

SERMON V.

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HOW IS GOSPEL-GRACE THE BEST MOTIVE TO HOLINESS ?

And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.—2 Timothy ii. 19.

THIS epistle was written by St. Paul to his "son Timothy," (2 Tim. i. 2,) whom he had begot "in the faith," (1 Tim. i. 2,) as his fatherly blessing, a little before his death; for he was, at the writing of it, in bonds, (2 Tim. i. 8,) and he had "finished" his "course:" (chap. iv. 7:)—this very Paul, whom God had so miraculously delivered at Damascus, (2 Cor. xi. 33,) and at Philippi, (Acts xvi. 26,) and where not? for whosoever reads the catalogue of his sufferings, (1 Cor. xi. 23—28,) may wonder how so many evils could befall any one man. But as they did abound, deliverance did proportionably abound. Yet now, when God had no further work for him to do, he calls his servant home to receive his wages; and being so near the end of his race, Paul stretches out his hand, "for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 14.)

And if we cannot but allow the children of God to "grow in grace, and in knowledge," (2 Peter iii. 18,) and that the lights of God's setting up in his church are brightest a little before they are extinguished by death, Timothy and all believers had reason to mind especially the words of this dying man; this epistle being his last will and testament, in which every member of Christ's church hath a legacy left unto him, more precious (if understood and improved) than gold that perisheth.

In the beginning of this chapter, verse 2, the apostle requires, that those things he had taught might be continued still to be taught and to be practised. He knew that there was no getting into heaven *per saltum*;* that there was no coming to glory, but *by taking the degrees* (at least, arriving at the truth) of grace; and therefore here, as elsewhere in all his epistles, so many exhortations and dehortations are to be found, so many precepts about what we are to do, and cautions about what we are to avoid. The philosopher, treating of happiness, observes: *Περί γαρ ταυτης, και των εις ταυτην συγτεινοντων, και των εναντιων, ταυτη αι προτροκαι και αι αποτροκαι ωσται [ωσιν] εις.*† The way is narrow, and the danger is great; and they are the best friends to us that bid us beware, and are jealous lest we should mistake.

* "Suddenly, by a leap."—EDIT. † ARISTOTELIS *Rhetoricorum*, lib. i. cap. 5. "For, in reference to happiness and those things which are either incentives or opposed to it, all men have much not only to excite them to it, but also to dissuade them from it."—EDIT.

But withal the apostle here meets with a great obstacle, a stone or rock of offence, which he endeavours to remove out of our way. Hymenæus and Philetus, two considerable persons, and probably highly accounted of in the church, (for, we find, no such difficulty arose at the turning away of Phygellus and Hermogenes, of whom mention is made, 2 Tim. i. 15,) apostatized from the truth; and whether they were, by their office, teachers, or no, is not certain; but that their breath was infectious, and that "their words did eat as a canker," is testified, verse 17. That their error was in a fundamental article, (denying the resurrection,) is very obvious; for, as the apostle says, "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain;" (1 Cor. xv. 13, 14;) yet such a darkness, or perverseness rather, have the fall and our corruption betrayed us to, that, without God cause his light to shine into us, there is nothing so senseless, irrational, or unscriptural, which we shall not embrace for truth.

Hence these wretches did not perish alone, but "overthrew the faith of some" (verse 18) *προσκαιροι*, or "temporary," believers, who assented to the truths of the gospel, and were reckoned amongst the faithful; nay, and they shrewdly shook the faith of others. When men in a field-battle see such fall who stood next them, or were before them, their hearts are apt to misgive them, lest the next bullet should take them off also. Especially true believers, knowing so much of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, as to make them humble all their days, and being so charitable toward others, and apt to believe any better than themselves, their concern also being so great for their souls, *hinc lacrymæ*,*—they cry: "We shall one day fall."

To such the apostle accommodates these words: *Nevertheless*—As if he had said, "Granting all that any fearful and weak (but true) believers amongst you can object, that so many fall away, and such as seemed so resolute have apostatized." *Yet the foundation of God standeth sure*—Though they who built upon the sand, with their stateliest and highest confidence, fell; yet every building upon the rock should hold out all winds and weathers. (Matt. vii. 24, 25.)

To prove which, the apostle offers a double security:—

1. *From the election and foreknowledge of God.*—"The Lord knoweth them that are his:" *Verba sensus et intellectus ponunt affectum et effectum*,† is a known rule to understand scripture by. God does not only *know* his people, as he does all other men, and all other creatures in the world; but he hath a special eye upon every one of them, and a special care for them as well as love unto them: and this is, as it were, THE PRIVY SEAL which every child of God may take for his security.

2. *They have also a BROAD SEAL, their sanctification.*—Which,

* "This is the source of their grief and tears."—EDIT. † "Words denote the effect and impression on the feelings and the understanding which their plain and intelligible meaning conveys."—EDIT.

comparatively at least, is evident ; for it is as a light set on a candlestick, and is visible, more or less, unto all : at least they may have "the testimony of a good conscience," (2 Cor. i. 12,) which is as a thousand witnesses.

Some have thought that these words may relate to an ancient custom of putting words and sentences upon such stones as were laid for foundations in buildings, in which something of the builder or author, or at least something thought worthy by him to be perpetuated, was inserted : and what more worthy than that which I have now mentioned of "the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God?" (Rom. xi. 33 :) which may be allowed to be on the top of this foundation-stone : and round about the stone, that which follows : "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Which words I shall at present be confined to. They may be understood as a reasonable caution ; lest any that heard of the continuance and assurance of God's care and love should be puffed up. For as the apostle would not have the defection of others to cause any to despond ; so he would by no means have others' security, upon any pretensions whatsoever, to cause them to presume. But, as a wise physician, having prescribed so great a cordial against their fainting at the sight of others' falling, by telling them, that they who were of God's building should stand ; (1 Cor. iii. 9;) he gives them direction how to use this cordial, lest, if unwarily taken, it might strengthen their distemper : in which direction we may take notice,

1. *Upon whom this injunction is laid.*—Namely, "Every one that nameth the name of Christ."

2. *The injunction itself.*—Namely, "To depart from iniquity." Which last words, "to depart from iniquity," I shall suppose to be so far understood, as that I need not to stay in the explication of them. All sin is an unequal and unjust thing ; against our duty which we owe to God or man ; it is *ἀδικία*. But the manner of the apostle's expression is equivalent to a negative form, which is most comprehensive ; and therefore eight of the Ten Commandments at least are negative ; but they do all include the contrary positive : as the forbidding us to have any other God, commands us to take Jehovah for our God, and to love and obey him accordingly. And thus *the departing from iniquity* includes not only the leaving of all sin, but the following after and practising of holiness, in all duties that are required in every relation and condition : so that there is no duty to God or man, but he "that names the name of Christ" is required to practise it ; nor any sin against God or man, against the first or second table, but he is enjoined to forsake it. Which will farther appear when we have considered,

I. *What is meant by naming the name of Christ, or who is understood by the apostle to name this name of Christ ?*

II. *That such an one as thus names the name of Christ, is especially concerned and obliged to depart from iniquity.*

WHAT IS MEANT BY NAMING THE NAME OF CHRIST.

