire, xxi. 19. the sapphire is a precious stone of a bright sky colour, and it hath a virtue in it, saith Pliny, to preserve chastness and purity. Thus heaven is represented by the sapphire; it is a place where only the refined sublimated spirits do enter. And heaven is compared to the emerald, ver. 19. which (as writers say) hath a precious virtue to expel poison. Heaven is such a pure soil, that as no fever of lust, so no venom of malice shall be there; with the emerald it will expel poison. There shall not enter into it any thing, 'that defileth,' Rev. xxi. 27. It is a kingdom wherein 'dwells righteousness,' 2 Pet. iii. 13. In this lower region of the world there is little righteousness; 'They set up wickedness by a law,' Ps. xciv. 20. and the wicked devours his neighbour, 'which is more righteous than he,' Hab. i. 13. The just man is oppressed because he is just. One saith, there is more justice to be found in hell than here among them: for in hell no innocent person is oppressed; but here righteousness is the thing that is persecuted. A man can

hardly tread two steps, but either into sin or into suffering. In this world, the sinner need not fear any punitive vindictive act of justice; rather he that reproves sin may fear. Holiness is the white that the Devil shoots at: but heaven is a kingdom wherein dwells righteousness; there is the judge of the world, 'who puts on righteousness as a breast-plate; who loves righteousness.'

4. Peaceableness. The word Peace, comprehends all blessings. Peace is the glory of a kingdom: this white lily is the best flower of a prince's crown. How happy was the reign of Numa Pompilius, when the bees made their hives in the soldiers' helmets! but where shall we find an uninterrupted peace upon earth? either divisions at home, or wars abroad, the beating of the drums, the roaring of the cannons, the sounding of the trumpets. Solomon's kingdom was peaceable a while, but how soon had he an alarm given him! 1 Kings xi. 14. 'The Lord stirred up an adversary against him.' How soon do the clouds of blood drop after a little sun-shine of peace! but the inheritance to come is peaceable; there is the 'Prince of Peace;' there the saints enter into peace. The harp, in ancient times, was made the hieroglyphic of peace; in heaven there shall be the 'voice of harpers harping.' The saints in this life wear 'garments rolled in blood;' but in a state of glory, they are said to wear 'white robes,' which shall not be stained with the blood of war any more: in heaven righteousness and peace shall kiss each other.

6. Amplitude. The inheritance is sufficiently spacious for all the saints. The garner wide enough to receive all those infinite grains of wheat that shall be laid in it: 'And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, &c. The city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth, and he measured the city with the reed

twelve thousand furlongs.' Or, as I find it in some Greek copies, 'twelve times twelve thousand furlongs.' Here is a finite put for an infinite; impossible it is that any arithmetician should number these furlongs: it is a phrase only that darkly shadows out the amplitude and largeness of this celestial city. Though there be innumerable companies of saints and angels in heaven, yet there is infinitely room enough to receive them: 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' Some are of opinion that every believer shall have a particular mansion in glory. Every saint shall have his kingdom, saith Jansenius. We know our Saviour told his apostles that they should sit upon twelve thrones. Certainly the saints shall not be straitened for room. The continent of glory is wide enough for the most sublime spirits to expatiate in.

6. Safety. It is an inheritance that the saints cannot be defrauded of; it is in safe hands. God keeps the inheritance for them, 1 Pet. i. 4. and keeps them for the inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 5. so that there can be no defalcation, nothing can hinder the saints from taking possession.

7. Light. It is called an inheritance 'in light.' If every star were a sun, it could never shadow out the bright lustre of this celestial paradise. Light is a glorious creature; what were all the world without light but a dark prison? What beauty is there in the sun when it is masked with a cloud? Light doth actuate the colours, and makes every flower appear in its fresh beauty. Heaven is a *diaphanum* or bright body, all over embroidered with light; not like *cælum stellatum*, or starry heaven, here and there bespangled with stars, but other parts of it like chequer-work interwoven with darkness. Here Christ as a continual sun shall give light to the whole heaven. 'The Lamb shall be the light thereof;' indeed all other light, in comparison of this, is but

like the twilight, or rather the midnight. Here alone are the shining rays of beauty, which every glorified eye shall be enabled both to behold and to possess; and this light shall have no night to eclipse or extinguish it; when once the Sun of Righteousness hath risen upon the soul, it shall never set any more. This is an high gradation of the glory of heaven, it is an inheritance in light. When the scripture would set forth the blessedness of God himself, it makes it consist in this, 'He dwelleth in light.'

8. Permanency. It is an inheritance incorruptible. It runs parallel with eternity; eternity is a circle that hath neither beginning nor end; a sea that hath neither bottom nor banks. This is the glory of the celestial paradise, it abides for ever. If we could by our arithmetic reckon up more millions of ages than there have been minutes since the creation, after all this time (which were a short eternity) the inheritance of the saints shall be as far from ending as it was at the beginning. 'The world passeth away,' 1 John ii. 17. every thing is passing: It is good to look upon the world as the heathens did upon pleasure; they looked upon the back parts of pleasure, and saw it going away from them and leaving a sting. The world is passing away, but heaven never passeth, therefore surpasseth. Evil things, (as pain and misery,) length of time makes them worse; but good things, (as joy and pleasure,) length of time makes them better: heaven's eminency is its permanency. Things are prized and valued by the time we have in them; lands or houses in fee-simple, which are to a man and his heirs for ever, are esteemed far better than leases, which soon expire. The saints do not lease heaven; it is not their landlord's house, but their Father's house: and this house never falls to decay; it is a mansion-house, John xiv. 2. There is nothing excellent (saith Na-

zianzene) that is not perpetual; the comforts of the world are fluid and uncertain, like a fading garland, therefore they are shadowed out by the tabernacle, which was transient; but heaven is set out by the temple, which was fixed and permanent: it was made of strong materials, built with stone, covered with cedar, over-laid with gold. Eternity is the highest link of the saint's happiness; the soul of a believer shall be for ever bathing itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of bliss. The lamp of glory shall be ever burning, never wasting: as there is no intermission in the joys of heaven, so no expiration. When once God hath set his plants in the celestial paradise, he will never pluck them up any more; he will never transplant them: never will Christ lose any member of this body; you may sooner separate light from the sun, than a glorified saint from Jesus Christ. O eternity, eternity! what a spring will that be, that shall have no autumn? what a day, that shall have no night! Methinks I see the morning-star appear, it is break of day already. Concerning the glory of this blessed inheritance, let me super-add these four things.

1. The glory of heaven is ponderous and weighty; it is called 'a weight of glory,' 2 Cor. iv. 17. God must make us able to bear it. This weight of glory should make sufferings light: this weight should make us throw away the weights of sin out of our hands, though they be golden weights: who would for the indulging of a lust, forfeit so glorious an inheritance? lay the whole world in scales with it, it is lighter than vanity.

2. It is infinitely satisfying. There is no vacuity or indigency; this can be said properly of nothing but heaven. You that court the world for honour and preferment, remember the creature saith concerning satisfaction, It is not in me. Heaven only is commensurate to the vast desires of the soul. Here

the christian cries out in a divine extacy, I have enough, my Saviour, I have enough. Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures; not drops, but rivers, and these only can quench the thirst. It shall be every day festival in heaven; there is no want at a feast: there shall be excellency shining in its perfection. The world is but a jail, the body is the fetter with which the soul is bound; if there be any thing in a jail to delight, what is the palace and the throne? what is heaven? If we meet with any comfort in Mount Horeb, what is in Mount Zion? All the world is like a landscape; you may see orchards and gardens curiously drawn in the landscape, but you cannot enter into them; you may enter into this heavenly paradise, 2 Pet. i. 11. 'For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom,' &c. Here is soul-satisfaction.

3. Though an innumerable company of saints and angels have a part in this inheritance, there is never the less for thee. Here is a propriety in a community; another man's beholding the sun doth not make me to have the lesser light: thus will it be in glory. Usually here, all the land goes to the heir, the younger are put off with small portions. In heaven all the saints are heirs; the youngest believer is an heir, and God hath land enough to give to all his heirs. All the angels and arch-angels have their portion paid out; yet a believer shall never have the less. Is not Christ the heir of all things? Heb. i. 2. and the saints co-heirs? Rom. viii. 17. they share with Christ in the same glory. It is true, one vessel may hold more than another, but every vessel shall be full.

4. The souls of the elect shall enter upon possession immediately after death, 2 Cor. v. 8. 'We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' There are some that

say, the souls of the elect sleep in their bodies, but the apostle here confutes it; for if the soul be absent from the body, how can it sleep in the body? There is an immediate transition and passage from death to glory, 'the soul returns to God that gave it.' Christ's resurrection was before his ascension; but the saints' ascension is before their resurrection. The body may be compared to the bubble in the water, the soul to the wind that fills it; you see the bubble riseth higher and higher, at last it breaks into the open air; so the body is but like a bubble, which riseth from infancy to youth, from youth to age, higher and higher; at last this bubble breaks, and dissolves into dust, and the spirit ascends into the open air: it returns unto God that gave it.

Be of good comfort, we shall not stay long for our inheritance; it is but winking, and we shall see God. O the glory of this paradise! When we are turned out of all, let us think of this inheritance which is to come; faith itself is not able to reach it: it is more than we can hope for. I may say of this celestial paradise, as once the children of Dan said of Laish, Judg. xviii. 9, 10. 'We have seen the land, and behold it is very good; a place where there is no want of any thing.' Faith being sent out as a spy to search the land of promise, returns this answer, 'There is no want of any thing.' There can be no want where Christ is, who is 'all in all,' Eph. iii. 11. In heaven there is health without sickness, plenty without famine, riches without poverty, life without death. There is unspotted chastity, unstained honour, unparalleled beauty. There is the tree of life in the midst of paradise; there is the river that waters the garden; there is the vine flourishing, and the pomegranates budding, Cant. vi. 11. There is the banqueting house, where are all those delicacies and rarities, wherewith God himself is delighted: while we are sitting at that table, Christ's

‘spikenard will send forth its smell,’ Cant. i. 12. There is the bed of love, there are the curtains of Solomon, there are the mountains of spices, and the streams from Lebanon, there are the cherubims, not to keep us out, but to welcome us into paradise; there shall the saints be adorned, as a bride with pearls of glory; there will God give us abundantly, ‘above all that we are able to ask or think,’ Eph. iii. 20. Is not here enough? What cannot an ambitious spirit ask? Haman’s aspiring heart could have asked not only the king’s royal robe, and the ring from his hand, but the crown from his head too; a man can ask a century of kingdoms, a million of worlds: but in heaven God will give us more than we can ask; nay, more than we can think: an high expression! what cannot we think? We can think, what if all the dust of the earth were turned to silver, what if every stone were a wedge of gold, what if every flower were a ruby, every pile of grass a pearl, every sand in the sea a diamond! yet what were all this to the ‘New Jerusalem which is above?’ It is as impossible for any man in his deepest thoughts to comprehend glory, as it is ‘to mete the heaven with a span,’ or drain the great ocean. **O** incomparable place! Methinks our souls should be big with longing for this blessed inheritance! All this that I have told you of heaven, may make you say as Monica, Austin’s mother, what do I do here? why is my soul any longer held with the earthen fetter of this flesh? Cleombrotus having read Plato’s piece of the immortality of the soul, being ravished with desire of those golden delights in the other world, killed himself. Though we must not break prison till God open it, yet how should we long for a jail delivery! how should we be inflamed with desire to taste of those rare and sweet delicacies, which are above at God’s right hand! O what madness is it for men to spin out their time, and tire out

their strength in the things of this world! which is to imitate Dionysius, who busied himself in catching flies. Surely, were we 'carried away in the Spirit,' I mean, elevated by the power of faith, to the contemplation of this royal and stately palace of glory; I know not whether we should more wonder at the lustre of heaven, or at the dulness of such as mind earthly things. How is the world adored, which is but a pageant or apparition! It is reported of Cæsar, that travelling on a time through a certain city, as he passed along, he saw the women, for the most part, playing with monkies and parrots; at which sight he said, What! have they no children to play with? So I say, when I see men toying with these earthly and beggarly delights; what! are there not more glorious and sublime things to look after? That which our Saviour said to the woman of Samaria, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;' the same may I say, did men know these eternal mansions, and what it were to be digging in these rich mines of glory. Would God give them a vision of heaven a while, as he did Peter, who saw 'heaven opened,' Acts x. 11. how would they fall into a trance, (being amazed and filled with joy!) and being a little recovered out of it, how importunately would they beg of God, that they might be adopted into this stately inheritance! But why do I expatiate? these things are unspeakable and full of glory. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could never sufficiently set forth the beauty and resplendency of this inheritance. Such was the curious art of Apelles in drawing of pictures, that if another had taken up the pencil to draw, he had spoiled all Apelles' work. Such is the excellency of this celestial paradise, that if the angels should take up their pencil to delineate it in

its colours, they would but stain and eclipse the glory of it. I have given you only the dark shadow in the picture, and that but rudely and imperfectly: such is the beauty and bliss of this inheritance, that as Chrysostom saith, if it were possible that all the sufferings of the saints could be laid upon one man, it were not worth one hour's being in heaven.

Some of the learned are of opinion, that we shall know our friends in heaven: nor to me doth it seem improbable; for surely our knowledge there shall not be eclipsed or diminished, but increased. And that which Anselm doth assert, that we shall have a knowledge of the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, all that were before us, and shall be after us, our predecessors and successors, to me seems very rational; for society without acquaintance is not comfortable, and methinks the scripture doth hint this much; if Peter and James, having but a glimpse of glory, (when our Lord was transfigured on the mount), were able to know Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen before, how much more shall we, being infinitely irradiated and enlightened with the Sun of Righteousness, know all the saints, though we were never acquainted with them before? and this will be very comfortable. Certainly there will be nothing wanting that may complete the saints' happiness.

Now that this glorious inheritance is the saints' prerogative, I shall evince by two arguments.

It is so, 1. In respect of the many obligations that lie upon God for performing this. As, 1. In regard of his promise, Tit. i. 2. 'In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.' God's promise is better than any man's bond. 2. In regard of his oath: 'He who is truth hath sworn,' Heb. vi. 17. 3. In regard to the price that is paid for it, Christ's blood. Heaven is not only a promised possession, but a purchased possession, Eph. i.

14. 4. In regard of Christ's prayer for it: 'Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.' Now God can deny Christ nothing, being the only favourite: 'I know thou always hearest me,' John xi. 42. 5. In regard of Christ's ascension. He is gone before us to take possession of heaven for us: he is now making preparations against our coming, John xiv. 2. 'I go before to prepare a place for you.' We read that our Lord sent two of his disciples before to make ready 'a large upper room for the passover,' Mark xiv. 15. So Jesus Christ is gone before to make ready a large upper room in heaven for the saints. 6. In regard of the anticipation of the Spirit in the hearts of the godly, giving them an assurance of, and stirring up in them passionate desires after this glorious inheritance; hence it is, we read of the earnest of the Spirit, 2 Cor. i. 22. and the first-fruits of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23. and the seal of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13. God doth not still his children with rattles. Heaven is already begun in a believer, so that the inheritance is certain. You see how many obligations lie upon God, and to speak with reverence, it stands not only upon God's mercy, but upon his faithfulness to make all this good to us.

The second argument is in respect of the union which the saints have with Jesus Christ. They are members of Christ, therefore they must have a part in this blessed inheritance: the member must be where the head is. Indeed the Arminians tell us, that a justified person may fall finally from grace, and so his union with Christ may be dissolved, and the inheritance lost. But how absurd is this doctrine? is Christ divided? can he lose a member of his body? then his body is not perfect; for how can that body be perfect which wants a limb? and if Christ may lose one member from his body, why

not as well all by the same reason? and so he shall be a head without a body. But be assured, the union with Christ cannot be broken, John xvii. 12. and so long the inheritance cannot be lost. What was said of Christ's natural body, is as true of the mystical: 'a bone of it shall not be broken.' Look how every bone and limb of Christ's natural body was raised up out of the grave, and carried into heaven: so shall every member of his mystical body, joined to him by the eternal Spirit, be carried up into glory. Fear not, O ye saints, neither sin nor Satan can dissolve your union with Christ, nor by consequence hinder you of that blessed place where your Head is.

Quest. Here it will be asked, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?' Psal. xxiv. 3. who shall be a citizen of this new Hierusalem which is above?

Ans. The new creature: this you read of, 2 Cor. v. 17. This new creature doth prepare us for the new Hierusalem. This is the divine and curious artifice of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, forming Christ in us: the same Holy Ghost that overshadowed the Virgin Mary, and formed the human nature of Christ in her womb, doth work and produce this new creature. O thou blessed man and woman, in whom this new creature is formed! I may say to thee, as the angel to Mary, 'That which is conceived in thee, is of the Holy Ghost.' Of all God's creatures, the new creature is the best: then let me ask, art thou a new creature? art thou a scion cut off from the wild olive of nature, and ingrafted into a new stock, the tree of life? Hath God defaced and dismantled the old man in thee? doth some limb drop off every day? hast thou a new heart? Till then thou art not fit for the new heaven. Art thou new all over? hast thou a new eye to discern the things that differ? hast thou a

new appetite? doth the pulse of thy soul beat after Christ? It is only the new creature which shall be their of the New Jerusalem. When thou wast sailing to hell, (for we have both wind and tide to carry us thither), hath the north and south wind awaked? hath the gale of the Spirit blown upon thee, and turned thy course? art thou now sailing to a new port? hath the seal of the word stamped a new and heavenly print upon thee? Then I am speaking all this while to thee; this blessed inheritance is entailed upon thee.

