

SERMONS,
ILLUSTRATING
THE FREENESS, SOVEREIGNTY,
AND
Invincible Operations
OF
DIVINE GRACE,
IN THE
COMPLETE AND EVERLASTING SALVATION
OF
THE ELECT.

BY
W. W. HORNE,
MINISTER OF HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, WOOD STREET, LONDON.

Ου εαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν, ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν Κύριον εαυτοῦς
δε, δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν.

“ We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your
Servants, for Jesus’ sake.”—PAUL.

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SOLD AT THE VESTRY OF HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, WOOD STREET; AND BY MR.
HIGHAM, CHISWELL STREET; J. NUNN, GREAT QUEEN STREET; MR. COOPER,
MINISTER OF THE OLD TABERNACLE, PLYMOUTH; BELCHER AND SON, BIR-
MINGHAM; MR. COOMBE, LEICESTER; AND AT MR. CLARKE’S, YARMOUTH,
NORFOLK.

PREFACE.

THE glory of a covenant God in Christ Jesus, is the zealous, ardent, and unremitting pursuit of every regenerated sinner, and the grand stimulus, by which every minister of the Gospel is actuated, with promptitude, affection, and faithfulness, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to proclaim to all, sensibly perishing sinners, that JESUS is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him—That no other name is given under heaven, whereby we must be saved—That he is the WAY—the glorious, and unerring way of salvation—the way of access to God, and communion with him.—The TRUTH—the divinely illustrious truth of the whole Bible.—The LIFE of every believer—the Author, and Preserver of our spiritual life, while travelling below, and the giver, and crown of our eternal life, when we shall arrive in those mansions of everlasting felicity, which he has prepared for us above.

By this stimulus, and with these sentiments, the Author publicly professes to have been actuated, when the following Discourses were first delivered; and he has the pleasure to add, with gratitude to the Lord, that his end was most graciously answered, by a Divine APPLICATION of them, to

many of God's children—to many, now living, who can testify, “that they came not unto them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” These the Author mentions with peculiar satisfaction of soul, as the greatest RECOMMENDATION of his Sermons to the regenerated children of God. He would not mention them with the ostentatious boast of a PHARISEE (God forbid), but to the exaltation of that divinely energetic power, by which the Gospel was attended; and for the glory of God, the comfort of his friends, and the confusion of his enemies.

The great Apostle to the Gentiles, brings forward those captives to sin and Satan, who had been graciously, gloriously, and conspicuously liberated by his instrumentality; and denominates them his “EPISTLE of Christ, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.”

He faithfully preached Christ, and the Holy Comforter acknowledged, and evidenced the truth he delivered, by a divinely sweet, and powerful APPLICATION; by which sinners were brought to a knowledge, and enjoyment of their personal salvation, by the Redeemer's blood; and to love him, superlatively, and rejoice, alone, in him, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory!

If, then, the Apostle mention those, to whom his labours in the Gospel had been graciously blest, as a RECOMMENDATION to his ministry, and

that with the most enthusiastic rapture of delight, calling them his “ Dearly beloved, his joy, and crown ;” surely, no child of God will attempt to censure the Author, for the bare mention of what the Lord has been pleased, in infinite condescension, to effect, by the ministry of one, who has a right with the deepest humility, to denominate himself the chief of sinners ; and yet, through distinguishing grace, though the least of all, a saint, and servant of the most high God ; for the benefit of the Church of Christ, and the glory of his name !

The following SERMONS have, certainly, been already blessed, in the comfort, encouragement, and establishment of many precious souls, in the faith of God’s elect ; and the Author has been graciously supported in the ministry, for many years, and amidst volleys of shot from the infernal artilleries, divinely influenced to attack error, as it arose to his view, in all its specious and detestable colours, and deceptive and baneful consequences ! and “ To preach, not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and himself a servant of the Church, for Jesus’ sake.” For which, with gratitude and love, he would ascribe all glory to the riches of free grace ! and by which he is encouraged to send this Volume into the world.

MAN NOTHING, AND CHRIST EVERY THING, IN THE SALVATION OF HIS PEOPLE, is the truth asserted, maintained, and defended in the following

Sermons, which cannot but obtain the approbation of God's regenerated children, into whose hands they may come: and, that they may, under the Divine blessing, be instrumental in their comfort, and in the effectual Calling of many more of the Ransomed, to the knowledge of Christ, is the submissive prayer of their willing and obedient servant in the Gospel,

W. W. HORNE.

Islington, Oct. 20, 1810.

INTRODUCTION.

A

DIALOGUE

Between PREJUDICE and IMPARTIALITY.

Prej. **W**HAT book is this?

Imp. The first volume of the Writings of W. W. Horne.

Prej. Who is Horne?

Imp. A dissenting Minister, who preaches in *Wood Street*, Cheapside, London.

Prej. Is it that Horne who is generally considered an *Antinomian*?

Imp. The very same.

Prej. How then can you read his Writings, or give encouragement to a publication, which, if that report be true, must have a tendency to vitiate the sentiments, and corrupt the morals of the religious public; and to lead into the evious, and melancholy paths of error and seduction, the sinner, who is simply, and earnestly enquiring after divine truth?

Imp. "Our law condemns no man before it hears him:" yet I have good ground to believe, that thousands of our religious professors have condemned this Author, alone upon the unjustifiable ground of vague report, who never heard a

A

sermon from his lips, read a single page of his writings, nor, perhaps, so much as beheld his person ! But, for my part, it is a maxim with me, never to take up a report against any Man, and especially to believe, and tell it for truth, except I have the most lucid and demonstrable proof of its authenticity.

Prej. I must confess, my friend, your maxim is excellent, and, if universally observed, we certainly should not hear so much *backbiting*, and *defamation of character* from religious professors ; who, when assembled on friendly visits, too often merit the title of *religious gossips*, rather than that of pious and devotional christians !—notwithstanding, I must confess that my prejudices against Horne, very forcibly pervade my mind, from what I have heard of him, and give me a total disinclination either to hear, or read him.

Imp. But my friend, have you any justifiable ground for entertaining such prejudices ? Has the man done you any injury ?

Prej. No, I have never had any thing to do with him.—I know nothing of him, only from what has been told me, by some persons of *great respectability*.

Imp. But I hope you do not consider their calumny a constituent of their respectability ?—But what have they told you against him ?

Prej. Many things, against both his doctrine, and deportment in life.

Imp. And are you sure that such accusations are founded on truth ?

Prej. I am not sure—but—

Imp. You are not sure, as to the truth of what you have heard—you may therefore be imposed upon—you may believe them a *truth*—*I do not*—and till you can prove them so, I have as good ground to say they are *false*, as you have to say they are *true*—and I am sure mine is the safest, the most honest, and commendable conclusion ; for, by so doing, I cannot bear “ false witness against my neighbour.”—I am confident he has been represented to you by the exaggerating, and injurious tongue of slander ; whose accursed employ it is, constantly to injure, by base insinuations, —half sentences—ambiguous terms—and *right down falsehoods*.—I am sure, therefore, that he has been misrepresented to you—for as to his doctrines, I heartily believe them to be the pure Gospel, which he can, and constantly does, maintain and defend, by abundance of scriptural evidence—which you must allow to be decisive, because unerring. And as to his *conduct*, I know he never yet set up for a *perfect* character, yet I believe he would outweigh many of his accusers in the scales of *good Morality* : but I shall not enter into any defence of his conduct, any further than by an appeal, *First*, to your conscience, and *Secondly*, to the Scriptures ; and let me first ask you, Whether *you* are free from imperfections ?—whether there are not many things in your life and character, which may not only be considered *blemishes*, but sins ; of which you are ashamed before the Lord, and confess with grief and

contrition of soul ! And, if you know your own heart, give me leave to tell you, that you will not have a stone to cast at another sinner, even if taken in the very act of sin (John viii. 4) and though we cannot countenance a perseverance in immorality, for where that is the case, we are sure the soul is not under the influence of *Divine Grace* ; yet, we have reason to believe, from the Scriptures, that “ there is not a just man upon the Earth who doeth good and sinneth not : ” hence the advice of Christ is very pertinent, and judicious, “ First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the *mote* out of thy brother’s eye.” (Matt. vii. 5.) And 2nd *In reference to scripture*, Have we not good ground to expect, that “ all manner of evil will be falsely spoken against ” the Ministers of Christ ? —and has not Christ pronounced a *woe* against those whom “ all men speak well of ? ” Such foul calunmy as some of our religious professors have employed against him, ought, therefore, rather to be taken by you, as a criterion of his being sent of God to defend his Gospel : for we know of whom it was said ; and that by the self-righteous sticklers for fleshly purity, “ He hath a Devil, and is mad ; why hear ye him ? ” and as they have called the Master of the house *Beelzebub*, the servants must expect the same contempt, and infamy : hence they affirmed of the apostles, that they said, “ Let us do evil that good may come.” So that this author is not the first of Christ’s servants, who has been “ *slanderosly reported.* ”

Hence it is plain, that so far as a minister is evilly and falsely spoken against, so far has he the outward testimony of being sent of Christ, to work in his vineyard; wearing the badge of intrinsic christianity, the glorious uniforms of all Immanuel's soldiers!

Prej. This is all very true; neither do I know any thing against the Author but from *Report*, and that, according to your account, we must expect—and—

Imp. Not merely according to my account, but according to God's word: for if any man will live godly, in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution. "For unto God's people, it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

Prej. And as to the evils of my own heart, I often think they are more numerous, and more hostile to God, than those existing in the carnal nature of any other sinner upon earth! Therefore we will drop this subject if you please, and attend more particularly to *Horne's doctrines*.

Imp. I suppose he would reply, "My doctrine is not mine, but His who sent me."

Prej. Well, if I thought so, I certainly should be for reading him; but I am told that he preaches *strange things*, and that he certainly is, if not *practically*, *doctrinally* an *Antinomian*.

Imp. Strange things he may advance, and yet defend the Truth of God, for the apostles were said to be "setters forth of strange gods, because

they preached Jesus, and the resurrection ;” the multitude exclaiming, “ These men bring certain strange things to our ears.” While men remain *strangers* to their own hearts, and the power of Christ, the preaching of the Cross will always appear unto them a *strange, mysterious*, and even, a *foolish* thing ! (1 Cor. i. 18.) which has been the case with the Author’s preaching and writings, because, instead of preaching Man’s supposed goodness, he has asserted the goodness of God in Christ, and the operations of the Eternal Spirit in a sinner’s heart, in bringing him off the sandy foundation of *human merit*, to build upon Christ, the sure, and only foundation, laid in Zion, for a sinner’s hope.

Prej. But how come people in general, who have heard him, so grossly to mistake, and misrepresent him ?

Imp. That’s very plain—as the world by wisdom knoweth not God, and as the natural man cannot receive, nor understand the things of the Spirit, it is no wonder that inexperienced professors should misunderstand, and misrepresent a Minister of Christ.

Prej. Who then are we to give credit to, and how are we to judge of this Author—whether he has published those doctrines which are solid consolation to a believer, and influentially productive of real practical godliness, or whether he has published error ?

Imp. Doubtless the best way is to read his

Writings through, with impartiality, and attention.

Prej. Very true : but then, what standard are we to take for a decision?

Imp. That, indeed, is an important question, though a very easy one to answer—and yet, the standard by which we are to judge of his doctrines, is not so easily adhered to, as may at first be imagined.

Prej. I suppose, with me, you think the SACRED SCRIPTURES not only the *best*, but the *only* standard of divine Truth?

Imp. Most certainly. A glorious and unerring standard ! But we read of some, “ who corrupt the word of God,” and, “ who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.” Which proceeds radically, from total spiritual blindness—“ being alienated from the life of God ;” and practically, from the prejudices of education ; or more especially from bigotry to a *sect*, or *party* of professors, and, by a too strict attention to technical, and common-place terms—In fact, such is the blindness, and enmity of the human heart to God, that no man can impartially attend to the Scriptures, and seriously enquire after truth, independent of the opinions of men, till God creates in the soul, by his Spirit, an earnest enquiry after personal salvation.

Prej. That I believe ; yet an appeal to the Scriptures may be made, and very justifiably, in vindicating the truth, against an unregenerate and gainsaying world : thus, Christ, to his pharisaic

antagonists, "Search the *Scriptures*, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me : " and, " Did you never read in the *Scriptures*, the Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner ? "

Imp. Yes, and it certainly must give great pleasure to the children of God, and especially to his ministers, who have publicly to defend his truth, to be able to make an appeal to such a divinely luminous volume, from which they deduce, through the supernatural guidance of the Spirit, such powerful evidence, and such forcible, and unsophisticated arguments, as completely to confute, and confound, every enemy to salvation by Grace : this was the method adopted by *Paul*, and the apostles, who were, I believe, like others of whom we read, "*Mighty in the Scriptures :*" confounding the enemies of evangelic truth. Christ himself, as you have very justly observed, confirmed his Messiahship, and doctrines, by quotations from the *Scriptures*. But it is necessary to observe, that he also plainly told them, they did not understand the *Scriptures* : for, saith he, " Ye do greatly err, not knowing the *Scriptures*, nor the power of God : " and we know that his disciples could not comprehend the great contents of the Bible, till " HE opened their understandings, that they might understand the *Scriptures*." And we cannot suppose that men are wiser now, than those who had so long been with Jesus—hence the necessity of the Spirit's work ; and hence it is

undeniably evident, that if any man understand the Scriptures for himself, and read therein his own interest in the Covenant of Grace, he is a new creature, and has the evidence in himself, of the Bible's divine authenticity.

Prej. But if unregenerated men are thus totally ignorant of the Scriptures, and must remain so, except it pleases God to give them supernatural understanding, where is the consistency of attempting to refute their errors, by an appeal to that Book, the contents of which is, to them, unintelligible and incomprehensible?