I. As to the first: *What is meant by naming the name of Christ?*—It is evident that it cannot be understood of a bare speaking of the word "Christ," sounding the letters of which it is made, which Pagans and Mahometans may do, and the wicked Jews often did; but by "naming the name of Christ," is understood, a making some special use of it, or of him that is signified by it. We must therefore consider,

That wheresoever there is any thing of divine revelation, there man's fall and misery are manifested. For though by natural light it could be perceived that all was not well with man; (hence the many complaints, that nature dealt very hardly with man, the noblest visible creature, that had rule and command over the rest of the creation;) yet that he was so short-lived, so full of misery and trouble, which seemed as natural to him, as for "sparks" to "fly upward;" (Job v. 7;) this was for a lamentation amongst the very Heathen; but *ποθεν xaxa*, "whence all this mischief came," they knew not. In scripture only we find the cause of our disease, and the remedy against it; and here, *Ubi invenitur venenum, juxta latus ejus nascitur antidotus*: "Where we may discover the malady, we may seek for and discover the remedy."

In the word of God we have means prescribed, institutions appointed, which being used and observed will help and recover us.

In the former economy and dispensation, they were veiled under shadows and types. The "wages of sin" being "death," (Rom. vi. 23,) every transgressor of the law forfeits his life; (Gen. ii. 17;) and his sin cannot be expiated but by blood: it might justly have been his own blood, and no other's; but the Lawgiver being graciously pleased to accept of *animam vicariam*, "another's blood or life," such as he should appoint, he did for a while accept of the sacrificing of beasts in the stead of the sinners, till the fulness of time was come, in which he sent his Son (this Christ whom the text mentions) to make full satisfaction to his offended justice, and by his death to expiate for all the sins of them that by faith apply themselves unto him. Hence it is said, he was "made sin for us," (2 Cor. v. 21,) and that "he was bruised for our iniquities," and that "the chastisement of our peace was upon him." (Isai. liii. 5.)

But as under the law the transgressor was to lay his hand upon the beast to be sacrificed, thereby acknowledging that he was the creature that had deserved to die, and desiring that the death of the beast to be sacrificed might be accepted in his stead; (Lev. iii. 2; iv. 4;) so under the gospel we must apply to Christ with a due sense of our sins, and our deserving of death for them, and be accordingly affected with them.

Yet, more: when all the outward ceremonies were performed, the sacrificed beast accepted and slain, though the law according to the letter was satisfied, and a legal expiation did ensue, and a legal atonement was made; yet if the person that brought the sacrifice did not

mortify his sin, as well as the priest kill the sacrifice, his conscience inwardly remained defiled, and God still provoked and incensed. Nay, if the sinner had done one without the other,—killed his beast, and spared his sin alive,—God looked upon it as a double iniquity ; for so indeed it was, to acknowledge he had offended God, and to pretend that he desired to be reconciled unto him, and yet to go on in provoking of him. Hence God did forbid and reject their sacrifices, though of his own appointment : “ I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goat out of thy fold ; ” (Psalm l. 9 ;) nay, he declares that, in such a case, “ he that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man ; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck ; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood ; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol ; ” (Isai. lvi. 3 ;) and elsewhere, “ Bring no more vain oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me.” (Isai. i. 13.)

Now that all sacrifices were types of Christ, through whom only they had their virtue and efficacy, is confessed by all Christians. Thus Christ was a “ Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ; ” (Rev. xiii. 8 ;) and the Christian, when affected with his sin, and desirous to be reconciled to God, whom by his sin he hath provoked, lays the hand of his faith upon Christ, and humbly begs that Christ’s death for him may be accepted instead of his own, which he had deserved. But now, to give a further illustration of my text and subject, if he pleads (though for Christ’s sake) for pardon of sin, and yet retains a love and liking to his sin ; if he desires never so earnestly that he may not die for sin, and yet is willing that his sin may live ; these are vain oblations, vain prayers, but most real and dreadful provocations. There is a *Σηριον εν ημιν*, “ a beast within us,” which we must kill ; I mean, every corruption ; or no sacrifice, no, not of the Lamb of God himself, will be accepted for us. *Habes in te quod occidas* : “ Every man hath some sin or other within him,” nay, a whole “ body of sin,” “ which he must slay ” by at least a sincere, continued endeavour, or all legal and gospel sacrifices too in the world will not avail him : we must “ mortify the deeds of the flesh,” or we cannot live. (Rom. viii. 13.)

And now we may easily understand who they are that name the name of Christ, and to what purpose. For our Saviour is he who is so called, (the same with Messias,) from his being anointed by God to those offices of King, Priest, and Prophet to his church.

ALL CHRISTIANS NAME THE NAME OF CHRIST.

Now those that apply themselves unto him for life and salvation, are necessitated to name his name : and so they do,

I. IN THEIR PROFESSION.

In their profession.—Hence we are called Christians ; and we own the name, and rejoice and glory in it, as a name divinely imposed on the disciples of the blessed Jesus, by God himself ; for so *χρηματισται* does import. (Acts xi. 26.) And in our baptism we agree to be

listed amongst his soldiers, and to fight under his banner ; nay, we name Christ's name, and it is our ambition to be called by it.

1. *Owning him as our Father.*—By whose Spirit we “are born again through his word ;” (1 Peter i. 23 ;) and as Jacob would have his name named on the children of Joseph, thereby owning and respecting of them as if they were his own children ; (Gen. xlviii. 16 ;) so does Christ look upon all believers as his children, and condescends to have his name named on them ; nay, he names them his children, when he says, “Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me.” (Heb. ii. 13 ; Isai. viii. 18.)

