

*The DAUGHTER of SION in SPIRITUAL  
TRAVAIL, &c.*

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THE  
SUBSTANCE  
OF TWO  
SERMONS,  
PREACHED AT LEICESTER, NOV. 28, 1802.

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JEREMIAH IV. 31.

“FOR I HAVE HEARD A VOICE AS OF A WOMAN IN TRAVAIL, AND THE ANGUISH AS OF HER THAT BRINGETH FORTH HER FIRST CHILD; THE VOICE OF THE DAUGHTER OF SION, THAT BEWAILETH HERSELF, THAT SPREADETH HER HANDS, SAYING, WO IS ME NOW! FOR MY SOUL IS WEARIED BECAUSE OF MURDERERS.”

IT is very essential to the comfort of God's people, to be able to distinguish between the *law* and the *Gospel*, in the perusal of his precious Word. And this is a distinction which they make, not only because they are taught it in the Scriptures, but the Holy Ghost also, by his powerful agency, leads them into it, in their own soul's experience. Hence the prophet, in the foregoing part of this chapter, is inspired to delineate, in the most lively colours, and by the most striking metaphors, the holiness, purity, and extensiveness

of the righteous law of God. Sensibly struck with the astonishing disparity between this Divine law, and the lamentable depravity of the human heart, he goes to God with the following language: Verse 10. *Then said I, ah! Lord God, surely thou hast greatly deceived this people, and Jerusalem, saying, ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.* And such is the language of a sinner, when the law of God, in its condemning power, enters his conscience. He has, previous to this, been expecting peace upon a false ground; but *behold for peace he hath great bitterness*, (Isaiah xxxviii. 17.) He is come to Sinai, where he hears the thunder of curses and denunciations against him; and the flashes of Divine wrath break in upon his guilty soul! For the *law worketh wrath—where there is no law there is no transgression*; and the sinner was alive *without it*; but, the law entering his conscience with its condemning power, sin revives; it arises and stares him in the face, to his utter *confusion*—it appears exceeding sinful, and he finds himself under the sentence of condemnation. Because the Lord hath said to his people, in his word, “*Ye shall have peace*,” he hath been expecting it; but upon a false ground, upon the ground of *human merit*: therefore, to destroy his false, legal hopes, the sword of justice is stretched forth, *and reacheth unto the soul.* It is exhibited to his view in all its terrific and destructive forms, and displays the direful vengeance of heaven, so justly due to his sin-contaminated soul!

It reacheth *unto* the soul, but never enters *into* it, to execute the sentence of the law.

Notwithstanding, the poor soul is often expecting that it will strike the decisive blow, which would fix his dwelling in the confines of a dismal hell! But blessed be God, this shall never be the case with any of the *Redeemed*. The sword of justice hath smitten the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be spared. It was sheathed in the soul of Christ, bathed in his infinitely rich, and precious blood, and there all its vengeance, due to God's people, was entirely exhausted. It reacheth unto the soul, for the grand and important purpose of convincing it of sin, and making a majestic display of Divine holiness, purity, and justice. When the law hath thus done its office, the Spirit of God turns the sinner from Sinai, and sets his face Sion-ward.

Verses 11, 12. *At that time shall it be said to this people, and to Jerusalem, a dry wind of the high places, in the wilderness towards the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse. Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me: now, also, will I give sentence against them.* Not the gales of the glorious Gospel, the sweet zephyrs of redeeming love, and the refreshing breezes of mercy and peace, accompanied with reviving showers of grace from Christ—which alone renders a soul fruitful; but the *dry, full* wind of the law from Sinai, which vociferates the

condemning language of, "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them:*" And proclaims the coming of a God of justice to execute the sentence, in the ministration of death and condemnation! A wind not to *fan* nor to *cleanse*: the law does not fan in dividing between flesh and Spirit, neither does it cleanse the conscience: the one is the work of the Spirit of God, as a Comforter, and the other is effected by the blood of Christ.

Verse 13. *Behold he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles: Wo unto us for we are spoiled.* Black gathering clouds of God's anger, that portend a dreadful storm of destruction, and threatens the sinner with everlasting death. For he comes, not now in chariots paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem; but in the rattling chariots of his justice and fierce indignation, which sounds in the sinner's ears like a destructive *whirlwind*. The agitation it creates within him, far surpasses all possible description; he finds that he has to do with the great and terrible God, from whose presence he cannot flee, for *his horses are swifter than eagles*. In all the horrors of self-despair, he exclaims concerning *himself and mankind*, "*Wo unto us, for we are spoiled.*" If he enquires how he is to evade the stroke, and escape the threatened catastrophe, the language of the law is, (verse 14.) "*O Je-*

*Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee."*

It will not admit of one vain thought or imagination. But alas! he finds *that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, is only evil continually.* (Genesis vi. 5.) Therefore, hopeless and helpless, he cries, verse 19. "*My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, my heart maketh a noise in me, I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*" But as I am persuaded your faces are turned Sion-ward, I shall dismiss this tremendous subject, and attend to the precious, instructive, and encouraging text now before me: which calls our attention to the TRAVAIL OF THE DAUGHTER OF SION; and which I shall attend to in the following manner:

I. Who, or what it is that travails.

II. The travail itself.

III. The anguish.

IV. The voice.

V. The bringing forth, or deliverance.

And before I enter upon the subject, I have to observe, that if God has done any thing for your

souls, even though you cannot, at the present, say, "my Lord and my God," you will be able to go with me step by step, so far as the Lord has led you Sion-ward; and I shall have a testimony in your consciences of the truth, importance, and preciousness of my subject. And if accompanied with an unction from the Holy One, the subject will be to you, not an epistle written with paper and ink, but a living epistle, written by the finger of God upon your hearts; for out of the *abundance of the heart the mouth* of every minister sent of God, *speaketh*. And while he is speaking of the treasure which God has put in his earthen vessel, those taught by the same Spirit, can bear witness to the truth of it, and say, "as face answereth to face in a glass, so does the heart of one child of God to another."

### I. Who, or what is it that *travails*?

One particular reason why I propose this *question* is, that it has been argued, that the soul is not regenerated till it is brought into the comfortable enjoyment of Christ, by an appropriating faith; when, by that precious faith in him, it can approach God, and say, "*my father*." And some that, I am persuaded, are men of God, have entertained such an idea. But it is a matter of the greatest indifference to me, what *any man* says: "*cease from man*" saith my God; and, "*call no man master upon earth*," saith my precious Redeemer, "*for one is your master, even*

*Christ.*" To this gracious master I stand or fall. To be judged, then, of man's judgment is a light matter with me, for I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not, my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Ghost; and blessed be God, I have also the witness of his dear children, which is a great consolation to me; yet, the *witness of God is greater*, and affords my soul a superabounding consolation. Therefore, from a firm persuasion, that the new creature is formed in the soul, before it is brought into the enjoyment of liberty in Christ, I repeat the question; and I repeat it from a feeling sense of its weight and consequence. Who, or what is it that travails? Being a subject that some have mistaken notions of, and as I do not recollect ever seeing it clearly investigated, I shall be the more *particular* in answering the question. By being *particular* in the investigation of any subject, I would not wish to be understood the advancing my *own sentiments*, and enforcing them upon *other people*, merely *because* they are *my* sentiments. It is shocking for any man to substitute a chymera of his own fanciful imagination for the truth of God, and advance it with as much seeming gravity and consequence, as if the endless felicity of immortal souls were dependant upon the belief of it! Totally averse to the visionary enthusiasm of mystics, I shall appeal to *scriptural testimony*. By being *particular* then, I mean a *particular* adherence to the WORD OF TRUTH. And I come forward upon the subject with a feeling concern, for the comfort, and

establishment of the weak and wavering of Christ's flock, *who are ready to perish* ; but perish they shall not, their kind Shepherd will not suffer them to miscarry ; he gently leads those that travail, or that are with young. Isaiah xl. 11.