Imp. When we say they are incapable of understanding them, we do not intend—and I wish not to be understood so—that they are incapable, as rational creatures, of receiving, and feeling the force of an argument deduced therefrom; nor, that they cannot learn the peculiar doctrines of the Bible; but, that they cannot discern the things of the Spirit, or that spiritual knowledge possessed by, and peculiar to the soul that is born again. For instance, a man may learn, merely from the letter of Scripture, that God has a Redeemed Church, a chosen people, who shall infallibly be saved; for this, with all other consequent doctrines, is clearly stated, and may be learned, and even vindicated by an unregenerated man: but tell him of eating the flesh of the Son of God—of a conscience sprinkled with the blood of Jesus—of seeing him who is invisible, and of walking, talking, and communing with Christ,

and you will be unto him as a *Barbarian*; who, ten to one, would pronounce you an enthusiast, in the worst sense of the word, or labouring under the most wild and chimerical delusion!

Prej. Thank you, my friend, for this distinction, which I highly approve; and, however we may differ in our opinion of this author, I am happy to find that we perfectly accord on the Scriptures, and a spiritual comprehension of them.

Imp. And I am happy to say this is the very doctrine which HORNE, throughout his writings, warmly and zealously advocates—indeed it is his favourite theme, so much so, that I have heard it said that he dwells too much upon the supernatural, and almighty work of the Eternal Spirit, in the hearts of his people.

Perj. But I am told he is so amazingly *high* in doctrine.

Imp. Now I think, on the contrary, that he is very *low*; for when he is so graciously favoured of the Lord, as to preach Christ, completely finishing the work which the Father gave him to do, leading captivity captive, putting away sin—all the sin of all his people—by the blood of his cross, and receiving gifts for men, even for the *rebellious*—when he is led to represent and proclaim Christ, the Head over all things to the church, the grand repository of all new covenant blessings, the fullness of grace, and the fullness of the Godhead!—when thus *preaching* CHRIST, he descends into the unfathomable mines of di-

vine Grace, and immeasurable depths of eternal love; where, I believe, it is his pleasure to labour, under the command of his Lord, for the promotion of divine truth, the consolation of Sion's children, and the glory of a covenant-keeping God.

Prej. You are very smart upon me—but you know what I intend by *high doctrine*.

Imp. Yes, I do; but instead of talking about *doctrines*, either *high* or *low*, *ancient* or *modern*, let us examine his writings, and see whether they comport with that divinely inspired, and divinely precious Book, which we both allow to be the unerring standard of all sacred truth; the justly decisive arbiter in all theological controversy, and the invincible Palladium of all christian doctrines and practice.

Prej. Nay, but rather let us cease to say any thing more of the servant, and turn our discourse to his Master—that is, if Christ be his master.

Imp. I believe he is Christ's servant in an exalted sense, not a *bond* servant; for the children of God are no more servants, but sons; but a servant of Christ, for the good of his church, in defending the doctrines of the Gospel—and with respect to our conversation, I am very willing to desist from saying any thing of the man: indeed I should not, that I know of, have mentioned his name to you, but from a particular desire that you should read his writings; and, as your friend, I feel a strong persuasion of your de- iving

some profit and consolation, from an unprejudiced, and impartial perusal.

Prej. I must confess I feel rather more inclined to do so, from what you have said; and, therefore, if you will indulge me with the loan of this First Part, should I, according to your prepossession, *approve* of it, I will certainly make a purchase of the *whole*; and shall then have reason to thank you, for the pains you have taken to slay my prejudices against a man, that, I must confess, I know nothing of, but from report: and “some say he is a good man,” others say, “nay, but he deceiveth the people:” now, as the former, are as likely to speak truth as the latter, should that be the case, I am certainly guilty of flagrant injustice, in giving credit to the reports of the latter. Well, I’ll read him.

Imp. I wish you to do so: not for the man’s sake, but for the sake of that truth which he defends—and may the Lord attend your perusal of it, with the unction of his holy Spirit; for he alone “teacheth his people to profit” by divine truth.

Prej. Should that be the case, you will certainly have an honest confession from me, of all my convictions, and a grateful acknowledgment of your friendship, in recommending a Work, which, till now, I had no inclination to read—but what are the doctrines principally maintained in his writings?

Imp. The doctrine of the *Trinity*, or Three

Persons in one indivisible, and incomprehensible essence—the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY SPIRIT; co-equal, and co-eternal, the only wise God, over all, blessed for ever: unalterably ordaining all things from everlasting, and, in his own appointed time, “performing all things after the council of his own will,” knowing no variation, nor even the shadow of a turn!

Prej. If these doctrines are boldly and unequivocally asserted and defended, I fear his writings will have but *few* purchasers, and still *fewer* advocates: for you well know this is the unpopular side of the question, and that these doctrines are become obsolete, unfashionable, and offensive; consequently, are either entirely exploded, or else *modified, modernised*, and explained into a consistency with *free will*, by our now more *pleasing*, because more *moderate, Calvinistic* preachers—and, besides, we know that thousands of volumes have been written, and ten thousand arguments ingeniously employed, by *very learned divines*, against the doctrine of the Trinity; and, also, even by some of the *modern Calvinists* themselves, against the immutable decrees of God.

Imp. True my friend; and I also know that thousands of our professors make no enquiry after truth for themselves; and will not even read any thing that is stigmatized by their priests, with the frightful, but unmerited, appellations of *High Calvinism*, and *Antinomianism*; while, it is curious to observe, *Arminianism* is caressed, free-will substituted for the Spirit's operations, and the

“*duty, and natural ability of all men to believe,*” bear away the palm of power and glory from our altogether lovely Immanuel! But, notwithstanding all the censorious declamation, and serpentine sophistry employed, and that very successfully, against the doctrines and operations of *free grace*; they have not been able to overturn them; neither shall they, while there is virtue in the blood of Jesus to cleanse, power in the eternal Spirit to regenerate a soul, and God hath an elect vessel to call by grace, and bring to glory: for “the foundation standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his:” and he will save his own people, defend his own cause, and vindicate his own eternal honour! If the Trinity be not a truth, there is no truth in the Scriptures; and if Jehovah must court the *free-will*, and wait the *caprice* of man, before he can know what will take place among his creatures, or who shall be saved—if subject, like ourselves, to changes and disappointments, he at once ceases to be the ETERNAL, ALMIGHTY, and ALL-WISE God, being stript of his essential divinity, and reduced to a level with his creatures, who call him to account for his procedure, and arraign him at their *Arminian* bar!!

Prej. Then I suppose this author is also an advocate of *Predestination* and *Election*.

Imp. Most certainly: according to the views and statement of *Paul*, in the first Chapter of *Ephesians*—that the people of God were chosen in Christ, and predestinated to be the sons of

God, and to dwell with him for ever; not on account of *good works* or *obedience*, foreseen in them; nor upon condition that they obey him, (for the Holy Spirit is the author of their evangelical and superior obedience,) but Jehovah, of his own good will and pleasure, so *elected* them, because he loved them freely, and with an everlasting love.

Prej. But, I hope he says nothing of Reprobation.

Imp. Only, that it is the unavoidable consequence of Election: for “the Election hath obtained it, and *the rest* are *blinded*.”

Prej. Well; it is a very hard doctrine.

Imp. It is, to the proud heart of man, which is not willing that God should do what he pleases with his own.

Prej. And it really does appear a strange thing to me, to save but a *few*, comparatively, of the human race.

Imp. It appears to me stranger, and more wonderful still, that he should save *any*—O! what free love to rebels! and, it is above all, astonishing to me, that I should be included in that happy number! I am often constrained to say, Lord, how is it that thou shouldst reveal thyself to me, and not to the world? For who maketh us to differ from them, and what have we that we did not receive? Now if we received it, why do we often glory, as if we had not received it, but obtained it by the works of the law, executed by the puny aim of *free-will*.

Prej. It is, certainly, amazing Grace that has made the difference, and cannot, in any way, be attributed to our seeking, or our merit.

Imp. Yes, and this regenerating grace is the fruit and effect of *Election*; for it is certainly distinguishing grace: And when were we thus distinguished from others? after we believed? Certainly, we then, by the witness of the Spirit, knew it for ourselves—but long before the world was created, in predestinating love, Jehovah determined upon our Redemption, Calling, Perseverance, and Glorification. For, denying this, we flatly deny the plain, and unsophisticated language of the Holy Spirit, in 1 Timothy i. 9: “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose, and grace, given us, in Christ, before the world began.” Such was the apostle’s doctrine, such his confession of faith: and, without any kind of comment, is it not a plain, unequivocal, and decisive statement of the glorious *plan*, and almighty power of *salvation*, which loudly proclaims the *Free-will System* of *conditional* salvation, as opposite to truth, as it is fostering to pharisaic pride, and derogatory to the honour of Christ?

Prej. I think nothing can be more self-evident than this, that if salvation is *conditional*, boasting is not *excluded*; and if *boasting* be not *excluded*, we must, for ever, share with Christ in the honours of our salvation!

Imp. Yes, and for ever *boast* over others, who

neglected to perform the *conditions* by which we *obediently* obtained our salvation. For, upon such a *self-righteous* ground, I might boldly say, “I am a partaker of that Grace which is *offered* to all the world, and nothing is wanted but their compliance with certain *conditions*, and their performance of certain *duties*,” hence I have a right to say, “Stand by yourselves, I am holier, and more worthy than you; inasmuch as you might have had the same Grace as myself, had you been as *virtuous* and *obedient*: I have complied with salvation’s conditions, and performed my *duty* of *faith*, *repentance*, and *prayer*; consequently, my *compliance*, and *obedience*, are my boast and glory; your *non-compliance*, and neglect of Grace, your *shame*!” But we, my Friend, have not so learned Christ. Boasting is excluded by the law of faith, and our glorying is in the *freeness*, and *discrimination* of sovereign grace: who are constrained to say, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, who sheweth mercy.” And whatever the enmity of man’s heart, instigated, and assisted by Satan, may invent, to asperse, oppose, condemn, and misrepresent this *grand*, and infinitely precious *truth*, we know it is of God; and the only doctrine which ascribes unto him, all power, praise, and glory.

Prej. I am constrained to acknowledge, that, however plausible, and pleasing to men, a doctrine may be, it cannot be of God, nor obtain his divine sanction, except it ascribes all *Power*

and *Glory*, unreservedly, immediately, and entirely, to the riches of his matchless Grace, and love in Christ.—How fast time flies, or appears to fly, when friends are engaged in agreeable conversation! WE really must abruptly dismiss this subject, as it is high time for your Friend *Prejudice* to take leave of you; but my dear Friend IMPARTIALITY! will you attend me in the perusal of these SERMONS: you are more established in the truth than myself; and I hope, by your wholesome Instruction, under the Divine blessing, to derive some consolation, from a fair and candid reading.

Imp. I accept of your invitation with pleasure, and sincerely pray that your impartial perusal of the Sermons, may be accompanied by an unction from the Holy One; and then, I am well assured, that every prejudice against this Author, will be removed from your mind, and absorbed in the love of Christ; which will lead you most cordially to esteem him as a brother: for he who loveth God loveth his brother also—and he who loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.—*Adieu.*

Joy in the midst of Sorrow:

THE
SUBSTANCE

OF A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, WOOD STREET,
On Thursday Evening, October 5, 1809.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF A FRIEND.

Introductory Letter

TO

A FRIEND,

AT WHOSE REQUEST THE FOLLOWING SERMON
WAS WRITTEN.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IF the cordiality of Friendship, unanimity of sentiments, divine and devotional unity of Spirit, and the intrinsic, and superior grace of Christian affection, unitedly form an incentive, most cheerfully and gladly to comply with the laudable request of a most endeared Friend, they were powerfully influential, in my glad compliance with your desire to see the Sermon that accompanies this; which you heard from the pulpit, through the beneficent blessing of the HOLY COMFORTER, with such a solid consolation, concurring approbation, and internal evidence of its truth.

Long indulged with your honourable acquaintance, invaluable friendship, and profitable conversation upon the Great concerns of our Salvation, I can speak the more freely to you, on the general contents of this DISCOURSE.

It would be superfluous for me to inform you, that it contains Truth, which none can fully com-

prehend, cordially embrace, and hear with mental delight, but the Regenerated Soul; who has renounced Self-righteousness, with a joy mingled with holy indignation, and, in the arms of heaven-descended faith, embraced the infinitely great, divinely glorious, and omnipotent Immanuel. Knowing the greatness of his saving power, the sin-atonement, and sin-removing virtue of his most precious blood, and the amazing love of his heart: making mention of, and rejoicing in, his righteousness, and his only.

Such a distinguished, and highly-favoured soul, is made a partaker of Christ's sufferings; and, has, at least, internally, to endure tribulation of a peculiar nature—peculiar to the cross of Christ—to enter upon the list, and rank among those, who daily contend with the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; consequently, must have sorrow upon sorrow; and especially, when we take into consideration their total imbecility; that they are entirely without strength:—How shall they stand, then, in the day of fiery trial, with enemies, as strong as they are malicious, and as indefatigable as angels that excel in strength!

The church of Christ is, indeed, a bush, burning!—but—O miraculous!—unconsumed! Why? It is for us, who know the mystery, to answer that question:—The Lord is there! Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation! The Lord of Hosts, strong in battle, the King of Glory! He is with us in our darkest moments, and amidst all our trials, temptations, and sorrows; by whatever

power they are promoted, or from whatever source they spring.

True, we lose sight of him, and sink in heart-rending sorrow ; still, faith clings to his cross, and looks to his promise, which produces a sweet internal joy, that consoles, and supports our dejected minds. Although, like Elisha's servant, we cry, " Alas ! Master, how shall we do ? " Our affectionate Master, and never-failing Friend, says, " Fear not : for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them." And when, through his Intercession, our darkness is dispersed, and our mental eyes opened, to see HIM who is invisible, we can rejoice that God hath appointed Salvation for our walls and bulwarks, and sing, in the rapturous strains of Isaiah, " Trust in the Lord for ever ; for in the Lord Jehovah, is Everlasting Strength ! "

With a sanguine hope that your perusal of this, will be attended with the same Holy Unction that rendered the preaching of it a cordial to your mind ; and with a fervent prayer, that the Lord may so bless you : I have the honour to be

Your devoted Friend,

and willing Servant, in the Gospel,

W. W. HORNE.

Joy in the midst of Sorrow.

2 CORINTHIANS VI. 10.

SORROWFUL, YET ALWAYS REJOICING.