2. *Looking upon Christ as our Husband.* (2 Cor. xi. 2.)—To whom this apostle tells us that we are “espoused.” It is as ancient as the prophet Isaiah's time to have the wife called by the name of her husband ; which is the meaning of their desire, “Let us be called by thy name ;” (Isai. iv. 1 ;) that is, that, being married, they might change their names for that of their husbands : and this was the custom amongst many of the Romans, as still amongst us : *Ubi tu Caius, ibi ego Caia,**

And thus all that look upon Christ as their Father, and hope for the inheritance [which] he hath so dearly bought for them ; or whosoever behold him as their Husband, and esteem his love, and long for the enjoying of him ; are concerned in this obligation, to “depart from iniquity.” As also,

II. IN THEIR PETITION.

In their petition naming Christ.—In every prayer, to be sure, they name the name of Christ, in that they ask all in his name, that is, in his strength, and for his sake. So indeed runs the promise : “Whosoever ye shall ask in my name ;” (John xiv. 13 ;) and in the next verse, (14,) “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” Especially after our Saviour's ascension, when he had paid the price for his people, and for all the pardons and graces, strength or comfort, they should want, he bids them expressly to mention his name, relying on his merit for the obtaining of them. He told them a little before his going to suffer for them, “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name ;” (John xvi. 24 ;) though doubtless they had prayed, according as they were commanded, the Lord's Prayer, (Luke xi. 2—4 ;) day by day, and, implicitly at least, desired all those mercies through a Mediator. They knew that the high priest was to appear with the names of God's Israel, and to offer up incense for them ; yet

[* In the 30th of his “Roman Questions,” Plutarch gives the following account of this nuptial formula : “Why do the bridemen, that bring-in the bride, [and lift her over the threshold,] require her to say, *Where thou art CAIUS, there am I CAIA ?* What, if the reason be, that, by mutual agreement, she enters presently upon participation of all things, even to share in the government of the household ? And this is the meaning of it : ‘Where thou art the lord and master of the family, there am I also the dame and mistress.’ Or is it that *Caia Cæcilia*, an honest and good woman, being married to one of Tarquin's sons, had her statue of brass erected in the temple of *Ancus Martius*, on which in ancient times were hung sandals and spindles, as a significant memorial of her housewifery and industry ?”—CHAUNCY'S Translation.]

clearly and explicitly Christ's own apostles did not enjoy this great privilege. And doubtless some new advantages have accrued to the disciples of Christ, since that prayer was recommended or commanded, by his death and resurrection. Now the explicit naming of Christ is a very great encouragement in prayer, whether in those or any other words.

More particularly, pardon and acceptance, justification and peace with God, must especially be desired in the name of Christ, and for his sake only; for he was "made a curse for us," and, by being a curse for us, hath redeemed us from the curse. (Gal. iii. 13.) He was as accursed in our stead, and did bear what the curse did threaten to transgressors. Which being done, and God's justice and the law satisfied, it follows that in him God is "well-pleased;" (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5;) which words are not only mentioned by the other evangelists, but repeated again in that extraordinary voice at his transfiguration; and are the more remarkable, in that it is not said, that Christ was God's beloved Son, *with* whom God was pleased; (though that was a truth from all eternity;) but, that God is pleased *in* him, that is, that God is well-pleased with all that are by faith united to him, and are as it were ingrafted in him. Hence we are said to be "justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" (Rom. iii. 24:) so that all who are liable to condemnation have no other remedy, no hope or help, but in Christ Jesus; and "there is no other name" by which they can be saved, but by "the name of Christ;" for we "are justified" by faith in his "name." (Acts iv. 12; 1 Cor. vi. 11.)

Justification, properly speaking, is not the making of any righteous or holy; (though none are justified, who are not also sanctified;) but it is the accepting of any person who duly comes in the name of Christ, as righteous and holy; for so he is in God's sight, Christ's righteousness being imputed unto him; and for Christ's sake he becomes one of those blessed ones unto whom the Lord does not impute sin, as the Psalmist expresses it in those very words. (Psalm xxxii. 2.)

Whatsoever the import of the Latin word, from whence our English word "justification," may seem to be,* the words *δικαιουν* and *δικαιοσυνθαι* used by the apostle, are juridical words, and relate to a court of judicature; where when the accused party upon sufficient ground is acquitted, he is said to be justified; and justification or absolution is the proper antitheton to condemnation, as by the whole of St. Paul to the Romans, viii. 33, may appear.

Now we must suppose that the convinced sinner sets himself as in God's sight; and having seriously considered what the law threatens, dreading that curse and wrath to come, hearing his conscience pleading guilty to the accusations of the law against him, he seems to hear the Judge asking of him what he hath to say for himself, why the sentence of death should not pass upon him. Here it is that he

* *En Græcis bonis Latina fecere non bona.*—TERTULLIANUS. "See how they have rendered the good and expressive Greek words into very indifferent Latin."—EDIT.

names Christ, and remembers in prayer unto God what the blessed Jesus did and suffered unto the utmost for him. He became sin for him; he could not be a sinner, but he was dealt withal as if he had been one, because he was in the sinner's stead. Now the convinced sinner urges God's promise and covenant with Christ, that he should "see of the travail of his soul," &c. (Isai. liii. 11.) Thus the name of Christ is the soul's "strong tower;" he "runneth unto it, and is safe;" (Prov. xviii. 10;) and in Christ, who is also the Lord Jehovah, he hath "righteousness and strength." (Isai. xlv. 24.)

Again: Is the penitent sinner so oppressed that words fail him, only sighs and groans (which in his case are never wanting) are frequent with him? The name of Christ upholds him; for he knows, as God said of Aaron, "that he can speak well;" (Exod. iv. 14;) and "he ever liveth to make intercession for him." (Heb. vii. 25.)

I do not wonder that our being thus made whole only through the name of Christ should be by so many gainsayed and ridiculed; for it is hard to bring our thoughts into subjection unto the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. x. 5.) And when I read it so often called the "righteousness of God" in scripture, (Rom. x. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21,) (as surely he alone could find out the ransom, &c.,) I know it must be something beyond the ordinary apprehension of man; for "no man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God;" (1 Cor. ii. 11;) and *nil diurnum nox capit*.*

HE WHO THUS NAMES THE NAME OF CHRIST IS SPECIALLY OBLIGED TO DEPART FROM INIQUITY.

II. May this suffice concerning the subject of my text, namely, he "that nameth the name of Christ." We must now speak of THE INJUNCTION that is laid upon him, or the direction given unto him, *Let every such an one depart from iniquity*.—In which we shall have cause to inquire how it consists with the naming of Christ, especially for our justification, as I have explained it; and these four particulars I shall offer to your consideration:—

1. *That departing from iniquity (or holiness) is no cause of our justification, properly taken: notwithstanding,*

2. *Holiness hath an influence upon our salvation; and also,*

3. *Holiness is indispensably necessary to all justified persons.*

4. *Nay, more: Free justification, or justification by God's free grace in Jesus Christ, is the best and most forcible incentive unto holiness.*

I. DEPARTING FROM INIQUITY IS NO CAUSE OF JUSTIFICATION.

It will appear that holiness is no cause of our justification: it did neither move God, when foreseen, to choose us; nor, when actually existing, to justify us.