I shall first fairly state the *question*, who is it that thus travails ? Or *who*, or *what* is it that groans under a burden ; complains, or cries to the Lord, on account of darkness, fears, doubts, unbelief, hardness of heart, &c. so that the soul remains at a painful uncertainty, whether it is interested in Christ or not. What is it in the soul that complains under this burden ? This is the *question* : in answer to which, be it observed,

1st. That it cannot be corrupt nature, nor any thing proceeding from it. Sin will never oppose itself ; Satan is not divided against himself, neither is our corrupt nature, which bears a very great resemblance to him. It would be absurd indeed, to suppose that sin will ever oppose sin, repent of sin, abhor sin, or groan under it as an intolerable burden. It must, therefore, be something supernatural, of a diametrically opposite principle, and which can never be reconciled to, or exist in union and communion with corrupt nature ; but will ever oppose, complain of, and resist the evil emotions of the flesh. What is it then which thus exists in the soul, in direct opposition to the flesh ?

It must be the *new creature* (or the *new man*)



which is the workmanship of the Spirit of God. But he is yet an *Embryo*, not brought forth to the rich enjoyment of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for himself, as his own God, strength, and portion.

As the *new man* is of Divine origin, it is evident that he is begotten of God, and must have a conception, and formation, before he is brought forth, or delivered from the bondage of corruption. For the new creature, or new creation, the *whole of it*, (or the new man in *every member*,) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; but there is a promise that the creature itself (i. e. the *new creature*,) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For, naturally, a child is conceived and formed in the womb, and has every proper member, before it is brought into the world. And as in nature, so in grace; the work of regeneration is performed, and the new man has all his members, in the soul of that poor sinner, who is convinced of his indwelling abominations. He knows, by real experience for himself, that out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, &c. He is stripped and emptied of self, laid low in the dust, at the feet of Jesus, and under the encouraging influence of that hope of deliverance, which God has given him, he knocks at mercy's door, beseeching the Lord to grant him an entrance into the holiest of all, through

the blood of Jesus. Nothing short of a real knowledge of God for himself, and sweet communion with him, can satisfy his longing soul: *For the earnest expectation of the (new) creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God*—for a manifestation of his Sonship in Christ.

But it is, very often, a long time before the soul is set at comfortable liberty. It has a long *night* of sorrow and *weeping*, before the *Sun of Righteousness* arises, *with healing in his wings*, to fill it with joy and gladness; (Psalm xxx. 5.) and travails in darkness, pain, and anxiety; but can reduce nothing to a certainty concerning its interest in Christ. Nevertheless the *new creature is formed*, and is the person who thus travails.

Now let us particularly enquire concerning the spiritual formation of the new creature. And of what is he formed? Or what constitutes a gracious work in the soul? I answer, the *Divine nature*; which you will find to be a truth by turning to 2 Peter i. 4. “*That you might be partakers of the DIVINE NATURE.*” Not the very ESSENCE of God, if so, believers would be *deified*. But some tell us, they cannot distinguish between the *Divine nature*, and *God’s essence*. And because they cannot, does it follow that the distinction is not at all to be made; I would ask them what the *essence* of God is, by which he fills boundless space, and exists in all places, the same at all

times! He is now present in this *chapel*, (graciously, I believe, but I refer to his omnipresence,) he exists here at this very instant; but how, is an unanswerable question. His essence is his omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, &c. and herein, none by searching can find out God.

“ His essence is a vast abyss,  
Which angels cannot sound,  
An ocean of infinites,  
Where all our thoughts are drown’d.”

But if you ask what the Divine nature is, which every regenerated soul partakes of, an answer can be given: It is light, life, love, holiness, &c.

I. Spiritual light is the Divine nature, for God is light; (1 John i. 5.) God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts. (2 Corinthians iv. 6.) And this light, when it first shines into a soul, discovers such dark, filthy, *odious* objects, that the poor sinner concludes he is in total darkness. He never saw himself in darkness before, because he had no light to see himself at all; and, therefore, he had no real knowledge of his polluted condition. The darkness which this light discovers is really felt to the distress of such a soul. And if God has taught you any thing, you can bear testimony to the truth and reality of this. Poor miserable sinner, what do you now discover when you look within? An innumerable train of *abominable lusts*, legions of vain thoughts, enmity to God, an aver-

sion to his truth, and his ways; an heart harder than the nether millstone!

Men may talk of these, when they really know nothing about them; but you know, to your great grief, that it is the very situation of your own soul. The hypocrite has them in his head; who is like a man that has learned to articulate a few sentences of some foreign language, which he is an utter stranger to, and knows not what he says; but in this Divine light, you have been taught to know what you express in that frequent exclamation of your sin-burdened soul, "O wretched man that I am! Wo is me now!"

Again, you see now the way in which a sinner must be saved; the way, or path, which the vulture's eye hath not seen, (Job xxviii. 7) which the merit-monger never explored; that by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified. You never saw your need of Christ before; but now you feel your need of him, and see how vain and abortive all your attempts have been to help yourself. To talk of faith as the duty of a carnal man is odious to you; knowing that it is a Divine gift, which flows gratuitously, and freely from the throne of God, and the Lamb; and is given according to the determination of God's eternal council, to whom, and when he pleases. You are, in yourself, a poor unbelieving creature; and if ever you have faith for yourself, to believe your own personal interest in Christ, you know it

will be a rich privilege; not a duty performed by you, but a grace wrought in you by the Spirit of God. You are ready to reply, "These things I am persuaded of, yet I fear that the Lord never shone into my heart, as I cannot discover one ray of Divine light within me; nothing but *darkness*, miserable *darkness*!" And the cause is obvious: the objects which this light has exhibited to your view, are so detestable and odious, that they engage your whole attention; and you are continually poring over your hard case, as a poor prisoner, shut up in darkness. Thus is verified that Scripture, "*The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.*" (John i. 5.) You have now just light *enough* to see yourself a miserable sinner; to see the chains which bind you down a poor prisoner—but you are a prisoner of *hope*; you see the ability of Christ to deliver you, and he hath given you a hope of deliverance; and when he exerts the arm of his salvation, in bringing you into the light of your heavenly Father's affectionate countenance, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, then shall you, not only see, in his light, your darkness and misery, but with the Psalmist shall say, "In thy light shall we see light." (Psalm xxxvi. 9.)