But if thou art an old sinner, expect that heaven should be kept, as paradise, with a flaming sword, that thou may est not enter. Be assured, God will never put the new wine of glory into an old musty bottle: heaven is not like Noah's ark, that received clean beasts into it, and unclean: nor like Pharaoh's court, where the vermin came: this inheritance doth not receive all comers. It is only the wheat that goes into Christ's garner; what hath the chaff to do there? this inheritance is only for 'them that are sanctified,' Acts xx. 32. Is thy heart consecrated ground? We read that in the time of Ezra, after the return of the people from the captivity, some who were ambitious of the priesthood, sought the writings of the genealogies, but they were not found among the numbers of the priests, 'therefore they were put by as polluted from the priesthood:' so whosoever they be that think to have a part in this blessed place, if their names be not found; that is, if they are not enrolled among the new creatures, they shall be put away as polluted from this inheritance.

CHAP. X.

The Fifth Prerogative Royal.

I Pass on to the next prerogative royal, which is :
 5. Our knowledge shall be clear. Knowledge is a beautiful thing; such was Adam's ambition to know more, that by tasting the tree of knowledge, he lost the tree of life: In heaven our knowledge shall be clear. Religion is a continued riddle; many things we have now but in the notion, which then we shall see perfectly; now, 'we know but in part.' The best christian hath a veil on his eye, as the Jews have upon their heart; hereafter the veil shall be taken off. Here we see through a glass darkly, in a riddle, mystery, then, face to face; that is, clearly.

There are five mysteries which God will clear up to us when we are in heaven.

1. The great mystery of the Trinity : this we know but in part. Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, where one makes three, and three make but one: this is bad arithmetic, but good divinity ; we have but dark conceptions of it : it is a mystery so deep, that we may soon wade beyond our depth.

Augustine being to write his books of the Trinity, was taught modesty by a child, who was lading the sea into a little spoon; to whom Augustine said, that he laboured in vain; for his little spoon would not contain the sea; to whom the child answered, my little spoon will sooner hold this vast ocean, than your shallow brain can contain the depth of the Trinity. How little a portion is known of God? If Job asked the question, who can understand the thunder? we may much more ask, who can understand the Trinity? but in heaven we shall see God as he is, that is, perfectly.

Quest. But shall every saint enjoy God so perfectly, that he shall have the same knowledge that God hath?

Ans. The infinite essence of God shall appear to the saints *tota*, but not *totaliter*; we shall have a full knowledge of God, but not know him fully, yet we shall take in so much of God as our human nature is capable of; it will be a bright and glorious knowledge: here we know him but by his power, wisdom, mercy: we see but his back-parts; there we shall see him face to face.

2. - The mystery of the incarnation; Christ assuming our human nature, and marrying it to the divine. Therefore called God-man, God with us. A mystery which the angels in heaven adore. God said, 'The man is become as one of us, Gen. iii. 22. but now we may say, God himself is become as one of us! it was not only *mirandum*, but *miraculum*. There was nothing within the sphere of natural causes to produce it. The incarnation of Christ is *catena aurea*, a golden chain made up of several links of miracles. For instance, that the Creator of heaven should become a creature; that eternity should be born; that he whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should be enclosed in the womb; that he who thunders in the clouds, should cry in the cradle; that he who rules the stars, should suck the breasts; that he who upholds all things by the word of his power, should himself be upheld; that a virgin should conceive; that Christ should be made of a woman, and of that woman which himself made; that the creature should give a being to the Creator; that the star should give light to the sun; that the branch should bear the vine; that the mother should be younger than the child she bare; and the child in the womb bigger than the mother; that he who is a Spirit, should be made flesh; that Christ should be without fa-

ther, and without mother, yet have both; without mother in the God-head, without father in the manhood; that Christ being incarnate, should have two natures, (the divine and human), and yet but one person; that the divine nature should not be infused into the human, nor the human mixed with the divine, yet assumed into the person of the Son of God; the human nature not God, yet one with God. Here is, I say, a chain of miracles.

I acknowledge the mercy of the incarnation was great, we having now both affinity and consanguinity with Jesus Christ: Christ's incarnation is the saint's inauguration.

The love of Christ in the incarnation was great; for herein he did set a pattern without a parallel; in clothing himself with our flesh, which is but walking ashes, he hath sewed, as it were, sackcloth to cloth of gold, the humanity to the Deity. But though the incarnation be so rich a blessing, yet it is hard to say which is the greater, the mercy or the mystery. It is a sacred depth, how doth it transcend reason, and even puzzle faith! We know but in part, we see this only in a glass darkly, but in heaven our knowledge shall be cleared up, we shall fully understand this divine riddle.

3. The mystery of scripture: the hard knots of scripture shall be untied, and dark prophecies fulfilled. There is a sacred depth in scripture which we must adore: some places of scripture are hard in the sense, others dark in the phrase, and cannot well be translated in regard of ambiguity; one Hebrew word having such various, and sometimes contrary significations, that it is very difficult to know which is the genuine sense. As it is with a traveller which is not skilled in his way, when he comes to a turning where the way parts, he is at a stand, and knows not which of the ways to take; such difficulties and labyrinths are there in scrip-

ture. It is true, all things purely necessary to salvation, are clear in the word of God; but there are some sacred depths that we cannot fathom, and this may make us long after heaven, when our light shall be clear. So for prophecies, some are very abstruse and profound; divines may shoot their arrows, but it is hard to say how near they may come to the mark: it is dubious whether in such a particular age and century of the church, such a prophecy was fulfilled. The Jews have a saying when they meet with an hard scripture they understand not, Elias will come and interpret these things to us; we expect not Elias; but when we are in heaven, we shall understand prophecies; our knowledge shall be clear.

4. The great mystery of providence shall be cleared up. Providence is the queen of the world; it is the hand that turns all the wheels in the universe; Chrysostom calls it the pilot that steers the ship of the creation. Providences are often dark; God writes sometimes in short-hand: the characters of providence are so various and strange, and our eyes are so dim, that we know not what to make of providence: hence we are ready to censure that which we do not understand: we think that things are very eccentric and disorderly; God's providence is sometimes secret, always wise. The dispensations of providence are often sad, 'Judgment beginning at the house of God,' and the 'just man perishing in his righteousness,' Eccles. vii. 15. that is, while he is pursuing a righteous cause: though his way be pious, it is not always prosperous: and on the other side, those that work wickedness 'are set up, yea, they that tempt God are delivered,' Mal. iii. 15. Though now our candle be in a dark lanthorn, and the people of God cannot tell what God is a doing, yet when they are in heaven they shall see the reason of these transactions: they shall see that every

providence served for the fulfilling of God's promise, viz. 'That all things shall work together for good,' Rom. viii. 28. In a watch the wheels seem to move cross one to another, but all carry on the motion of the watch, all serve to make the alarm strike; so the wheels of providence seem to move cross, but all shall carry on the good of the elect; all the lines shall meet at last in the centre of the promise; in heaven, as we shall see mercy and justice, so we shall see promises, and providences kissing each other: Our light shall be clear. When a man is at the bottom of an hill, he cannot see very far: but when he is on the top, he may see many miles distant. Here the saints of God are in the valley of tears, they are at the bottom of the hill, and cannot tell what God is a doing; but when they come to heaven, and shall be on the top of the mount, they shall see all the glorious transactions of God's providence; never a providence but they shall see either a wonder or a mercy wrapt up in it. A limner, at the first makes a rude draught in the picture, here an eye, there an hand; but when he hath limned it out in all its parts and lineaments, and laid them in their colours, it is beautiful to behold. We that live in this age of the church, see but a rude draught, as it were some dark pieces of God's providence represented, and it is impossible that we should judge of God's work by pieces; but when we come to heaven, and see the full body and portraiture of God's providence drawn out in its lively colours, it will be a most glorious sight to behold: providence shall be unriddled.

5. The mystery of hearts. We shall see an heart-anatomy, Eccles. xii. 14. 'For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.' We shall see the designs and cabinet-counsels of mens' hearts discovered; then the hypocrite's mask

shall fall off. Oh the black conclave that is in the heart of man! The heart is deep: it may be compared to a river which hath fair streams running on the top, but when this river comes to be drained, their lies abundance of vermin at the bottom: thus it is with man's heart, there are fair streams running on the top, a civil life, a religious profession; but at the day of judgment, when God shall drain this river, and make a discovery of hearts, then all the vermin of ambition, covetousness, shall appear, all shall come out: then we shall see whether Jehu's design was zeal for God, or the kingdom; we shall see clearly whether Jezabel had more mind to keep a fast, or to get Naboth's vineyard: then we shall see whether Herod had more mind to worship Christ, or to worry him; all the secrets of mens' hearts shall be laid open; methinks, it would be worth dying to see this sight. We shall then see who is the Achan, who is the Judas; the womens' paint falls off from their faces when they come near the fire; before the scorching heat of God's justice, the hypocrite's paint will drop off, and the treason hid in his heart will be visible; these mysteries will God reveal to us: our knowledge shall be clear.

CHAP. XI.

The Sixth Prerogative Royal.

THE next privilege, is, our love shall be perfect: love is the jewel with which Christ's bride is adorned: in one sense it is more excellent than faith; for love never ceaseth, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. The spouse shall put off her jewel of faith, when she goes to heaven: but she shall never put off her jewel of love: love shall be perfect.

1. Our love to God shall be perfect: the saint's love shall be joined with reverence; for a filial dis-

position shall remain, but there shall be no servile fear in heaven. Horror and trembling is proper to the damned in hell; though in heaven there shall be a reverencing fear, yet a rejoicing fear: we shall see that in God which will work such a delight that we cannot but love him: and this love to God shall be, 1. A fervent love. Our love to God in this life is rather a desire, but in heaven the smoke of desire shall be blown up into a flame of love; we shall love God with an intenseness of love, and thus the saints shall be like the seraphims who are so called from their burning. Here our love is lukewarm, and sometimes frozen: a child of God weeps that he can love God no more; but there is a time shortly coming when our love to God shall be fervent, it shall burn as hot as it can: the damned shall be in a flame of fire, the elect in a flame of love. 2. A fixed love. Alas, how soon is our love taken off from God! other objects presenting themselves, steal away our love. 'Your goodness is like a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away:' in the morning you shall see the grass covered with drops of dew, as so many pearls, but before noon all is vanished; so it is with our love to God: perhaps at a sermon, when our affections are stirred, the heart melts in love; and at a sacrament, when we see Christ's blood, as it were, trickling down upon the cross, some love-drops fall from the heart; but within a few days all is vanished, and we have lost our first love: this is matter of humiliation while we live. But O ye saints, comfort yourselves, in heaven your love shall be fixed, as well as fervent; it shall never be taken off from God any more: such beauty and excellency shall shine in God, that as a divine loadstone it will be always drawing your eyes and heart after him.

2. Our love to the saints shall be perfect: love is a sweet harmony, a tuning and chiming together

of affections. It is our duty to love the saints, 1. Though they are of bad dispositions; sometimes their nature is so rugged and unhewn, that grace doth not cast forth such a lustre; it is like a gold ring on a leprous hand, or a diamond set in iron: yet if there be any thing of Christ, it is our duty to love it. 2. Though they in some things differ from us, yet if we see Christ's image or portraiture drawn upon their hearts, we are to separate the precious from the vile. But alas, how defective is this grace? how little love is there among God's people? Herod and Pilate can agree: wicked men unite when saints divide. For the divisions of England there are great thoughts of heart; contentions were never more hot, love never more cold: many there are whose music consists all in discord, whose harp is the cross; that pretend to love truth, but hate peace. Divisions are Satan's powder-plot to blow up religion. Histories relate that in the time of the emperor Commodus, the temple of Peace at Rome was burned down to the ground; it was a stately edifice, richly adorned with donaries of gold and silver: the burning of this temple was very ominous, and did presage war among the Romans. I may too truly allude, sin kindled the fire of separation, and this fire hath burned down the temple of peace in England, and now we are crumbled into factions: for these things there are great thoughts of heart. It were not strange to hear the harlot say, Let the child be divided; but to hear the mother say so, this is sad. If pope, cardinal, jesuit, all conspire against the church of God, it were not strange; but for one saint to persecute another, this is strange. For a wolf to worry a lamb is usual, but for a lamb to worry a lamb is unnatural. For Christ's lily to be among the thorns, is ordinary; but for this lily to become a thorn, to tear and fetch blood of itself, this is strange? How will Christ

take this at our hands? would he not have his coat rent, and will he have his body rent? O that I could speak here weeping! Well, this will be a foil to set off heaven the more; there is a time shortly coming when our love shall be perfect, there shall be no difference of judgment in heaven; there the saints shall be all of a piece: though we fall out by the way, and about the way, we shall all agree in the journey's end. The cherubims, representing the angels, are set out 'with their faces looking one upon another;' in this life christians turn their backs one upon another, but in heaven they shall be like the cherubims with their faces looking one upon another. It is observed, that the olive tree and the myrtle have a wonderful sympathy, and if they grow near together, will mutually embrace, and twist about each others roots and branches: christians in this life are like tearing brambles, but in heaven they shall be like the olive and myrtle, sweetly embrace one another. When once the blessed harp of Christ's voice hath sounded in the ears of the saints, the evil spirit shall be quite driven away. When our strings shall be wound up to the highest pitch of glory, you shall never hear any more discord in the saints' music: in heaven there shall be a perfect harmony.

CHAP. XII.

The Seventh Prerogative Royal.

THE next glorious privilege to come, is the resurrection of our bodies. Trajan's ashes after death were brought to Rome and honoured, being set upon the top of a famous pillar: so the ashes of the saint's at the resurrection shall be honoured, and shine as silver dust: this is an article of our faith. Now for the illustration of this, there are three

things considerable: 1. That there is such a thing as the resurrection. 2. That this is not yet past. 3. That the same body that dies shall rise again.

1. I shall prove the proposition that there is a resurrection of the body. There are some of the Sadducees of opinion that there is no resurrection, then 'let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,' 1 Cor. xv. 32. To what purpose are all our prayers and tears? and indeed it were well for them who are in their life-time as brute beasts, if it might be with them as beasts after death; but there is a resurrection of the body, as well as an ascension of the soul; which I shall prove by two arguments.

1. Because Christ is risen, therefore we must rise: the head being raised, the rest of the body shall not always lie in the grave, for then it would be an head without a body: his rising is a pledge of our resurrection, 1 Thess. iv. 14.

2. In regard of justice and equity. The bodies of the wicked have been weapons of unrighteousness, and have joined with the soul in sin; their eyes have been a casement to let in vanity, their hands have been full of bribes, their feet have been swift to shed blood; therefore justice and equity require that they should rise again, and their bodies be punished with their souls. Again, the bodies of the saints have been members of holiness; their eyes have dropped down tears for sin, their hands have relieved the poor, their tongues have been trumpets of God's praise, therefore justice and equity require that they should rise again, that their bodies as well as their souls may be crowned. There must be a resurrection, else how should there be a remuneration? We are more sure to rise out of our graves than out of our beds. The bodies of the wicked are locked up in the grave as in a prison; that they may not infest the church of God; and at the day of judgment they shall be brought out of

the prison to trial; and the bodies of the saints are laid in the grave, as in a bed of perfume, where they mellow and ripen against the resurrection. Noah's olive tree springing after the flood, the blossoming of Aaron's dry rod, the flesh and sinews coming to Ezekiel's dry bones, what were these but lively emblems of the resurrection?

2. That this resurrection is not yet past. Some hold that it is past, and make the resurrection to be nothing else but regeneration, which is called a rising from sin, and a 'being risen with Christ;' and do affirm, that there is no other resurrection but this, and that only the soul is with God in happiness, not the body. Of this opinion were Hymeneus and Philetus, 2 Tim. ii. 18. But the rising from sin is called the first resurrection, Rev. i. 6. which implies that there is a second resurrection; and that second I shall prove out of Dan. xii. 2. 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake;' he doth not say they are already awake, but they shall awake. And John v. 28. 'The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' Observe, Christ doth not say, they are come forth of the grave already, but they shall come forth.

Here a question may be moved, Whether the bodies of some of the saints are not in heaven already? then it will seem that their resurrection is not yet to come; as we read that Elias was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot: and Enoch, Heb. xi. 5. 'was translated, that he might not see death.'

Ans. I know the question is controverted among divines; and should it be granted that they are bodily in heaven, by an extraordinary writ, or dispensation from God, this doth not at all disprove a ge-

neral resurrection to come. But there are some reasons do incline me to think that Enoch and Elias are not yet bodily in heaven, nor shall be till the resurrection of all flesh, when the rest of the elect, like a precious crop, being fully ripe, shall be translated into glory. The first is Heb. xi. 13. where it is said, 'these all died in faith,' where Enoch was included: now why we should restrain this word, these, only to Abel, Noah, Abraham, and not also to Enoch, I see no rational ground.

Quest. But is it not said, he was translated, 'that he might not see death;' how can these two stand together, that Enoch died, yet he did not see death?

Ans. These words, that he might not see death, I conceive (with some other divines) the meaning is, that he might not see it in that painful and horrid manner as others: his soul had an easy and joyful passage out of his body; he died not after the common manner of men: seeing and feeling are in scripture oft exegetical, the one is put for the other.