REASON I. *Mercy is only from something in God.*

For all God's works of mercy arise from something in God himself.—Who is the "Fountain of" mercy, or of "living waters;" (Jer.

* "The night comprehends nothing which belongs to the day."—EDIT.

xvii. 13;) and judgments are said to be his "strange work," (Isai. xxviii. 21,) because he never proceeds to them but when he is necessitated to vindicate the glory of his injured attributes; that is, the cause of all God's severities is out of himself, and only to be found in the provocations of his creatures. The cause of all his mercies are his own bowels and compassions, and wholly in and from himself: "O Israel," thy destruction is from thyself; but "in me is thy help." (Hosea xiii. 9.) Nay, when God says unto the soul, "Live," he sees it in its "blood;" and it remains in its "blood," until he says unto it, "Live." (Ezek. xvi. 6.) For, in the apostle's phrase, he "justifies the ungodly" and the sinners; (Rom. iv. 5, 6;) that is, God does for Christ's sake discharge and acquit sinners who flee unto him, and desire pardon and acceptance through the blood of his Son, "the Lamb of God that" thus "taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.)

And yet thus "the Judge of all the earth" does right too, when he makes Christ to become righteousness unto the believing and penitent sinners; for by the same reason and justice that they fell in one Adam, they may be made alive in another: (Rom. v. 19:) and "where is the disputer?" (1 Cor. i. 20.)

REASON II. *There is no commutative justice between God and his creature.*

There is no commutative justice betwixt God and his creature.— We can give no equivalent for the least mercy, the least crumb, the least drop, to be sure, as coming from God. The giver puts a suitable price upon the gift: as the giver is in excellency, so is the gift in esteem. What a prince or a king gives is much magnified, though many times otherwise a trifle. But here is eternal life and a crown immortal, given by the great King of heaven and earth to such as know themselves to be but dust and ashes; and, to be sure, they cry, "Grace, grace unto it." (Zech. iv. 7.)

God gets nothing by all our holiest performances, devoutest prayers, and most spiritual duties. Our righteousness cannot profit him. "Can a man be profitable unto God?" (Job xxii. 2;) that is, he cannot by any ways be profitable unto his Maker. No: it is for our sakes that God hath given us his commandments and institutions, that we might by them mend the frame and temper of our hearts, and be fitted for to enjoy him to all eternity. In the mean while, to stay our longing after him, he affords us to see him thus, though as in "a glass darkly." (1 Cor. xiii. 12.)

But if God could be pro-merited, as they speak, and obliged, it must be by some things that are our own; and, secondly, it must be by such things as are not due upon any other account whatsoever. Now "what hast thou which thou hast not received?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) Thy faculties and powers, thy grace and goodness, a heart and will to do good, every enlargement of prayer, and exercise of faith, or any other grace, is his; it is he "that works in us both to will and to do according to his own good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) And if thanks

be not due to a servant when he does what he is bidden, as our Saviour expresses, (Luke xvii. 9,) what can be due to a creature from his Creator, who gives him food and raiment, life and breath, and all things? Where is there any proportion betwixt these, and any returns we can make? In all trading or exchanging, there it is, *Δος τι, και λαβε τι*, a *quid* for *quo*,* which cannot be given to God by us.

II. DEPARTING FROM INIQUITY HATH ITS INFLUENCE UPON,
THOUGH NO CAUSE OF, OUR SALVATION.

Departing from iniquity hath an influence upon our salvation, though it be not a cause of our salvation.—And though it cannot be admitted as a foregoing condition of our justification, for the reasons above given; yet it must be acknowledged to be a condition in the heirs of salvation; for “without holiness no man shall see God.” (Heb. xii. 14.) And, rightly understood, holiness is such a thing with which we shall be saved, and, to be sure, without which we shall not be saved. The Heathens made the way to the temple of honour through the temple of virtue; and amongst Christians, grace is the way to glory; that is, walking in the way of God’s commandments brings us to the place where God is; which way is as necessary to be walked in by all those that will go to God at last, as a path that leads to a town or place must be gone in by all that will come thither.

It is true, good works do not go before justification, but follow after; for being sanctified also when we are justified, “we are created unto good works in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. ii. 10.) Till we have a being, we cannot act; and till the root be made good, the fruit cannot be good. Amongst the moralists it may still be a rule, *Bona agendo, sumus boni*; “By doing good we become good;” but this must not be so strictly urged in divinity, where the fountain must be cleansed before the stream can run pure. Indeed, after conversion and regeneration, nothing increases the habits of grace more than the actings of grace; and in this natural and infused habits do agree: they are both strengthened by acting of them. Whatsoever grace you would have strong and lively in the soul, let it be conscientiously and frequently exercised, and it will become so: this hath many a *probatum est* [“proof”] amongst the children of God.

The consideration of these things does give us a true account, why in scripture we shall find good works and holiness so much magnified on the one hand, and yet sometimes on the other hand so debased: not to make proof of the former, the extolling good works, which deservedly is every where in scripture; yet withal we shall find them very diminutively spoken of in scripture; as where it is said, that “our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;” (Isai. lxiv. 6;) and also where the apostle says, that he accounts his blamelessness and righteousness which is in the law “but loss,” nay, “dung.” (Phil. iii. 8.) That is to say, when good works are considered with any relation to justification, or when they are compared with the righteousness of Christ,

* “Give me that, and I will give you this.”—EDIT.

we cannot think or speak too meanly of them ; but when holiness is considered as a fruit of the Spirit, always accompanying justification, and a requisite preparative for glory, and an ornament to our profession, in the mean while we cannot too much extol it, nor be too zealous and earnest in the acquiring and practising of it ; especially considering that,

III. HOLINESS IS INDISPENSABLY NECESSARY TO JUSTIFIED ONES.

Holiness is indispensably necessary unto all justified persons. Departing from iniquity is the duty of all that name the name of Christ.—As it was necessary that Christ should take upon him our flesh, so it is as necessary that we should receive from him his Spirit. He must become “flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone,” (Gen. ii. 23,) that he might pay our debt in the same nature which contracted it ; so we must partake of his Spirit, that we may be capacitated to receive the fruit of his redemption, and be one with him.

Nay, all promises, the very covenant of grace itself is thus to be understood ; namely, that the beneficiaries, or they that receive benefit by them, should be holy ; otherwise they might not, without presumption, hope for any good from them. And though we do not meet with this always expressed, yet it is always to be understood ; God expressly declaring, that though Coniah, a wicked person, was as a “signet upon his right hand, yet he would pluck him thence.” (Jer. xxii. 24.)