2. There must be spiritual *life*, as well as *light* to constitute the *Divine nature* in the soul, for God is LIFE. Christ is the *prince of life*, who

came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly; who said, *I am the resurrection and the life*. Divine *light* and *life* are inseparably connected in the soul, and where the one is, there is the other also. The *formalist* has *light*, but his soul remains dead in trespasses and sins. He can talk familiarly of the doctrines of grace, assiduously attend to what he calls his *duties*, and externally walk in all the ordinances of the Gospel; but he never felt one half hour's heart-ache on account of his depravity; yet he will talk of the doctrine of Adam's apostacy, and of the Fall of all his posterity in him; and display some ability in defence of it; but never had spiritual life to *feel* the awful effects of the Fall! He may see those things within him, which are incompatible with the law of God, and acknowledge himself a sinner. It is an easy thing to say with Judas, "*I have sinned.*" And, under the accusations of conscience, he may be somewhat terrified, and shed some tears; but where the light of God really shines into the soul, it is accompanied with Divine *life*, by which sin, in all its exceeding sinfulness, is not only *seen*, but *felt*.

The soul has not merely a little terror under the lashes of conscience, through fear of hell, but goes mourning all day long *because of iniquity*. Such a soul laments *sin* as *sin*; not under a dreadful apprehension of hell: but even, poor sinner!

when hell is not in your thoughts, what an oppressed, dark, miserable frame of mind you experience. Your's is a continual distress—for though you have a little alleviation sometimes, you are never completely delivered from your trouble. “I know not, you will say, that ever I was in any spiritual trouble”—and that's what you lament—your dismal, spiritual darkness, hardness, and stupidity.

A mourning because you cannot mourn; an abhorrence of yourself, because of your dulness. For as spiritual *light* discovers *darkness*, so does *life* discover, by the keenest sensations, spiritual *deadness*. Daily suppressed in soul, and can scarcely account for it! But the reason is obvious: that spiritual life which Christ has diffused into your heart, gives you to feel what an hardened, vile, relentless wretch you are by nature. You are ready to answer, “I may have some light, so as to see the evil, which I know constitutes my detestable nature: but after the strictest, and most impartial examination, I cannot discover one spark of spiritual life; but, on the contrary, *lifelessness* and *deadness*—a whole train of indwelling evils, that continually oppose my rising to God, and prevent my enjoyment of spiritual things! For instance, when I would pray, my heart is as hard as a stone, and my thoughts are directed to other objects, so that my mouth is stopped; and then I conclude that my prayers are but formal, and that the life of God is not in my soul. And it is the same in whatever I am engaged of a

spiritual nature; when I would do *good, evil is present with me.*" But, poor soul, if destitute of spiritual life, how came you to *feel* those evils, and to be discouraged, and cast down on account of them? *Feeling* indicates life—a dead man has no *feeling*—you know the meaning of David in Psalm xxxii. 4. "for your heart is like a barren heath, withered and unfruitful;" and, by this, the Lord is about to deliver you from SELF, that you may have no confidence in the flesh. You want a better heart to approach God with, but he will bring you just as you are: he is teaching you to know what is within you, that you never may expect any thing from the flesh, but that which is evil; and the deeper you dig in that abyss of uncleanness, the greater abominations you will discover. But if you had no spiritual life, you would have no *feeling* sense of these impurities, nor of your deadness by nature; which is proveable from Romans viii. 10. *The body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* Blessed be God, I am taught now, to expect nothing from my nature but opposition: for you may as well look into the confines of hell for holiness, as to look for any thing naturally good in the *human heart!* Jeremiah xvii. 9. Galatians v. 17.

3. Light and *life* are attended with *love*. *God is love*, (1 John iv. 16.) and if made a partaker of the *Divine nature*, consequently of *love*. "Well, (say you,) it is more difficult yet for me to



comprehend, or believe this, concerning myself: for I am persuaded I have not one spark of love in my heart to God." I know you have not in your nature, and it is an infinite mercy that you know it; your carnal mind will never love God. Love to God does not spring from nature, but proceeds from the operation of the Holy Ghost in the soul. Hence it is that no man can love God till he is regenerated; the love of God is not in him. (John v. 42.) Therefore, if we love him, it is because he first loved us. (1 John iv. 19.)

"But how does this love operate?" In a widely different way to your expectations. You are supposing if you had love to God, it would break forth in such a flame, as entirely to exempt you from the evil within, which you now groan under, and bear you perpetually upon the wing for heaven.—When the love of God is fully manifested, and the soul set at liberty, I know, blessed be God, for myself, that it is accompanied with joy unspeakable and full of glory: but previous to such manifestations, the soul is deeply humbled under a sense of its sin and unworthiness: by which the love of God, at the first, operates. But you will reply, "How is it that we find some professors, who, from their first setting out in the ways of God, appear so loving, happy, and comfortable, and are not making the bitter complaints that I am constrained to make? I want to be

comfortable, happy, and affectionate in the Divine life, but I feel every thing the reverse." The religion of the *flesh* never meets with opposition from the *flesh*; it will never oppose itself: hence it is evident to me, that the affection of such persons is only *fleshly*: they receive the word *with joy*, they *hear gladly*;" and so did *Herod*, and the *stony ground hearers*: but they never felt the plague of their own hearts, and that is the plain reason why they soar so high in affection and joy; their wings of self-sufficiency never were clipped; their mouths never stopped, on account of their shame; nor were they ever humbled in the dust before God. They set themselves down for *converted* people, and take it for granted that they love God;—destitute of a feeling sense of the enmity of their hearts to him. They never were reduced to spiritual beggary, brought, through necessity, to knock at mercy's door, nor laid low in the dust, crying, *unclean! unclean!* Therefore, are lovely in their own *eyes*; pleased with themselves, thinking they are *something*, when they are *nothing*; whereas love to God is always attended with self loathing.

When his love first enters the soul, it immediately creates a thirst for him, and a cleaving to, and insatiate craving after Christ, the bread of life. (Psalm xliii. 1.) Nothing short of an experimental knowledge of God, and sweet communion with him, can satisfy the longing, hungry, and thirsty soul. It seeks water, but there is

none; (Isaiah xli. 17.) it seeks in all the means of grace, but they are empty cisterns till the Lord reveals himself. The God of ordinances is the object of the soul's pursuit. Its cry is, "O that I knew where I might find him;" (Job xxiii. 3.) and you know, poor disconsolate soul, this is your very experience. And why this thirst for God? Why this cry of, *come Lord Jesus?* Whence does it proceed? I positively reply, from *real love* in your soul to God. Though such are the risings of enmity to him, and aversion to his ways, in your nature, that you call in question the reality of your love to him; but your nature, remember, is an avowed enemy to this love, and ever will be. It is for want of distinguishing clearly between them, that you are apprehensive of having no love to God: and this is a distinction, which, though I may teach you to make in your judgment, none but the Spirit of God can make in your experience. Thus it is provable, from your own feelings, that the love of God is within you. And I can also prove, from a plain Scripture, that it is the experience of every soul in spiritual travail, before it is delivered from that darkness, and those doubts and fears, concerning its interest in God's love, which create so much distress and anxiety. 1 John iv. 18. proves it beyond all dispute. *He that feareth is not made perfect in love.* It is not said, the *love of God is not in him* who thus fears; neither is it said, that it is not *perfect* in him; but *he* is not made perfect in love: that is, he has not a *perfect* view of the in-

finite *freeness* of God's love to him, nor a *perfect* manifestation of *love*, that brings the soul into *perfect liberty*.