2. My second argument is, John iii. 2. 'We know when he shall appear, we shall be like him.' We read in scripture but of two appearings of Christ, his appearing in the flesh, and his appearing at the day of judgment. Now his appearing in this text, must needs be meant of his last appearing: and what then? then saith the apostle, 'we shall be like him,' that is, in our bodies, Phil. iii. 21. The spirits of just men being already made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. whence I infer, Enoch is not yet ascended bodily into heaven, because none of the bodies of the saints shall be fully made like Christ till his second appearing. 3. Besides this, may be added the judgment of many of the Fathers, who were pious and learned. It is not probable that Enoch and Elias should be taken up in their bodies into heaven, saith Peter Martyr; and he urgeth that saying of our Lord, 'No man hath ascended into heaven,'

(that is, saith he, corporeally) 'but the Son of man that descended from heaven.' Of this opinion also is Œcolampadius, Martinus, Borrhæus, and learned Doctor Fulk, who in his marginal notes upon the xith to the Hebrews, hath this descant: "It appeareth not, saith he, that Enoch now liveth in the body, no more than Moses; but that he was translated by God out of the world, and died not after the common manner of men." And concerning Elijah, the same reverend author hath this passage: "It is evident that he was taken up alive; but not that he continueth alive." And again, "Because we read expressly, that he was taken up into heaven, 2 Kings ii. 11. it is certain (saith he) that his body was not carried into heaven." Christ being the first that in perfect humanity ascended thither, 1 Cor. xv. 20. 'Christ is become the first fruits of them that sleep.' He is called the first fruits, not only because he was the most excellent, and sanctified the rest, but because he was the first cluster which was gathered; the first that went up in a corporeal manner into the seat of the blessed: hence we see that the resurrection is yet to come.

3. The third thing is, That at the resurrection every soul shall have its own body: the same body that dies shall arise. Some hold that the soul shall be clothed with a new body, but then it were improper to call it a resurrection of the body, it should be rather a creation. It was a custom in the African churches to say, I believe the resurrection of this body. I confess, the doctrine of the resurrection is such, that it is too deep for reason to wade: you must let faith swim. For instance, suppose a man dying is cast into the sea, several fishes come and devour him, the substance of his body goes into these fishes, afterwards the fishes are taken and eaten, and the substance of these fishes go into several men; now how this body, thus devoured, and as it were

crumbled into a thousand fractions, should be raised the same individual body, is infinitely above reason to imagine, we have scarce faith enough to believe it.

Ques. How can this be?

Ans. To such I say as our blessed Saviour, Matt. xxii. 19. 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 1. Not knowing the scriptures: The scripture tells us expressly, that the same body that dies shall rise again, Job xix. 26. 'In my flesh shall I see God,' not in another flesh, And ver. 27. 'My eyes shall behold him,' not other eyes.' So 1 Cor. xv. 53. 'This mortal shall put on immortality:' not another mortal, but this mortal, and, 2 Cor. v. 10. 'That every one may receive the things done in his body,' &c. not in another body. Death in scripture is called a sleep; it is far easier with God to raise the body, than it is for us to awake a man when he is asleep. 2. Ye err, not knowing the power of God: that God, who of nothing created all things, cannot he reduce many things to one thing? When the body is gone into a thousand substances, cannot he make an abstraction, and bring that body together again? Do we not see the chymist can, out of several metals mingled together, as gold, silver, alchymy, extract the one from the other, the silver from the gold, the alchymy from the silver, and can reduce every metal to its own species or kind? and shall we not much more believe that when our bodies are mingled and confounded with other substances, the wise God is able to make a divine extraction, and re-invest every soul with its own body.

Use 1. This is comfort to a child of God: as Christ said to Martha, John xi. 23. 'Thy brother shall rise again:' so I say to thee, thy body shall rise again. The body is sensible of joy as well as the soul; and indeed, we shall not be perfect in glory

till our bodies be re-united to our souls. Therefore in scripture, the doctrine of the resurrection is made matter of joy and triumph, Isa. xxvi. 19. 'Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust. Death is as it were the fall of the leaf, but our bones shall flourish as an herb, in the spring of the resurrection. That body which is mouldered to dust shall revive. Sometimes the saints do sow the land with their bodies, Psal. cxlii. 7. and water it with their blood, Ps. lxxix. 3. But these bodies, whether imprisoned, beheaded, sawn asunder, shall arise and sit down with Christ upon the throne. O consider what joy there will be at the re-uniting of the body and soul at the resurrection! As there will be a sad meeting of the body and soul of the wicked, they shall be joined together as briars, to scratch and tear one another; so, what unspeakable joy will there be at the meeting together of the soul and body of the saints: how will they greet one another? (they two being the nearest acquaintance that ever were) what a welcome will the soul give to the body? O blessed body, thou didst suffer thyself to be martyred, and crucified, thou wert kept under by watchings, fastings, &c. when I prayed thou didst attend my prayers with hands lifted up, and knees bowed down; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now thou shalt reign with me; cheer up thyself my dear friend; thou wert sown as seed in the dust of the earth with ignominy, but now art raised a spiritual body. O my dear body, I will enter into thee again as an heavenly sparkle, and thou shalt clothe me again as a glorious vestment.

Use. 2. It shews the great love and respect God bears to the weakest believer; God will not glorify the bodies of his dearest and most eminent saints, not the patriarchs or prophets, not the body of Moses or Elias, till thou risest out of thy grave. God

is like a master of a feast that stays till all his guests are come. Abraham, the father of the faithful, must not sit down in heaven till all his children are born, and the body of every saint perfectly mellow and ripe for the resurrection.

3. If the bodies of the saints must arise, then consecrate your bodies to the service of God : these bodies must be made one with Christ's body. The Apostle makes this use of the doctrine of the resurrection, 1 Cor. vi. 14. ' And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power : ' there is the doctrine. ' Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? ' ver. 15. there is the use. It is enough for wicked men, to adulterate and defile their bodies. The drunkard makes his body a tunnel for the wine and strong drink to run through. The epicure makes his body a living tomb to bury the good creatures of God. The adulterer makes his body a stew. The body is called a vessel in scripture; these vessels will be found musty at the resurrection, fit only to hold that wine which you read of, Psal. lxxv. 8. ' In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; ' this is the wine of God's wrath. It is enough for those bodies to be defiled which shall be joined to the devil : but you that are believers, that expect your bodies shall be joined with Christ's body, oh cleanse these vessels ; take heed of putting your bodies to any impure services. Present your bodies a living sacrifice, Rom. xii. 1. Have a care to keep all the passages and cinque-ports ; sometimes the devil comes in at the eye ; therefore Job made a covenant with his eyes, and goes out at the tongue ; therefore David set a watch before his lips. Surely those that have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, that

is, the guilt of known sin, will have a care to have their bodies washed with clean water.

CHAP. XIII.

The eight Prerogative Royal.

I Proceed now to the next privilege which is to come, viz. The bodies of the saints shall be enamelled with glory. In this life the body is infirm, physicians have much ado to piece it up; it is like a picture out of frame, or an house out of repair, every storm of sickness it rains through. How doth the excellent soul oft lodge in a deformed body? The body is like a piece of rotten wood, diseases like worms breed there, fevers, pleurisies, aches, &c. But this body shall be made glorious at the resurrection, it shall neither have diseases nor defects; Leah shall no more complain of her blear eyes, nor Barzillai of his lameness. There are five properties of the glorified bodies.

1. They shall be agile and nimble. The bodies of the saints on earth are heavy and weary in their motion, but in heaven their shall be no elementary gravity hindering; but our bodies being refined, shall be swift and facile in their motion, and made fit to ascend, as the body of Elias. This is the apostle's meaning when he calls it a spiritual body; that is not only a body tunable and made fit to serve God without weariness, but a body that can move swiftly from one place to another. In this life the body is a great hindrance to the soul in its operation: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' The soul may bring its action against the body; when the soul would fly up to Christ, the body as a leaden lump keeps it down; but there is a time coming when it shall be otherwise; here the body is a clog, in heaven it shall be a wing, The bodies

of the saints shall be agile and lively, they shall be made fully subject to the soul, and so no way impede or hinder the soul in its progress.

2. The bodies of the saints shall be transparent, full of clarity and brightness ; as Christ's body when it was transfigured, Matt. xvii. 2. Our bodies shall have a divine lustre put upon them : here they are as iron when it is rusty ; there they shall be as iron when it is filed and made bright, as the sun in its splendour ; nay, seven times brighter, saith Chrysostom: here our bodies are as the gold in the ore, drossy and impure ; in heaven they shall be as gold when it spangles and glisters : so clear shall they be, that the soul may sally out at every part, and sparkle through the body as the wine through the glass.

3. They shall be amiable. Beauty consists in two things. 1. Symmetry and proportion, when all the parts are drawn out in their exact lineaments. 2. Complexion, when there is a mixture and variety in the colours, white and sanguine : thus the bodies of the saints shall have a transcendency of beauty upon them. Here the body is called a vile body : vile in its birth and production ; of the dust of the earth ; the earth is the most ignoble element : and vile in the use that it is put to ; the soul oft useth the body as a weapon to fight against God ; but this vile body shall be ennobled and beautified with glory ; it shall be made like Christ's body.

How beautiful was Christ's body upon earth ! In it there was the purple and the lily, it was a mirror of beauty: For all deformities of body issue immediately from sin, but Christ being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and so without sin, he must needs have a beautiful body, and in this sense he was fairer than the children of men, Psal. xlv. 2. There was graceful majesty in his looks. Christ's body, as some writers aver, was so fair by reason of the beauty and grace which did shine in it, that no limner

could ever draw it exactly; and if it was so glorious a body on earth, how great is the lustre of it now in heaven? That light which shone upon Saint Paul, 'surpassing the glory of the sun,' was no other than the beauty of Christ's body in heaven. O then what beauty and resplendency will be put upon the bodies of the saints! they shall be made 'like Christ's glorious body.'

4. The bodies of the saints shall be impassible. Not but that the body when it is glorified shall have such a passion as is delightful, (for the body is capable of joy) but no passion that is hurtful; it shall not be capable of any noxious impression; in particular,

1. The bodies of the saints shall be free from the necessities of nature, as hunger and thirst. Here we are pinched with hunger: 'David waxed faint,' 2 Sam. xxi. 15. Here we need the supplies of nature. Christ 'took compassion on the multitude,' and wrought a miracle, lest they should 'faint by the way,' Matt. xv. 32. Nature must have its recruits; these are as necessary to maintain life, as the oil is to maintain the lamp, but in heaven we shall hunger no more, Rev. vii. 16. Hunger implies a vacuity and want, which cannot be in heaven; there we need not pray, 'Give us our daily bread.'

Quest. But doth not Christ say, 'I will not drink this day of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;' which implies there will be eating and drinking in heaven, and by consequence hunger?

Ans. We must not understand the words literally; our Saviour only alludes to the metaphor of the vine: it is as if Christ had said, as drinking the fruit of the vine now with you, is an action of familiarity and pleasantness; so when you shall be with me in the kingdom of heaven, you shall be filled with such joy and delight, as if all the time were

a time of feasting and banqueting. 2. Glorified bodies shall be free from the infirmities of nature, as cold and heat; heaven is a temperate zone: there is no nipping frost or scorching heat, nothing will be there in extremity, but joy.

3. The bodies of the saints shall be free from the burdens of nature, as labour and sweating; no more ploughing or sowing: what needs that when the saints shall receive the full crop of joy? Look that, as it is with an husband-man while he works in the field, he needs his hedging-bill, his spade and mattock, &c. But let this man be advanced to the throne, and now there is no more use of the spade, he is freed from all those labours: so though now we must 'eat our bread with the sweat of our brows,' yet when we are in heaven, and shall be advanced to the throne, there will be no more need of our working tools; labour shall cease; our sweat as well as our tears shall be dried up.

4. The bodies of the saints shall be free from the injuries of nature, as sufferings; we run the race of our life in a ring of misery, from one suffering to another; we do not finish our troubles but change them: 'man is born to trouble,' he is the natural heir to it. Where the body is, there will afflictions like eagles be gathered together. Job was smitten with boils, and Paul did bear in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Afflictions, like hard frosts, nip the tender buds of our comfort; but ere long the saints shall be impassible, they shall have a protection from injuries granted them.

5. The bodies of the saints shall be immortal: here our bodies are still dying.' It is improper to ask when we shall die, but rather when we shall make an end of dying: first, the infancy dies, then the childhood, then youth, then old age, and then we make an end of dying: it is not only the running out of the last sand in the glass that spends it,

but all the sands that run out before. Death is a worm that is ever feeding at the root of our gourds; but in heaven 'our mortal shall put on immortality.' As it was with Adam in innocency, if he had not sinned, such was the excellent temperature and harmony in all the qualities of his body, that it is probable he had not died, but had been translated from paradise to heaven. Indeed, Belarmine saith, that Adam had died though he had not sinned; but I know no ground for that assertion, for sin is made the formal cause of death: however there is no such thing disputable in heaven, the bodies there are immortal; Luke xx. 36. 'Neither can they die any more:' heaven is an healthful air, there is no sickness or dying; we shall never hear a passing-bell go any more: as our souls shall be eternal, so our bodies immortal. If God made manna (which is in itself corruptible) to last many years in the golden pot, much more is he able by a divine power, so to consolidate the bodies of the saints, that they shall be preserved to eternity. Rev. xxi. 4. 'And there shall be no more death:' our bodies shall run parallel with eternity.

CHAP. XIV.

The Ninth Prerogative Royal.

THE next privilege is, we shall be as the angels in heaven, Matt. xxii. 30. Christ doth not say, we shall be angels, but as the angels.

Quest. How is that? *Ans.* Two ways.

1. In regard of our manner of worship. The angels fulfil the will of God,

1. Readily. 2. Perfectly.

1. Readily. When God sends the angels upon a commission, they do not hesitate or dispute the case with God, but presently obey. The angels are

set out by the cherubims, with wings displayed: this was not to represent their persons (spirits having no wings) but their office; to shew how ready they are in their obedience, it is as if they had wings, Dan. ix. 21. The man Gabriel (this was an angel) 'was caused to fly swiftly:' as soon as God speaks the word, the angels are ambitious to obey: now in heaven we shall be as the angels.

This is a singular comfort to a weak christian: alas, we are not as the angels in this life; when God commands us upon service, to mourn for sin, to take up the cross, O what a dispute is there? how long is it sometimes ere we can get leave of our hearts to go to prayer? Jesus Christ went more willingly to suffer, than we do often to pray: how hardly do we come off in duty? God had as good almost be without it. O but (if this be our grief) be of good comfort, in heaven we shall serve God swiftly, we shall be winged in our obedience, even as the angels.

2. The angels serve God perfectly; they fulfil God's whole will; they leave nothing undone: when God commands them upon duty, they can shoot to an hair's breadth. Alas, our services, how lame and bed-rid are they? we do things by halves? instead of using the world as if we used it not, we pray as if we prayed not, we weep for sin as if we wept not; how many blemishes are there in our holy things? as the moon when it shines brightest, hath a dark spot in it. How many grains should we want, if Christ did not put his merits into the scales? our duties, like good wine, do relish of a bad cask; the angel pouring sweet odours into the prayers of the saints, Rev. viii. 2. sheweth, that in themselves they yield no sweet savour, unless perfumed with Christ's incense; but in heaven we shall be even as the angels, we shall serve God perfectly: how should we long for that time.

2. We shall be as the angels in regard of dignity. There is no question, but in regard of our marriage-union with Christ, we shall be above the angels, but behold our human nature, simply and entirely considered, shall be parallel with the angelical, Luke xx. 36. 'they shall be equal to the angels.' I shall shew the dignity of the angelical nature, and the analogies between the saints glorified, and the angels. The dignity of the angels appears,

1. In their Sagacity. The angels (who are God's courtiers) are wise intelligent creatures. Tyrus in regard of wisdom is stiled a cherubim, or angel, Ezek. xxviii. 3, 4, 16. The angels have a most critical exquisite judgment, they are discerning spirits; and thus the saints shall be as the angels, for wisdom and sagacity: Christ the wisdom of God is their oracle.

2. The dignity of angels appears in their majesty: an angel is a beautiful glorious creature. They saw Stephen's face 'as it had been the face of an angel,' Acts vi. 15. The angels are compared to lightning, in regard of their sparkling lustre, Matt. xxviii. 3. such beams of majesty fall from the angels, that we are not able to bear a sight of them. John the divine was so amazed at the sight of an angel, that he fell at his feet to worship him, Rev. xix. 10. and thus shall we be as the angels, for splendour and majesty. 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,' Matt. xiii. 43. not that the saints shall not surpass the sun in brightness, saith Chrysostome; but the sun being the most noble and excellent creature, therefore our Saviour takes a resemblance thence, to express the saints' glory: they shall not only be of a sun-like, but angel-like brightness: the beams of Christ's glory will be transparent in them.

3. The dignity of angels is seen in their power. Ye angels 'that excel in strength,' Psal. ciii. 20.

We read of one angel that destroyed an army of an hundred fourscore and five thousand at one blow. An angel were able to look us dead: thus shall we be as the angels. Here we have our fainting fits, we wrestle continually with infirmities; but in heaven the weak reed shall be turned into a cedar, we shall put on strength, and be as the angels of God.

4. The dignity and nobility of angels consists in their purity. Take away holiness from an angel, and he is no more an angel, but a devil. Those blessed spirits are sinless, spotless creatures; no unholy thought enters into their mind; they are virgin spirits; therefore the angels are said to be 'clothed in pure white linen,' Rev. xv. 6. And they are represented by the cherubims overshadowing the mercy-seat, which were made 'all of fine gold,' to denote the purity of their essence: and in this sense we shall be as the angels of a refined sublimated nature; therefore the saints are said to have 'washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 14. Christ's blood washeth white; and we read of 'the spirits of just men made perfect.'