And when God engageth to continue his favour unto any, he engageth to continue them in a fit disposition to receive his favour. Thus to the posterity of David, which in a type were the representatives of the spiritual seed that should be raised to our elder brother Christ Jesus, whom David typified, it was promised that they should “endure for ever ;” (Psalm lxxxix. 29 ;) but then in case of forsaking of God’s law, he would “visit their transgressions with a rod,” (verse 32,) or he would use such means, though irksome for him to do, and grievous for them to bear, as might bring them back unto himself by repentance. Nay, were the promise of God never so plain and full in any case unto any person, yet there is always a *sub-intelligitur* * of such a demeanour as may be fit to receive the mercy promised : as we may see in the case of Eli and his family, which God doth acknowledge that he had promised the priesthood to ; and yet, upon the provocations of Eli and his sons, God says, “ ‘ Be it far from me, that I should perform it.’ ” (1 Sam. ii. 30.) Neither is God unrighteous, or his veracity to be excepted against ; for so long as we have to do with so holy a God, all covenants are to be understood so as may agree with his holiness, and not otherwise.

Thou sayest, (but “they are but vain words,”) that thou hast such mercies promised unto thee, and treasured up for thee ; whereas unless thou beest sanctified and “born again,” thou canst not “enter into the kingdom of heaven,” or so much as “see the kingdom of God,”

* “ A proviso or understanding.”—EDIT.

(John iii. 3,) or be benefited by any promise that God hath made. As it is storied of one who was very debauched and wicked, and, taking up a Bible, which by his religion he had not been acquainted with, (being a Papist,) he confessed that whatsoever book that was, it made against him; so unless thou dost sincerely labour after holiness, there is never a word in all the book of God that speaks any comfort unto thee, none of the fruit that grows upon the tree of life can be tasted by thee.

This might be more evinced, if we fix our mind on these following reasons :

REASON I. *From the nature of God.*

The first may be taken from the nature of God.—I mean, the essential holiness of his nature, by which he cannot have communion with any one that is unholy, no more than light can have “fellowship with darkness;” but he indispensably hates and opposes all wickedness, and hath declared his enmity against it. As fire cannot but devour stubble, so God’s holiness will not suffer him to spare any whom he finds sin and guilt upon. (Isai. v. 24.) Hence so many threatenings and denunciations of judgments against it, which do not linger, whatsoever the sinner may think. Neither can the gospel change God’s nature, or make him less to abhor sin. It is indeed a declaration of the way and means which God hath ordained to exalt his grace and mercy to the sinner by; but it is in saving of him from his sin, and not with it. Nay,

REASON II. *From the requisites in the gospel itself.*

All the privileges of the gospel do include or pre-suppose departing from iniquity.—An unholy person, whilst such, *ipsa salus non potest salvare*, “salvation itself cannot preserve.” How did the Jews search every hole and corner of their houses to find out leaven, and how earnestly did they cast it away! or else the paschal lamb would not have availed them, and the destroying angel would not have passed from them. And “these things are our examples,” (1 Cor. x. 6,) and tell us, that unless we industriously search out and cast away the leaven of sin and wickedness, the very death of Christ, the Lamb of God, will profit us nothing. It is as the first principle of the Christian religion, “that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” (1 Cor. vi. 9,) which the apostle took for granted the Corinthians could not but know. And what a bead-roll is there of such as he declares “shall not inherit the kingdom of God!” (Verses 9, 10.) No less than ten abominations are there mentioned to exclude from heaven, and some of them valued in common account but as peccadilloes. Men are apt to say of any sin, “Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live.” (Gen. xix. 20.) But, as the apostle there cautions, “Be not deceived.” (1 Cor. vi. 9.) Deceits of this nature are frequent, but very dangerous. And this is the gospel to which we appeal when we are scared and frightened by the law: but in all the gospel there is nothing that can take away or lessen our obligation to

God's commandments; but what does every way straiten and strengthen it. Now we are bound with a double cord, which is harder to be broken; and it shows that sin under the gospel hath acquired greater strength when it snaps it asunder.

Let us take a view of the privileges of those that are saved by the gospel, and see how they are obliged to holiness by them.

1. *Election is the first.*—And if we are “chosen in Christ Jesus,” the apostle tells us, that we are “chosen in him, that we should be holy and without blame before him;” (Eph. i. 4;) and if we should make our “calling and election sure,” it must be “with fear and trembling.” (2 Peter i. 10; Phil. ii. 12.) The book of life is with God in heaven: thou canst not see thy name there, but it is transcribed for thy comfort in thy heart when thou art sanctified; and the more thou proceedest in holiness, the more legible it will be unto thee.

2. *Our vocation is unto holiness.*—Does God call any of his to come from the world and sin unto him, as Christ called Saul? And “his sheep do hear his voice:” they “are called to be saints,” (Acts ix.; John x. 3; Rom. i. 7,) they are called to be made holy, and to be sanctified, (whatsoever they were before,) when once they come to Christ: “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.” (1 Cor. vi. 11.) Christ comes by water and blood, and not by water or blood only; and Christ is made of God unto us not only “righteousness,” but “sanctification.” (1 Cor. i. 30.)

3. *Our regeneration, or being born again, which the gospel insists so much upon, is in being made like unto God.*—“Partakers of the divine nature,” (2 Peter i. 4,) enabled to love what he loves, and to hate what he hates, and to be conformed unto him in all things; so that God and regenerate ones have but one will. Thus they are said to be “created” again “unto good works.” (Eph. ii. 10.)

4. *And what is glory, which we seek for, and endeavour after, but only holiness in perfection?* (Rom. ii. 7.)—Grace is glory in the bud, glory is grace in the flower; hence they are put together, and we are said to be “called to glory and virtue.” (2 Peter i. 3.) Wheresoever true grace is, there will be glory; and in whomsoever glory is, there hath been grace: God hath put these two together, and let no man put them asunder. As Laban's two daughters were disposed of,—the elder, though less lovely, must be first accepted by Jacob; (Gen. xxix. 26;) so God deals with his two, grace and glory: grace is the elder, and though not so desirable, (every one would covet glory,) yet this is the law of the land,—the younger must not be given before the elder; you must woo for and obtain grace, before you can be admitted to the enjoyment of glory.

Nay, we are only so far Christians as we are like Christ in principle and practice; as we partake of the spirit which he had, and lead such a life as he did. Christian is not an empty name; and being called so, makes us not to be so. Every one is not a scholar, or an artist in any faculty, who is called so. Besides, Christianity is a practical science; and thou hast no more of it than thou dost practise. O

how little have most men! The Heathen painted their deified heroes with this sentence proceeding from them: *Si feceritis sicut nos, eritis sicut nos*. We may imagine we hear our Saviour telling us from heaven, "If ye do as I did, ye shall be as I am."