THIS chapter, which I have had the pleasure of reading to you, contains those paradoxes that are totally incomprehensible, and for ever inexplicable to all, except the man who is taught of God, and born of God.

The paradox before us, is certainly involved in great difficulty, and exhibits such contrast of sensations, as we should naturally suppose impossible to exist, in the same heart, at the same time. For the most poignant sorrow, and the most ineffable joy to co-habit in the same mind, and both to be most sensibly felt at the same moment, appears, indeed, irreconcilable with all truth, a flagrant contradiction in nature, and an utter impossibility!

But, herein the Christian bears a great similarity to Christ himself; for this same contrast of character and sensation, is discoverable in our pre-

cious Jesus, while he tabernacled among us. Hence Isaiah calls him, "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," (Isaiah liii. 3.) who exclaims, in the anguish, and love of his heart, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?" Yet we are authorized to believe, that he felt almost perpetual joy, serenity, and pleasure, amidst all his unequalled anguish of heart: (Hebrews xii. 2.) "Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." He had a grand end in view, which was the complete Redemption of his Elect, and their certain salvation, upon the ground of his sufferings.

This joy set before him—The certainty of the deliverance of his people, from bondage, and their exaltation and glorification, with himself, in the heavens, so animated the great Immanuel, that, though sorrowful, he was always rejoicing! At an important period of his life, his soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death!—*sorrowful—exceedingly sorrowful—sorrowful unto death!* To such an inconceivable extent was the sorrow of his soul, at this important time, that his human nature appeared to shudder, and even recoil, when the cup of heavenly indignation made its appearance; yet, for the joy set

before him, he cries,—“ *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done !*”

It is evident, then, according to the description of our text, that the Christian bears a very great similarity of character and sensations, to his glorious Lord. Did I say similarity? I recall the word, considering it too weak, and faint, to express how much a believer bears the amiable, and noble likeness of his great Redeemer. I would rather say, that he is created in the very Image of Christ; and that his *sorrow*, and joy, are two most prominent features of that divine Image, in which he is created a new creature !

In the examination, and illustration of this subject, various difficulties waylay us, and present themselves to our discouragement: the principal of which, is, the dwelling, and co-habitation of *sorrow* and *joy*, at the same moment, in one, and the same mind.

This might, in some measure, be easily explained, upon the principle of the two natures, existing in a child of God; and which we should always keep in view, upon all occasions, to avoid a variety of errors, and very dangerous mistakes, into which we should, otherwise, unavoidably fall, to our confusion and distress. But it will not do to argue upon that principle in this case; see-

ing the sorrow and joy, under consideration, are both attached to the *new man*, and both exist in him, as in one, and the self same person. Therefore, I shall attempt to show, not only the possibility of their existence at the same time, in the same person; but also, upon what principle they do exist, or how a believer in Christ, is “SORROWFUL, yet *always* REJOICING.”

The text is naturally divided into two parts:

I. SORROW. II. JOY.

I am, then, to describe these two sensations, or passions of the new mind:—and proceed to give you a description of,

I. SORROW. What is sorrow? It would be an insult to your understandings to attend, for a moment, to the etymology of a word which is in common use, and universally known.

We may call sorrow the *heart-ach—mental pain*: to which all the posterity of *Adam* are exposed, and which, upon some occasion or other, every individual have keenly felt. It is an epidemic disorder, pervading every human heart! There are, doubtless, many corporeal complaints and aches, from which a large number of the human race may be exempt: but no individual was ever exempt from sorrow—from the *heart-*

ach ; “for man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.” (Job. v. 7.)

Nothing in this world can exempt us from sorrow : if we search through the whole creation for perfect happiness, our pursuit will prove abortive, and every desired object, as soon as possessed, will loudly proclaim to our disappointed hearts ; *happiness is not in me !*

Admitting, I now possessed the largest estate of any man in the world, and in the full bloom of youth and health, enjoying all my friends, and their warmest, and most cordial friendship, without celestial consolation, flowing from a knowledge and enjoyment of Jesus, I should lie down in sorrow, lamenting a *vacuum* of mind, unfilled, unoccupied, and pregnant with perpetual dissatisfaction.

Ask the devotees to worldly pleasure?—ask yourselves, for some of you have, undoubtedly, attempted to launch into that dangerous ocean, in times past,—say, then, after a night of jovely and festivity, spent in the most engaging conviviality,—say, if the very next morning you did not arise, perhaps with a disordered body, but, most assuredly, with a gloomy mind, and a dissatisfied and aching heart?

Sorrow is, undeniably, the inmate of every human breast—but the sorrow I am to describe, is

of a discriminating and peculiar nature ; confined to the regenerated family of heaven, and cannot be felt, but by one who is made truly alive to God.

1st. Then, It is not the sorrow of the world, but a godly sorrow—not the sorrow of desperation, but that which leads to, and is attended with evangelical repentance. For godly sorrow worketh repentance, to salvation, not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death: (2 Corinthians vii. 10.) Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: they have sorrow upon sorrow, till at last their life of ignorance and ungodliness, terminates in everlasting perdition! Not so, the soul awakened, quickened, enlightened, and raised from the dead in sins, by the Eternal Spirit: which experiences,

1st. *Sorrow* on account of the deep, and thorough convictions of the law's purity, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the nauseousness of self. The law pronounces the sentence of eternal condemnation upon the poor soul; sin prevails against him;—he strives, but cannot conquer it—and the disparity between God, as infinitely holy, and himself, as inconceivably sinful, distresses him beyond description! He would seek unto God, and be sorry for his sin.—Mercy is his pursuit, his plea, and his only encouragement, to call upon the Lord—but sin, unbelief, and a variety of discouragements, keep him back, and plunge him

into the overwhelming floods of poignant sorrow, and heart-rending anguish! This is the commencement of the Holy Spirit's divine work: not that the celestial Comforter is the direct and immediate cause of distress. It would be totally incompatible with his nature, character, title, and office, as the Comforter of his people.

Sin, unbelief, a sense of unworthiness, weakness, darkness, and a variety of Satan's temptations, are the various causes of distress, in such a poor sinner's heart.

The Holy Comforter, indeed, opens a channel for the afflictive operations of these; by breathing divine life into the soul, and illuminating it with divine light, and knowledge; and by suffering the powers of darkness, for wise designs, to assail it, with the most distressing buffetings, and horrid temptations.

But, I shall leave this stage of Christian experience, and proceed to show the godly sorrow of a believer, who has known, and enjoyed his interest in Christ. I have only entered upon the threshold of godly sorrow, at present; and yet am persuaded, I have already advanced farther than thousands of professors, with all their pretension to religious knowledge, and obedience to the Lord: for this sorrow, proceeding from such convictions, can never be alleviated, till Christ is revealed; his blood applied to the conscience,

and pardon pronounced by the all-soothing, and divinely musical voice, of the Holy Spirit.

2nd. The believer, thus highly favoured with a knowledge of Christ, when deserted of the Lord, left in a state of extreme darkness, and sorely afflicted in mind, through the horrid temptations of the devil, experiences sorrow upon sorrow!

The Lord has deserted him, not in his affection, but has withdrawn and withholds his powerful and re-animating influence. On what account? I am more than ever convinced, that in all such desertions, and consequent darkness of mind, the Lord has *one grand end to answer*; which is, to teach us our entire, and continual dependance on his Spirit, for every spiritual enjoyment, and pleasurable sensation of soul. I have been ready to think, when going into company with the children of God, I could command spiritual conversation, and freely speak of Christ, and his salvation, with comfort and enlargement of heart: but, cutting experience has convinced me of my mistake. Words, indeed, may be uttered (though to this, at such a deserted season, we feel no inclination); but O, how barren, how hard, how unoccupied is the heart, in the forced topic of conversation! The thoughts, desires, and affections, are in the world, and not a single drop of comfort is derived from the religious discourse, which has engaged, and occupied the time and the tongue, unregarded by the barren and desolate soul. Here the believer grieves

because he does not feel that compunction of soul, which he once felt, on account of his sin and folly; and, through the insinuations of Satan, is ready to conclude, that he is in a backsliding state: but this persuasion cometh not of him who called him by his grace; it is a temptation of Satan: and I will venture to affirm, that scarcely a believer present, can say, that he is exempt from such distressing insinuations: in this benighted state of mind, we sometimes conclude that our heavenly Father is angry with us, for something which we have done, contrary to his will, and, therefore, withholds his influence; and though he *will* not, he *cannot*, finally leave us to perish—he will be severe in his chastisements. How inconsistent is such a conclusion! and, no doubt, proceeds, in a great measure, from Satanic suggestions. The Lord cannot chastise in severity, but always in *love*, for our *profit*. These desertions, of which we have to complain, are, ultimately, intended to teach us more of our own vileness, and our dependance upon the Eternal Spirit, for life, comfort, and vivacity in the ways of the Lord; and for triumphant faith in our dear Lord Jesus, who hath said, “Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again and your joy shall be full.”

3rd. A backslider, when convinced of his departure from the Lord, has the extremest sorrow; inasmuch as he has sinned against everlasting love, deserted his great and adorable Saviour, slighted his own mercies, and fought against his own spi-

ritual interest. Here Satan will again interfere, and persuade him that he is nothing more than an apostate; that he has fallen from an high profession, but never knew any thing of regenerating grace. Satan, upon all occasions, is a *liar*: for when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a *liar*, and the father of it. To a believer in spiritual darkness, he will say, "You are a backslider!" and to a real backslider, "You are an apostate!" He is sure never to speak the truth, concerning your case, but by the most malicious misrepresentation, endeavours to plunge you into all the distress of the keenest and blackest despair!

4. But the cause of perpetual sorrow, with a believer, is in-dwelling sin, the rising of corruptions, and inward abominations—the carnal mind—the body of sin and death. This, through every stage of experience, creates him sorrow of heart; for the new man can never be reconciled to sin; no, not to the least rising of sin: and, in the common course of experience, perhaps, there is not a day, nor an hour, but sin is felt painfully inimical to our comforts, and most violently hostile to the work of God in our hearts. Hence the contention between flesh and spirit, (Galatians v. 17.) and hence the heartfelt groan of the believer, "O, wretched man that I am!" (Romans vii. 24.)

There certainly are extraordinary seasons, when we are ready to conclude sin *dead*, and our corrup-

tions of nature all slain; as in the celebrated exaltation of Paul, who experienced such extatic raptures of soul, as not to be able to say, whether he was in, or out of the body: but these are instances, which do not so commonly occur. Our daily experience tells us, that we are poor sinners, dependent entirely on a covenant God, and the influence of his grace—that without Christ we can do nothing: all which is to teach us, with the Apostle, “Most gladly to glory in our infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us.”

5th. Though our text says, *always* rejoicing, it does not say *always* sorrowful: yet I will contend, that these two may, and do exist, and appear to prevail, in the same mind, at the same moment of time.

6th. *As* sorrowful. We appear in the eyes of the world to be sorrowful, when we have a solid peace, and perennial joy of soul. We are considered, by men who know not God, as devoted, most miserably devoted to melancholy, and so securely bound in the chains of religious spleen, as to be incapable of cheerfulness, or even a *smile*. This is a strange mistake; for, at the worst of times, we have an internal joy, which a stranger intermeddleth not with: nay, our most disconsolate seasons, are infinitely preferable to all their boasted, and fading pleasures!

“ For though our cup seems fill’d with gall,
“ There’s something secret sweetens all.”

7th. Our sorrow is *internal*, and, consequently, invisible to the natural eye. Though a sinner is sometimes so affected, as to be constrained to weep, and to shed tears of sorrow, mingled with love, under the harmonious sound of the gospel of Christ; I am persuaded, that the keenest anguish of heart, is often concealed by a cheerful countenance.

It is secret, silent sorrow; and does not consist in *vocal cries*, *groans*, and *loud amens*, which are only calculated to interrupt the preacher, and disturb the whole congregation.

It is a continual sorrow of mind; sometimes a little abated, at other times more keenly felt.

It is not a sudden flash of conviction, of which we hear no more, but the secret and internal operation of the Spirit’s conviction. Hence it is compared to broken bones; as David prays, “ Cause me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones, which thou hast broken may rejoice.” (Psalm li. 8.) It has been my happiness never to have had a broken bone, but I have been told that it is a continual aching sensation, which is supposed to be in the marrow—the most internal part. Thus the child of God, internally feels that anguish and sorrow, from a feeling sense of

sin, and its concomitants, which is undiscoverable to the world. For, "*even in laughter the heart is sorrowful.*" (Proverbs xiv. 13.)

I now proceed to treat of the more delightful part of my subject.

II. *Always rejoicing !*

1st. Sorrow is turned into joy. Weeping endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning. True spiritual joy, is always preceded by sorrow : "Before honour is humility." The sinner must be humbled, before he is exalted in Christ. We must know, feel, acknowledge, and lament, that we are *sinner*s, before we can, possibly, see the suitability of Christ as a Saviour, or feel the joy of his salvation. To make this exceedingly plain, and indisputable, I refer you to Jeremiah xxxi. 9. and Isaiah xxxv. 10. The first describes the sinner coming to Christ—"They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them." With weeping, on account of their wretched state, and with supplication, for mercy and grace at the feet of Jesus. The second Scripture (Isaiah xxxv. 10.) beautifully describes their entrance into gospel liberty : "and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness ; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." They are ransomed, and it is a knowledge of that great ransom of their souls, by the

sacrifice of Jesus, which creates in them joy unspeakable and full of glory. They are brought to *Sion*, not to *Sinai*. They hear the delightful sound of the gospel of the grace of God, and the oil of joy heals every wound, and enkindles in their hearts everlasting consolation, and good hope.

In what do they now rejoice? Not in themselves nor in any thing of their own: they renounce, and execrate, with holy contempt of soul, all *free-will* boasting, and every self-righteous pretension. Clothed in their right, their spiritual minds, and reclining upon the bosom of eternal love, they rejoice:

1st. In a knowledge of Christ, whose language is that of Jeremiah ix. 24. "Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth, and knoweth me, that I am *the Lord*." No sorrow, no affliction, can take away this knowledge, for God hath given it; and it is divinely sweet, savory, and durable. This was the knowledge of the Eunuch when he went on his way rejoicing: (Acts viii. 39.) A proof that he had done no harm in being baptized with water, but, on the contrary, that God acknowledged the ordinance, by attending it with his divine presence; and which will be an encouragement, I hope, for some of you, believers, to come forward, and follow his example.