5. The dignity of angels appears in their immunity. The angels are privileged persons, and thus shall we be as the angels. There is a two-fold immunity. 1. We shall be privileged from the difficulties of religion. Duties are irksome to the flesh, but in heaven, we shall be as the angels; no more praying or fasting, no more repenting or mortification. When we are above sin, then we shall be above ordinances: I do not say we shall be free from serving God, but we shall be freed from all that is tedious and unpleasant: the angels serve God, but it is with cheerfulness. It is their heaven to serve God: when they are singing hallelujahs they are ravished with holy delight: though being spirits they need no food, yet it is their meat and

drink to be doing the will of God: 'the joy of the Lord is their strength.' Thus the saints shall be as the angels, 'they shall rest from their labours,' Rev. xiv. 13. They shall not rest from serving God, but from their labour in serving him. Their service shall be sweetened with so much pleasure and delight, that it shall not be a task, but a recreation. What joy will it be to sing in the heavenly choir? the angels begin the music, and the saints join in the concert.

2. We shall be privileged from the immodesty of temptation. The angels, those blessed spirits, have no temptations to sin: thus shall we be as the angels. It is sad to have atheistical, blasphemous thoughts forced upon us; it is sad always to lie under the Devil's spout, to have temptations dropping upon us; and though we do not yield to the enemy, yet to have the garrison continually assaulted, is a great grief to a child of God; but this is a believer's privilege, he shall be shortly as the angels, not subject to temptation. The Devil is cast out of paradise, the old serpent shall never come into the New Jerusalem. Heaven is set out by an exceeding high mountain, Rev. xxi. 10. This heavenly mount is so high, that Satan's fiery darts cannot shoot up to it, it is above the reach of his arrow.

6. The dignity of angels consist in their impeccability. The blessed angels are not only without sin, (as the lapsed angels were once) but they are in an impossibility of sinning. The angels have a clear sight of God, they are by the sweet influence of that vision so enamoured with the beauty and love of God, that they have not the least motion or will to sin. They are confirmed by the power of God, saith Austin, that they cannot sin. The angels are immoveable in holiness; indeed Origen affirms that there is a possibility of sinning even in the angels; but this opinion is, 1. Contrary to the current of

the fathers, the angels are of that invincible sanctity, that they cannot be drawn by any violence to sin, as Damasçen speaks. 2. That it should be possible for the angels to be stained with the least tincture of sin, is repugnant to scripture; for if the angels may sin, then they may fall, but they cannot fall. The minor proposition is clear: elected angels cannot fall, but the angels are elected; the apostle proves the election of angels. 1 Tim. v. 21. 'I charge thee before God and the elect angels.' The angels are called stars, Job. xxxviii. 7. these angelical stars are so fixed in their orb of sanctity, that they cannot have the least erring, or retrograde motion to sin; and doth not all this set forth the privilege and comfort of believers? they shall be in this sense as the angels, in an impossibility of sinning; here it is impossible that we should not sin, in heaven it is impossible that we should. There we shall not only be exempted from the act, but from the capacity of sinning, for we shall be as the angels of God; what a blessed privilege is this! we that now are accounted as the off-scouring of men, shall be as the angels.

Oh how may this excite the most profane persons to the study of piety! fly from sin; that will not make you angels but devils; 'follow after holiness;' it alludes to huntsmen that follow the game with earnestness; pursue holiness as in a chase; here is reason enough, you shall not only be with the angels, but you shall be as the angels; if while you live, you live as saints, when you die you shall be as angels.

CHAP. XV.

The Tenth Prerogative Royal.

THE next privilege to come is, the vindication of names. Fulgentius calls a good name the godly man's heir, because it lives when he is dead,

It is the best temporal blessing, yet all wear not this garland; those which have a good conscience, have not always a good name. The old serpent spits his venom at the godly through the mouths of wicked men: if Satan cannot strike his fiery dart into our conscience, he will put a dead fly into our name. The people of God are represented to the world in a very sad manner; how strangely doth a saint look when he is put in the Devil's dress! as those primitive christians that were clothed with bear's skins and painted with red devils. Job was represented to the world as an hypocrite, and by his friends too, which went near to him. Paul was called a seditious man; and he suffered (in the opinion of some) as an evil-doer, 2 Tim. ii. 9. 'Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, even unto bonds:' he did not only bear Christ's mark in his body, but in his name. Our blessed Saviour was called 'a deceiver of the people.' It hath ever been the manner of the wicked world, to paint God's children in very strange colours. It is a great sin to defame a saint, it is murder; better take away his life than his name; it is a sin which we can never make him reparation for; a flaw in a man's credit being like a blot in white paper, which will never come out. The defaming of a saint is no less than the defaming of God himself; the saints have God's picture drawn in their hearts: a man cannot abuse the picture of Cæsar, without some reflection upon Cæsar's person. Well, either God will clear his peoples' innocency here, which he hath promised, Ps. xxxvii. 6. 'And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light:' thy good name may be in a cloud, but it shall not set in a cloud; or else at the day of judgment, then there shall be a vindication of names.

In this life the godly are called the troublers of Israel, seditious, rebellious and what not? but

a day is shortly coming, when God himself will proclaim their innocency. Believe it, as God will make inquisition for blood, so for names; the name of a saint is precious in God's esteem, it is like a statue of gold which the polluted breath of men cannot stain; and though the wicked may throw dust upon it, yet as God will wipe away tears from the eyes of his people, so he will wipe off the dust from their name. The time is shortly coming when God will say to us, as once to Joshua, 'I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you:' even as it was with Christ, the Jews rolled a great stone upon him, and as they thought, it was impossible he should rise again; but an angel came and rolled away the stone, and he arose in a glorious triumphant manner: so it shall be with the godly, their good names or titles are buried, a stone of obloquy and reproach is rolled upon them; but at the day of judgment, not an angel, but God himself will roll away the stone, and they shall come forth from among the pots, where they have been blacked and sullied, 'as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.' O what a blessed day will that be, when God himself shall be the saints' compurgator.

CHAP. XVI.

The Eleventh Prerogative Royal.

THE next blessed privilege, is, the sentence of absolution. Here take notice of two things,

1. The process in law, Rev. xx. 12. 'The books were opened.' It is a metaphor taken from the manner of our courts of judicature, where there is the whole process, every circumstance traversed, and the witnesses examined: So here, the books are opened, the book of God's account, the book of

conscience: now observe, 'another book was opened, which is the book of life; that is, the book of God's decree, the book of free grace, the book that hath the saints' names written in it, and their pardon; and the elect shall be judged out of this book: surely the sentence cannot be dismal, when our husband is judge, and will judge us by the book of life.

2. The sentence itself, Matt. xxv. 34. "Come ye blessed of my Father:" which implies two things, 1. The saints' acquittance: the curse is taken off, they have their discharge in the court of justice, and shall have the broad seal of heaven, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all setting their hands to the pardon, and this Christ shall proclaim. 2. It implies the saints' instalment. Come ye blessed. As if Christ should say, ye are the heirs apparent to the crown of heaven, heaven is your freehold; come in ye blessed of the Lord, enter upon possession. And this sentence can never be reversed to eternity: but as Isaac said, I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed. At the hearing of this comfortable sentence, O with what ineffable joy will the saints be filled! it will be like music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. Even as Elizabeth once said to the virgin Mary, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy; so the heart of a believer will leap in him at the hearing of this blessed sentence, and be ready to leap out of him for joy. O what trembling now among the devils, what triumph among the angels!

CHAP. XVII.

The Last Prerogative Royal.

THE last privilege to come, is, God will make a public and honourable mention of all the good which the saints have done. This I ground

upon three scriptures, Matt. xxv. 21. 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' The world maligns and censures; when we discharge our conscience they say ill done; but God will say, well done, thou good and faithful servant; he will set a trophy of honour upon his people, Matt. xxv. 35. 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me.' &c. King Ahasuerus had his book of records; and when he did read in his book, he took notice of Mordecai's good service, and caused him to have public honour. Be assured, God hath this book of record, and will openly take notice of all the good service you have done, and he himself will be the herald to proclaim your praises, 2 Cor. iv. 5. 'Then shall every man have praise of God.'

I speak this the rather, to encourage you in God's service. Perhaps thou hast laid out thyself for the cause of God, and thou seest Providence blows upon it, and thou beginnest to think it was a desperate venture, all is lost. No, thy faith and zeal is recorded, thy name is taken in heaven, and God will give thee a public testimony of honour, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' What a whetstone is this to duty? How should it add oil to the flame of our devotion? thou perhaps hast prayed a great while, and watered this seed with thy tears; be of good comfort, thy tears are not lost; God bottles them as precious wine, and it is not long before he will open his bottle, and this wine which came from the wine-press of thy eyes, shall sparkle forth in the sight of men and angels. Nay, God will not only take notice of what we have done for him, but what we would have done. David had an intention to build God an house, and the Lord did interpret it as if he had done it, 1 Kings viii. 18. 'Whereas it was in thine heart to build

an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. Intentional goodness is recorded, and shall add to our crown.

What a good God do we serve! who would ever change such a master! it were, one would think, enough, that God should give us wages for our work (especially seeing he gave us ability to work); but that God should applaud us, Well done! Think how sweet it will be to hear such a word from God, how amazing and ravishing, when he shall say openly, these are the servants of the most high God, these are they that feared an oath, that have wept in secret for that which it was not in their power to perform; these are they that have kept their garments pure, that have valued my favour above life, that did rather choose to honour me than humour men: these are they that are willing to wash off the stains from the face of religion with their blood, and to make my crown flourish, though it were in their ashes. Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord: thus shall it be done to them whom God delights to honour.

These are those glorious things which are to come: I have led you to the top of the mount, and given you a prospect of heaven; I have shewn it you at the little end of the perspective: I shall say of this glory of heaven, as once the queen of Sheba of Solomon's pomp and magnificence, 'The half of it hath not been told.'

CHAP. XVIII.

The First Inference drawn from the Proposition.

Use 1. **I**T shews us what an high valuation and esteem we should set upon the godly. They are, we see, men greatly in favour with God, as the angel once proclaimed to Daniel, and they

are invested with glorious privileges; they are of an heavenly descent, born of the Spirit; and they are very rich, for they are heirs of the kingdom. God hath not only laid out some parcels of land, or divided heaven to them, as Canaan was divided to Israel by lot: the tribe of Judah to inhabit in one country, the tribe of Reuben in another, &c. God, I say, doth not parcel out heaven thus to the saints: no, heaven is theirs with all its perquisites, with all its royalties: there are no enclosures or land-marks in heaven: there can be no confinement where every thing is infinite. Oh what an high value and estimate then should be put upon the saints! they are heirs: how doth the world respect great heirs? what honour then should we give to the godly! They are adopted into all the stately privileges of heaven. It is true, an heir under age may be kept short, but how rich is he when possessed of the inheritance? how rich shall the saints be, when God shall pour out of his love, and shall empty all the treasures of glory into them! The saints are jewels, but their worth and riches is not known; therefore they are trampled upon by the world. 'It doth not yet appear what they shall be:' all things are theirs.

CHAP. XIX.

The Second Inference drawn from the Proposition,

IT shews us a main difference between the godly and the wicked; the godly man hath all his best things to come; the wicked man hath all his worst things to come: as their way is different, so their end; 'Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' The wicked have all their good things here; they have not only what heart can wish, but they have more than heart can wish; their worst things are to come; why, what is to come? the

apostle answers, 1 Thes. i. 10. wrath to come. And here I shall briefly shew you the wicked man's charter: which consists in five things.

SECT. 1.

1. The awakening of conscience: this is to come. Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, his viceroy; a wicked man doth what he can to unthrone conscience, and put it out of office. Conscience is God's echo, and sometimes it is so shrill and clamorous, that the sinner cannot endure the noise, but silenceth conscience, and at last by often sinning, conscience begins to be sleepy and seared; 'having their conscience seared with a hot iron,' 1 Tim. iv. 2. this conscience is quiet, but not good; for the dumbness of conscience proceeds from the numbness of it: it is with him as with a sick patient, who having a confluence of diseases upon him, yet being asleep, is insensible of the pain. The conscience of many a man is like the body of Dionysius, so gross and corpulent, that though they did thrust needles into his flesh, he felt no pain. Time was when conscience was tender, but by often sinning, he is like the ostrich that can digest iron; or as it is said of Mithridates, that by often accustoming his body to poison, it never hurt him, but he could live upon it as his food: that sin which was before as the wounding of the eye, now is no more than the cutting of the nail. Well, there is a time coming when this sleepy conscience shall be awakened. Belshazzar was drinking wine in bowls, 'but there came out fingers on the wall, and his countenance changed;' there conscience began to be awakened. Conscience is like a looking-glass; if it be foul and dusty, you can see nothing in it; but wipe away the dust, and you may see your face in it clearly: there is a time coming when God will wipe off the dust from the glass of a man's conscience, and he shall see his sins clearly represented. Conscience

is like a lion asleep, when he awakes he roars and tears his prey: when conscience awakes, then it roars upon a sinner, and tears him, as the devil did the man into which he entered; Mark ix. 22. he 'rent him, and threw him into the fire.' When Moses' rod was turned into a serpent, he was afraid and fled from it; oh what is it when conscience is turned into a serpent! Conscience is like the bee, if a man doth well, then conscience gives honey, it speaks comfort; if he does ill, it puts forth a sting: it is called a worm, Mark ix. 44. 'where the worm never dies.' It is like Prometheus' vulture, it lies ever gnawing: it is God's blood-hound that pursues a man. When the jailor saw the prison doors open, and, as he thought, the prisoners were missing, he drew his sword and would have killed himself: when the eye of conscience is opened, and the sinner begins to look about him for his evidences, faith, repentance, &c. and sees they are missing, he will be ready to kill himself: a troubled conscience is the first-fruits of hell; and indeed it is a lesser hell. That it is so, appears two ways:

1. By the suffrage of scripture, Prov. xviii. 14. 'A wounded spirit who can bear? a wound in the name, in the estate, in the body, is sad; but a wound in the conscience who can bear? especially when the wound can never be healed; for I speak of such as awake in the night of death.'

2. By the experience both of good and bad. 1. By the experience of good men; when the storm hath risen in their conscience (though afterwards it hath been allayed) yet for the present, they have been in the suburbs of hell. David complains of his broken bones, he was like a man that had all his bones out of joint. What is the matter? you may see where his pain lay, Ps. li. 3. 'My sin is ever before me;' he was in a spiritual agony: it was not the sword threatened, it was not the death of the

child, but it was the roarings of his conscience ; some of God's arrows fast stuck there : though God will not damn his children, yet he may send them to hell in this life.

2. By the experience of bad men, who have been in the perpetual convulsions of conscience : I have sinned, saith Judas : before, he was nibbling at the silver bait, the thirty pieces ; but now the hook troubles him, conscience wounds him : such was Judas's horror, being now like a man upon the rack, that he hangs himself to quiet his conscience. This shews what the hell of conscience is ; that men account death easy to get rid of conscience ; but in vain : it is with them as with a sick man, he removes out of one room into another, and changeth the air, but still he carries his disease with him. Thou mayest think, O sinner, to laugh thy sins out of countenance ; but what wilt thou do when conscience will begin to fly upon thee, and shall examine thee with scourgings ? It is a mercy when conscience is awakened in time ; but the misery is when the wound is too late, there being then no balm in Gilead.

SECT. 2.

The second thing to come is, his appearing before the judge ; ' For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.' Hierome thought he ever heard that sounding in his ears, Arise ye dead, and come to judgment. What solemnity is there at an assizes, when the judge comes to the bench, and the trumpets are sounded ? thus Christ the Judge shall be accompanied with angels and arch-angels, and the trumpets shall be blown ; 1 Thess. iv. 16. ' For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God : ' this is the great and general assizes. Then shall Christ sit down upon the throne of judicature, holding his sword in

his hand, and a flame coming out of his mouth. Now the sinner being summoned before him as a prisoner at bar, he hath his guilt written in his forehead, he is condemned before he comes, I mean in his conscience, which is the consistory or petty sessions: and appearing before Christ, he begins to tremble and be amazed with horror: and not being covered with Christ's righteousness, for want of a better covering, he cries to the mountains to cover him: 'And the kings and the great men said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:' nothing so dreadful as the sight of mercy abused. Now the Lamb will be turned into a lion, and he who was once a Saviour will be a judge.

SECT. 3.

The third thing to come is, his charge read: I will reprove thee, and 'set thy sins in order before thee,' Ps. l. 21. As God hath a bottle for tears, so he hath a book to register mens' sins, Rev. xx. 12. 'the books were opened.' Oh what a black charge will be read against a sinner! not only the sins which have damnation written in their forehead, as drunkenness, swearing, blasphemy, shall be brought into the charge, but those sins which he slighted, as,

1. Secret sins, such as the world never took notice of: many a man doth not forsake his sins, but grows more cunning: with the vintner, he pulls down the bush, but his heart gives as much vent to sin as ever; his care is rather that sin should be covered than cured: not unlike to him that shuts up his shop windows, but follows his trade within doors: he sits brooding upon sin; he doth with his sins as Rachel did with her father's idols, she put them under her that he might not find them; so doth he put his sins in a secret place: all these

sins shall be set in order before him : Luke xii. 2.
 ‘ For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed :’ God hath a key for the heart.

2. Little sins, as the world calls them ; though I know no such thing as little treason, the majesty against which it is committed, doth accent and enhance the sin. Besides, little sins (suppose them so) yet multiplied, become great. What is less than a grain of sand? yet when multiplied, what is heavier than the sands of the sea? a little sum multiplied is great; a little sin, unrepented of, will damn; as one leak in the ship, if it be not looked to, will sink it. You would think it is no great matter to forget God, yet it hath a heavy doom, Ps. l. 22. The non-improvement of talents, the world looks upon as a small thing; yet we read of him that ‘ hid his talent in the earth,’ Matt. xxv. 25. he had not spent it; only not trading it, is sentenced.