And certainly, though heaven and the glory of it be freely promised, and it is no contradiction to say, that it is fully purchased, and sufficiently paid for, being [seeing] the apostle calls it a "purchased possession;" (Eph. i. 14;) yet there must be a meetness and suitability to it in every one that shall be admitted to the fruition of it: we must be "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) What should an unholy heart do in heaven? Heaven would not be heaven unto it; that is, it could not be a place of bliss and joy unspeakable unto such. There are no carnal delights; not so much as the here lawful, because necessary, ones of eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage: there is no gold and silver, to fill the bags of the covetous earth-worms; no Delilahs, for the wantons; no company, to debauch and carouse with. If a sermon or a Lord's day be so tedious, ("Will it be gone?") how unhappy would an unchanged, unsanctified soul think itself to hear perpetual hallelujahs and praises, to be conined amongst the souls of just men, and holy angels! (Heb. xii. 14, 23.) God certainly will not cast his jewels before such swine. (Matt. vii. 6.)

Besides, the gospel does by no means take away the ground of that discrimination which will be at the last between the sheep and goats, between them that shall stand on the right hand, and on the left, of the Judge of the quick and dead. In the final sentence there must be a truth in what shall be said to the blessed, "I was an hundred, and ye gave me meat;" (Matt. xxv. 35;) as well as the final condemnation of the cursed, "I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat," &c. (Verse 42.)

But I need not multiply reasons to prove that every one must depart from iniquity, even such as hope to be saved. For,

REASON III. *Taken from our very natures.*

It is written in our very natures, did we but understand them.—Every man that receives a reasonable soul, is, by his receiving of it, obliged to give God a reasonable service: as all creatures are called upon to glorify and praise God; and they do it in their kind, by affording unto man, who is their priest, and [who] only can offer for them, cause of thanksgiving and admiration. (Psalm cxlviii.)

But man owes most for himself, as having received most. There is no man comes into the world, but he hath some of his Lord's money intrusted with him, under an obligation and charge to "occupy it until he come;" (Luke xix. 13;) and he hath undertaken to do so. This is the *επαγγελια ανθρωπου*,* or the inessentiate promise which every one is understood to make at his creation; namely, to perform all reasonable service, (and it is such, whatsoever God commands,) and to be subject to his Maker in all things.

* "The engagement or promise on the part of man."—EDIT.

And when this promise or oath is broken, man cannot but be uneasy; his conscience accuses, condemns, torments him; so that it is indeed *μεγας πονος το μη ζην καλωσ*.* A wicked man is in more trouble and pain in the pursuit of his lust and wickedness, than a good man meets with in all the severest exercise of holiness.

The soul that is renewed and born again, is so far from being disengaged from holiness, that its engagement is doubled; for he is redeemed, that "he might serve God in holiness and righteousness." (Luke i. 74, 75.) God hath chosen him for his champion, to fight against "the world, the flesh, and the devil." And should such an one desert or yield, it were cowardice or treachery. God expects greater matters from such; that being "formed for himself," he should "show forth his praise." (Isai. xliii. 21.)

To be sure, no act of grace, no gospel-privilege or advantage, present or to come, can take away or lessen our obligation to become holy; for, this being the law of our creation, whilst we are God's creatures, so made, so endued, that is, whilst we have our beings, and we are at all, we carry our bonds about with us, which we may not break without sinning against the law of our creation, which it is impossible that any thing or matter in the gospel, which comes after it, should disannul.

OBJECTION. "But if holiness be so absolutely necessary to life and happiness, and that under the gospel, to which men flee to escape the condemnation of the law, 'who then can be saved?'"

The apostles propounded that question unto our Saviour upon the observation [which] our Saviour had made (the rich young man having departed from him) of the very great difficulty in the salvation of a rich man. It is observable, that the disciples do not say, "What rich man can then be saved?" (Matt. xix. 25.) But, being conscious that every condition had its temptations, (as a rich man had his, so they had theirs,) they therefore propound the question more generally. To which, so far as my subject leads me, I answer,

ANSWER 1. *By concession, that certainly there will be but few saved.*—Christ's flock is a very little one, a little diminutive flock. (Luke xii. 32.) Of the many that came out of Egypt, how few entered Canaan! And if the apostles were so solicitous, when it was told them that one of them, though but one of the twelve, was the son of perdition, how careful should we be, when our Saviour tells us, that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it!" (Matt. vii. 14.) Who that thinks seriously on this, will not make the apostles' solicitous question, "Is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 22.)

2. *God does undertake for holiness too, to enable all that, in sense of their inability, come unto him in the name of Christ.*—Nay, God "knows them that are his," and draws them unto Christ, who hath "received gifts for the rebellious," (good news for the humbled, penitent sinner!) "that the Lord God might dwell amongst them." (Psalm lxxviii. 18.) Nay, Christ hath "all fulness," which it pleased

* "A vicious course of life is both tollsome and distressing."—EDIT.

the Father should be in him. (Col. i. 19.) And God hath promised to "take away the stony heart," and to "give them a heart of flesh." (Ezek. xi. 19.) As for others that perish in their blood and sin, God is righteous; for who of them does what he could do, and ought to do? And God may do with his own (all grace is his) as he pleases.

3. *A sincere endeavour to depart from iniquity, and to keep the commandments of God, shall be accepted at thy hand for Christ's sake.*—In the first covenant (according to the tenor of it) the person was accepted only for the works' sake; but in the covenant of grace, the works are accepted for the person's sake. If thou hast made thy peace with God through Jesus Christ, and art beloved in him, God will accept thee "according to what thou hast," and not reject thee for what thou "hast not." (2 Cor. viii. 12.)

But be not mistaken, as if some sorry wishes and faint endeavours after holiness were sufficient. Do men pursue so coldly and faintly things which they value? especially if it be for their lives. Therefore they shall be your judges.

But having exceeded in the foregoing particulars, (like those children that come first [who] have usually the biggest portion,) I must hasten to the fourth and last, and be brief in it; namely,

IV. FREE PARDON THE BEST MOTIVE TO BECOME HOLY.

This grace of the gospel, to wit, our justification through the name and merit of Jesus Christ, is the strongest motive toward our departing from iniquity.—Though departing from iniquity is in itself very good and necessary, yet the motive for such our departing does very much vary it. Our Saviour taxeth the scribes and Pharisees, that they did "all their works to be seen of men;" (Matt. xxiii. 5;) which was as a fly in the box of their precious ointments. Any good action ought to consist (*ex integris causis*) "of good causes in every respect." If the principle out of which it flows, or end to which it tends, be not good, the whole work is marred, it cannot be a good work. Our business at present is to inquire about the end which we propound in our obedience, in which,

1. *Meriting, or retaliating, may not move us.*

If it be to expiate for by-past offences, or to merit undeserved favours, it must needs be abominable in the sight of God, being the highest act of pride or presumption that can be imagined.—Let our works be what they will, though the best "are as filthy rags," (Isai. lxiv. 6,) if they be offered unto God by way of barter or exchange, they become most abominable: as if God stood in need of something that we have, or that we were so sufficient as to be able to benefit God too.