2d. Possessing the love of Christ, they rejoice

in the truth. They are the righteous nation which keepeth the truth ; and love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the *truth*. (1 Corinthians xiii. 6.)

What truth do they rejoice in?

1st. In *Election*. “ Rejoice not that the Spirits are subject unto you : but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke x. 20.)

Whether the Spirits are subject or not—whatever occurs—though the Lord hideth himself, Satan tempts, and sin arises, they rejoice that their names are written in the Book of Life, of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, in characters of sovereign love, never to be obliterated ! O what insuperable consolation to a poor unworthy sinner ;—to an afflicted and tried saint !

2d. They rejoice in Christ—in his person, as God and Man, in his fullness of grace, and the completeness of his work, in finishing salvation.—In all the names, characters, and offices that he bears, and sustains, as the Eternal Covenant Head over all things, to his Church. All their joys center in Christ ; as Paul hath beautifully expressed it, (Philippians iii. 3.) “ We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and *rejoice* in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

3d. In pardoning love in Christ, (Micah vii. 10.) “ Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity ! This is their joyful triumph,

“ Whose sins are all drown in his blood,
Whose souls are both happy and free.”

4th. In the complete, and everlasting righteousness of Christ: (Isaiah lxi. 10.) “ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” So that as all unrighteous, in themselves, they can rejoice that they are complete, and perfect, in the alone righteousness of the Son of God. Clothed in which robe, they stand blameless and spotless before the throne of God, outshining all the angels in heaven !

5th. In every tribulation. Not that tribulation in itself, can ever be joyous or pleasant ; but because of its divinely beneficial tendency, (Romans v. 2, 3.) “ We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.”

6th. They shall rejoice in death, and over death, with the apostolic triumph, “ O Death ! where is thy sting ? O Grave ! where is thy victory ! ” — Thanks be to God, that giveth *us* the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ ! Then shall they go away into everlasting life, where mortality shall be swallowed up, in the sweetest, most consummate, uninterrupted, and luxuriant enjoyment, of the everlasting love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord !

THE
Efficacy of the Blood of Christ:

^
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT HEPHIZIBAH CHAPEL, WOOD STREET,
October 22, 1809.

1 JOHN I. 7.

AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON,
CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN.

THIS passage at once proves, that the church of Christ is, naturally, in a filthy and polluted condition, far from God, and incapable of coming to him, having neither will nor power; and that even where the Lord influences the soul, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, the Mercy-Seat is inaccessible, without the cleansing Blood of the GREAT HIGH PRIEST of our profession, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.

Through the great atonement, and the purifying, and cleansing efficacy of that infinitely precious, and peace-proclaiming blood, and through that alone, we have boldness of access unto the

inconceivably pure, and righteous Jehovah: entering the holiest of all, and with an energy peculiar to the faith of God's elect, fervently, familiarly, and affectionately cry, ABBA, FATHER!

The atonement prevails in our behalf—no tremendous frown is seen on the brow, no thunderbolt of vindictive vengeance in the hand of inflexible justice—no fiery law denounces everlasting curses against us—JESUS *fills the throne*—the Father looks upon the face of his own ANOINTED, his best BELOVED, in whom he is well pleased!

His blood speaketh in the heavens!—His blood speaketh in our consciences, better things than that of the blood of *Abel*. It speaketh *to us, in us, and for us*; in language so forcible, so sweet, and overcoming, that it always prevails to the liberation, consolation, and joyful festivity of our souls. It speaketh for us universally, and perpetually. To *justice*—“Atoning blood hath cleansed them, and purged away all their crimes—Where now are thy charges of guilt? His blood is a full receipt for thy tremendous account.” At which justice satisfied, *looks, approves, and smiles*!—To Satan, when accusing a poor sensible sinner, it speaks thus: Take away his filthy garments: Is not this a brand plucked from the burning? Or, Is not his *filth* all cleansed away? And, are not the garments of salvation; those spotless, noble, royal, crimson garments, most

exquisitely wrought by Christ's own hand, and dyed in his blood, sufficient to present him, without spot, before the throne of love? and to introduce him into the company, and give him boldness in the presence of the inconceivably splendid, magnificent, and august courtiers, who encircle the throne of God, and the Lamb? Nay, to give him boldness in the sacred presence of the KING of KINGS, and the LORD of LORDS? Satan, the the Lord rebuke thee! He is a brand plucked from the burning, by that omnipotent arm of redemption, which none of your malicious forces, nor artifices, shall ever, in the least, *unnerve*, till judgment be brought forth unto victory; till thine empire in the hearts of God's elect be overthrown, and all the redeemed plucked from the burning of sin, the world, and thy temptations, by the hand of eternal love, into the world of eternal glory.

IN us, sprinkled upon the conscience, it proclaims peace: and TO us, declares, in the most delightful accents, "Though your sins be *many*, and of *long* standing, very aggravating, and so grievously stubborn, that you cannot subdue, nor obtain a victory over it, notwithstanding all your endeavours:"—though sin dwells within you, and does so easily beset you, fear not, look to JESUS, who has suffered, and atoned, for those very sins which are now your burden, grief, perplexity,

and bitterest complaint before the Lord. He receiveth sinners, because he died for them ; and such redeemed sinners, called, and established in the truth, daily live upon the great contents of this delightful sentence : “ *The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin !* ”

As sin is felt, acknowledged, and hated, by every regenerated sinner, and is our daily, and almost perpetual plague, by its internal hostility to the new, and hidden man of the heart ; surely nothing can be more encouraging, animating, and delightful, than to hear of the “ *Great Purifier of the sons of Levi,* ” whose heart’s blood is an open fountain, accessible to every poor sinner led there by the eternal Spirit, to know its cleansing efficacy, in producing unspotted purity of heart. Redemption by the blood of Christ, particular and certain redemption, is the good hope, fervent plea, and sure refuge, of the sinner who feels sin’s impurity, plague, and power : salvation flowing from the heart of Jesus in crimson streams ; the complete removal of ALL SIN from the church of God, by that great and complete atonement, is the foundation upon which the great apostle stood, when exulting, with a joy peculiar to the divine life, in the purity, justification, and certain salvation of God’s people : Romans viii. 34. “ Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ who died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession

for us!" And in this, we, who know the Lord rejoice, confide, and triumph; knowing that "There is no other name given under the heavens, among men, whereby we must be saved," but the divinely sweet name of JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH; and that there is no deliverance from the guilt, filth, and consequence of sin, but by the cleansing of his blood; and, above all, knowing its virtue to cleanse, not only by the apostle's testimony, but more especially by a purged conscience, and purified heart, we esteem it our exalted privilege to investigate the great concerns of our salvation; and, at this time, the ATONEMENT, the complete atonement of our IMMANUEL, by which we are cleansed, and eternally exempt from the charge of sin!

May the Lord, then, favour us with his gracious presence, in the discussion of this admirable subject, that we may pursue it with ardent affection, glowing and intrepid zeal, serious solemnity and increasing delight!

I propose to consider,

I. Whose blood cleanseth—the blood of
JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON.

II. What it cleanseth from—ALL SIN.

III. Its cleansing efficacy and effects.

IV. Who it cleanses—us; poor sinners,
called to know ourselves, and our
election in Christ.

With an animating hope that the Lord will attend me with his presence and blessing, and render his truth effectual in our abounding consolation, I proceed to offer to your serious consideration,

I. Whose blood cleanseth.

The blood of JESUS—by this glorious, and supereminently exalted name, his Eternal Godhead is asserted, and revealed too conspicuously to admit the shadow of a doubt, or to suffer any wise and unprejudiced man, who will allow the literal meaning of the word, to advance a single argument against it!

JESUS! O precious name! soul-enamouring word! Beaming with all the glories of heaven, proclaiming the deliverance of sinners from the ruins of the Fall, and breaking upon the attentive ear with sounds too melodious for nature: sounds which vibrate only through the regenerate soul, and to which no other powers can give reverberation, but those of the new man in Christ. JESUS! What does it mean? literally, JEHOVAH, A SAVIOUR: God manifest in the flesh, (1 Timothy iii. 16.) A child, born into this world, and yet

the MIGHTY GOD! (Isaiah ix. 6.) Immanuel, God with us. (Matthew i. 23.)

Wonderful mystery! unparalleled condescension! immeasurable descent! The mystery of Deity incarnate, the condescension of a God, and the descent of the King of Glory, the Creator of all things, to dwell among worms of the earth! Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour, the only wise God, arrayed in human flesh! Taking our place, that he might take our sins, conquer our foes, and crown his triumph over them, with our eternal salvation! Blessed be the name of Jesus! Blessed be the glorious name of his Majesty for ever! That divinely illustrious name, hated by infidels, dreaded by devils, but loved, and adored, by all the regenerated sons and daughters of the Almighty! Jesus hath cleansed us from all our sins! JEHOVAH is our Saviour—wearing our flesh—our brother near a kin, clothed in a body like unto our own, in which, not only dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, but all the immense riches of unfading love, and all the fulness of grace, and everlasting salvation!

2. CHRIST; *the anointed*. Anointed, and set apart by everlasting love, for the filling and executing of certain glorious, infinitely holy, and exalted offices. As the High Priest, under the ceremonial law, was anointed with a *sacred unction*, as a qualification for the execution of his office, so JESUS, arrayed in human flesh, received the

Spirit without measure ; who through the Eternal Spirit, offered, not the sacrifice of bulls and goats, but HIMSELF ; his human soul and body upon the altar of his divinity : and, as “ the altar sanctifieth the gift,” it became eternally efficacious in removing sin, and infinitely satisfying to offended justice ; purifying, everlastingly, all for whom he died.

CHRIST, the Lord’s anointed, a Lamb of his own providing, a body of his own preparing ; anointed, and set apart, to die for his people : according to his own declaration, “ Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved* Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day :” (Luke xxiv. 46.) which, according to the apostle’s account, he hath done effectually : “ Those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled ;” (Acts iii. 18.) and, according to Paul’s account, of indispensable necessity, who, as his manner was, reasoning with the Jews out of the Scriptures, “ opened and alledged that Christ must *needs* have suffered.” (Acts xvii. 3.) Hence we may fairly infer, nay, must unavoidably conclude, that Christ, as the second person in the Trinity, in the Covenant of Grace, proposed, at a certain specified and appointed time, to become very man, in order to be capable of dying ; and that by so dying on the cross, and cancelling all their sins, he should infallibly bring many sons to glory ; even as many as the Father had given him,

And as all things written in the prophets are fulfilled by him, he certainly hath brought forth judgment unto victory, and shall see his seed, the travail of his soul, the trophies of his conquests, all in the world of glory; encircling his royal throne, with palms of victory in their hands, and crowns of salvation on their heads!

CHRIST, the anointed *King of Israel*: and being lineally the Son of David, he had certainly an hereditary right to that crown and kingdom: and it appears, his disciples must have entertained an idea of his coronation, and accession to that throne; for, immediately after his death, they lamentingly said, "We thought it had been him who should have restored the kingdom unto Israel:" and hence those who imbrued their hands in his blood, mockingly exclaimed, "Let Christ, the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." But what a gross and fallacious idea! "His kingdom is not of this world:" it is all glorious, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. "Him hath God exalted with his own right hand to be a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts v. 31.) His reign on earth is maintained in Sion by the Spirit's powerful application of the Gospel, by which we know that his "kingdom is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost." (Romans xiv. 17.)

And he will extend his empire, by carrying

his Gospel to the ends of the earth ; for he is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS ; which unparalleled title is written on his thigh, to show that he will “ Gird his sword there, and with his glory and majesty, ride prosperously because of truth and meekness, that his right hand may teach him terrible things.”

And when, as the *anointed King of Israel*, he shall have gathered all his elect from the “ four winds of the earth ;” they shall be for ever with him, their Lord, to behold him, in all the inconceivable grandeur of heavenly majesty and magnificence, crowned by saints and angels, THE LORD OF HOSTS, MIGHTY IN BATTLE, THE KING OF GLORY !

3. HIS SON. The Son of God in a two-fold sense, pre-eminently, and *eternally*, as the second person in the Trinity ; not begotten ; that is too gross an idea , but in the economy of the Covenant of Grace, and in his official capacity, as *Mediator* between God and man, set up from everlasting : not the human soul of Christ set up from everlasting : that sentiment, though embraced by some, who, I believe, are taught of God, is absurdity in the extreme ! and though taught by the Spirit, in other important matters, I am persuaded he never taught them to imbibe a sentiment so averse, both to the divinity and humanity of Christ ! But the glory which the Eternal Son had with the Father, before all worlds, was his

mediatorial glory—proposing, and engaging, to take upon him our nature, exempt from sin; and in order to accomplish this, he became the Son of God, in a *secondary* sense, by the Holy Ghost overshadowing the Virgin, and his consequent miraculous conception in her womb. On which account the Spirit saith, “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, *made* of a woman, *made* under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians iv. 4, 5.

Thus I have considered, and I am persuaded, clearly proved, to the satisfaction of all who know, and love the gospel, WHOSE blood cleanseth from all sin: that it is no less than the blood of Jesus, Jehovah the Saviour—Christ, the Lord’s anointed—The Son of God—whose precious blood, by virtue of the wonderful union of God and man, in *One Person*, is most emphatically denominated “*The blood of God;*” not that Deity could bleed: but the man, being a part of the very same Person with the Godhead, is, alone upon the ground of this delightful union, very consistently, and truly entitled, “*The Man, God’s fellow;*” whose blood was shed by Deity, in as much as Deity dwelt in, and actuated the humanity: and, therefore, though God was not sacrificed, it was a sacrifice made by the eternal God, Christ Jesus our Lord!

This is a great and unsearchable mystery; but it is also a great, essential, and very precious truth: for if his blood could not be proved thus DIVINELY RICH; but, on the contrary, disproved, I must for ever sink in despair, the church of Christ perish, and every individual of the human race fail of salvation!