3. Sins that in the eye of the world were looked upon as graces; sins that were coloured and masked over with zeal of God, and good intentions, &c. men put fine glosses upon their sins, that they may obtain credit, and be the more vendible. It is said of Alcibiades, that he embroidered a curtain with lions and eagles, that he might hide the picture under, full of owls and satyrs. So doth Satan embroider the curtain with the image of virtue, that he may hide the foul picture of sin under. The devil is like the spider, first she weaves her web, and then hangs the flie in it: so he helps men to weave the web of sin with religious pretences, and then he hangs them in the snare; all these sins shall be read in the sinner’s charge, and set in order before him.

SECT. 4.

4. The next thing is, the passing of the sentence, Matt. xxv. 41. ‘ Depart from me ye cursed.’ At the hearing of this sentence, the heart of a sinner will be rent thro’ with horror; that heart which be-

fore would not break with sorrow for sin, shall now break with despair. At the pronouncing of this dreadful sentence, 'depart from me,' the sinner would be glad if he could depart from himself, and be annihilated. O it will be a sad departing! We use to say, when a man is dead, he is departed; but this will be a departing without a deceasing. As soon as Christ hath pronounced the curse, the sinner will begin to curse himself. Oh what have I been doing! 'I have lain in wait for my own blood;' I have twisted the cord of my own damnation. While he lived, he blessed himself; oh how happy am I, how doth providence smile upon me! Psal. xlix. 18. 'Though whilst he lived he blessed his soul,' yet when this sentence is passed, he is the first that will curse himself.

SECT. 5.

5. The pouring out of the vial, Psal. lxxv. 8. 'For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red, it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same.' This is the sad execution: hell is set out by Tophet, Isa. xxx. 33. which was a place situated near Jerusalem, where they offered their children in the fire to Moloch. A metaphor to figure out the infinite torments of hell: the sinner shall lie in the furnace of God's wrath, and the breath of the Lord, as a pair of bellows, shall blow the fire. Hell is said to be prepared, as if God had been sitting down to study and devise some exquisite torment. Hell is set out in one place by fire, and in another place by darkness: to shew that hell is a fire without light. The hypocrite, while he lived, was all light, no fire; and in hell he shall be all fire, no light; nothing there to give comfort, no music but the shrieks of the damned; no wine but what is burnt with the flame of God's wrath: 'There shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.' The weeping hypocrite shall go to the place

of weeping : while he lived, he lifted up his eyes in a false devotion, and now being in hell he shall lift up his eyes. He that gnashed his teeth at the godly, shall now have gnashing enough ; before he gnashed in envy, now in despair ; and this for ever. ‘ He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire ;’ the word unquenchable scorcheth hotter than the fire. The fire of hell is like that stone in Arcadia, I have read of, which being once kindled, could not be extinguished. Eternity is the hell of hell ; the loss of the soul is irreparable : if all the angels in heaven should go to make a purse, they could not make up this loss. When a sinner is in hell, shall another Christ be found to die for him ? or will the same Christ be crucified again ? oh no ; they are everlasting burnings. Thus the sinner hath all worst things to come ; but a believer hath all his best things to come, the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, viz. the beatifical vision, the chrystal streams of joy that run at God’s right hand : his heaven is to come. -

CHAP. XX.

A Serious Scrutiny about the Believer’s Charter.

Use 2.

I Hear, methinks, a christian say, Great are the privileges of a believer ; but I fear I have no title to this glorious charter : all depends upon an interest. Were there a dispute about our estate, whether such an inheritance did belong to us, we would desire that there should be a trial in law to decide it. Here is a large inheritance, things present and things to come ; but the question is, whether we are the true heirs to whom it belongs ? now for the deciding this, we must seriously examine what right we have to Christ ; for all this estate is made over to us through Christ : so in the text, ‘ All things

are yours, and ye are Christ's : there comes in the title. Jesus Christ is the great magazine and store-house of a christian, he hath purchased heaven in his blood; now if we can say we are Christ's, then we may say, all things are ours.

Quest. But how shall we know that we are Christ's.

Ans. Those that are Christ's, Christ is in them, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. ' Know ye not that Christ is in you?

Quest. But how shall we know that?

Ans. If we are in the faith. It is observable, before the apostle had said, ' Know ye not that Christ is in you ;' first he puts this query, ' Examine whether you are in the faith.' Christ is in you, if you are in the faith : here lies the question, Have you faith? Now for the deciding this, I shall shew,

The antecedents, the concomitants, the genuine act, and the fruits of faith.

SECT. 1. *Shewing the Antecedents of Faith.*

1. Antecedent is knowledge. Faith is an intelligent grace; though there can be knowledge without faith, yet there can be no faith without knowledge. ' They that know thy name will put their trust in thee,' Ps. ix. 10. one calls it, quick-sighted faith. Knowledge must carry the torch before faith, 2 Tim. i. 12. ' For I know whom I have believed.' As in Paul's conversion, a light from heaven ' shined round about him,' Acts ix. 3. so before faith be wrought, God shines in with a light upon the understanding. A blind faith is as bad as a dead faith : that eye may as well be said to be a good eye, which is without sight; as that faith is good which is without knowledge. Devout ignorance damns; which condemns the church of Rome, that think it a piece of their Religion to be kept in ignorance; these set up an altar to an unknown God. They

say ignorance is the mother of devotion; but sure where the sun is set in the understanding, it must needs be night in the affections. So necessary is knowledge to the being of faith, that the scriptures do sometimes baptize faith with the name of knowledge, Isa. liii. 11. 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; knowledge is put there for faith, and this knowledge which is antecedaneous to faith and doth usher it in, consists in the apprehension of four things: the soul through this optic glass of knowledge sees,

1. A preciousness in Christ, 'he is the chief of ten thousand.' Christ was never poor but when he had on our rags; there is nothing in Christ but what is precious: he is precious in his name, in his nature, in his influences, in his privileges; he is called a precious stone, Isa. xxviii. 16. he must needs be a precious stone who hath made us living stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

2. A fulness in Christ, the fulness of the God-head. Col. ii. 9. 'all fulness,' Col. i. 19. a fulness of merit, his blood able to satisfy God's justice; a fulness of spirit, his grace able to supply our wants.

3. A suitableness in Christ; nothing can be satisfactory but what is suitable; if a man be hungry, bring him fine flowers, this is not suitable, he desires food; if he be sick, bring him music, this is not suitable, he desires physic. In this sense there is a suitableness in Christ to the soul: there is a fitness as well as a fulness; he is (as Origen speaks) whatever is desirable; if we hunger, he is the food of the soul, therefore he is called the bread of life; if we are sick unto death, his blood is the balm of Gilead: he may be compared to the trees of the sanctuary, which were both for meat and medicine, Ezek. xlvii. 12.

4. A propenseness and readiness in Christ to give out his fulness: there is bounty in Christ as well as

beauty, Isa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, buy and eat,' &c. Behold, at what a low price doth God set his heavenly blessings! it is but thirsting: bring but desires. Behold the propenseness in Christ to dispense and give out his fulness: buy without money. A strange kind of buying! as he is all fulness, so he is all sweetness, of a noble and generous disposition. This is the lenocinium and enticer of the affections; this draws the eyes and heart of a sinner after him. What are the promises but Christ's golden sceptre held forth? what are the motions of the Spirit, but Jesus Christ coming a wooing; and such a knowledge of Christ doth necessarily precede and go before faith; now the soul begins to move towards him.

2. The second antecedent to faith is credence; a setting our seal to the truth of the word; a giving credit to that which the word asserts concerning Christ: viz. that he is the true Messiah, that there is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved; that whosoever believes in him shall not perish; that he delights in mercy. It is delightful to the mother (saith Chrysostom) to have her breasts drawn: so it is pleasing to Christ, that sinners should draw the breasts of the promises. An assent, and giving credence to all that the scripture holds forth concerning Christ, is necessary to precede faith. Dogmatical faith goes before justifying.

3. The third preparatory or antecedent to faith is, deep conviction and humiliation; the seed that wanted depth of earth withered: so will faith that is not laid in deep humiliation. Christ is never sweet till sin is bitter; he never gives ease but to them that feel their burthen, Matt. xi. 28. and indeed, till a man feel his burden, he cannot cast it upon Christ: a man must see himself lost. Many are lost for want of losing, Acts ii. 37. 'they were

pricked at their hearts,' &c. as if a bladder were pricked and the wind let out: so the flatus, or swelling of pride, was let out by humiliation, Rom. vii. 9. 'when the commandment came sin revived and I died:' as if Paul had said, when the law of God came, and shewed me the spots of my soul, sin revived; sin began to appear in its bloody colours, striking horror and amazement into my soul, and I died: the good opinion which before I had of myself did die, I was as one that gives up the ghost. As it was with the people of Israel, they saw the Red Sea before them, and Pharaoh pursuing behind. So the sinner after some legal bruising, being affrighted, sees the sea of his sins before ready to swallow him up, and the justice of God pursuing and ready to overtake him, and no way to extricate or help himself, only there is a brazen serpent lifted up, and if he can look upon that he may be saved.

4. The fourth antecedent to faith is abrenunciation, or a disclaiming and renouncing any thing in a man's self that can save: this is certain, before a man can come to Christ, he must come out of himself, before he can trust in Christ he must despair in himself, Phil. iii. 7. 'Not having mine own righteousness.' Men would have something of their own to trust to; they would bow down to their own righteousness, their duties and moralities, Rom. x. 3. Oh but if ye will lean on Christ, throw away these rotten crutches; you must use duty, as the dove did her wings to fly, but trust to Christ the ark for safety. A man must be first transplanted; taken out of the old soil, have nothing of his own to grow upon, before he can be ingrafted into Christ the true olive; as the angel said to Mary when she looked for Christ in the sepulchre, 'he is not here,' Matt. xxviii. 6. So I may say to that man who seeks to make a Christ of his duties, and moral ex-

cellencies, Christ is not here, you must look higher; salvation is not to be found within thee, but in something without thee, in something above thee.

5. The fifth antecedent, or that which goes before faith, is a secret persuasion in the soul of man, that Christ is willing to shew mercy to him in particular, Mark x. 49. 'arise, he calleth thee: so the Spirit secretly whispers to the soul, arise out of thy sins, Jesus Christ calleth thee; he bids thee believe in him. Then the soul begins to think thus, did Jesus Christ come to save sinners, such as are humble and penitent? doth he not only invite them, but command them to believe in him, 1 John. iii. 23. then why do I not believe? what is it keeps me off from Christ? is it my unworthiness? behold there is merit enough in Christ to make me worthy: is it my impurity? 'the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin,' 1 John i. 7. his blood is a balsam to heal me, a laver to wash me: and though I have nothing whereby to ingratiate myself into his favour, yet my comfort is, Jesus Christ doth not require that I should carry any thing to him, but, fetch something from him. I need carry no water to this well of salvation, only an empty vessel, an humble broken heart. Why then should I hold off from Christ any longer, if God 'justifies the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5. Why then should not I think that there is mercy for me? sure there is; methinks I see Christ beckoning to me to come to him, methinks I hear the soundings of his bowels: these are the preparations to faith.

SECT. 2. *Shewing the Concomitants of Faith.*

2. The concomitants of faith which are, 1. Consent. The soul now consents to have Christ, and to have him upon his own terms. 1. As an Head. The head hath a double office: it is the fountain of

spirits, and the seat of government; the head is as it were the pilot of the body, it rules and steers it in its motion; the believer consents to have Christ, not only as an head to send forth spirits, that is comfort, but as an head to rule. A sinner would take Christ's promises, but not his laws: he would be under Christ's benediction, but not his jurisdiction. A believer consents to have whole Christ; he doth not pick and choose; but as he expects to sit down with Christ upon the throne, so he makes his heart Christ's throne.

2. The believer consents to have Christ for better for worse, a naked Christ, a persecuted Christ: for he sees a beauty and glory in the reproaches of Christ, 1 Pet. iv. 14. and will have Christ not only in purple, but when with John Baptist he is clothed in camel's hair; he can embrace the fire if Christ be in it: he looks upon the cross as Jacob's ladder by which he ascends up to heaven; he saith, Blessed be that affliction, welcome that cross which carries Christ upon it.

3. He consents to have Christ purely for love: if the wife should give her consent only for her husband's riches, she would marry his estate rather than his person, it were not properly to make a marriage with him, but rather to make a merchandise of him. The believer consents for love: he loves Christ for Christ. Heaven without Christ is not a sufficient dowry for a believer; there is nothing adulterate in his consent, it is not sinister; there is nothing forced, it is not for fear; that were rather constraint than consent; a consent forced will not hold in law; it is voluntary; the beauty of Christ's person and the sweetness of his disposition draws the will, which as the *primum mobile*, or master-wheel, carries the whole soul with it.

4. The believer consents to have Christ, never to part more; he would have an uninterrupted com-

munion with him; he will part with life but not with Christ; indeed death, when it slips the knot between the soul and the body, it ties it faster between the soul and Christ.

5. The believer doth so consent to have Christ, as he makes a deed of gift, resigning up all the interest in himself to Christ: he is willing to lose his own name, and surname himself by the name of Christ: to lose his own will and be wholly at Christ's disposal, 1 Cor. vi. 19. he resigns up his love to Christ: in this sense the spouse is said to be a spring shut up, Cant. iv. 12. she hath love for relations, but the best of her love is kept for Christ: the world hath the milk of her love, but Christ hath the cream of it. The choicest and purest of her love is a spring shut up, it is broached only for Christ to drink.

2. The second concomitant of faith is desire; Psal. xlii. 1. 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God!' Oh (saith the soul) that I had Christ, that I might but touch the hem of his garment! 'Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem! 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. So saith the thirsty sinner, who will give me to drink of those streams of living water, that run in Christ's blood? O that I had this morning star, to enlighten me; this pearl of price, to enrich me; this tree of life, to quicken me. Oh that I had a sight of Christ's beauty, a taste of his sweetness! there is such a thirst raised in the soul, that nothing can quench it but the blood of Christ: nothing but the breast will quiet the child; nothing will quiet the longing soul, but God's opening the breasts of free-grace, and giving his Son out of his bosom.

3. The third concomitant of faith is a spirit of contrition: the soul is even melted into tears, Zech. xii. 10. 'They shall look upon me whom they have

pierced, and shall mourn.' The Spirit of grace drops as dew upon the heart, and makes it soft and tender. The poor sinner weeps for his sins of unkindness against Christ: Oh, saith he, that I should sin against so sweet a Saviour! he looks upon a broken Christ with a broken heart; he washeth Christ's wounds with his tears; before, he wept for fear; now, he weeps for love; Mary stood at Jesus' feet weeping, Luke vii.

SECT. 3. *Shewing the genuine Act of Faith.*

3. Then follows the genuine and proper act of faith, namely recumbency. The soul doth rest upon Christ, and Christ alone for salvation: this is the very door by which we enter into heaven. Faith casts itself upon Christ, as a man that casts himself upon the stream to swim: the believer stays himself upon Christ, therefore faith is called a 'leaning upon Christ,' Cant. v. 8. Believers are called lively stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. and they rest upon Christ the corner-stone, Isa. xxviii. 16. the believer catcheth hold of Christ, as Adonijah caught hold of the horns of the altar, 1 Kings i. 51. or as a man that is sinking catcheth hold of a bough; faith makes an holy adventure upon Christ, as Queen Esther did upon king Ahasuerus, 'If I perish, I perish,' Esther iv. 16. and this adventuring upon Christ, is by virtue of a promise: else it is not faith, but presumption. Faith hath its warrant in its hand, John vi. 37. he 'that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out.'

This is the proper act of faith, the soul's resting with an humble affiance upon Jesus Christ. Saint Bernard, being a little before his death (as he thought) brought before God's tribunal, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him for his sins, he runs to Christ, and saith he, Satan I am

sinful and unworthy as thou sayest, but though thou dost magnify my disease, I will magnify my physician. I know the Lord Jesus hath a double right to the kingdom of glory, not only by heritage, but conquest; and he hath conquered for me. So that I am not confounded while I look on Christ as my Saviour, and heaven as my inheritance: and it was a saying of Austin, I can rest securely while I lay my head on Christ's bleeding sides.

Now concerning this faith I shall lay down two rules. 1. That faith justifies not as a formal cause, but purely as an instrument, viz. as it lays hold on Christ the blessed object, and fetcheth in his fulness: and in this sense it is called a precious faith: the worth lies not in the faith, but in Christ, on which it doth centre and terminate; faith in itself considered, is not more excellent than other graces. Take a piece of wax, and a piece of gold of the same magnitude, the wax is not valuable with the gold; but as the wax hangs at the label of some will, by virtue of which a great estate is confirmed and conveyed, so it may be worth many hundred pounds. So faith considered purely in itself, doth challenge nothing more than other graces, nay in some sense, it is inferior, it being an empty hand: but as this hand receives the precious alms of Christ's merits, and is an instrument or channel through which the blessed streams of life flow to us from him; so it doth challenge a superiority above other graces.

Indeed some affirm, that the very act of believing without reference to the merits of Christ, justifies: to which I shall say but this, 1. Faith cannot justify, as it is an act, for it must have an object: we cannot (if we make good sense) separate between the act and the object. What is faith, if it do not fix upon Christ, but fancy? It was not the people of Israel's looking up that cured them, but the fixing their eye upon the brazen serpent. 2. Faith

doth not justify as it is a grace: this were to substitute faith in Christ's room, it were to make a Christ of faith. Faith is a good grace but a bad Christ. 3. Not as a work; which must needs be, if the stress and virtue of faith lies only in the act, and then we should be justified by works, contrary to that, Eph. ii. 9. where the apostle saith expressly, 'not of works.' So that it is clear, faith's excellency lies in the apprehending and applying the object Christ: therefore in scripture we are said to be justified through faith as an instrument deputed; not for faith as a formal cause.