4. And *light, life, and love*, have the glorious attendant of *Divine holiness*: for if the new creature is created in the *nature of God*, and we know that the Lord is holy, (Psalm cxlv. 17.) it necessarily follows, that the new man is created in righteousness and TRUE holiness. It is not *imperfect* grace, as it has been ignorantly termed by some: your imperfections spring from an opposite *place*, in the fountain of your heart. (James iii. 11.) We never read, in the book of truth, of IMPERFECT grace; the work of grace is *pure and untainted*. He that is born of God cannot sin, because he is born of God; sin cannot proceed from that which comes from God. *Paul* says, *It is no more I*, (speaking of himself as a new creature) *that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me*. The *law of sin in the flesh*, and the *law of God*, written upon *the heart*, are two opposites—two antagonists, between whom is a continual war. Well, (say you) this is more puzzling still, for such a sinful heart as mine to possess *real holiness*! surely it is impossible!

But let us examine the subject a little, and ask, how this holiness operates? In a real hatred to sin, and a loathing of self; it objects to, and opposes the least rising of corruption. Its language is, *I hate vain thoughts, cleanse*

me from my secret faults! This Divine holiness is not satisfied with washing the *outside*, but pants after an inward purity, a conscience purged from all filthiness! At the same time that the *outward* conduct is irreproachable, and unblameable in the sight of men, the sinner *sees* and *feels* so much impurity within, that he looks upon himself as a monster of iniquity, and approaches God, with shame and confusion of face. The disorder is *within*. And what causes this hatred to *internal* impurity, and renders self so loathsome and detestable? *Internal* holiness, wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost. While the mere professor is satisfied with the *externals* of christianity, such a humble sinner, although in conduct he may shine as an angel of light, can have no *solid* satisfaction, till his conscience is purged by the blood of Christ, and his internal impurities subdued by Divine grace. And this, poor soul, you know to be your experience. You never saw before, so much of your need of Christ's infinitely precious blood. Sin is now odious, a loathsome disease in your bones, poison in your cup, one of your inveterate foes; and can you love it? Why, say you, "I fear I do sometimes." Your corrupt nature loves it, and ever will; but God's pure seed of holiness within you, will ever hate and detest it.

How shocking it is, then, for any man to say that this doctrine leads to licentiousness. What!

to hate sin, to hate vain thoughts, not to be contented with a mere outward reformation : but to cry out against inward impurity to the Lord—to loath and abhor one's self on account of indwelling sin—to thirst for God, to pant after the enjoyment of Christ, and sweet communion with the Father, in him ! Is *this licentiousness* ! Is this vileness ! if so, the Lord make me more vile still !

Thus, I have proved, that the soul is *regenerated*, though it is not yet *liberated*. An additional proof of which we may obtain, by considering the soul as created in the image of Christ.

1st. As in the days of his flesh he possessed the greatest *humility*, the same mind is in all his regenerated members, (Phillippians ii. 5.) “ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation, &c.” Christ was humbled under an *intolerable burden of sin*, though not his own ; for he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners : but his people's sins were imputed to him on account of the wonderful union between them. Their sins were considered his own by Divine justice ; and *he was made sin for us* ! See him in the garden ; in that bleeding perspiration, when his soul was so exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, that he cried, “ Father, if it were possible, let this cup pass from me !” How detestable was sin to his holy

soul! And, though in an infinitely less degree, all his people are made thus to groan under sin, and to feel an abhorrence to it.

2nd. We not only partake of his sufferings under sin, as has been observed, but as Christ suffered through banishment from his Father's face, from a tempting devil, and from persecuting men, so do his people. Did Christ go with prayers and tears to his Father? So do his people: and thus I might go on to point out, in a variety of instances, the similarity of your sufferings to those of Christ: for his people are also created in his *image*, in their affections, their will, their zeal,—in having the law of God written upon their hearts; but I forbear to enlarge upon these, and go on to give a further representation of the new creature in *travail*: and now observe,

1. That as a child, before it is brought into the world cannot see, so the children of God, sometimes cannot, for a long time, see the *truth* clearly; which is more particularly the case with those who set under an erroneous ministry. Some may say, cannot you preach without condemning other ministers? God knows my heart, I have no enmity against their persons, but against their wicked principles; and God has put an enmity in my soul, against all such principles, as are only calculated to eclipse the glory of Immanuel, and keep his dear children in *legal* bondage! While the blind guide is enforcing, from

the pulpit, the soul-distressing doctrine of *duty* faith, *duty* repentance, *duty* prayer, &c. the poor *broken-hearted* sinner, who knows he *can do nothing*, (John xv. 5.) is shut up in the most miserable bondage! He has been at these kind of *duties* long enough, and the Holy Ghost hath created in his soul a thirst for the privileges and blessings of the *covenant of grace*; (which cannot be a *covenant of works!* or *duties!*) but being himself blind to the real state of his disconsolate, sin-burdened soul; under a blind watchman, (Jeremiah lvi. 10.) we may judge what will be the consequence. *If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.* (Matthew xv. 14.) While the poor tried soul, falls into the ditch of his own depravity, sticks fast in the mire and clay of his corruptions, and finds himself in a horrible pit of darkness, wherein there is no water of life and consolation, (Psalm xl. Zechariah ix. 11.) the blind guide falls into the ditch of eternal condemnation, (if grace prevent not) for God hath said, in that law which all such are under, "*Cursed is he that leadeth the blind out of the way.*" And the poor sensible sinner will never be delivered from the bondage of corruption, till the blood of the everlasting covenant enters his conscience. For thus saith the Lord; by the "Blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners," (Zechariah ix. 11.) And, even those who are privileged with a sound ministry, and see, and know the truth clearly, can seldom see themselves in the way, till God brings them into liberty. For



I will bring the blind by a way they knew not.  
(Isaiah xlii. 16.)

2. As a child cannot *speaking*, (or cry) till brought into the world, neither can the child of God cry, *Abba Father*, my Lord and my God, till his soul is delivered from bondage: he can only *groan* under his distress and troubles, and supplicate the gracious throne for a manifestation of his being, indeed, one of God's covenant children. And herein, that Scripture, which must appear totally inexplicable to the unregenerate, is beautifully opened and explained: *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long*, (Psalm xxxii. 3.) He kept *silence*, and yet *roared*—here is the paradox; but, which is graciously explained, sinner, in the painful exercises of your mind. For, when in company with the children of God, who are telling the wonders of grace, you are *silent* on account of your ignorance and darkness: you *know not*, you *cannot*, at the present, *see* that God has done any thing for your soul; which causes an inward *groaning*, and frequently, in prayer, your mouth is *stopped because of your shame*, (Ezekiel xvi. 63.) not knowing how to address the Lord; for you can neither cry, *Abba, Father*, nor say, my *beloved* is mine. But, though *silent* upon this ground, you approach the Lord with *groanings* which cannot be uttered, but which shall be answered, in your deliverance, and to the glory of Christ! (Romans viii. 26.) And this brings me to consider,

## II. THE TRAVAIL ITSELF.—

And why is it said, as of her that *bringeth forth her first child*? To distinguish this from the various distresses of believers. Because the dear people of God very often *travail* in pain, darkness, and distress, deprived of the enjoyment of their liberty. But, being experimentally acquainted with deliverance, they are seldom distressed with fear of miscarriage, knowing, that though they walk in darkness, the Lord will be their light, who hath exhorted them to *trust* in the *Lord*, and *stay* upon their God. They are supported by a knowledge of the everlasting covenant, love, and immutability of him, who once graciously revealed himself to their souls; who is their husband, and everlasting friend; and who will never leave them, nor forsake them! But as a woman in travail with her first child, from being altogether unacquainted with the feelings peculiar to such a situation, is often fearful of miscarriage, or of abortion; such is the case, spiritually; the soul is distressed with a thousand fears, least its experience should not be that of God's people: saying, "Mine are not the spots of his *children*." And especially, when the *old man* of sin is striving for the mastery; then, the sinner exclaims, like *Rebecca*, "*If it be so, why am I thus?*" If, indeed, the spiritual seed of Christ is in my soul, why these contrarieties? But she *went to enquire of the Lord*. And that has been your experience, poor soul, again and again.