2. *But thankfulness to God excites us.*

To depart from iniquity, or to labour in holiness, in order to express our thankfulness unto God for his mercies in Jesus Christ, is most grateful and most forcible.

(1.) It must be most acceptable unto God, being [seeing] it speaks the soul truly affected with and sensible of God's free grace and mercy. It does not come to God with any purpose to deserve at God's hands; but with a "What shall I render?" (Psalm cxvi. 12;) with many blessings of God for his pardoning of his iniquity, and healing his diseases. (Psalm ciii. 1—3.)

(2.) Thankfulness, as low as sin hath sunk man, is yet left, as visibly engraven on the nature of man. Hence the Heathen could account unthankfulness as the sum of all vices; and scripture makes the unthankful man worse than a beast. (Isai. i. 3.) Now if thankfulness remain and be cogent, what can oblige more than the mercies of God in Christ? If we serve them that give us food and raiment, what service is too much for him that gives us all things? nay, that gives us Christ, and with him all things? O there is a vast difference in having Christ, the peace and love of God through him, in having Christ, his Spirit to enable us to improve what we have from God, and not having Christ with our present enjoyments. Methinks when we see our children or servants run or go where we would have them, do any thing to please or gratify us; we cannot but blush to think how little we do, and how awkward it is what we do, for God.

Who is it that considers the love of God in Jesus Christ, and can forbear crying out with the Psalmist, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant?" (Psalm cxvi. 16.) (Away with all formal fops!) It is ingeminated, because of our obligation to God's service, from our redemption as well as from our creation; and if thou dost say so, as thou dost in effect in every prayer, let not God find thee with a lie in thy mouth.

3. *God's and Christ's love constrains us.*

Love unto God for all his glorious excellencies, especially for his mercy in Christ Jesus, is the best principle of holiness and [of] our departing from iniquity.

God requires his children to give him their heart. (Prov. xxiii. 26.) And indeed, in all the acts of religion and devotion, what the heart does not do is looked upon by God as not done at all; nay, it were well for the hypocrite, that all his outside services and formal professions had never been. This made St. Paul to pray for the Thessalonians, that the Lord would "direct their hearts into the love of God." (2 Thess. iii. 5.)

Now love is as a fire which "many waters cannot quench." (Canticles viii. 7.) Difficulties will be overcome, and obedience will be permanent, where true love to God is. And this love in the soul to God is begun by and flows from God's love first unto the soul, as fire kindles fire: "He loved us first;" (1 John iv. 19;) and had it not been a very great flame, it could never have thawed and warmed our frozen hearts. We do but *αντιπελαργειν*, "love when we are beloved." But when we are made sensible of Christ's love, the freeness, efficacy, and usefulness of it, (I know not what to say, first or last, concerning it,) it passeth knowledge; then we are "constrained,"

(2 Cor. v. 14.) that is, as effectually, though inwardly, forced, as any strong man can by his strength force us to do any outward act.

He that acts according to any of God's commandments, out of hope to merit by them, may act out of love indeed, but it must be then self-love, to obtain, as he vainly thinks, by his obedience, eternal happiness. Our love of God should exceed self-love, as far as God himself exceeds us, which is infinitely. Our love of God is a virtue, and the foundation of all the rest. Our love of ourselves, thus taken, is a sin, and a mother-sin, the cause of all the rest of our sins.

To hear a penitent and believing sinner exulting in his praises unto God, professing his deep sense of his mercies, considering what returns he shall make unto God, (for the Spirit of God is a "free" and ingenuous "Spirit," Psalm li. 12,) it were the pleasantest and desirablest music on this side of the heavenly choir. Thou mayest set about it thyself, and make this "melody in thy own heart:" (Eph. v. 19 :) ruminates on what God hath done for thee, and what he daily does; what thou owest for the mercies of every day, and night, and moment; and what suitable sense thou oughtest to have of them; and, to thy poor power, (thy "little all,") what returns thou oughtest to make for them. But when thou settest thyself, as in the sight of God, to consider what thou shouldst return to thy God for his mercy in Christ Jesus, thou wilt find that thyself, thy service, thy all, is too little; but you must cry-out, with Mr. Herbert,—

"Alas! my God, I know not what!"

APPLICATION.

I cannot wholly omit application, though I have in a great measure prevented myself: take what remains in these few USES:—

USE I. INSTRUCTION.

1. *This justifies God.*—For no doctrine, no dispensation of his did ever countenance sin; nay, nothing does show so plainly God's hatred of sin, as the gospel does. If we take a walk in the garden where our Saviour sweat those drops of blood; (Luke xxii. 44;) or be within hearing of that lamentable cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46;) if we ask, "Why does the Son of God thus cry out? What makes him thus sweat?" the gospel informs us, that it was our sin that pressed this blood out of him, and forced this bitter cry from him; and if this be done "in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31.)

2. *This discovers the groundless pretensions and vain confidence of most men, who live in sin, and yet hope (or would seem to hope) to live with God.*—O "know ye not your own selves?" Read the whole Testament over; either that is not the gospel, or you cannot receive comfort from it. Not one good word is there in it to any in whom sin reigns; unless those threatenings of hell and destruction may be called good, (O that they might prove so!) to awaken you to a due sense of your condition, and be as a "schoolmaster" to lead, or

drive you to Christ; to take him for your Lord as well as for your Saviour: if he be not both, he is neither unto you. (2 Peter i. 11; ii. 20.) You cannot be saved by your book, could you read it and understand it never so well, unless you practise it also. "Christ must be in you," his Spirit entertained in your heart, or there is no "hope of glory" for you. (Col. i. 27.) All "good hope" is "through grace." (2 Theas. ii. 16.) Thou flatterest thyself that God is thy Father, and so thou callest him in thy prayers; but if thou beest [art] not like him, if thou partakest not of his "Divine Nature," (2 Peter i. 4,) thou takest his "name in vain," and he "will not hold thee guiltless;" for thy prayers will be turned into sin unto thee. (Psalm cix. 7.) And yet pray thou must, or thou runnest into a greater iniquity; by neglecting to acknowledge thy dependence upon God, thou wilt at least border upon atheism. O what a miserable dilemma does thy wickedness betray thee unto!