The second rule is, that faith doth not justify, as it doth exercise grace. It cannot be denied but faith hath an influence upon the graces; it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl; it puts strength and vivacity into all the virtues; but it doth not justify under this notion. Faith begets obedience: by faith Abraham obeyed, but Abraham was not justified as he obeyed, but as he believed. Faith works by love, but it doth not justify as it works by love. For as the sun shines by his brightness, not by his heat (though both are inseparably joined); so faith and love are tied together by an indissoluble knot, yet faith doth not justify as it works by love, but as it lays hold on Christ. Though faith be accompanied with all the graces, yet in point of justification, it is alone, and hath nothing to do with any of the graces. Hence that speech of Luther, In the justification of a sinner, Christ and faith are alone; as the bridegroom and bride in the bed-chamber. Faith is never separated from the graces, yet sometimes it is alone. And thus I have shewn you the essentials of faith.

SECT. 4. *Shewing what are the Fruits and Products of Faith.*

I proceed to the consequentials of faith. There are many rare and supernatural fruits of faith.

1. Faith is an heart-quickening grace, it is the vital artery of the soul : ' The just shall live by his faith,' Hab. ii. 4. When we begin to believe, we begin to live. Faith grafts the soul into Christ, as the scion into the stock, and fetcheth all its sap and juice from the blessed vine. Faith is the great quickener; it quickens our graces and our duties.

1. Faith quickens our graces; the Spirit of God infuseth all the seeds and habits, but faith is the fountain of all the acts of grace; it is as the spring in the watch that moves the wheels: not a grace stirs till faith set it a work. How doth love work? By faith! When I apprehend Christ's love, this doth pullize and draw up my love to him again. How doth humility work? By faith! Faith humbles the soul; it hath a double aspect; it looks upon sin, and a sight of sin humbles: it looks upon free-grace, and a sight of mercy humbles. How doth patience work? By faith! If I believe God is a wise God, who knows what is best for me, and can deliver not only from affliction, but by affliction: this spins out patience. Thus faith is not only *viva*, but *vivifica*: it puts forth a divine energy and operation into all the graces.

2. Faith animates and quickens our duties. What was the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin? It was their faith in the Messiah, that made their dead sacrifices become living sacrifices. What are ordinances but a dumb shew, without the breathings of faith in them? therefore in scripture it is called the prayer of faith, the hearing of faith, and the obedience of faith: dead things have no beauty in them, it is faith that quickens and beautifies.

3. Faith is an heart-purifying grace: ' Having purified their hearts by faith,' Acts xv. 9. Faith is a virgin grace, of a pure and heavenly nature. Faith is in the soul as lightning in the air, which purgeth; as fire in the metals, which refines; as physic in the

body, which works out the disease. Faith works out pride, self-love, hypocrisy : it consecrates the heart : that which was before the devil's thoroughfare, is now made God's enclosure, 1 Tim. iii. 9. ' Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.' Faith is an heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure soil. Faith doth not only justify, but sanctify : as it hath one work in heaven, so it hath another work in the heart. He that before was under the power of some hereditary corruption, as soon as faith is wrought, there is a sacred virtue coming from Christ, for the enervating and weakening that sin : ' the waters are abated.' The woman that did but touch the hem of Christ's garment, felt virtue coming out of him. The touch of faith hath an healing power : faith casts the devil out of the castle of the heart, though still he keeps the out-works. Satan hath a party in a believer, but there is a duel fought every day : and faith will never give over, till, as a prince, it prevails. ' This is the faith of God's elect.' Thou that sayest thou believest, hath thy faith removed the mountain of sin, and cast it into the sea ? What, a believer, and a drunkard ! a believer, and a swearer ! a believer, and an apostate ! for shame ! either leave thy sins, or leave thy profession : Faith and the love of sin can no more stand together, than light and darkness.

4. Faith is an heart-pacifying grace ; peace is the daughter of faith, Rom. v. 1. ' Being justified by faith we have peace with God ;' faith is the dove that brings an olive-branch of peace in its mouth : faith presents God reconciled, and that gives peace. What is it makes heaven, but the smile of God ? Faith puts the soul into Christ, and there is peace, John xvi. ult. ' That in me ye may have peace.' When the conscience is in a fever, and burns as hell, faith opens the orifice in Christ's side, and

sucks in his blood, which hath a cooling and pacifying virtue in it. Faith gives us peace in trouble, nay, out of trouble. 1. It gives peace in trouble: Faith is an heart-pacifying, because an heart-securing grace. When Noah was in the ark, he did not fear the deluge; he could sing in the ark. Faith shuts a believer into the ark, Christ: 'Lead me to the rock which is higher than I,' was David's prayer. Faith plants the soul upon this rock. The West Indians built their palaces upon the tops of hills: in the flood the waters covered the hills: but a believer is built higher: Isa. xxxiii. 16. His place of defence shall be the munition of rocks: but a man may starve upon a rock; therefore it follows, bread shall be given him, &c. Faith builds a christian upon the power, wisdom, faithfulness of God: This is the munition of rocks: and it feeds him with the hidden manna of God's love: here is bread given him. The way to be safe in evil times, is to get faith; this ushers in peace, and it is such a peace as doth garrison the heart, Phil. iv. 7. 'The peace of God shall keep your heart; it shall keep it as in a tower or garrison. 2. Faith gathers peace out of trouble; joy out of sorrow; glory out of reproach. This is the key to Sampson's riddle, 'out of the eater came meat;' this explains that paradox, 'Can a man gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' Yes, of trials and persecutions, faith gathers joy and peace: here are figs of thistles. How were the martyrs ravished in the flames! the Apostles were whipt in prison, but it was with sweet-briar. O how sweet is that peace which faith breeds? it is a plant of the heavenly paradise; it is a christian's festival? it is his music: it is as Chrysostome speaks, the anticipation of heaven.

5. Faith is an heart-strengthening grace: a believer is heart of oak, he is strong to resist temptation, to bear afflictions, to foil corruptions; he

gives check to them, though not full mate. An unbeliever is like Rueben, unstable as water, he shall not excel. A state of infidelity, is a state of impotency. A believer is as Joseph, who though the archers shot at him, his bow abode in strength. If a christian be to do any thing, he consults with faith; this is the sinew, which if it be cut, all his strength goes from him. When he is called out to suffering, he harnesseth himself with faith, he puts on this coat of mail; faith lays in suffering strength, furnisheth the soul with suffering promises, musters together suffering graces, propounds suffering rewards.

But how comes faith to be so strong? Ans. 1. Because it is a piece of God's armour; it is a shield he puts into our hand: Eph. vi. 16. 'Above all, taking the shield of faith:' a shield will serve for a breast-plate, a sword, if need be, an helmet; it defends the head, it guards the vitals; such a shield is faith. 2. Faith brings the Strength of Christ into the soul; Phil. iv. 13. 'I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. The strength of faith lies out of itself, it grafts upon another stock. When it would have wisdom, it consults with Christ, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor; when it would have strength, it goes to Christ, who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Christ is a christian's armoury, faith is the key that unlocks it. Faith hangs upon the lock of Christ, all its strength lies here; cut it off from this lock, and it is weaker than any other grace. Christ may be compared to that tower of David, on which there hung a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men: the faith of all the elect, these shields hang upon Christ. Faith is an heroical grace; the crown of martyrdom is set upon the head of faith. 'By faith they quenched the violence of the fire;' the fire over-

came their bodies, but their faith overcame the flame.

5. Faith is a life-fructifying grace, it is fruitful. Julian, upbraiding the christians, said, that their motto was, 'only believe;' and the papists call us solifidians. Indeed, when faith is alone, and views all the rare beauties in Christ, then faith sets a low value and esteem upon works; but when faith goes abroad in the world, good works are the handmaids that wait on this queen. Though we place faith in the highest orb, in matter of justification, yet good works are in conjunction with it in matter of sanctification. It is no wrong to good works to give faith the upper hand, which goes hand in hand with Christ. Good works are not separated from faith, only faith challengeth its seniority. Faith believes as if it did not work, and it works as if it did not believe, Faith hath Rachel's eye, and Leah's womb: Rom. vii. 4. 'That ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.' Faith is that spouse-like grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears.

Thus having briefly shewn you the nature of faith, I now come to the reflexive act: Have you faith or not? And here let me turn myself, first to unbelievers, such as cannot find that they have this uniting, this espousing grace; What shall I say to you; Go home and mourn; think with yourselves, what if you should die this night? what if God should send you a letter of summons to surrender? what would become of you? you want that grace which should entitle you to Christ and heaven: oh, I say, mourn: yet mourn not as them without hope, for in the use of means you may recover a title. I know it is otherwise in our law-courts; if a title to an estate be once lost, it can never be recovered: but it is otherwise here; though thou hast no title

to Christ to day, yet thou mayest recover a title: thou hast not sinned away the hope of a title, unless thou hast sinned away the sense of sinning. To such as are resolved to go on in sin, I have not a word to say, they are upon the spur to go to hell: but to you that have been prodigal sons, but are now taking up serious resolutions to give a bill of divorce to your sins, let me encourage you to come to Christ, and to throw yourselves upon his blood; for yet a title to heaven is recoverable.

Obj. 1. But saith the sinner, is there hope of mercy for me? sure this is too good news to be true: I would believe, and repent, but I am a great sinner. *Ans.* And whom else doth Christ come to save! whom doth God justify but the ungodly? did Christ take our flesh on him, and not our sins?

2. But my sins are of no ordinary dye?

Ans. And is not Christ's blood of a deeper purple than thy sins? is there not more virtue in the one, than there can be venom in the other? what if the devil doth magnify thy sins? canst not thou magnify thy physician? cannot God drown one sea in another, thy sins in the ocean of his mercy?

3. But my sins are of a long standing.

Ans. As if Christ's blood were only for new and fresh wounds: we read that Christ raised not only the daughter of Jairus, who was newly dead, and the widow's son who was carried forth to burying; but Lazarus, who had lain four days in the grave, and began to putrify: and hath Christ less virtue now in heaven than he had upon earth? if thine be an old wound, yet the medicine of Christ's blood, applied by faith, is able to heal it: therefore sink not in these quick-sands of despair. Judas his despair was worse in some sense than his treason. I would not encourage any to go on in sin, God forbid: it is sad to have old age and old sins. It is hard to pull up an old tree that is rooted, it is easier to cut

it down for the fire; but let not such despair: God can give an old sinner a new heart, he can 'make springs in the desert.' Have not others been set forth as patterns of mercy, who have come in at the twelfth hour? therefore break off thy league with sin, throw thyself into Christ's arms; say, Lord Jesus thou hast said, Those which come to thee, thou wilt in no wise cast out.

2. Let me turn myself to the people of God, such as upon a serious scrutiny with their own hearts, have ground to believe that they have faith, and being in the faith, are ingrafted into Christ. Read over your charter, 'All things are yours:' things present and to come; you are the heir on which God hath settled all these glorious privileges. 'Give wine,' saith Solomon, 'to them that are of heavy hearts.' But while I am going to pour in this wine of consolation, methinks I hear the christian sadly disputing against himself that he hath no right to this charter.

CHAP. XXI.

The Believer's Objections answered.

THERE are three great objections which he makes,

Object. 1. Alas, saith he, I cannot tell whether I have faith or no.

Ans. Hast thou no faith? how didst thou come to see it? a blind man cannot see: thou canst not see the lack of grace, but by the light of grace.

Quest. But sure, if I had faith I should discern it?

Ans. 1. Thou mayest have faith, and not know it: a man may seek for that sometimes which he hath in his hand. Mary was with Christ, she saw him, she spake with him, yet her eyes were held that she did not know it was Christ: the child lives

in the womb, yet doth not know that it lives. 2. Faith oft lies hid in the heart, and we see it not for want of search; the fire lies hid in the embers, but blow aside the ashes and it is discernable: faith may be hid under fears, temptations; but blow away the ashes. Thou prizest faith; hadst thou a thousand jewels lying by, thou wouldst part with all for this jewel: no man can prize grace but he that hath it. Thou desirest faith; the true desire of faith, is faith. Thou mournest for want of faith; dispute not, but believe: what are these tears but the seeds of faith.

Object. 2. But my faith is weak, the hand of it so trembles, that I fear it will hardly lay hold upon Christ.

Ans. There are seven things which I shall say in reply to this. 1. A little faith is faith; as a sparkle of fire is fire. Though the pearl of faith be little, yet if it be a true pearl, it shines in God's eyes. This little grace is the seed of God, and it shall never die, but live as a sparkle in the main sea. 2. A weak faith will entitle us to Christ as well as a stronger: 'To them that have obtained like precious faith,' 2 Pet. i. 1. not but that there are degrees of faith; as faith purifies, so all faith is not alike, one is more than another; but as faith justifies, so faith is alike precious; the weakest faith justifies as well as the faith of the most eminent saint; a weak hand will receive the alms: for a man to doubt of his grace because it is weak, is rather to rely upon grace than upon Christ. 3. The promise is not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, Whoever hath a faith that can remove mountains, that can stop the mouths of lions, shall be saved; but whoever believes, be his faith never so small: the promise is made to true faith, and for the most part to weak. What is a grain of mustard seed, what is a bruised reed, but the emblem of a

weak faith? yet the promise is made to these: 'A bruised reed he will not break.' The words are a meiosis, where the lesser is put for the greater. He will not break, that is, he will bind up: though Christ chides a weak faith, yet that it may not be discouraged, he makes a promise to it. Hierome observes upon the beatitudes, there are many of the promises made to weak grace, Matt. v. 3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn, ver. 4. blessed are they that hunger," ver. 5.

4. A weak faith may be fruitful; weakest things do multiply most. The vine is a weak tree, it is borne up and under-propt, but it is fruitful; it is made in scripture the emblem of fruitfulness. The thief on the cross, when he was newly converted, had but a weak faith; but how many precious clusters grew upon that vine! Luke xxiii. 40. he chides his fellow-thief; 'Dost thou not fear God?' he falls to self-judging, 'we indeed suffer justly:' he believes in Christ when he says, 'Lord' (he makes an heavenly prayer) 'remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom:' here was a young plant, but very fruitful. Weak christians oft are most fruitful in affections; how strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith!

5. A Christian may mistake, and think he is weak in faith because he is weak in assurance, whereas faith may be strongest when assurance is weakest; assurance is rather the fruit of faith: the woman of Canaan was weak in assurance, but was strong in faith. Christ gives her three repulses, but her faith stands the shock; she pursues Christ with an holy obstinacy of faith, insomuch that Christ sets a trophy of honour upon her faith, 'O woman, great is thy faith:' it may be a strong faith, though it doth not see the print of the nails: it is an heroical faith that can swim against wind and tide, believe against hope. Christ sets the crown upon the head of faith,

not of assurance, John xx. 29. 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'

9. God hath most care of weak believers; the mother tends the weak child most: 'God will gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom.' The Lord hath a great care of his weak tribes: when Israel marched towards Canaan, the tribes were divided into several companies or brigades: now it is observable, all the weak tribes were not put together, lest haply they should discourage one another, and so have fainted in their march: but God puts a strong tribe to two weak tribes; as Issachar, Zebulun, two weak tribes, and Judah a victorious tribe; therefore he gives the lion in his standard: surely this was not without a mystery, to shew what care God hath of his weak children: Christ the lion of the tribe of Judah shall be joined to them.

7. Weak faith is a growing faith. It is resembled by the grain of mustard-seed, of all seeds the least; but when it is grown, it is the 'greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof.' Faith must have a growing time; the seed springs up by degrees, first the blade, and then the ear; and then the full corn in the ear: the strongest faith hath sometimes been weak. The faith that hath been renowned in the world, was once in its infancy and minority: grace is like the waters of the sanctuary, which did rise higher and higher. Wait on the ordinances, these are the breasts to nourish faith: be not discouraged at thy weak faith; though it be now in the blossom and bud, it will come to the full flower.

Object. 3. But saith a child of God, I fear I am not elected.

Ans. What! a believer, and not elected? who told thee thou wert not elected? hast thou any skill

in the black book of reprobation? the angels cannot unclasp this book, and wilt thou meddle with it? which is our duty to study, God's secret will, or his revealed? It is a sin for any man to say he is a reprobate; that which keeps him in sin must needs be a sin; but this opinion keeps him in sin, it cuts the sinews of endeavour. Who will take pains for heaven that gives himself up for lost? O believer, be of good comfort, thou needest not look into the book of God's decree, but look into the book of thy heart, see what is written there: he that finds the Bible copied out into his heart, his nature transformed, the bias of his will changed, the signature and engravings of the Holy Ghost upon him, he doth not look like a reprobate.

When you see the fruits of the earth spring up, you conclude the sun hath been there; it is hard to climb up into election: but if we find the fruits of holiness springing up in our hearts, we may conclude the Sun of Righteousness hath risen there, 2 Thes. ii. 13. 'God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit.' By our sanctification we must calculate our election. Indeed, God in saving us, begins at the highest link of the chain, election; but we must begin at the lowest link of the chain, sanctification, and so ascend higher.

Therefore laying aside all disputes, let me pour in of the wine of consolation. Thou who art a believer, (and though thou wilt not affirm it, yet thou canst not deny it without sin) let me do two things, shew you your happiness, then your duty.