Weary, and *heavy* laden, you have gone to the throne of God, crying, "Lord, if I am thy child, *why am I thus—dark, lifeless*, averse to thee, full of those evils which are continually warring in my soul against thy Divine Majesty. Lord decide this doubtful case, shew me a token for good, speak peace to my troubled mind; dear Jesus I fly to thy blood!"

To be in travail, therefore, spiritually implies, to be in great *pain*, and under *heavy oppression*.

1. *Light* is veiled in *obscurity*, and the soul will never have any real comfort till this Divine light breaks forth, by the power of precious faith, in the enjoyment of Christ, the light of life. There are, at the present, dark, dismal objects, which prevent the sinner, though blessed with Divine light, from beholding the Lamb of God:—dark *mountains* of sin and *unbelief*, encompass him about! Though a poor prisoner, shut up in some dismal cell, may have light glimmering in upon him, he cannot behold the sun shining in his meridian brightness. That little light only discovers to him his chains, the strong fortifications there are against him, and the impossibility of liberating himself. Such is the situation of a soul in spiritual travail; strikingly described by Jeremiah, (Lamentations iii. 5, 6.) *He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail, he hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.* The dismal walls of the prison of unbe-

lief, or those walls which God himself hath builded, in shutting the sinner up in darkness, (*and when God shutteth up, there is no opening,*) prevents him from seeing Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, in his meridian glory, as his own Redeemer. He exclaims, "I am set in *dark places*; dark unbelief, dark dismal apprehensions of banishment from God, horrid accusations from the powers of *darkness*, and as one that *be dead of old*." What is the appearance of one *long dead*, and laid in the sepulchre? In such a sepulchre, what will you find but *dead men's bones, and all uncleanness*! This is the state in which he views his heart, yet, not a *whited sepulchre*; for the mask of hypocrisy, and self-deception is torn off, and his nature now appears in its true colours—*all unclean*! He longs for the blood of Christ to cleanse him, and till he is led by the Spirit, to that precious fountain, can have no satisfaction. He hungers after righteousness, and nothing but the peculiar goodness of God in Christ, can fill his hungry soul. As it is written in Psalm cvii, 9, 10. *He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness; such as sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.* He is bound in afflictions—afflictions from God himself—whose hand is heavy upon him—he is God's prisoner, shut up in darkness, and separated from the enjoyment of Christ, by the *iron bar of unbelief*. *Spiritual death* overshadows him, and sometimes he is apprehensive of *death eternal*. To preach *faith as his*

*duty*, is but to aggravate his case, and to *add affliction to his bonds*. He is well assured, that none but the omnipotent arm of Christ can knock off his chains, break the *iron bar* of unbelief, and *bring the prisoner out of prison, and him that sits in darkness out of the prison house*, (Isaiah xlii. 7.) The real cause of his great affliction and pain, is the opposition of his natural darkness to that Divine light which God has given him. *For what communion hath light with darkness*; (2 Corinthians vi. 14.) He cannot enjoy any solid comfort till he is delivered from under the bondage of this darkness, and brought into the light of God's countenance, to behold his face in righteousness.

2. Life is opposed by *spiritual deadness*. The spiritual life, which comes from God, is oppressed by, and groans under that carnality of his mind, of which he has a real feeling knowledge. And this is death to his comforts, *For to be carnally minded is death*; (Romans viii. 6.) And under the oppression of spiritual deadness, he bitterly exclaims, "*I am carnal sold under sin!*"

3. *Love* is opposed by *enmity*. The carnal mind is enmity against God; (Romans viii.) And think not, poor soul, that this enmity will ever be eradicated till you pass the spiritual Jordan, *Death!* It opposes your love to God, and ever will oppose it. Instigated by Satan, it strives to conquer: and when it obtains the ascendancy in your

heart, you groan under its baneful influence, and conclude the love of God is not in you!

4. Holiness is opposed and suppressed by the filthiness of the flesh,—The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride and self consequence of your heart! Even when you would do good, evil is present with you. They make such violent opposition, and appear in such frightful forms, that you are constrained to cry with Paul, *O wretched man that I am!* But blessed be the God of all grace! he has given you *light* to see the innumerable evils with which your nature is impregnated; *life* to *feel* them, to your great distress; *love* to Christ, which teaches you to cleave to him for deliverance; and *holiness*, which creates in your soul an everlasting hatred to them! These Divine principles, will, under the command of Christ, ever oppose the flesh; and, under the banner of his bleeding cross, you shall be more than conqueror!

I pass on to speak,

### III. *Of the* ANGUISH.

Extreme pain,—continual pain. Anguish of *soul*, which it is impossible fully to represent, by all the acute pains occasioned by any of the various disorders, or sufferings incident to the human body. For in the greatest bodily affliction, a man's spirit will sustain his infirmities, but

a *wounded spirit* who can bear? When the soul is thirsting for the waters of consolation, and can find none; wandering after rest, and cannot obtain the invaluable object of its pursuit, but is still more fatigued, and discouraged, by fruitless exertions! It has spent much time and labour in making application to many physicians, and gets nothing better, but rather worse! Ordinances are to no purpose, the Lord hideth himself, and the sinner still cries, "Even to day is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning;" (Job xxiii. 2.) *Lost*, I feel I am, and not certain of salvation! O I fear such sinful, worthless wretch, has no part nor lot in the precious Christ! Thirsting for HIM—longing to participate with the children of God, of the bread of life, but cannot find it—want a precious Jesus to feed my soul—"O that I knew where I might find him—I perish with hunger!" I fear I have not the *root of the matter in me*; for though, sometimes, I thus long for Jesus, at others, I appear lost to all sense of my miserable state. O what a dull and lifeless frame of soul!—as if I had no conscience, no concern about eternal things; and yet, at the same time, feel myself completely miserable!" In this situation, the poor sinner is an inexplicable paradox to himself. He *feels* miserable, because he has no *feeling*! In these embarrassed circumstances, he wants words to describe the anguish of his soul; which far surpasses all description! Under the legal dispensation it was typified by circumcision, which was an opera-

tion extremely painful to the flesh ; which, under the Gospel dispensation, is circumcision of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God ; (Romans ii. 29.) Not with the knife, as under the law, but with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, *which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword ; piercing, even to the dividing of the soul and Spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* (Hebrews iv. 12.) It divides between law and Gospel, flesh and Spirit ; between the joints of formality and hypocrisy, and the marrow of pure and undefiled religion in the soul. It strips the sinner of all fleshly confidence, and makes him feel what he is in himself ; poor, lost, and helpless ; and, having no expectation of any thing good from the flesh, his hope, his only hope is in the Lord, who must work all his works in him ! He has a bleeding conscience, and an aching heart ; wounds which stink and are corrupt, without any prospect of cure, or mitigation of pain, only as the Spirit of God leads him out of himself, and gives him a view of the precious bleeding Jesus. This anguish of soul is also represented by *broken bones*, Psalm li. 8. “ *Make me to hear joy and gladness : that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*” A person with all his bones broken is incapable of moving, totally debilitated, and in continual pain and anguish ! How strikingly descriptive is this, of the continual anguish of soul, which a sinner, truly regenerated experiences