But our Jesus fills the throne above, and it is the express command of heaven, "That all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." When he bringeth his first begotten into the world, he saith, "And let all the angels of God worship him."

I proceed then to shew,

II. From what his blood cleanses—from sin, from ALL sin.

Sin, the most potent enemy, and perpetual plague of a new man in Christ, is that most monstrous, detestable thing, which no terms can ever fully define, nor language, the most powerful and expressive, ever sufficiently reprobate!

Those who daily feel, and lament the power and plague of sin, alone, are able to form any idea of its nauseousness, filthiness, and mischievous, malevolent, and direful effects! Sin, dwelling within him, was the greatest enemy Paul ever met with, and the heaviest burden he ever com-

plained of, or groaned under. Though, in other instances, he endured much, we scarcely hear a complaint.

He tells us himself, of his amazing sufferings from the cruelty of the Jews, from whom he had received many *stripes*, and buffetings; and from hunger and nakedness—"but, none of these things, saith he, move me;" "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content," (a lesson we can learn as soon as Paul, when it pleases the Lord to teach us.)—He appears in the midst of all, to make no kind of complaint; cheerfully submitting to the will of the Lord. But, when this grand enemy, SIN, attacked him, got him down, wounded, and stript his soul of spiritual delights, his anguish was extreme; his sorrows swell too enormously for mental detention, he must give them vent by an exclamation the most bitter, and a metaphor the most nauseously and horribly striking—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans vii. 24.

On no other occasion, that I know of, did Paul call himself a *wretch*. An apostle, and yet a *wretched man*! O the bitterness and plague of indwelling sin, to the regenerated soul! Comparable to a putrified carcase, chained to a living man; after that cruel punishment inflicted on culprits in some of the Eastern nations.

Sin is that diabolic poison, which, upon all occasions, imbitters the cup of human life, and produces the most pungent and melancholy woes !

It is that cloud of darkness which has overspread the universe, and thrown all the posterity of *Adam* into an abyss of the extremest ignorance of God and truth ! It is that cloud, that thick cloud, which veils the christian mind with gloominess, and hides from him the light and beauty of the Sun of Righteousness ! a cloud, which none but the Lord can remove ; and which, according to his own declaration, he has done, for his dear people, by the shedding of his blood, and often chases away, by the brightness of his appearance : “ I have, saith the Lord, blotted out, as a *thick cloud*, thy transgressions, and as a *cloud* thy sins : return unto me for I have redeemed thee.” Isaiah xliv. 22.

It is that hell-born tyrant, which usurps dominion over every human soul, and holds them all, bound in adamantine chains, its servile and perpetual slaves !

Who, then, that knows sin, can love it, show it any favour, or give it any quarters ?

The *New Man* has an everlasting hatred to sin, and can no more be reconciled to it, than a

slave to his chains, or a person of a most delicate appetite, to feeding upon the most *putrified* human body!

It has marred the most beautiful part of God's creation, spread devastation round the globe, and brought ruin upon an universe of men and women! Nay, more, it has, doubtless, consigned to the regions of everlasting misery, thousands and thousands of souls, who are justly suffering the punishment proportioned by inflexible justice, to their demerit, and sinful deserts! But, above all, O ye believers in Jesus! it has put to death, to the most ignominious, painful, and unparalleled death, the Son of God! Who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, by a banditti of sin's slaves, that imbrued their hands in his most precious blood!

Sin nailed him to the cross, pierced his hands and feet, wrung his soul with anguish never felt before, and produced the indignant sword of justice, which entered his affectionate heart!

Sin! hateful monster of innumerable and untold cruelties! which causes our hearts to ach, by perpetually interrupting our comforts, and promoting our afflictions and sorrows!—It shall not always reign! Blessed be God for the unspeakable gift of his dear and well beloved Son! who hath, by his sufferings, and atonement, taken away, and cleansed us from, all our sin!

We yet lament its plague and power, and the many innovations, and grievous inroads which it makes upon us: but, notwithstanding its molestations, and inimical hostility to our best interests, we triumph over it, as a *vanquished* enemy; which, however it may grieve, shall never be able to injure our *new man*: for, "Sin shall not have dominion over you," is the gracious promise. However it may fight and rage, and even though you feel it a whole *putrid* body, it shall not have dominion—it shall not, it cannot *conquer* and *govern* the hidden man of the heart; who never will give approbation, nor consent to the *reign of sin*; although our old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ever loves it, and most strongly pleads for its sole, and absolute dominion.

But it never can be said that dominion is obtained, till the party to be subdued strikes colours, lays down arms, and, with a discontinuation of defensive exertions, quietly resigns, with acknowledgments of being completely conquered, swearing, through necessity, allegiance to the conqueror.

This our *new man* will never do: and till that is done, sin can never be said to have dominion over you, though it dwells in your hearts.

As soon shall heaven and hell be reconciled, become one, and shake hands in friendly union,

as the *Flesh* and the *Spirit* ; for “ these are contrary the one to the other ;” (Galatians v. 17.) so that we may, each one, for ourselves, safely, and fairly conclude with the apostle, “ I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the *mind* I myself serve the law of God ; but with the *flesh* the law of sin.” (Romans vii. 24.)

I shall now proceed to consider the subject more *doctrinally*, and with a triumph over sin, through my dear bleeding Lord, to give such a definition of it, as the Lord may enable me, for his glory, to give, upon the ground of *scriptural* representation. What the Scriptures declare, I wish, upon all occasions, positively to affirm : and upon that consideration shall say,

1st. *Sin* is the transgression of the law. “ Who-soever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law ; for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John iii. 4.)

Every action, word, or thought, hostile to the divine purity, incompatible with the most unimpeachable justice, and derogatory to infinite and everlasting holiness, is justly denominated *Sin* : and as “ by the law is the knowledge of sin,” such an hostility to immaculate purity, such incompatibility with strict and undeviating justice, is very rightly called, the transgression of the law : and, therefore, every thing which is a violation of that infinitely holy law, whether an action, an

expression, or a thought, exposes a sinner to all that fiery condemnation, and those vengeful curses, which it so inflexibly, and awfully denounces against those “who continue not in all things written therein, to do them.”

“All unrighteousness is sin,” (1 John v. 7.) the least unrighteousness, if only in a thought, deviating from unspotted holiness, is a flagrant violation of God’s law : for “he who offends in one point is guilty of all ;” and as “in many things we all offend,” I may fairly infer,

First, The utter impossibility of salvation by works, or the deeds of the law ; and *Second*, The absolute necessity of Christ’s fulfilling the law, punctually, and completely, in order to our deliverance from its curse, and the tyrannic dominion and dreadful consequences of *sin* ; or, in other words, he must take the offences of his people into his own account, and endure the penalty threatened and incurred, to procure their discharge, and bring them into the presence of his Father, without a sinful spot, a dishonourable blemish, or so much as a wrinkle in any one part !

For except sin is cleansed away, even though the Lord loves his people unremittingly and everlastingly, He cannot, consistently with his holiness, take possession of them ; neither can they enter into his divine and glorious presence.

2nd. Sin hath usurped sovereign, and absolute dominion over all mankind: and, so clearly is this melancholy truth stated in Scripture, and confirmed by the ravages which sin has made in the world, as well as, secretly, in our experience, that I do not hesitate to pronounce man, not only a willing slave to sin, but so securely bound in its massy chains, that he is incapable, even when the Lord hath given him a will, of leaving its vassalage, and detestable servitude. This the inspired Paul, after the most critical examination, found to be the melancholy fact: "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." Romans vii. 21. "For," saith he, at another time, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." 2 Corinthians iii. 5. Where, then, is the boasted free-will of man, to obey and love God, and, believingly, to embrace the Great Saviour of sinners? If man's heart is thus deceitful above all things, desperately wicked, and a source of every thing vile and iniquitous, where are those pure streams of inherent holiness, fleshly sanctification, and natural love to God, which we are, sometimes, gravely told, are produced by some holy people, as an essential recommendation to God, and an indispensable preparation for death and glory? Such a boast of *free-will*, such pretensions to creature-goodness, and inherent righteousness, in my opinion, stand among the most lucid evidences of sin's dominion

over the hearts of men ! What extreme ignorance of man's ruined and sinful condition ! What ignorance of the real necessity of a complete salvation, all of grace, in Christ ! What melancholy ignorance of the necessity of God's working in his people, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure ! Such darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people ! And till the Lord is pleased to arise and shine, that vail will remain upon their hearts ; for, saith the precious Jesus, " No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him : and I will raise him up at the last day." John vi. 44. He does not say, merely, they *will not*, but they *cannot* : there is not only an inability of the will, but also of the power : not only a *moral* but a *natural* inability. In fact, a man, in his natural state, has nothing to do with the religion of Jesus Christ : God gives the sinner an entirely *new* heart ; so that it is not a *reformation* of the *old* man, who is the servant and slave of sin, but a *renovation* ; a *new* creature, created, by the Eternal Spirit, in the image of Jesus.

Having reviewed sin in its nature, consequences, and effects, I shall proceed to discuss one of the most glorious, lovely, and engaging subjects in the whole Bible ; consisting of the best news that ever was proclaimed to a poor sinner ; the most delicious feast that ever a Prince royal of heaven possessed : a precious bleeding Christ ; Salvation by his blood ; or, according to my proposal,

III. Its cleansing efficacy.

Nothing but the blood of Jesus can cleanse from sin, and produce a pure heart and conscience, in the sinner : For, while the heart remains in its natural and impure state, vain and ineffectual are all the prayers, tears, and duties of the creature.

After the most strict, and scrupulous attention to ordinances, the works of his own hands leave him in the very same state of impurity and uncleanness ! God is unknown, his throne inaccessible, and the worship of the sinner, legal, carnal, and external. God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in Spirit and in truth ; and is approachable only through the atoning blood of Jesus.

1st. Then, for this grand end was Jesus made flesh, and sent into our world ; that he might purify, and cleanse us from all sin. To this prophecy bears a most glorious testimony, and has been punctually, and completely fulfilled by Christ.

By the mouth of Daniel, the Lord saith, "Many shall be purified and made white, and tried : " (Daniel xii. 10.) and, that Christ the Lord, the messenger of the Covenant, was to perform this great work, is evident from Malachi iii. 3. "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

This is corroborated by Isaiah, "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." Isaiah liii. 5. His blood is "The fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." Zechariah xiii. 1. And O! what a consolation it is, to be assured that he hath carried this grand design of heaven, into glorious, and everlasting effect.—That "he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus ii. 14.

2nd. That his blood hath completely cleansed all for whom he died: for there cannot exist a more erroneous, and preposterous idea; there cannot be greater dishonour reflected on the blessed Saviour, than, that his blood was shed in vain! If he died for every individual of mankind, and his blood alone, the shedding of his blood, cleanseth from all sin, then all mankind are so cleansed, and must infallibly be saved: but, as we are well assured that all mankind are not saved, he could not shed his blood for them all: we must, necessarily, draw this conclusion, or else, that his blood has no virtue to cleanse; which would be a flat contradiction to our text, and to the whole tenor of Sacred Writ!

But it is a truth which will not, with any common modesty and decency, admit a single argument in attempting a refutation, that he laid down his life for his sheep, and, consequently, they

shall never perish. (John x. 11—28) That he hath purchased his church with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.) That he gave himself for it. (Ephesians v. 25) and that his church is not the world at large, but chosen out of the world; (John xv. 19.) bought with a price, bought and paid for, with the invaluable price of his blood; and, that, consequently, he shall see his seed, see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Isaiah liii.

3rd. Its efficacy is such, that justice is perfectly satisfied, and well pleased for his righteousness' sake. We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Ephesians i. 7. If Jesus hath thus taken the sins of his people upon himself, (and that he has is evident, see 1 Peter ii. 24. and iii. 18.) where is the possibility of the imputation of sin to those for whom he died? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who died." (Romans viii. 34.) To charge the Lord with condemning a sinner for whom Jesus shed his blood, is to attribute to him that conduct, which an honest man would blush to be found guilty of; which he would spurn with indignant contempt; or, if convicted, would acknowledge, that his shameful conduct merited the severest reprobation. For where, I would ask, is the man, possessed of common moral honesty, who would, knowingly, demand the same

debt again, after receiving full payment, and giving a receipt? and hath not justice received full payment at the hands, yea, from the very heart of Christ, and given him a receipt, a discharge for all his people, by his admittance into the heavens as their forerunner, and advocate, who pleads his own merit, in their behalf? He gave himself a ransom for his people, and,

“ Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding surety’s hand,
And then again at mine,”

It has been a settled point with me, for many years, that if Jesus died for me, I never shall perish. My destruction is impossible, my salvation and glorification everlastingly secure!

But how is this ascertained? How does a sinner satisfactorily know, and rejoice, that Christ died for him, as an *individual*? By the Spirit’s application of the atonement to his heart; by

4th. *It’s effects on the conscience.* It’s purifying influence, and cleansing virtue, is known, as the sinner is delivered from the condemnation of the law, brought out of the horrible pit of despair, and Satan’s horrible suggestions; and out of the mire and clay of his bondage to sin and corruption, by a sweet, and never to be explained, display of the ability of Christ to save! His chains fall off, his fears are gone; he knows there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ.

He is happy, completely happy; the gospel of bleeding love has made him so—he can say, “Christ is truly precious:” for he feels him precious indeed! And this I call, receiving the truth, in the love of it, and consequently, feeling its power: which is nothing short of an almighty application of the blood of Christ to the conscience! Hence it is called, “*The blood of sprinkling* ;” (1 Peter i. 2. Hebrews xii. 24,) which is a beautiful, and very elucidating metaphor, adopted by the Holy Spirit, in reference to the blood sprinkled on the houses of the Israelites. (Exodus xii. 13.) “And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt.”

That blood was typical of this infinitely precious blood, which, thus powerfully revealed, is a sweet token indeed to the poor sinner. “Christ his passover was sacrificed for him,” whose blood, sprinkled on his conscience, forbids avenging justice to come near him. It has cleansed him, and he feels it: his sins are *all gone*. Great, numerous, and aggravating as they were, not one appears to his confusion and distress, at such a truly happy season! Justice cannot smite him, having smitten his Surety, whose blood is a token of his everlasting reconciliation to God. It cleanses, it washes from all sin: the knowledge of which makes the church triumph, who thus

ascribes glory to her Great Redeemer: "Unto him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Revelations i. 5.