1. Behold your happiness: all the things which you have heard of, present and to come, are your portion and prerogative. What shall I say to you? All my apprehensions fall short: when I speak of things to come, I know not how to express myself but by a deep silence and astonishment. O the mag-

nitude and magnificence of the saints' glory! The ascent to it is so high, that it is too high for any man's thoughts to climb: the most sublime spirit would here be too low and jejune. How happy art thou, O believer, if God himself can make thee blessed, thou shalt be so: if being invested with Christ's robes, enamelled with his beauty, replenished with his love: if all the dimensions of glory will make thee blessed, thou shalt be so. O the infinite superlative happiness of a believer! all things to come are his. What? to have the same jointure with the angels, those blessed spirits! nay, to speak with reverence, to have a partnership with God himself! to be enriched with the same glory which did sparkle forth in the human nature of Christ! How amazing is this! the thoughts of it are enough to swallow us up. O what an inheritance is he born to, who is new-born? Suppose he is poor in the world, and despised, (the king of the Moors was offended at religion, because the professors of it were poor) I say to him as our Saviour, 'Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.' All things to come are yours. Who would not be a believer! O that I might tempt such to Christ as yet stand out!

2. Learn your duty. Mercy calls for duty.

CHAP. XXII.

Shewing the Duties of a believer by way of Retaliation.

THERE are several duties which I would press upon believers; and they branch themselves into ten particulars.

1. Admire, and thankfully adore the love of God in settling this rich charter upon you. You that are mirrors of mercy, should be monuments of

praise. How was David affected with God's goodness? 2 Sam. vii. 19. 'Thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come.' So should we say, Lord, thou hast not only given us things present, but thou hast spoken of thy servants for a great while to come, nay, for ever. It will be a great part of our work in heaven, to admire God; let us begin to do that work now, which we shall be for ever doing. Adore free grace; free grace is the hinge on which all this turns; every link in this golden chain is richly enamelled with free grace; free grace hath provided us a plank after shipwreck. When things past were forfeited, God hath given us things to come: when we had lost paradise, he hath provided heaven. Thus are we raised a step higher by our fall. Set the crown upon the head of free grace. O to what a seraphical frame of spirit should our hearts be raised! How should we join with angels and arch-angels in blessing God for this! It is well there is an eternity coming; and truly that will be little enough to praise God. Say as that sweet singer of Israel, Psal. ciii. 1. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul;' or as the original will bear, Bow the knee, O my soul, before the Lord. Thus should a christian say, All things in heaven and earth are mine, God hath settled this great portion upon me, bow the knee, O my soul; praise God with the best instrument, the heart, and let the instrument be screwed up to the highest, do it with the whole heart. When God is tuning upon the string of mercy; a christian should be tuning upon the string of praise: I have given you a taste of this new wine, yet so full of spirits is it, that a little of it would enflame the heart in thankfulness. Let me call upon you, who are the heirs apparent to this rich inheritance, Things present and to come; that you would get your hearts elevated, and wound up into a thankful frame. It is not an handsome pos-

ture, to see a christian ever complaining when things go cross : O do not so look upon your troubles as to forget your mercies. Bless God for what is to come : and to heighten your praises, consider God gives you not only these things, but he gives you himself. It was Austin's prayer : Lord, saith he, Whatever thou hast given me, take all away, only give me thyself: you have not only the gift but the Giver. O take the harp and viol; if you do not bless God, who shall? where will God have his praise? he hath but a little in the world. Praise is in itself an high angelical work, and requires the highest spirited christians to perform it. Wicked men cannot praise God : they can say, God be thanked ; but as it is with the hand-dial, the finger of the dial is at twelve, when the dial hath not moved one minute : so though the tongues of wicked men are forward in praise, yet their hearts stand still. Indeed, who can praise God for these glorious privileges to come, but he that hath the seal of the Spirit to assure him that all is his? O that I might persuade the people of God to be thankful, 'make God's praise glorious.' Let me tell you, God is much taken with this frame ; repentance is the joy of heaven, and thankfulness is the music of heaven : let not God want his music : let it not be said, God hath more murmurers than musicians. 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifies me.'

2. If all things to come are yours, live suitable to these glorious hopes : you that look for things to come, let me tell you, God looks for something present from you ; namely, that your lives be answerable to your hopes, 'What manner of persons ought you to be?' 2 Pet. iii. 21. You have heard what manner of privileges you shall have ; aye, but what manner of persons ought you to be? Those that look to differ from others in their condition, must differ from them also in their conversation.

Wherefore beloved, 'seeing you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot.' We would all be glad to be found of God in peace, then labour to be found without spot. Spot not your faces, spot not your consciences; live as those who are the citizens and burgesses of this New Jerusalem above. Walk as Christ did upon earth. There are three steps in which we should follow Christ.

1. In sanctity. His was an holy life; 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' though he was made sin, yet he knew no sin. The very devils acknowledged his holiness: 'we know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.' O be like Christ; tread in his steps. In the sacrament, 'we shew forth the Lord's death:' and in a holy conversation, we shew forth his life. The holy oil, wherewith the vessels of the sanctuary were to be consecrated, was compounded of the purest ingredients, which was a type and emblem of that sanctity which should rest upon the godly: their hearts and lives should be consecrated with the holy oil of the Spirit. Holiness of life is the ornament of the gospel, it credits religion. Sozomen observes, that the devout life of a poor captive christian woman, moved a king and his whole family to embrace the christian faith. Whereas how doth it eclipse, and as it were entomb the honour of religion, when men profess they look for heaven, yet there is nothing of heaven in them? if there be light in the lanthorn, it will shine out: and if grace be in the heart, it will shine forth in the conversation. It is a great sin in these times to be bewailed, the looseness of professors: even those that we hope (by the rule of charity) have the sap of grace in their heart, yet do not give forth such a sweet savour in their lives: how many under the notion of christian liberty, degenerate into libertinism! the carriage of some that

go for saints is such, that it would make men afraid to embrace religion. What Chrysostome saith of the contentions of the church in his time, (If, saith he, a gentile should come and say, I would be made a christian, yet when he sees such a spirit of dissension among them, one of Paul, and another of Apollos, such are the diversities of opinions, that he knows not which to choose, but must return to his gentilism again :) the same may I say of the looseness, if not scandals, of some professors. If a stranger should come from beyond sea, and see the miscarriages of many, their covetousness, their licentiousness; had he no other Bible to read in, but the lives of some professors, he would turn back again and resolve never to be made a christian. What a shame is this! Did Christ walk thus when he was upon earth? His life was a pattern of sanctity! You that are professors, your sins are sins of unkindness, they go nearest to Christ's heart. Do you live as those who have hope of things to come? is Christ preparing heaven for you, and are you preparing war against him? is this your kindness to your friend? O consider how you wound religion; your sins are worse than others. A stain in a black cloth is not easily seen or taken notice of; but a spot in a piece of scarlet, every one's eye is upon it. The sins of wicked men are not much wondered at, they can do no other, theirs is a spot in black; but a sin in a professor, this is like a spot in a bright scarlet, every one's eye is upon it; how doth this dishonour the gospel? and is it not sad that others should make a rod of your sin to lash religion? The deviation of the godly is as odious as the devotion of the profane. O that there were such a lustre and majesty of holiness in the lives of professors, that others might say, These look as if they had been with Jesus; they live as if they were in heaven already. Aaron must not only have bells, but pomegranates,

which were for savour, as the other were for sound. It is not enough to discourse of godliness, or to make a noise by a profession: What are these bells without the pomegranates, viz. a life that casts a savour in the church of God?

2. Walk as Christ did, in humility. His life was a pattern of humility. He was the heir of heaven, the Godhead was in him, 'yet he took on him the form of a servant,' Phil. ii. 7. O infinite humility for a Saviour to become a servant, for the Lord of glory to lay aside his robe, and put on a livery; as if a king should leave his throne, and wait at table: nay, that is not all, but Christ washeth his disciples' feet. 'He poured water into a bason, and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel,' 1 John xiii. 6. No wonder it is said that he came in the form of a servant; he stands here with his bason of water and a towel! Yea, to express the depth of his humility, he was made in the likeness of men. O how did Christ abase himself in taking flesh! it was more humility in Christ to humble himself to the womb than to the cross. It was not so much for flesh to suffer, but for God to be made flesh; this was the wonder of humility. We read Christ's flesh is called a vail, Heb. x. 20. 'Through the vail, his flesh;' indeed the taking of flesh was the wearing of a vail. By putting this dark vail upon him, he eclipsed the glory of the Deity. This was Christ's 'emptying of himself,' Phil. ii. which Tertullian renders, he exhausted himself. The metaphor may allude to a vessel full of wine that is drawn out; Christ, in whom all fulness dwells, by humility seemed to be so drawn out, as if there had been nothing left in him. Behold here a rare pattern of humility.

You that look for things to come, tread in this step of Christ, be humble; grace shines brightest through the mask of humility: humility is such a

precious herb as grows not in the garden of philosophy, that is rather humanity than humility. Humility beautifies our persons. The humble saint looks like a citizen of heaven. Humility is the vail of a christian: Christ's bride never looks more beautiful in his eyes, than when she hath on this vail: be ye clothed with humility. Or as the Greek word is, be knotted. Humility is the spangled knot in the garment of our graces. Humility sweetens our duties; incense smells sweetest when it is beaten small: when the incense of our duties is beaten small with humility, then it sends forth its most fragrant perfume. The violet is a sweet flower; it hangs down the head so low, that it can hardly be seen, only discovers itself by its scent. This is the emblem of humility.

The humble christian studies his own unworthiness: he looks with one eye upon grace to keep his heart cheerful, and with the other eye upon sin to keep it humble. Better is that sin which humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud. As humility hides another's error, so it hides its own graces. Humility looks upon another's virtues and its own infirmities. The humble man admires that in another which he slights in himself; he is one that denies not only his evil things, but his good things; not only his sins but his duties: he desires to have atonement made even for the altar. The humble saint is no murmurer, yet he is ever complaining; the more knowledge he hath, the more he complains of ignorance; the more faith, the more he complains of unbelief: in short, the humble christian translates all the glory from himself to Christ. Constantine did use to write the name of Christ upon his doors; so doth the humble soul write Christ and free-grace upon his duties. 'I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' When he prays, saith

he, it is the 'Spirit helps my infirmities.' Rom. viii. When he mourns for sin, saith he, 'the Almighty makes my heart soft.' When his heart is in a good frame, saith he, 'By the grace of God I am what I am.' When he conquers a corruption, saith he, 'It is through Christ that strengthens me.' As Joab when he had gotten a victory, sends for king David that he might carry away the crown of it: so doth the humble christian when he hath gotten the victory over a corruption, he sets the crown upon the head of Christ; O blessed humility! You that look for things above, let me tell you, the way to ascend is to descend; the lower the tree roots, the higher it shoots up: would you shoot up in glory, would you be tall cedars in the kingdom of God, be deeply rooted in humility. Humility is compared by some of the Fathers to a valley: we must walk to heaven through this valley of humility. Humility distinguisheth Christ's spouse from harlots. Hypocrites grow in knowledge, but not in humility. 'Knowledge puffeth up,' 1 Cor. viii. 1. It is a metaphor taken from a pair of bellows that are blown up and filled with wind. He that is proud of his knowledge, the devil cares not how much he knows. It is observable in the old law, that God hated the very resemblance of the sin of pride; he would have no honey mingled in their offering; 'Ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey in any offering of the Lord made by fire,' Lev. ii. 11. Indeed, leaven is sour, but what is there in honey that should offend? why no honey? because honey, when it is mingled with meal or flower, maketh it to rise and swell: therefore the people of Israel must mingle no honey in their offering. This was to let us see how God hated the resemblance of this sin of pride. Be humble.

3. Be like Christ in charity: Christ's life was a life of charity: he breathed nothing but love; he

was full of this sweet perfume : as his person was lovely, so was his disposition, he was composed all of love : his lips dropped honey, his side dropped blood, his heart dropped love. You that expect these glorious things to come, live as Christ did, live in love. O that this spice might send out its fragrant smell among christians! ' we know we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.' Dost thou love the person of Christ, and hate the picture? ' He that loves him who doth beget, loves him also that is begotten.' There are two devils which are not fully cast out of God's own people ; the devil of vain-glory, and the devil of uncharitableness. Are we not fellow-citizens? Do we not all expect the same heaven? Nay, are we not brethren? which should be a sufficient bond to knit us together in amity. We have all the same Father, God; we are born of the same mother, the Church? we are begotten of the same seed, the Word; we suck the same breasts, the promises; we feed at the same board, the Table of the Lord; we wear the same clothing, the Robe of Christ's Righteousness; we are partners in the same glory, the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; and shall we not love? There is indeed a blessed strife, when the saints strive for the faith : but this is a strife that consists of unity. ' Striving together for the faith of the gospel,' Phil. i. 27. You that look for things to come, live suitably to your hopes : Walk as Christ did, that some of his beams may shine in you, and his life may be copied out in yours.

3. The third Duty is, If things to come are a believer's, be content though you have the less of things present : a believer is to be valued according to that which is in reversion. Things to come are his. If you were to take an estimate of a man's estate, would you value it by that which he hath in his house, or by his land? Perhaps he hath little in

his house, little money or plate; but he is a landed man, there lies his estate. While we are in this house of clay, we have but little. Many a christian can hardly keep life and soul together; but, he is a landed man, things to come are his: then be content with the less of things present: if we have but a small fore-crop, we shall have a great after-crop; it is sufficient if we have but enough to bear our charges till we come to heaven. An heir that hath a great estate beyond sea, though he hath but little money for his voyage thither, he will be content. Should not Hagar have been content, though the water were spent in her bottle, when there was a well so near? God hath made a deed of gift, he hath given Christ to a believer, and in him all things, 'things present and to come,' grace and glory; is not here enough to make him content? But, saith the christian, I want present comforts. Consider, the angels in heaven are rich; yet they have no money; thou hast things to come, angels' riches, such as cannot stand with reprobation; be content then with the less of things present. If thou complainest of any thing, let it be of thy complaining.

4. Labour for such an high degree of faith, as to make these things to come, present. Faith and hope are two sisters, and are very like: they differ thus; hope looks at the excellency of the promise, faith at the certainty of it: now faith looking at the infallible truth of him that promiseth, thus it makes things to come, present. Faith doth antedate glory, it doth substantiate things not seen. Faith alters the tenses, it puts the future into the present tense, Ps. lx. 6. 'Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, Ephraim is the strength of my head,' &c. Those places were not yet subdued, but God had spoken in his holiness, he had made David a promise, and he believed it, therefore he looked upon it as already

subdued: Gilead is mine, &c. So saith faith, God hath spoken in his holiness, he hath made me a promise of things to come, therefore heaven is mine already. When one hath the reversion of an house, saith he, this house is mine: O that we had this art of faith, thus to anticipate heaven, and make things to come present. Thou who art a believer, heaven is thine now; thy head is already glorified; nay, heaven is begun in thee, thou hast some of those joys which are the first fruits of it. A christian, by the eye of faith, through the perspective glass of the promise, may see into heaven. Faith sees the promise fulfilled before it be fulfilled. Faith sets to its hand: *Item*, Received so much, before it be paid. Had we a vigorous faith, we might be in heaven before our time: that which a weak believer hopes for, a strong believer doth in some kind possess. Oh that we could often take a prospect of the heavenly paradise: 'Walk about Sion, and go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces,' Ps. xlviii. 12, 13. So, walk into the heavenly mount, see what a glorious situation it is, go tell her towers, see what an inheritance you have; see your nobility, behold your 'scutcheon: O that we could thus breathe our faith up this mount of heaven every day. Do not say, all this shall be mine; but say, it is mine already: my head is there, my faith is there, my heart is there: Could we thus, living up to the height of our faith, realize and antedate things to come, how would all present things vanish! if a man could live in the sun, the earth would not appear; when saint Paul had been wrapped up into the third heaven, the earth did hardly appear ever after: see how he scorns it, 'I am crucified to the world:' it was a dead thing to him, he had begun heaven already; thus it is with a man that is heavenly. You saints that are earthly, the eye of

your faith is blood-shot : it is the character of a sinner, ' he cannot see afar off ;' like a man who hath bad eyes, that can see but just before him. Faith carries the heart up to heaven, and brings heaven down into the heart.

5. If all things to come are yours, then walk cheerfully with God, put on your white robes: hath a believer a title to heaven? what, and sad! ' We rejoice in hope of the glory of God,' Rom. v. 2. It is but a while, it is but putting off the earthly clothes of our body, and we shall be clothed with the bright robes of glory, and can a believer be sad? See how Christ doth secretly check his disciples for this, Luke xxiv. 17. ' What manner of communications are these, while you walk and are sad?' What, sad, and Christ risen? So I say to believers; things to come are yours; why walk ye and are sad? let them be out of heart who are out of hope. O rejoice in God: when the lead of the flesh begins to sink, let the cork of faith swim above! How doth the heir rejoice in hope of the inheritance! How doth the apprentice rejoice to think of coming out of his time! Here we are kept under by sin, and a child of God is forced sometimes to do the devil's work, but shortly death will make us free: there is an eternal jubilee coming, therefore ' rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' Can wicked men rejoice that have their portion in this life? and cannot he rejoice that hath a reversion of heaven? Are the waters of Abanah and Pharpar like to the waters of Jordan? O ye saints, think into what a blessed condition you are now brought! is it not a sweet thing to have God appeased? is it not a matter of joy to be an heir of the promise? Adam in paradise had choice of all the trees, one only excepted. The promises are the trees of life: thou mayest walk in the garden of the Bible, and pluck from all these trees. Who should rejoice, if not a christian?

he hath never so much cause to be sad, as he hath to be cheerful.

Obj. 1. But my sins trouble me.