Widely different from him who has received only slight convictions of sin, which, though he fears that the fiery indignation of the Lord will devour him, have neither depth nor duration. They will, certainly, produce an external reformation, and then presently wear off, by a conceit that all is well with the soul, because the conduct is reformed; which proves that he never felt his utter inability to help himself: but, like a person who has only a wound in the flesh, which, though it creates him much smart, does not, in the least, impede the use of his limbs; his bones are not broken, his fleshly wound is soon healed; and, during his keenest pain, he was capable of great exertions, and much activity. From this distinction between *fleshly wounds*, and broken bones, we may perceive the difference between him, whose convictions are only through fear of hell, and the soul which the Lord has effectually called. The former, though he is terrified by the fear of punishment, is an utter stranger to his inability and helplessness. The latter is not so much terrified through fear of perishing, as distressed, because he cannot find JESUS as his own Redeemer. He wants, in his own heart and conscience, a sense of mercy, pardon, grace, and peace in Christ; but finds his dark, tried, downcast soul, destitute of them, and unable to embrace them. It is as the anguish created by amputation—like a poor invalid, with a shattered limb, which is pronounced incurable. He has undergone much pain in endeavouring to

effect a cure, and is nothing better, but rather worse: therefore, must yield, at last, to the dreadful operation of amputation. And thus the poor sinner has, for a long time, been endeavouring to make corrupt nature better, to patch up the old man, and purify the flesh. Or, if convinced that the flesh will never produce any thing good, still he has been endeavouring by his duties, circumspection, prayer, and watchfulness, to subdue its vile passions, and rise superior to its horrid attacks. But alas! he finds his labour but in vain; he is more than ever overcome, and carried captive. His fleshly religion, his duties, and every thing short of grace in Christ, must be cut off, and *accounted as dross and dung*. But O! how painful is this! He knows not how to give up all—to be stripped naked—to have no hand in his salvation—to have self entirely cut off! None but the Lord can perform this operation: and he does it by leaving the poor soul entirely to his *darkness, vanity, and helplessness*. And in this distress, he strives again and again for deliverance. He prays, and cries to the Lord for relief, but has to say with Jeremiah, *When I cry out and shout, he shutteth out my prayer*; (Lamentations iii. 8.) He reads, and hears the Word of God preached, but can get no relief, no comfort, no deliverance. He can see, nor feel nothing within him, but *darkness and void*, covering the great deep of his tempestuous mind; and after all his labour and toil, exclaims,

“ I find alas! do all I can,  
“ That I can nothing do.”

And a great mercy it is that he cannot, for he is hereby graciously prevented from putting an undue dependance upon the means of grace. The Lord is cutting him off from all hope in, or expectation of relief and comfort from, any object, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

I shall now proceed to consider,

#### IV. The *voice*.

The voice of the daughter of Sion, that bewail-eth herself, that *spreadeth her hands*,—She spreadeth her hands of prayer, saying, “ Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter, I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me. “ Make haste, O Lord God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Lord,” (Isaiah xxviii. 14. Psalm lxx. 1.) She spreads her hands of *desire*, saying, “ With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my Spirit within me, will I seek thee early,” (Isaiah xxvi. 9.) And she also spreadeth her hands of little faith, crying, “ Lord, I believe, help thou mine *unbelief*.”

The soul has faith in the power, and love of Jesus, to save poor perishing sinners, but wants faith to claim her personal interest in him. This

is the unbelief which creates so much distress, and proves a bar against every kind of spiritual enjoyment.

A person in this situation may believe all the doctrines of the Gospel, and have his judgment well informed in the ancient settlements of God's love, in the covenant of grace: but the solemn and important question with him is, "Have I an interest in them? Do they belong to me? Is God my God, and Christ my Redeemer?" And then, from a survey of the *enormities* of his heart, he concludes, No, I fear I have no interest in this precious Jesus, and those desirable blessings of his gracious covenant: for I know nothing of their sweetness, and preciousness, by experience. *Wo is me, my soul is wearied because of murderers!*

This is, therefore, the *voice of complaint*: complaining against self—complaining of unbelief; darkness, and disconsolation—complaining of distance from God, and the want of an interview with Jesus, to see his glories, hear his voice, feel the power of his love, and taste his pardoning, justifying grace. But *he hideth himself*, and the complaint is, "I sought him, but could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no answer," (Solomon's Song, v. 6.)

All other refuge faileth, and the soul goes to Christ in the greatest extremity of distress. Not now with a view of performing a *duty*, but through

the greatest necessity with the cry of, *Save, Lord, or I perish!*

“Nothing in my hand I bring;  
Simply to thy cross I cling;  
Foul I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!”

It is the voice of the *wounded*, crying with wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores, to Jesus, the all wise, and never failing Physician, who heals the wounds of his people with his own heart's blood!

It is the voice of one overwhelmed with billows of distress, and ready to sink in the great deep of despair: but, with an hope founded upon *free grace*, cries out for the strong *rock*, and sure refuge of the perishing, A POWERFUL CHRIST! “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” (Psalm lxi. 2.) The language expressed by this voice is,

I. *Wo is me, my soul is wearied.* These are the weary souls to whom Christ says, “Come unto me all ye that are weary,” (Matthew xi. 28.) Such are *wearied* under a burden of sin, and *spiritual death*, (the consequence of sin,) crying, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” (Romans vii. 24.) *Wearied*, like a poor prisoner, who has been expecting to have his chains knocked off and to be brought out of his dismal cell; but instead of

that, is put into closer confinement, his chains made heavier, and his prison more dreary! The soul, instead of being brought into the light, experiences an increase of darkness. "*He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light.*" (Lamentations iii. 2.)

Sins, that before were latent, now make a formidable appearance, and a powerful resistance, against his embracing Christ, and calling him his own. And the sinner feels himself more vile, hard, unfeeling, and destitute of light, life, and love, than ever he has done before. *Wearied*, because his hope and expectations are cut off. He has been expecting deliverance; and hoped, that at such a time, by such instruments, or through such means, the Lord would liberate his poor imprisoned soul, by a powerful display of his pardoning love, in Christ Jesus. But his hope is disappointed; and *hope deferred maketh the heart sick*: (Proverbs xiii. 12.)

2. Wearied because of MURDERERS! Who are these *murderers*? The devil is a *murderer*. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. (John viii. 44.) He murdered *Adam*, and all his posterity; for all fell dead in trespasses and sin, in that dreadful apostacy; and he now goeth about like a *roaring lion*, seeking whom he may devour. His principal aim is to devour the sheep of Christ. He is particularly desirous to have them, that he may sift them as

wheat; especially the *weak* and *feeble* of the flock. He will, sometimes, with a representation of your sins as too many, too great, too aggravating ever to be forgiven, endeavour to drive you to despair. Feeling within you the truth of the representation, your unbelief joins in his horrid temptation, till he has almost murdered your hope in God's mercy. But, poor sin-despairing soul, the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. There is no sin too great for a God of mercy to pardon, no soul too filthy for redeeming blood to cleanse!