Sin being thus divinely, and completely cleansed away, the *ransomed* soul approaches God with an humble, holy boldness, and enjoys most delightful interviews with him as his covenant Father, and affectionate Friend! For, though once afar off, he is made nigh by the blood of Christ. Ephesians ii. 13. *Made* nigh—not made *himself* nigh by his own preperation, and pretendedly holy duties; but made nigh, through the Spirit's revelation of the blood of Christ. Simply, and entirely by that blood the sinner is made nigh: embraces a pardoning God, feels the celestial sweetness of divine love, exults in his everlasting completeness in Christ, and appears before the Lord "blameless in love;" more gloriously arrayed than an angel, and "pure as God himself is pure!"

O ye sin despairing souls! Ye want nothing of your own, to present you faultless before your God; the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin: and to be found in him, is to possess a righteousness, not only commensurate with all that the law commands, and justice can possibly require; but so bright, so gloriously spotless, divinely immaculate, and inconceivably mag-

nificent, that we are said, by an inspired writer, to be made the Righteousness of God in him! Thus cleansed in his blood, and clothed in his righteousness, we must be, notwithstanding all our indwelling sin, pure as our heavenly Father is pure! And thus we appear before our God at all times; and shall to eternity; justified, perfect, blameless, lovely, amiable, beautiful, and everlastingly precious and invaluable in the eyes of eternal love!

And all this, remember, entirely in, and through the precious Jesus! Surely then we cannot but highly approve, and affectionately join the church's triumph of praise. "He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" (Solomon's Song v. 16.)

Through the cleansing of his blood, what sweet communion we enjoy with our God! Every impediment to that luxuriant, and insuperable enjoyment, is removed—by removing our sins, he hath taken every thing out of our way that was against us, so that we have "boldness to enter into the holiest, by the *Blood of Jesus!* and pleading the efficacy of his blood, as the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, we prevail in prayer, and enjoy intercourse with heaven!"

When dejected, cast down, weary, and heavy laden, his most precious blood is that generous

wine which revives, cheers, and re-animates our faint and exanimated hearts: When afflicted and sick with a variety of complicated, and internal complaints, it ever proves an efficacious restorative to health, and vigour in the divine life. We eat his flesh, we *drink his blood!* (John vi. 54.) What a beautiful figure of that nourishment, support, and spiritual restoration, we so repeatedly experience from a fresh display of his atonement! Sin arises in us so powerfully, and exhibits so many frightful, and horrific scenes, that we are truly miserable! But when the loving kindness of God our Saviour appears; when we are led again to look on him who was pierced, and to venture wholly on him, reviving consolation breaks in upon us like a river with broad streams! Love re-kindles, hope revives, and faith exultingly cries; "It is enough! Jesus is yet alive! whose blood is ever efficacious! It cleanses from all sin: and, therefore, as a sinner, so cleansed, I venture wholly on my altogether lovely, and able Saviour; trusting to, and rejoicing in, him alone! And, from what I have so recently felt of carnal nature's impurities, cannot, dare not, put any kind of confidence in the flesh!"

Its efficacy, and invincible power, are farther evinced, by that complete conquest, or those repeated and numerous conquests, which believers decisively, and triumphantly obtain, over the mighty and malicious "Accuser of the brethren." (Revelations xii. 11.) "They overcome him by

the *Blood of the Lamb*, and the word of their testimony." All his discouraging suggestions are answered by, "Jesus died for sinners;" and all his fiery darts are quenched, by this one everlastingly precious, and glorious expression, HIS BLOOD CLEANSETH FROM ALL SIN!

Satan may, and does, accuse us of our ingratitude to God, and our high rebellion against him. He tells us of our unworthiness, negligence, carelessness, hardness of heart, darkness, ignorance, and inactivity in the spiritual life—all which a real believer keenly feels, and candidly acknowledges, till he is ready to faint—but when the free love, and cleansing blood of Jesus, is again brought home to his soul, he tramples upon the Old Serpent, and the Dragon, with the feet of faith, shod with the preparation (or foundation) of the gospel of peace: and with a confession, peace, and confidence peculiar to such a faith, says, "I am black, but comely." (Solomon's Song i. 5.) I abhor myself; (Job xlii. 6) and esteem my righteousness as filthy rags, (Isaiah lxiv. 6) loss, and dung, that I may win Christ. (Philippians iii. 8.) "Let the beauty of the Lord my God be upon me: for it is in the Lord Jesus Jehovah, that I have everlasting strength, and righteousness!"

This is the victory, even our faith; by which we shall not only quench all the fiery darts of hell, but outbrave, and triumph over, Death himself, who, even when we walk through his dreary

valley, and lay in his cold arms, shall hear us sing, salvation by the blood of the Lamb, and shout "Death is swallowed up in victory!" For though the sting of Death is *sin*, and the strength of sin, the law, yet, with unmoved confidence in Jesus, we can say, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians xv. 57.

As his blood does so effectually, and everlastingly cleanse from all sin, I shall proceed to consider,

IV. *Who it cleanses.* Us, saith the text: All the elect of God, who were given to Christ to redeem; and who, on that account, are called and sanctified by the Spirit. This is most clearly stated, and confirmed by the inspired *Peter*, who, addressing his Epistles to believers, calls them, "Elect," according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience; and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 2.

Us, the worst, and vilest of sinners: the most polluted of the polluted, the most worthless among the unworthy, and the most rebellious of a rebel world! So sensible are we of this, that had it been said, only, that his blood cleanseth from sin of a less aggravating nature, than that of a deep and crimson dye—had it not been said from ALL SIN—we should for ever despair of salvation!

But, O how sweetly is this invaluable, and boundlessly efficacious balm of the GREAT PHYSICIAN administered! The balm prescribed by eternal love, shed on Calvary by JESUS, and graciously administered to sin-sick souls, by the HOLY SPIRIT. Healing most effectually, and for ever, all our direful diseases! A universal Cleanser! It cleanses *us*, even us, the chief of sinners; and cleanses us, thoroughly, from all sin! We have proved its virtue thousands of times, and can bear testimony to its never-failing, healing, and purifying efficacy.

But as it cleanses the vilest of sinners, and from all sin, probably it may be asked, "Does it then cleanse from the sin against the Holy Ghost?" For the sin-sick soul, who pants for Jesus, to ask such a question, is, indeed, altogether superfluous; since the Scriptures so clearly prove, that such a person never was, nor can be guilty of it.

And yet it is an enquiry I wish to answer, because I know it is, sometimes, a very distressing temptation, under which a child of God in spiritual travail, often distressedly labours. But fully to answer the question, we must examine the nature of that unpardonable crime: to do which I shall have recourse to that clear, and unequivocal statement of Christ himself, recorded in Matthew xii. 31, 32, where, in reprobating the *malicious*, persecuting conduct of the Pharisees, he says, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven

unto men: but the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

From this description, it is, evidently, the most consummate malice, boiling in the heart, exhibited, publicly, in the conduct, and most inveterately expressed, against the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! For those malicious Pharisees knew it was by a *Divine Power* that Jesus effected his miracles, and yet such was their implacable enmity against him, that they most maliciously, and against the brightest evidences and conviction, attributed them to the power of *Beelzebub*! They knew those miracles were performed by the finger of God, yet, most blasphemously, called them the works of the devil!

This the child of God cannot do: he may sin wilfully, and dreadfully, in a great variety of ways, against *light*; but, when once he knows the Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation, cannot, *with malice*, publicly contemn, and treat it with ridicule, nor, in any way, maliciously oppose, and denominate it diabolical.

"Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man," saith Jesus, "it shall be forgiven him."

Had they only spoken against Christ, in his state of humiliation, without beholding his miracles, their crime would have been, comparatively, small; but seeing they had such convincing proofs of his ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD, their blasphemy was extreme, unpardonable, and an evident token of their reprobation, and eternal damnation! For such "shall never be forgiven!"

And now, a sinner, through ignorance and unbelief, may speak a word against the Son of Man; and even a sinner, in whom the Lord has begun a good work:—he may ignorantly contend for universal redemption, and for the performance of duties, as a recommendation to the divine favour, which is speaking against Christ, and detracting from his glory, by setting aside the efficacy of his blood, and ascribing to our duties, the power and honour due alone to his grace.

This I was guilty of myself, when an *Arminian*; and, yet, I have no doubt but a gracious work was then begun in my soul. I did it ignorantly, and in unbelief. But, after knowing, and professing the truth, to contemn, despise, and persecute it, under the immediate influence of malicious hatred, is that which a child of God cannot do; however he may backslide, or fall away: for his enmity is slain, and though grievous sin may overcome him, he cannot falsify, misrepresent, and maliciously blaspheme the *truth* as it is in Jesus.

Peter's oaths were tremendously dreadful ; yet, though he swore that he never knew Christ, he neither swore *at* him, nor *against* him. His oaths were not dictated by malice to Christ, but by cowardice, and the fear of man ; and were, evidently, uttered (though a desperate expedient) to procure personal safety, by concealment of his intimacy with Jesus. I speak not this either to excuse Peter, or extenuate his crime.—He was desperately wicked, and his crime nefarious and detestable to an inexpressible degree :—but to prove that, however miserably far a child of God may fall, he has no malice against Christ, and will never persecute, *maliciously* persecute his church ; and, consequently, cannot be found guilty of the unpardonable sin, the sin unto Death !

Poor sinner, though Satan strives hard to persuade you of having been guilty of this uncancellable crime, fear not, I know that you seek Jesus ; and seeking him is, most certainly, neither to blaspheme his Eternal Power and Godhead, nor with malice, knowing it to be the Gospel, to resist the Holy Ghost in his Great Work of promulgating it, by persecuting his ministers and people, in whom he dwells.

I conclude, then, by affirming, positively, that, however the children of God may fall to their distress, and anguish of soul, the blood of Jesus still retains its sin-cleansing virtue, to restore them, and shall remain so, till all his people be

brought, through much tribulation, unto his kingdom of glory. For, saith the apostle, to our encouragement, not *in* sin, (as we be slanderously reported,) but to look again unto Jesus, the great atoning sacrifice.

If we sin wilfully; that evidently is, If we, who are called by divine grace, sin, as we frequently do, there remaineth *not any more victim* to be offered for an atonement: for, by ONE OFFERING, he hath perfected for ever those who are sanctified in him: and, in course, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous." (1 Peter ii. 1.)

But, when sin prevails, if, instead of looking unto Jesus, we turn our eyes from him, with a view to offer some other sacrifice, such as the works of our own hands, there remains nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment: for, take Christ out of the way, leave him out of the question; and, whatever sacrifice beside you may look to, nothing is discernible but judgment and fiery indignation: which must be, undeniably, the case, since HE, and HE *only* is our peace.

And that the children of God sin after they have received a knowledge of the truth, I presume no person, who believes the Scriptures, will pretend to contradict: (1 John i. 8.) and, admitting they sin, it follows, of course, that they *must* sin

wilfully (*or willingly,*) for, without the will, they would never sin at all: but the question is, with what *will* do they sin? and, yet, such a question is absurd, except more than *one Will* inhabits and actuates the man. But that there are in one, and the self-same person, *two wills*, as opposite to each other as light and darkness, holiness and sin, love and hatred, I hope most clearly, and satisfactorily to prove: and then to conclude, by shewing that the *will* of our old carnal nature, is the stimulating principle which hurries on the poor sinner, in rebellion against God; in opposition to his better self, the *new man*, who may safely say, "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

The *will* of the *new man* is that which God creates, and gives at the time of regeneration; which was promised in Covenant to Christ: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. (Psalm cx. 3.) It is a *will* which requires the exertion of Omnipotence in its creation, and a perpetual supply of divine grace, to carry it into an actual performance of the Will of God: For it is God which worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure. (Philippians ii. 13.) This is a will, therefore, independent of the natural will, with which man sins against the Lord: The *natural will*, which is called the *will* of the flesh, (John i. 13.) in contradistinction to this spiritual will, with which a Christian cannot sin: being always opposite to the law of sin, which is warring

in his members, against the law of his mind. And is a *will* to believe, pray, resign to the divine *will*, love Christ, embrace him by faith, and walk in all his delightful ways. Though, often he is under the painful necessity of complaining, with Paul, "To *will* is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." Therefore, it is very evident, that a distinct *will* to that with which sin is committed, exists, and opposes sin, perpetually, in the soul of a believer: and in consideration of such a spiritual opposition to sin, it argues, most powerfully, that the natural *bent*, and *bias* of the fleshly will, is to sin against God: and, with such a depraved *will*, does the Christian, who has received a knowledge of the truth, sin; whenever he wanders from the fold of Christ.

But, poor distressed sinner! Wretched Backslider! Or, you who are wandering sheep from the fold! Rely upon it, as an indisputable truth, that no comfort, no deliverance, no restoration of soul, flows from any other source than that of the Redeemer's blood!—No other sacrifice is needful to bring you back to God! May his bleeding love dissolve you at his feet, in affectionate repentance, holy indignation against sin, and the most devoted adoration and delight! Then shall you say, "HE is precious indeed to those who believe."

THE
Commission Opened:
AN
INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE DISSENTING MEETING-HOUSE,
PLYMOUTH DOCK, NOV. 18, 1808.

ACTS x. 29.

I ASK, THEREFORE, FOR WHAT INTENT YE HAVE
SENT FOR ME?

THE ministers of Christ are not only well informed by the letter of Scripture, and made skilful in word and doctrine, to be able to defend, argumentatively, the truth as it is in Jesus; but, it is their peculiar province, as well as their greatest happiness, to speak those things which they have seen and heard, and to declare, upon an experimental ground, the saving power, eternal love, and superlative preciousness, of that glorious Immanuel, who is formed in their hearts, the hope of glory. They preach that gospel which they received, not of man, but from the Lord; and possess that knowledge of divine things which

flesh and blood never revealed to them, but their Father who is in heaven!