If thou hadst a design to dishonour God, thou couldest not more effectually execute it than by saying, that thou art his servant or child, and by sin to disparage him thy Father, or Lord and Master: as *he* must needs provoke any great and noble person, *who*, in the livery of his servant, or garb of his child, acts filthiness and abominations.

And as for laying hold on Christ, and shrouding of thyself amongst his retinue, calling him thy Husband, or professing him to be thy Head, what a monster (pardon the expression, I tremble to mention it) wouldst [thou] make him! as if he were a Dagon, whose head was like a man, but his lower parts like stinking fish. The truth is, the pretensions of such unto salvation would make scripture a lie, and Christ the minister of unrighteousness; which God forbid. (Gal. ii. 17, 21.)

Dost thou think it will serve thy turn well enough, if thou canst but with Stephen say at last, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit?" (Acts vii. 59.) Unless thy spirit be sanctified, and [thy] sins washed away in his blood, thou wilt now soon hear him say unto thee, "Depart, thou cursed, into everlasting fire." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

Men, brethren, and fathers, hear our apology: if we be taxed, because we maintain free grace and free justification, that we make a way for free sinning, and free living, and doing what we please, and yet getting thus into heaven at last, and that we may be assured of it in the mean while; we justly abominate such inferences, and think they can least of all be inferred from such premisses. May we all agree to stand up for God, and to oppose sin to our utmost! which is the last and only use that remains, and the best and suitablest to the text that can be made.

USE II. EXHORTATION.

To depart from iniquity.—It is foretold concerning the times of the gospel, that "in the latter days" they should "fear the Lord and his goodness." (Hosea iii. 5.) O that these words might be now fulfilled! that men would fear to abuse "the goodness of God," which is designed to "lead them to repentance." (Rom. ii. 4.) The

richest and sweetest wines, they say, make the sharpest vinegar; I am sure, sweetest promises, when neglected or abused, issue in the severest torments: "Woe to thee, Chorazin! woe to thee, Bethsaida!" Why is so sad a woe denounced, beyond that on Tyre and Sidon? And Capernaum too is threatened with a more terrible destruction than that of Sodom and Gomorrah: because those miserable ones perished without having had the means of salvation declared in the gospel amongst them; these refused to come to be saved, though invited by Christ himself. (Matt. xi. 21—24.) The hotter the sunbeams are, the more they harden the clay that will not be softened by it.

If you keep your sins now, you do "despite unto the Spirit of grace," that in the gospel invites, persuades, and offers to enable you to forsake them: you trample "under foot the precious blood of the Son of God," which should wash you from all your impurities; you count it as a common thing, and let it be spilt in vain, as water on the ground. (Heb. x. 29; 1 Peter i. 19.) One brings-in Satan upbraiding our Saviour with the fewness of his followers, and true disciples: he (Satan) did never any good for man, he is man's enemy on all accounts; and yet, upon the offer of any foolish toy, profit, or pleasure, he is obeyed, and men yield themselves up to his service, though so hard and tyrannical a master. Our blessed Lord became man, lived meanly, died miserably, that he might gain obedience to such just precepts and commandments that are for our good, and yet hath so very few that will serve and obey him. "Be astonished, O ye heavens." (Jer. ii. 12.) Therefore "Christ died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." (Rom. xiv. 9.) "All things are put under his feet;" (1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22;) and "by his power he ruleth" over all, (Psalm lxxvi. 7,) whether they will or no. But Christ died and suffered that he might obtain a "willing people," such as out of choice and love would obey him. (Psalm cx. 3.)

And do any of you pretend to be "bought with a price," even "with the precious blood of the Son of God?" Then you ought to glorify him with those bodies and spirits which are his. (1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23; 1 Peter i. 19.)

It is now sacrilege indeed to rob God; and he will bring thee into judgment, and indict thee, ay, and condemn thee too, without serious and timely repentance, for it. And, O how hot is that hell which is especially prepared for hypocrites and unbelievers!

Thy obligation is as strict, and, as you heard, stricter too, under the gospel, than it was to any under the law; and yet the transgressors of the law deserved then to perish "without mercy;" (Heb. x. 28;) and how shall we escape?

One difference there is indeed betwixt the law and the gospel: the law required the full "tale of brick," but afforded "no straw;" (Exod. v. 18;) it required obedience, but the law, as such, afforded no means to perform it. The means how thou mayest be enabled to do the will of God, and to depart from iniquity, are manifested in the

gospel; here thou art shown a "fulness" in Christ, out of which thou mayest have "grace for grace." (Col. i. 19; John i. 16.)

Thou art invited to come, thou art assured to be welcome; bring never so many empty vessels, thou mayest fill them freely. (Isai. lv. 1.) It is in vain to say thou canst not, but thou wilt not, be holy. Did any now, in a sense of their weakness and inability, beg strength and power from him to do his will, and walk in his commandments, there would be "joy in heaven" for such a petition, so readily would it be heard and granted. (Luke xv. 7, 10.)

You have heard, that every one that calls himself a Christian does it therefore, because he pretends to be married to Jesus Christ; but, in good earnest, to use the words of Rebekah's friends, "Wilt thou go with this man?" (Gen. xxiv. 58.) Wilt thou go with Christ, and be a follower of him? "Say, and do it;"* and God speed thee well: I cannot wish thee more joy than thou wilt find.

And O what advantages would this bring, would Christians be what they profess and would seem to be! were the precepts of Christ obeyed, and his life copied out by them, this would mend the world indeed. Pagans and Mahometans, Papists and Jews, would not be able to stand out against the power of godliness, when it once appears in the lives of men. Not only ministers may convert, but even women too: thus the husband, the apostle tells us, (1 Peter iii. 1.) may be gained to Christ by his wife; thus a servant, that does his service as to the Lord, may convert his master.

O! up and be doing; "your labour shall not be in vain;" (1 Cor. xv. 58;) no, but "great" shall be your "reward in heaven," when you shall be taken up to "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

But if you shall neglect or refuse, my soul shall mourn in secret for you, as knowing that the crying, "Lord, Lord," (Matt. xxv. 11.) will not avail you, nor any confident profession of Christ's name stand you in any stead. When the deluge came, how many perishing wretches ran to the ark, and laid hold on it, cried earnestly for to be admitted into it, but in vain! You know whom the ark represented, even this Christ, in whom alone is salvation. O get into him, by a true and living faith; and that to-day, "whilst it is called To-day," (Heb. iii. 13,) lest "swift destruction" come upon you. (2 Peter ii. 1.) May we all so know and consider "the terrors of the Lord," that we may be persuaded! (2 Cor. v. 11.)

* *Fac quod dicis, et fides est.* "Do what thou sayest, and it is faith."—EDIT.