I might proceed to notice various other temptations, and suggestions of the devil, whereby he murders the comfort of God's children; but I would only make this observation; after his all satannic malice, stratagems, evils, and devices, he cannot lay one finger upon the NEW MAN. He certainly hath access to the human heart, but has power only to operate upon the corrupt passions of the old man. Christ is the strength, and shield of his own image within you: and though the gates of hell will wage war against you, the promise is, "They shall not prevail:" for, "I am with you," saith the Lord, "to deliver you."

2. *Inbred corruptions* are *murderers*; and you are so wounded, suppressed in spirit, and captivated by them, that like the man in the parable, who fell among thieves, you are left *half dead*. The risings of ungodliness within, like a mighty torrent, drive all your comforts before them.

When you are a little revived with a view of the mighty Saviour, and so charmed with the Gospel of bleeding love, as to be encouraged to the throne of grace, these *murderers* will meet you by the way. Evil concupiscence, carnal affections, hard thoughts of God; nay, even the *Scepticism* and *Atheism*, of your nature, will meet you with an horrid, formidable, and murderous force of other abominations, headed by the black Prince of hell; which almost stop the breath of prayer, wound your conscience afresh, and fill you with the greatest discouragement: and, leanness, deadness, and barrenness of soul, are always sure to follow.

Such innumerable train of these evils pervade your whole soul, and exhibit such horrid scenes of impiety, ungodliness, uncleanness, wretchedness, and woe, that you sometimes consider yourself as eligible only for the company of devils!

They follow you up so close, and are so continually opposing you, that, like David, you are hunted by them as a partridge upon the mountains, and brought into such a dismal night of darkness, that you fear the morning of deliverance will never arrive! O what a *weariness* to a sinner *created in righteousness and true holiness*! With what shame, self abhorrence, and bitter complaints does he go to God!

3. *Unbelief* is another *murderer*. This is the strong, brazen bar, that keeps the soul from the



enjoyment of God. A bar so strong, that no arm, either human or angelic, can ever break it: the same omnipotent arm which defends the soul from despair and death, must be exerted in breaking the power of dark *unbelief*.

O how cruel and *murderous* are its operations! If a promise is repeated to one who is its miserable vassal, this *murderer* immediately defeats the soul-liberating and comforting effect, by replying, "It is not spoken to *you*; the Lord does not intend it for *your* comfort." When the election, redemption, safety, and security of God's people, are proclaimed in the ears of the sinner, this tyrant will answer, "You have no right to take any encouragement from these doctrines, they are sweet to those who know, and feel themselves peculiarly interested in them; but as for *you*, such ignorant, dark, lifeless worm as you, can have no business to take any encouragement from them: for by so doing, you would be guilty of horrid presumption, and by a profession of being something, when you know you are nothing, would deceive yourself, and ultimately prove a sordid hypocrite!"

4. Another species of *murderers*, which I am persuaded, is primarily intended by the Holy Ghost in the text, are *false prophets*—blind guides, which lead the blind out of their way, to their confusion and distress. Against whom Christ himself warns

you, by saying, *Beware of false prophets*; and whose deceitfulness he exposes, by assuring us that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. (Matthew vii. 15. and xxiv. 24.) These are, indeed, *murderers*; not that they have power to divest Christ's sheep of *eternal* life; for he freely *gives unto them eternal life*, and resolves *they shall never perish*; (John x. 28.) but how frequently do they MURDER the *comfort* and *consolation* of God's children!

Instead of preaching repentance and faith, as the gift of God, (Acts v. 31. Ephesians ii. 8.) they enforce them as legal duties: which so powerfully operates upon the natural legality of those who are in spiritual travail, that it adds affliction to their bonds! For the sensible sinner knows it is not in his power either to *repent* or *believe*; and when he complains that he cannot perform the task allotted him by his legal task-master, probably he will extort such a concession from him as this, "*I know you cannot, you have not the power*:" but then he immediately redoubles the force of his *murderous* weapon, by adding, "*though you cannot, you OUGHT, it is your duty, and a requirement of the law of God!*"

Poor soul! believe them not—go not after them; for God does not require repentance toward himself, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, in the covenant of works; but, in his infinite love, graciously promises, *freely* to GIVE them, as bles-

sings of the everlasting covenant of grace! They are not *duties*, but *privileges*; not *required of you*, but *freely* given to you: not the legal duties of your own hands, but the effectual work of the eternal Spirit in your heart!

V. The *bringing forth*, or *deliverance*.

When the Lord sets his hand to this work, it is easily effected.—He speaks the word, and it is done. When he says, “*Be thou clean*,” immediately the *leprosy* of sin is *cleansed*!

The Holy Spirit, according to his gracious office, as a Comforter, enters the soul with a powerful display of the pardoning love of God in Christ Jesus: And this soul-transporting news powerfully proclaimed, “*The Lord also hath put away thy sins*,” dissolves the heart of stone! Precious faith is given, which looks to the source of pardon, DIVINE LOVE, and to the channel through which it flows, a PRECIOUS BLEEDING CHRIST!

As soon as pardon is thus spoken, and displayed, the sinner is delivered from all legal strife, and brought out of the dismal bondage in which he was before shut up. The *everlasting love of God* enters, and casteth out all fear; in the enjoyment of which, the soul is *manifestly* made perfect in the sight of God!

And O! the sweet melting of soul, the joy, the

peace, the consolation, which accompany this pardon! Sin is drowned in the sea of Divine love, fury is no more beheld in God; his anger is turned away!—Christ appears in the court of conscience, with his garments dyed in atoning blood; justice smiles from Calvary, having received there a complete and full satisfaction! The Holy Spirit preaches the atonement to the poor sinner's heart; guilt recedes from the conscience, doubts and fears subside, unbelief is vanquished, the world and Satan trampled upon, and the groans and sighs of the soul, frequently offered up before God in prayer, are turned to praise, and holy triumph in Christ! “O Lord, I will praise thee,” saith the pardoned sinner, “for thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me,” (Isaiah xii. 1.) It is the Gospel *Jubilee*: one of the precious days of the Son of Man:—he hath visited the soul, and sorrow is turned into joy!

The sinner now rejoices that he is washed from all his sins, clothed in the complete, and everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer, delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought into the liberty of God's children.

He walks at large in the city of Zion, and having received the Spirit of adoption, cries, *Abba, Father!*

He is now in possession of the greatest blessing that a soul can possibly enjoy, this side of hea-

ven: COMMUNION WITH GOD! A blessing this, peculiar to those, who, being regenerated, and brought into sweet Gospel liberty, can say, from the most comfortable experience, “ *Truly our fellowship is with the FATHER, and with his Son, JESUS CHRIST:*” which is an anticipation of the joy, that we shall fully experience, when, through infinitely free grace, we are arrived in that blissful country, the Canaan above, to inhabit those mansions prepared for us, before the foundation of the world!

# *The Love of God.*

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A

## SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE BAPTIST MEETING,  
GREAT YARMOUTH, 1800.

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I JOHN iv. 16.

AND WE HAVE KNOWN, AND BELIEVED, THE LOVE  
THAT GOD HATH TO US.