They run in the ways of God under a divine command, and preach by the majestic authority, and dignified commission of heaven!

“There are those,” saith the Lord, “who run, but I never sent them!” Such ministers, shall not profit the people of God: neither can they give any satisfactory account, to a spiritual people, of their Call to the Ministry, nor of their being, in reality, divinely called, by grace, to know the Lord. Being thus dead in trespasses and sins, it is morally, and absolutely impossible, that they should be of any service to the church of God.

But a minister of Christ, with a sweet sense of his own *personal* salvation—with the rich experience of pardon, justification, election, and adoption, in Christ, goes forth in the strength of the Lord, with this divinely sweet, and extensive commission, “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” This being my high authority, and extensive commission, I was encouraged to visit you, and certainly cannot be guilty of any crime in coming to *Plymouth Dock*.

The bounds of God’s ministers are fixed, their work appointed, and direction and strength given them, at all times, for the execution of that work which God is determined to effect, by their instru-

mentality. I am come, therefore, under the encouraging persuasion, that I shall be of some utility to the people of God in this place.

I am come under the High authority, and (I am persuaded) the great and peculiar blessing of heaven! I am come,

1. Sensible of my weakness, and looking to Jesus for strength: for we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God.

2. With a desire to be truly faithful: not consulting your sentiments, nor enquiring what doctrines will please, or what would offend you; but consulting the Word of God, and a good conscience, I am determined to know nothing among you but Christ Jesus, and him crucified!

3. With an hope to be *useful*: relying upon his promise to be with me at all times, in all places, and to crown his Gospel with success, to his own eternal glory.

4. I am come with a resolution, to call no man Master, upon the earth, but to consult my all wise Counsellor, and divinely majestic and gracious Master, who is in heaven, and in whose service I take a peculiar pleasure.

5. I am come in the name of no *man*, *sect*, nor

party whatever, but in the name of the Lord Jesus: and, O that his infinitely precious name may be poured forth like ointment, and then I am well assured you can but love him.

6. I am come, not to preach my SELF, but Christ Jesus my Lord, in whose cause and interest I am your *willing, humble, and obedient* servant, and in that character,

I shall now proceed to enter into the enquiry:

“I ask, therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me.”

I ASK—1. Because your sending for me gives me that authority; for I have an indubitable right to know, on what account you have engaged me, and in what cause you are desirous of my service.

2. I ask on account of the importance of my commission, and with an animating hope that your motive in sending for me, and mine, in coming, are *one*;—the salvation of perishing sinners! their deliverance from ignorance—from sin, Satan, the world, and every error, which is often effected by the instrumentality of the ministers of Christ.

For what INTENT? Was your intention *Good* or *Bad*? were you influenced by right motives, with a desire to accomplish, through the Divine

blessing, some grand end and design, to the honor and glory of Christ? The motives and intention of some people, in sending for a Minister, are highly censurable, and ought to be publicly exposed: some, enveloped in extremest ignorance, when in dying circumstances, send for a Minister, as if it was in his power to save them at that *sad* hour; whereas, when in health, they were totally negligent of the gospel, averse to the truth, and careless of salvation! I am not censuring the conduct of a minister, in visiting the sick, but the *motive* of those who send for ministers with such a vain hope, and idolatrous dependence upon a Priest!

But to enquire farther, and more particularly into your intention, in sending for me; permit me to ask, Was it to preach the works of the law, to build you up in self-righteousness, to bind on the necks of Christ's disciples heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, to mingle the law and the gospel, the old covenant and the new, works and grace, flesh and spirit, after the modern fashion, and in such a way as to corrupt the word of God, and, indirectly, to sap the very foundation of eternal truth: by opposing, and artfully undermining, and that in the garb of friendship, all the precious, and fundamental doctrines of salvation by grace?

But these, sirs, I hope, were not your *motives*—it is not for such *intent* that you have sent for

me. If so, you are egregiously mistaken, and will, I hope, in every Sermon I preach to you, and in every sentence I utter, not only meet with disappointment, but with a scriptural refutation, evangelical reprehension, and such spiritual instruction, as shall, under the Divine blessing, convince you of your errors and religious delusion: then will you renounce self-righteousness, with unspeakable abhorrence, and embrace the precious Jesus with unutterable affection and delight!

But, persuaded better things of you—that *some* of you, at least, *know* and *love* the Gospel, in its unadulterated purity,—I pursue my enquiry with pleasure, because, in that case, you can answer it unequivocally, positively, and to the satisfaction of every minister sent of God.

I, therefore, demand of you who are *spiritual*, to tell me *for what intent you have sent for me*; well assured that you can answer, to the glory of God. Or, by your permission, I will take the liberty of answering for you: and,

1st. The people of God send for a minister (with a persuasion that he is made so by the Eternal Spirit) knowing, that preaching the Gospel is an ordinance of God, and has the promise of being attended with his peculiar blessing: and, therefore, are desirous to hear for their instruction and edification.

2nd. Because they love the sound of the Gospel—its doctrines are delightful, being applicable to their case; and they have known, and felt, their holy and salutary influence: consequently, can testify, that they are doctrines according to godliness.

How sweet is the FREENESS OF GOD'S LOVE to a poor sensibly unworthy sinner! How delightful the glad news of ELECTING GRACE, to a sinner who knows it is not *his choosing* God, and his ways, that obtains salvation, and will bring him to glory, but the *Lord's choosing* him before the foundation of the world; and that it was *electing* love which looked upon him, when he had neither will nor power to choose the Lord, and, that so powerfully attracted his heart to Christ! To a *filthy* sinner, how reviving is the sound of *cleansing* by the *blood of Christ*, and to a poor sinner so richly taught of God, as to know that he has neither *will* nor *power*, by nature, to embrace Christ, how delightful are the *Glad Tidings* of the ETERNAL SPIRIT'S condescending love, in working in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure! To tell such a soul to come to Christ, and to get Christ, when he feels so dark and wretched, is but to distress him, and add affliction to his bonds! But to tell him that it is the office of the Holy Ghost to reveal Christ with power, is to comfort his soul, at the same time that it ascribes all the glory to the blessed and gracious *Comforter*. These, Sirs, are the doc-

trines, which believers love and delight in ; and, consequently, wish to hear publicly proclaimed, and scripturally defended.

These are the doctrines which I am divinely commissioned to preach ; not only because they are scriptural ; but, as the Lord has graciously, and powerfully sealed them upon my own heart and conscience, and given me to enjoy their inexpressible sweetness, I can confidently testify their celestial origin and authenticity, from what I have seen, and heard, felt, and experienced—doctrines, familiarized, and endeared to my soul, by the blessed Comforter ; which I have preached successfully for many years, to the disgust, and confusion of Pharisees ; to the spiritual conversion of many sinners, and to the unspeakable joy, and consolation, of real believers in Jesus ; and, which, in the strength of Christ, I am determined to preach, and defend, during the *few weeks* that I continue among you : and, therefore, you know, Sirs, by this time, what you have to expect from me.

3rd. A spiritual people send for a minister, with hearts earnestly and fervently influenced with prayer, and desires, that God may own, and abundantly bless his labours among them, to the joy and rejoicing of their hearts ; in the detection of error, and the promotion of truth : in pulling down the strong holds of sin and Satan, ar-

minian legality, and pride; that *free, sovereign, unmerited, eternal, and invincible* grace may be known, felt, enjoyed, and glorified in the effectual calling, and deliverance of sinners, from the yoke of bondage—"That deliverance may be preached to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound."

And, my dear Sirs, permit me to say, That if you were actuated by such a Spirit of prayer, and with such spiritual desires, to answer this grand design, in sending for me, you certainly must wish me, regardless of the frowns of Pharisees, "Rightly to divide the Word of Truth;" in order to which, I must distinguish between *truth* and *error, law* and *gospel, believers* and *unbelievers, flesh* and *spirit*, or the religion which is born of the flesh, and that which descends from God, and is the work of his Spirit. For where such distinctions are not made, the Gospel is not preached in its purity; but, on the contrary, by mingling law and gospel, works and grace; and by preaching the works and duties of the creature, instead of the Faith of God's elect, and the operations of his Spirit, sinners, who know the plague of their own hearts, are kept in bondage, Pharisees are encouraged in their self-righteous pride, the grace of God trampled under foot, and my everlastingly precious Jesus stripped of his glories, and robbed of his eternal honour, as the complete Saviour; in whom a believer possesses

every thing, and to whom he desires, upon all occasions, and for ever, to ascribe all praise!

For ability to preach his Gospel, defend his truth, and comfort his people, I am entirely dependent on the God of all grace: and as my heart is up to him, and my expectations from him, it is my prayer for you, that, under his gracious blessing, you may receive, and enjoy the truth, in the love of it, and nobly take up spiritual weapons in its defence: for if any man will live godly in Christ, he shall suffer persecution, and must take up his cross, in order to follow him.

You are all strangers to me—I know nothing of you: and, consequently, for aught I know, you may be all believers: but I do not expect, and cannot believe, that to be the case; for, I am persuaded, there never was such a congregation existing in the world—yet, may I not hope that many of you know and love the Gospel?—To such of you, I believe my ministry will be “A savor of life unto life;” And, Oh that the Lord may make me the happy instrument, if it is his will, in bringing many more to a knowledge of themselves, in order that they may feel, and acknowledge their need of Christ! But leaving that with my gracious Lord, I have only to add, That as the Lord has made my soul both happy and free in Christ, I am a free man every where; and, consequently, free, and bold to de-

clare the whole council of God. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." May it effectually prove so to you, if acceptable in the sight of God, and to him shall be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE
Backslider's last resolve, and sure Refuge:

THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
SERMON,
PREACHED AT HEPHZIBAH CHAPEL, WOOD STREET,
March 1, 1810.

JONAH II. 4.

THEN I SAID, I AM CAST OUT OF THY SIGHT; YET,
I WILL LOOK AGAIN TOWARD THY HOLY TEM-
PLE.

NO pain is so afflictive as that which a be-
liever feels, when destitute of the divine presence,
with a heart-rending sense of his wandering from
God! No wounds like his, whose heart aches,
and conscience bleeds, through his departure from
Christ, and his base ingratitude to that God,
who has dealt with him so mercifully, indulgently,
and affectionately! He is indignant against him-
self, while his own follies stare him in the face
with severest accusations; and his backslidings
create him that anguish, which is almost intoler-

able! His very existence is a burden, and his soul refuseth to be comforted!

Encompassed with distresses, in the unbelief and gloominess of his soul, he concludes, that it is of no use for him to attempt praying any more, for, such a wretch has he been, and still feels himself, that the Lord will no more regard his supplications, nor attend his unworthy cry!

This Satan suggests with a most tremendous roar, indwelling sin testifies the same, and unbelief immediately gives an echo to the Satanic suggestion: presumptuously, but very plausibly, exclaiming, Have you not frequently prayed for preservation from those inward, and easily besetting evils, by which you have been led captive, and under which you now groan; and has the Lord regarded your cry? No! you have a melancholy evidence that he has not; for he has left you, most miserably to feel nothing but hardness of heart, and to plunge yourself into deeper distress than ever!

Have you not frequently prayed for deliverance and comfort? But where are they? Farther off than ever! Has he afforded you any comfort by working deliverance for you, and making bear his omnipotent arm, in defending your soul from the tyrannic power of indwelling enemies? No, but he has left you to lie down in sorrow, and given you over to a hard, relentless, and unfeeling

ing heart! Or, if any feeling, it is only the most pungent anguish, that he stand aloof from your complaint, and shutteth out your prayer! You had better not attempt praying again; it is of no use; you have been so often, and obtained nothing: Jehovah is silent, and you are plunged into deeper distress. To attempt to pray with such a cold, hard heart, is surely but to add sin to sin; he will no longer regard the prayer of such a treacherous, and perfidious wretch!

He certainly has heard, and answered you, in times past: a thousand times has he appeared for you, delivered you out of many distresses, and poured the balmy consolation of celestial love into your soul; but you have as repeatedly rebelled against him, slighted his love, and wandered from him: by which shamefully ungrateful conduct, you have *wearied* him, and he will be favourable no more!

Such are Satan's suggestions against everlasting love, rendered effectual in augmenting the believer's distress, by the plausible logic, and persuasive eloquence of *unbelief* and *legality*: and such are the melancholy conclusions of the afflicted soul. So powerfully did they prevail against me, and obtain with me, this morning, that I really concluded it would be better for me not to attempt to address the Lord in prayer!

I believe Jonah was not the *first*, who, in a spiritual sense, was cast out of the Divine presence; and I am confidently sure *he* was not the *last*: at least by one; for I can well witness, and that from this day's painful experience, the restless agitation, and tempestuous tossing of a soul under the divine desertion, and left to the cruel tauntings of Satan and unbelief!

I shall, therefore, upon the ground of experience, and with a reference to Scripture, call your attention,

I. To the state, and circumstances of the person who complains;

II. To what he was resolved again to look:

III. To the manner of his looking.

The Lord give me a spiritual view of the subject! and that encouragement of soul to discuss it, that while I *look again* to his holy Temple, I may be able to comfort you, with the comfort wherewith I myself am comforted of God; that, emerging from your distress, by the power of faith, you may take encouragement to say, with that firm resolve which grace creates, I will look *again*—notwithstanding all that I have done—I will look, at least, *once more* to the Temple of

my God; to the everlasting hills whence comes my help. We are now to consider,

I. The state, and circumstances of the person who complains.

It is *Jonah*, who prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly: I am well aware that *infidels*, amongst a multiplicity of ridiculous, and blasphemous sarcasms on the Bible, in order to disprove its authenticity, have foolishly argued the impossibility of the *whale's* swallowing Jonah; alledging, that though the fish itself is enormously large, its swallow is so exceedingly small, that it would scarcely admit of the arm of a man, much less his whole body, so as to preserve him alive!