Ans. It is true: that sin will not forsake thee, is matter of sadness; but that thou hast forsaken sin, is matter of joy: sin is a talent of lead. That thou canst not run so fast as thou wouldst in the ways of God, is matter of sadness; but that thou goest without halting (in regard of righteousness) this is matter of joy; and for your comfort remember, shortly you shall sin no more, all things shall be yours, but sin.

Obj. 2. But we are bid to mourn.

Ans. I would not speak against holy mourning; while we carry fire about us, we must carry water; as long as the fire of sin burns in our breasts, we must carry tears to quench it. But consider, 1. Spiritual joy and mourning are not inconsistent; sometimes it rains and shines at once: when there is a shower in the eyes, there may be a sunshine in religion, mourning and music may stand together; one saith, the great mourner in Israel was the sweet singer of Israel. 2. The end why God makes us sad, is to make us rejoice; he doth not require sorrow for sorrow, but it is ordained to be as sauce to make our joy relish the better: we sow in tears, that we may reap in joy. 3. The sweetest joy is from the sourest tears: Christ made the best wine of water: the purest and most excellent joy is made of the waters of true repentance: the bee gathers the best honey off the bitterest herbs: tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. When Hannah had wept, she went away, and was no more sad. Those clouds are very uncomfortable that never have any sunshine: that mourning which dyes the soul all in sable, that hath no place for rejoicing, I shall rather think it despair, than true remorse: The same God who hath bid us mourn, hath also bid us rejoice, Phil.

iv. 4. It is an excellent temper to be serious, yet cheerful. Jesus Christ loves the sanguine complexion: joy puts liveliness and activity into a christian, it oils the wheels of the affections; an heavy mind makes a dull action: the joy of the Lord is your strength. The pensive melancholy christian doth disparage the glory of heaven: what will others say? Here is one that speaks of things to come, and of a crown laid up, but sure he doth not believe it: see how sad he is! what ado is here to make a child of God cheerful! shall we need bid an heir rejoice in the estate befallen him? let me tell you, you who refuse consolation, are not fit persons to praise God: it is a kind of solecism to praise God with a sad heart: 'I will sing praises,' Psal. cviii.

1. It is more proper to sing praises, than to weep them. Rejoice, O christian, lift up thy crest, triumph in the hope of these things to come: it is not enough that there be joy within the firmament of a christian's heart, but it must shine out in his countenance.

Sixth *Duty*. If all things to come are a believers, let him not envy them who have only things present. God often wrings out the waters of a full cup to wicked men; but there are dregs at the bottom. Indeed, the prosperity of sinners is a great temptation: David stumbled at it, and had almost fallen; Psal. lxxiii. 'My feet had well nigh slipt.' It is not matter of envy but pity, to see men thrive in a way of sin; a fool is in gay clothes, but do you envy him? a man under a sentence going up the ladder, do you envy his preferment? 'They that will be rich, fall into temptations and a snare,' 1 Tim. vi. 9. Do you envy a man who is fallen into a snare? wicked men have that guilt which embitters their comforts, so that they may be said to want what they have; as a man who hath great possessions, yet having a fit of the stone or gout, while he is in

that torment, he may be said not to have them, because the comfort of them is taken away. A believer hath better things than these; things to come: wicked men have a crown of unrighteousness, he hath a crown of righteousness; they have robes (and perhaps stained with 'the blood of innocents') he hath the bright robe of glory. 'Envy not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways:' better is sanctified adversity than successful impiety.

Seventh Duty. Be supported in want of spiritual comfort: spiritual joy is a sweet thing; this is the spiced wine that 'causeth the lips of them who are asleep to speak:' this is the hidden manna, the bunch of grapes that grows upon the true vine; this is the saints' banqueting stuff; how sweet is it to have Word and Spirit, and Conscience speaking peace! in the mouth of these three witnesses, faith is confirmed. But, saith the poor soul that goes mourning, It is not so with me, I have not the privy seal of heaven, I want assurance. Well, do not give over waiting. We read, John vi. 19. the disciples were in the ship, and there arose a great storm, 'And when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus.' This, O christian, may be thy case: there is a tempest of sorrow risen in thy heart; and thou hast rowed from one ordinance to another, and hast no comfort; Well, be not discouraged, do not give over rowing; thou hast but rowed three or four furlongs; perhaps when thou has rowed twenty-five or thirty furlongs, thou mayest see Jesus, and have a comfortable evidence of his love; but suppose thou shouldest row all thy life long, and not have assurance, yet this may be a pillar of support;

Things to come are yours: it is but staying a while, and you shall be brimful of comfort: now, a believer is an heir of this joy; let him stay but while he is of age, and he shall be fully possessed of

the joys of heaven. For the present, God leaves a seed of comfort in the heart, the seed of God; there is a time shortly coming, when we shall have the full flower; 'We shall drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of heaven. As Paul said of Onesimus, Philem. ver. 15. 'For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou mightest receive him for ever:' so I say of the comforts of God's Spirit, that they may be withdrawn for a season, that we may have them for ever: there is a time coming when we shall bathe ourselves in the rivers of divine pleasure.

8. If there be such a glorious inheritance to come, let us zealously contend for it against all oppositions: we have a city above, but there are enemies in the way which we must give battle to. God would give Israel Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but first they must encounter with the sons of Anak. So he will bestow upon us a crown, but we must fight for it. Heaven is not taken without storm. Hence it is the scripture bids us stand to our arms, and 'fight the good fight of faith,' 1 Tim. vi. 12. that we may not through a supine negligence lose the recompense of a reward. Christians must be military persons; it becomes the children of light to put on the armour of light. The apostle reckons up our several pieces of armour; the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast-plate of love; and our artillery, the sword of the Spirit, the cannon-bullet of prayer. Indeed in heaven our armour shall be hung up in token of victory and triumph; but now it is a day of battle, and no cessation of arms, till death. And there is a threefold regiment we must fight against, which would hinder us of our crown.

1. The enemy within, viz. a treacherous heart; this is a sly enemy; 'A man's enemies are they of his own house,' Mic. vii. 6. nay, of his own heart,

Man by his fall lost his head-piece, viz. spiritual wisdom, and ever since he is an enemy to himself; he lays a snare for his own blood, Prov. i. 18. therefore Austin prays, Lord deliver me from myself: The heart is a conclave of wickedness; it is an armoury and magazine, where all the weapons of unrighteousness lie: the heart doth hold intelligence with Satan, it sides with him, and at every turn is ready to deliver up the keys to him; therefore good reason that we should gird on our armour, and give battle to this bosom traitor, which stands in our way to the crown. It is reported of Basil, that to shun the allurements and flatteries of the world, he retired and fled into the wilderness; but when he was there, he cries out of his heart, I have, saith he, forsaken all, but my evil heart is still tempting me. Luther used to say, he feared his heart more than pope or cardinal. Thy heart, O christian, would supplant thee of the blessing which is in reversion; O therefore make a brave onset, run the sword of the Spirit up to the hilt in the blood of thy sins; stab thy heart-lusts to the heart with the knife of mortification; let a duel be fought every day, and call in Christ for thy second. If the flesh doth war against us, good reason we should war against the flesh.

2. The second regiment that stands in the way to salvation, and which we must arm against, is the devil. He may be called a regiment, his name being Legion. This is the red regiment! how furiously doth he make his onset upon us, sometimes with temptations, sometimes with persecutions, that if possible we might let fall our armour, and so let go our crown? the devil, that roaring lion, while we are marching to heaven, raiseth all the trainbands of hell against us; 'whom resist, steadfast in the faith,' 1 Pet. v. 9. Our enemy is beaten in part already, he knows no march but running away.

3. The third regiment which stands in our way to heaven is the world; this enemy courts us; it smiles that it may deceive; it kills with embracing; it hath a golden apple in one hand, and a dagger in the other. Marcia gave to the emperor Commodus poison in perfumed wine: such an aromatic cup doth the world present us with, that we may drink and die. The ivy, while it clasps about the oak, sucks away the heart of it for its own leaves and berries; such are the world's embraces. Him whom I shall kiss, saith Judas, take him. So, whom the world kisseth, it often betrays. The world is a silken halter, a golden fetter; some have been drowned in the sweet waters of pleasure, others have been choaked in silver mines; Oh arm, arm against this flattering enemy! If the world's music enchant us, and we fall asleep upon our guard, then the devil falls on, and wounds us. Fight it out against all these regiments.

Consider the excellency of the prize, Things to come; what striving is there for earthly crowns and sceptres! with what zeal and alacrity did Hannibal continue his march over the Alps, and Cæsar's soldiers fight with hunger and cold? men will break through laws and oaths, run a thousand hazards for those things which, when they have them, will prove damnable gains. But 'things to come are yours.' You expect salvation, which is the crown of your desires, the flower of your ambition; oh therefore muster and rally together all your forces against this three-headed adversary which stands in your way to hinder you from taking possession. Fight it out to the death, you have a good captain; Christ is 'the Captain of your salvation,' Heb. ii. 10. If a flock of sheep have a lion for their captain, what need they fear? so, fear not little flock, you fight under the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

9. The next Duty is; If all Christ's things are

ours, then all our things must be Christ's; this is *lex talionis*, justice and equity require it. There is a joint interest between Christ and a believer: Christ saith, All mine are thine, things present, and things to come; then the heart of a believer must echo back to Christ, Lord, whatsoever I have is for thee; my parts, my estate: It was the saying of an holy man, 'Lord, thou art my all, and my all is thine.' Oh be willing to spend, and be spent; do, and suffer for Christ.

1. Let us to our power advance the honour and interest of Jesus Christ: Alas, what is all that we can do? If a king should bestow upon another a million per annum, with this proviso, that in lieu of his acknowledgment he shall pay a pepper-corn every year to the king, what proportion were there between this man's rent and his revenue? Alas, we are but unprofitable servants; all that we can do for Christ is not so much as this pepper-corn; yet up, and be doing. Christ hates compliments: we must not only bow the knee to him, but, with the wise men, present him with gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Be not like the sons of Belial, who brought their king no presents: But, saith the christian, I am poor, and can do little for Christ. Canst thou not make a deed of gift, and bestow thy love upon Christ? In the law, he that could not bring a lamb for an offering, if he brought but two turtle doves, it was sufficient. The woman in the gospel that threw in but her two mites, yet was accepted. God is not angry with any man because he hath but one talent, but because he doth not trade it.

2. Suffer for Christ, be willing to sell all, nay, to lose all for Christ: we may be losers for him, we shall never be losers by him; if he calls for our blood, let us not deny it him; we have no such blood to shed for Christ as he hath shed for us. It was Luther's saying, That in the cause of God he

was content to endure the odium and fury of the whole world. Basil affirms of the primitive saints, they had so much courage in their sufferings, that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal, turned christians; they snatched up torments as so many crowns. O think nothing too dear for Christ! We that look for things to come, should be willing to part with things present for Christ.

10. Lastly, If all things to come are ours, be content to wait for these great privileges: it is not incongruous to long for Christ's appearing, and yet to wait for it: you see the glory a believer shall be invested with; but though the Lord gives a great portion, he may set a long day for the payment; David had the promise of a crown, but was long before he came to wear it. God will not deny, yet he may delay his promise, to teach us to wait: it is but a short-sighted faith that cannot wait. The husbandman waits for the seed: there is a seed of glory sown in a believer's heart; wait till it spring up into an harvest. Truly, it is an hard thing to wait for these things to come; so many discouragements from without, so many distempers from within, that the christian is willing to be at home: therefore we need patience, Heb. x. 36. 'For ye have need of patience.' But how shall we get it? nourish faith, ver. 35. 'Cast not away your confidence.' Patience is nothing else but faith spun out; if you would lengthen patience, be sure to strengthen faith.

There is a great deal of reason why a believer should be content to wait for heaven. 1. God is faithful who promiseth: God's word is security enough to venture upon; his bond is as good as ready money: all the world hangs upon the word of his power; and cannot our faith hang upon the word of his promise? We have his hand and seal, nay, his oath. 2. While we are waiting, God is tuning and fitting us for glory; 'Giving thanks to

the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance,' Col. i. 12. we must be made meet. Perhaps our hearts are not humble enough, not patient enough; our faith is but in its swaddling band: we should be content to wait a while, till we have gotten such a vigorous faith as will carry us full sail to heaven. As there is a fitting of vessels for hell, Rom. ix. 22. so there is a ripening and a preparing of the vessels of mercy, ver. 23. A christian should be willing to wait for glory, till he be fit to take his degree. 3. While we are waiting, our glory is increasing; while we are laying out for God, he is laying up for us, 2 Tim. iv. 8. If we suffer for God, the heavier our cross, the heavier shall be our crown. Would a christian be in the meridian of glory? would he have his robes shine bright? let him stay here and do service; God will reward us, though not for our works, yet according to our works, Mark xvi. 27. The longer we stay for the principal, the greater will the interest be. 4. Wait for these things to come out of an ingenuity: the longer a christian lives, the more glory he may bring to God. Faith is an ingenuous grace; as it hath one eye at the reward, so it hath another eye at duty. The time of life is the only time we have to work for God. Heaven is a place of receiving; this of doing. Hence the apostle being inflamed with divine love, though he could with all his heart be with Christ, yet he was content to live a while longer, that he might build up souls, and make the crown flourish upon the head of Christ: It is self-love saith, 'Who will shew us any good?' Divine love saith, How may I do good? The prodigal son could say, Father give me my portion; he thought more of his portion than his duty. A gracious spirit is content to stay out of heaven a while, that he may be a means to bring others thither. He whose heart hath been divinely touched with the love of

God, his care is not so much for receiving the talents of gold, as for improving the talents of grace. O wait a while! learn of the saints of old, they waited: if we cannot wait now, what would we have done in the times of the long-lived patriarchs? Look upon worldly men, they wait for preferment; shall they wait for earth? and cannot we wait for heaven? If a man hath the reversion of a lordship or manor when such a lease is out, will he not wait for it? we have the reversion of heaven when the lease of life is run out; and shall we not wait? look upon wicked men, they wait for an opportunity to sin; the adulterer waits for the twilight; sinners 'lie in wait for their own blood,' Prov. i. 18. Shall men wait for their damnation, and shall not we be content to wait for our salvation? Wait without murmuring, wait without fainting; the things we expect are infinitely more than we can hope for. And let me add one caution; 'wait on the Lord and keep his ways,' Psal. xxxvii. 34. while we are waiting, let us take heed of wavering. Go not a step out of God's way, though a lion be in the way: avoid not duty to meet with safety: keep God's highway, 'the good old way,' Jer. vi. 16. the way which is paved with holiness, Isa. xxv. 8. 'And an highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness:' avoid crooked paths, take heed of turning to the left hand, lest you be set on the left hand. Sin doth cross our hopes, it barricades up our way; a man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as in a sinful way.

My last use is to such as have only things present, that they would labour for things to come. You have seen the blessed condition of a man in Christ: never rest till this be yours. Alas, how poor and contemptible are these present enjoyments laid in balance with things to come!

1. What is honour which is the highest eleva-

tion of mens ambition? one calls it the gallant madness. It was foretold to Agrippina, Nero's mother, that her son should be emperor, and that he should afterward kill his own mother; to which Agrippina replied, 'let my son be emperor, and then let him kill me and spare not;' so thirsty was she of honour. Alas, what are swelling titles but rattles to still mens' ambition? Honour is like the meteor which lives in the air; so doth this in the breath of other men: it is like a gale of wind which carries the ship; sometimes this wind is down, a man hath lost his honour, and lives to see himself intombed: sometimes this wind is too high: how many have been blown to hell, while they have been sailing with the wind of popular applause: Honour is but a glorious fancy; Acts xxv. 23. It doth not make a man really the better, but often the worse. A man swelled with honour, wanting grace, his bigness is his disease.

3. What are riches that men so thirst after? Amos ii. 7. 'Who pant after the dust of the earth;' golden dust will sooner choak than satisfy. How many have pulled down their souls to build up their houses. What a transiency and deficiency is there in all things under the sun? Christ, who had all riches, scorned these earthly riches; he was born poor, the manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains: he lived poor, he had not where to lay his head: he died poor; I do not read that when Christ died, he made any will; he had no crownlands, only his coat was left, and that the soldiers parted among them: and his funeral was suitable; for as he was born in another man's house, so he was buried in another man's tomb; to shew how he did contemn earthly dignities and possessions. His kingdom was not of this world. Suppose an hour of adversity come, can these present things quiet the mind in trouble? Riches are called thick

clay, which will sooner break the back, than lighten the heart. When pangs of conscience and pangs of death come, and no hope of things to come, what peace can the world give at such a time? surely it can yield no more comfort than a silken stocking to a man whose leg is out of joint. A fresh colour delights the eye; but if the eye be sore, this colour will not heal it. 'Riches avail not in the day of wrath.' Thou canst not hold thy wedge of gold as a screen to keep off the fire of God's justice. Let this sound a retreat to call us off from the immoderate pursuit of present things, to labour for things to come. What are these nether springs to the upper springs? As Abraham said, 'Lord, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? So say, Lord, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go Christless? Luther did solemnly protest, God should not put him off with these things: Oh labour for those blessings in heavenly places. Things present are pleasing, but not permanent? be not content with a few gifts: Abraham gave unto the sons of the concubines gifts, and sent them away; 'but unto Isaac, Abraham gave all that he had.' Reprobates may have a few jewels and ear-rings which God scatters with an indifferent hand: these with the sons of the concubines are put off with gifts; but labour you for the portion, that portion which the saints and angels are spending upon, and can never spend: get into Christ, and then all is yours; so saith the Apostle, 'All things are yours, and ye are Christ's.'