Vain men! Could not HE, by whom all things are created, have formed a whale purposely to preserve his Prophet? Yet, I would not appeal to Jehovah's miraculous interposition, without his own authority; and, indeed, without any necessity: For we have no necessity to believe that it was a *whale* which absorbed Jonah. Throughout his whole history, the fish is called by no other name than *a Great Fish, The Fish*; (chap. i. 17;) and in Matthew xii. 40. the word *Κητος*, by our translators, rendered, *whale*, signifies *a great fish, a sea monster*. We have some reason to believe it was a *shark*: for, it is well known that *sharks* are very common in the Mediterranean, into which Jonah was cast; and

naturalists are agreed, not only in the possibility of a *shark*, of the largest species, being capable of swallowing a man ; but, that “so *large* are its jaws, and its gullet so *wide*, that it could swallow a man with ease.” Consequently, it is my private opinion, that it was not a *whale*, but a *shark*, of the largest species, which the Lord employed in *Jonah's* miraculous preservation ; or, according to a modern critic, a *Grampus*, a species of large fish abounding in the Mediterranean.

In this, *Jonah* was a very striking type of Christ's imprisonment three days in the tomb : “For, as *Jonah* was three days and three nights in the whale's (or *fish's*) belly, so, saith Jesus, shall the Son of Man be three days, and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew xii. 40.) But had not Christ himself thus applied, and spiritualized it, such interpretation, and application, would have been treated with contempt, and held up to laughter and ridicule, by many of our modern professors, who, instead of spiritualizing, are for *carnalizing*, and corrupting the Word of God, to answer some sinister purpose, or through enmity to the truth ; or, perhaps, actuated by both.

But I shall consider the *text* as descriptive of a tried Christian ; and his bitter complaint, yet unshaken determination, not entirely to yield his hope, but to *look again* to Jesus, the object of his delight and love, in whom he possesses everlasting strength.

Jonah was called, by Divine grace, to know and love the promised *Messiah*, and was divinely commissioned to go and preach unto *Nineveh*, that great city, and to cry against it. But though the fear of the Lord was in his heart, (chap. i. 9.) he, like ourselves, Christians, had an *old man* of sin, an heart of unbelief, that taught, and led him to, high rebellion against a gracious God. Consequently, he rose up to flee unto *Tarshish*, from the presence of the Lord. Here was high rebellion indeed! The Lord commanded him to go and cry against Nineveh, and he ought to have gone.—When I say ought, I mean in point of right—I know it was the purpose of God that he should wander and rebel; yet, God was not the author of his rebellion; he followed the dictates of his own *free-will*, inconsiderate of the decree: his rebellion was his own act and deed; and, therefore, he was as culpable as he could have been, had no decree existed.

The message was unpleasant, and galling to his pride; and, therefore, he was determined, upon consulting his own ease, honour, and comfort, that he would not go. Had he been sent with a message pleasing and agreeable; and consonant with the corrupt desires and practices of that populous city, in all probability, he would have gone with exulting pleasure: But to cry against it; and to proclaim its unavoidable destruction, if they persevered in their wickedness, was a task so extremely disagreeable, and intoler-

able to Jonah, that he “rose up to flee unto *Tarshish*, from the presence of the Lord.” Like *Bunyan's Pilgrim*, who turned into Bye-path Meadow for a pleasanter road. It is almost the universal cry of our professors, “Prophecy unto us *smooth* things in the name of the Lord;” and their perpetual study to make (not straight, but) *smooth* paths for their feet; or to embrace such doctrines, and pursue such a line of conduct, as shall, instead of offending, prove truly grateful to the world; being conformable to the flesh; and, therefore, certain to shun every species of persecution.

Jonah arose to flee from the Divine presence! How astonishing! But so it is, Sirs, with us all. Dear and delightful as the enjoyment is, he no sooner thwart our will, than the diabolic rebellion of proud nature, and black unbelief, leads us from our gracious God and Father, to flee to some *Tarshish*, or any way, rather than passively submit to his will, or execute it according to his command. But in vain is all our opposition, “His council shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure!” There is no getting out of his hand, nor fleeing from his power. The seas are at his command, and all the ships of *Tarshish* directed by him, in their course.

Jonah went down to Joppa—so far he was suffered to wander—he embarks in a ship bound for *Tarshish*—but, though he had “*paid his fare*,”

he was not to arrive at that place. No: when wandering, the eye of everlasting love followed him, and the unalterable decree went before him: his bounds were fixed—and so far he *must* go, and no farther: at the very moment appointed, HE, whom the elements continually, and punctually obey, “Sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken:” and whenever any of his people embark in the ship REBELLION, to flee from his presence, he will send out a great wind to their distress; and though it is their determination, and expectation, to arrive at their own destined port, God will prevent them, fill them with confusion, and clothe them with shame!

None of his *Jonahs*, shall ever arrive at *Tarshish*, though they rebelliously flee from his presence; he loves them too well to part with them, and will even cast them into the bowels of the great deep, to prevent their further rebellion, and to humble their pride; that they may say, on such a great deliverance, “I will pay that which I have vowed, salvation is of the Lord.”

How cutting must have been Jonah's convictions, and to what a state of distress must he have been reduced, to *desire* the mariners to cast him into the sea! Horrid self-accusations, harrowed up all the powers of his soul; and far less tremendous to him were the raging wind, and tem-

pestuous sea, than the spiritual agitation of his tempest-tossed mind!

He is cast into the deep, which swallows him up! Who could now expect his restoration and deliverance? Who could expect to see him again, brought alive, and in perfect health, safely to land? The hopes of such an event must all be cut off; all human possibility must fail! But with God all things are possible, and easy,

Wonders of Grace to God belong,
Repeat his mercies in your song!

As a vessel of mercy, Jonah was as safe, when cast into the sea, and entombed in the belly of the fish, as before he entered the ship, or fled from the Divine presence! All this was the purpose of God to manifest his great power, never failing mercy, and unfading love; and to shew the safety of his dear children, in the most severely afflictive seasons, and when surrounded with the greatest difficulties!

It was God's opportunity to display marvellous and miraculous power, pardoning love, and covenant faithfulness!

The Lord had made provision for his preservation long before his perilous situation; long before his departure from the Divine presence! As in chap. i. 17. *Now the Lord had PREPARED a great fish to swallow up Jonah*—and as it was

prepared, and *had*, previously, been prepared of the Lord, for that express purpose, nothing could destroy that fish, till it had accomplished the Divine design; and nothing could prevent its being ready, at the very moment, to receive him, upon his awful entrance into the tempestuous waves!

What a strikingly beautiful circumstance, to prove most positively, the prescience and *decrees* of God; as well as his resolute determination to save his own people, and the tender care which he exercises over them!

While in the belly of the fish, his covenant God encompassed him about with tender mercies, and influenced his heart, even there, to cry for deliverance: though he cried, as out of the *belly of hell*, unto the Lord, he heard, and delivered him! As one well observes, Jehovah “*angled for Jonah.*” He let down the *line* of electing love, with the *hook* of free grace, *baited* with a thousand covenant blessings, which deep distress renders so necessary, desirable, and invaluable to the afflicted saint, that he is sure to “*open his mouth wide;*” and then, upon the ground of absolute promise, the Lord “*will fill it.*” (Psalm lxxxi. 10.)

Thus the OMNIPOTENT ARM drew up Jonah from the great deep, and will, in the greatest extremity of distress, from whatever source it

flows, deliver all his afflicted children; and that, probably, in a way the most unlikely; and altogether unexpected, and unsought for by them! But whether expected, or unexpected, the very way in which your deliverance, poor afflicted soul, is to be effected, was, before the foundation of the world, divinely, and, consequently, unerringly, and irrevocably, appointed: in consideration of which, your deliverance is certain, not in your's, but in God's own time and way, agreeable to his precious promise, "*I will deliver, and thou shalt glorify me.*" (Psalm l. 15.)

Jonah declares himself to have been in "The belly of hell;" he was an *hell* to himself, by the anguish of bitter reflection on his high rebellion; and, doubtless, it was also an *hell* to him, to be banished from the presence of the Lord. But, behold, even here, he prayeth! It was, indeed, a time for prayer. He could not help himself; none but the Lord could deliver him, and that only by a miracle! His was the prayer of necessity, and the gracious throne, his last and only refuge!

Could one of our legal preachers have paid him a visit—but they have never yet been in deep waters where there is no standing; yet, admitting the possibility, for a moment, what would have been his address? If we may judge from their usual tone of preaching, something like this: "Come Jonah, exert yourself; arise with a re-

doubled diligence in duty, and, upon the ground of such *virtuous* conduct, and pleasing exertions of your own, Jehovah will condescend to put his hand of grace to *your works*, and crown your free-will efforts with a signal deliverance: but if you *neglect* the performance of such necessary duties, he will, undoubtedly, leave you to perish in your miserable condition: Why are you so full of tossing to and fro?—which, doubtless, was the case—kneel devotionally and read, or repeat, your prayers devoutly.

But Jonah thought nothing of either *form, duty*, or, at that time, even of privilege—extreme necessity prompted the most fervent cry: he wanted deliverance, and therefore *cried*, entreated, besought the Lord, for the miraculous interposition of his wonder-working arm!

And now we will come home to ourselves. *We*, who are worse than Jonah! at least, I know I am: for when I seriously reflect upon my high internal rebellion against a covenant God and Father, palpable conviction impels me to acknowledge myself, the chiefest of sinners; and, sometimes, to conclude, that I am worse than a devil in human shape!

We certainly are worse than Jonah in rebellion, inasmuch as we enjoy superior privileges under the Gospel dispensation; as bad as Peter in perfidy, having often denied our Lord, and as vile

as Judas; except only in one instance; we cannot act with malice against Christ: for which we are indebted to the riches of his grace! When we arrive in glory, we shall, indeed, praise, in the highest strains of admiration, that distinguishing love which brought such wretches there!

We have, in times past, enjoyed his presence, leaned upon his arm, and lived upon his affectionate smiles! But alas! how repeatedly have we rebelled against him, and wandered from him; and as repeatedly has a storm arisen, (graciously designed for our reclamation,) and we have been cast into the great deep, where floods shut us in, and billows of distress overwhelmed us! Floods, and billows of self-accusations, dark unbelief, horrid temptations, vile corruptions, extreme grief, and intolerable dismay!

Then we cried *again* unto the Lord—this was the time for prayer. But, upon what ground? the answer leads me to notice,

II. To what the christian looks *again*.

To the Holy Temple. But how could Jonah see the Temple at *Jerusalem*? He was favoured with a sweet view of the great antitype of that Temple, which is *Christ Jesus* our Lord, clothed in human flesh. The Temple was typical of his body: for when he spake of its destruction, and of rearing it up in three days, “He spake of

the Temple of his body," (John ii. 21.) observe, then,

1. That as believers of old worshipped in the Temple, so Christ, in human flesh, hath done his Father's will, and our worship is acceptable only in him.

2. As the Temple was filled with the Divine glory and presence, so all the fulness of the God-head dwells bodily in our dear *Immanuel*; and we enjoy the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in his divinely refulgent face; which is too dazzling for any but the eye of faith, and shines brighter than the sun in his meridian! yea, compared with whose brightness, that luminary of our day, may be justly considered darkness itself!

3. Solomon, at the dedication of his *Temple*, besought the Lord to hear in the heavens, and answer on the earth, any man, who, knowing the plague of his heart, prayed, looking to that place: and all who now feel their mental plague of sin, and look to Christ's human nature—to God manifest in the flesh, and plead the merit of his blood, shall be heard, and infallibly saved!

Then, Sirs, looking to the Temple, is, spiritually, *looking* unto *Jesus*; which now brings me to consider,

III. The manner of looking.

And, 1st. With what? With *shame* and confusion. "I blush for shame, says the poor backslider, at my unkind conduct, and base ingratitude to that God, who has loved me, and done so much for me." For my own part, I was constrained to tell the Lord this morning, that if his grace was not *free indeed*, he could not save *me*.

But, my dear fellow sinners, he has neither considered our *bad works*, nor our good works, in our salvation, and justification before him: it is an act of his own grace; done before we were born, the world created, or angels formed! and, on this consideration, though clothed with shame, we are encouraged to *look again* to our precious Jesus! How many times, Christian, have you looked? Times almost innumerable, and obtained relief and restoration.

But in your distress, probably, you may say, I have been so often, and have as often rebelled; and will he now suffer me to *look again*? Yes, says precious Faith, encouraged by his promise, I will *look* once more, at least *once more*: for to whom besides should I go? I have looked many times, and have obtained no answer, yet I will *look again*, encouraged to believe that he answers in his *own time*: "*Therefore, I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.*" (Micah vii. 7.)

2d. I will *look again* with confidence, for he is

he same : His love is as warm, his grace as free, and his blood as efficacious as ever ! My wandering brought the deepest distress upon me, but has made no alteration in Jesus. Having loved his own, he loves them perpetually, and can never cease to love them : consequently, though often wretched, they are always safe ; because, at the worst of times, perpetually under his watchful and affectionate care ! *Jonah* was as safe, and as precious to the Lord, when in the *great deep*, as before he wandered and departed from the Divine presence.

By suffering him thus to wander, the Lord intended to stab his pride, lay him low at the foot of Mercy, and teach him to know his sole and entire dependance upon *Christ*, for every thing. And this is evidently Jehovah's design in hiding his face from us, and leaving us to feel our weakness, darkness, and unbelief. This is, indeed, to grow in grace. To be made more sensible, (and to be humbled under it,) that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. To grow in a distressing knowledge of my sinful, hard, dark, and rebellious heart. Or, in other words, to feel more of my need of life, strength, and every thing from *Jesus* : and to grow out of conceit of myself, and up into him in all things. We are told by those who do not discern, nor distinguish between the *old* and *new* man, that to grow in grace, is to become so holy in the *flesh*, (or carnal nature,) as to feel but little, if any thing, of indwelling sin, and to soar

so high, as scarcely to feel that we are on the earth. But, were this my experience, I should be ready to say, "Adieu, free grace and Jesus Christ, I stand in need of you no longer; you are only suited to poor, polluted, helpless, sinners."—But, my dear hearers! I feel, more than ever, my need of Christ. He has done every thing for me, and is every thing to me! He worketh all my works in me: I feel at this moment his reviving presence; I feel I love him—his presence creates an heaven upon the earth! O, what will it be, when we take our seats in his eternal glory!