**I**N the true knowledge and comprehension of God, as described, and revealed in the Scripture, consists the present, and everlasting happiness, of immortal souls!

Without such a knowledge, it is impossible to worship him acceptably. Whatever men may presume to do in their nature's ignorance, while in that lamentable state, all their acts of worship fall infinitely short of, and are diametrically contrary, in their very nature and tendency, to that spiritual worship, which the Scripture so powerfully enforces, and so clearly inculcates!

The *Athenian* worshippers had altars as many, and as various as their deities; and from the light

of nature, they dedicated one to the true and eternal God. But what did they inscribe thereon? All that was possible for those to assert, who were alienated from God through ignorance: To THE UNKNOWN GOD; whom, (as Paul faithfully informed them) they *ignorantly* worshipped. Bound by the infatuating chains of ignorance, as the willing slaves of superstition, they were utterly incapable of looking to God, as the great Author and Supporter of their existence; and of coming to him as the overflowing fountain of benignity, mercy, and superabounding goodness: neither could they, while in this pitiable situation, contemplate the Divine glories and perfections, which shine with the most illustrious splendour and magnificence only in the face of Jesus Christ!

And, O how desirable is such a knowledge! To know God as a God of goodness, grace, and love; to feel our minds happily liberated from every thing that hindered our access to him; to approach him in the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; to find in him all those blessings, which completely, and fully satisfy, the extensive desires of our capacious and immortal powers; and to say, from our very souls, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us," must be, to the sensible sinner, above all other things, the most desirable!

But, alas! how opposite to this is the natural state of man: as we learn from the circumstance

of the idolatrous *Athenians*. And this is not only true, as it respects heathenish idolaters, but it is also the melancholy state, even of many who have the superior advantages of God's *written* and *preached* word: to whom it may, with the greatest propriety, be said, as our Lord addressed one of old, "*Ye worship ye know not what.*"

And, as it is impossible to worship God, reverently, affectionately, and devotedly, without a true knowledge of him, and all men, by nature, are destitute of such a knowledge, the necessity of the Spirit's work must appear in a very clear and striking point of view! The eternal God certainly has, in infinite condescension, revealed himself in his most holy Word, in such beautiful characters, and under such familiar and agreeable metaphors, as are peculiarly adapted to our contracted ideas, and shallow comprehension: but under none of those characters is he to be known; by none of those metaphors can he be comprehended, only as the soul is taught by the eternal Spirit!

*God is a Spirit.* But how should man, who is *earthly, sensual, and devilish*, understand the spirituality of God? "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither indeed can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned.

*God is a sun—God is light.* But darkness hath



covered the earth, and gross darkness the people ; and though “ The light shineth in darkness, the darkness comprehendeth it not.” For men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Poor lost man, captive to the power of darkness, (Colossians i. 13.) has no ability to come to God, to come to the light, until God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into his heart, (2 Corinthians iv. 6.) and as one of his own people “ call him out of darkness, into his marvellous light.” (1 Peter ii. 9.)

And, according to our text, *God is love*. But men are “ living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another : ” (Titus iii. 3.) yea, are even “ haters of God ” himself ! (Romans i. 30.) In short, such is the state of sinful man, that he is destitute of the life of God in his soul, alienated from him, and not only without hope in him, but his carnal mind is enmity itself to God ! So miserable is his condition, that there is in him, every thing contrary to God, and his truth : and, instead of loving him, and looking to him, as an inexhaustible source of the purest love, if he think of God at all, he considers him as a being, full of wrath and fury, and under this consideration, daily exercises an enmity to him !

Men and brethren are these things so ? Happy then are the people whose natural enmity to Jehovah is slain : who are acquainted with God, as

a God of love: who love him, because he first loved them. "Happy is the people that is in such a case!" Everlastingly blessed are all those, who can say, from heart-felt experience, *we have known, and believed the love that God hath to us.*

While I call your attention to this sublime and most important subject, may the eternal Spirit, whose office it is to teach his people, take of the things of Christ, and shew unto you—may he comfortably direct your hearts into the love of God. And before I proceed, let me exhort you, seriously, and deliberately, to meditate upon those passages of God's word, which I shall quote in defence of what I am about to advance: remembering the unerring language of inspiration; "To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah viii. 20.)

Hear with impartiality: and may the Lord enable you to lift up your hearts unto him for his Divine instruction, and peculiar blessing! For, except he makes a powerful application of his truth to your hearts, my preaching, and your hearing, will be altogether abortive.

I shall endeavour to shew,

- I. The discovery of God's love to the souls of sinners.

II. Wherein God hath manifested his love.

III. The nature and properties of his love.

And in speaking of the discovery of God's love to the souls of sinners, I would observe,

*First*, That in the Scriptures, and only there, Jehovah hath revealed himself a *God of love* ! This is the peculiar province of the Bible, and herein appears the superexcellence of Divine Revelation.

I will, with the greatest pleasure, admit, that the works of Creation and Providence, in a most convincing manner, demonstrate the existence, unsearchable greatness, and astonishing power of the great God. But in none of these is he discoverable, as the grand fountain of eternal love. Nevertheless, I say, it gives me pleasure to affirm, that these are demonstrable proofs of his eternal existence, infinite wisdom, and uncontrollable power. Let that bold blasphemer, the daring *Atheist*, take but a cursory survey of the beauties, and unsearchable glories of creation ; let him stand still, and reflect, and he must shudder at his own presumption !

How forcibly a contemplative mind must be struck, in surveying the bright luminaries of the night, and the burning orb of day, that warms and illuminates the earth by his genial beams ;

and by whose fructifying influence, it brings forth its fruits in due season.

These glittering orbs, that strike us with such an astonishment, must have their origin and formation. But who was their author? By what power were they created? Grand and magnificent objects! What but an Almighty power could have created them? The eternal God, the first grand cause of all causes, of his own unerring Will, and by his all-commanding voice, spoke them into being! And if these are his glorious and incomprehensible works—*the work of his fingers*, how unsearchably Great must **HE** be, who now holds them in his hand, and by whose sovereign command, they revolve in their appointed circuits! And O, when compared with these, how diminutive frail man appears! A creature of a day—a worm of the earth—a sinful inhabitant of this little ball! And that the eternal Jehovah, whose glory the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, that **HE** should look upon man, or at all visit him, is still matter of greater astonishment!

Such, we find, were the Psalmist's thoughts, when contemplating the grandeur, and unsearchable power of his Creator; "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him." (Psalm viii. 3, 4.)

Every object in the vegetative, animal, or rational world, is a living witness of Jehovah's existence, and has a mouth to speak his boundless praise.

But they give us no account of restoration for fallen man—salvation for the lost—pardon for the guilty—mercy for the miserable—grace for the unworthy—nor of the covenant love of God, in Christ, to sinners.

No, it is the BIBLE, that blessed God-breathed book, which contains this joyful news, and gives us the pleasing information of DIVINE LOVE to men! Blessed be God for this precious volume of truth! wherein he hath fully manifested himself as a *God of love*; and encourages us to approach him as such, by the most loving declarations; such as you will find in Isaiah xxvii. 4.—“Fury is not in me.” Zephaniah iii. 17.—“He will rest in his love.” Romans v. 8.—“God commendeth his love towards us.” Romans viii. 39.—“The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians ii. 4.—“His great love wherewith he has loved us.” 1 John iii. 1.—“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us.” Malachi i. 2.—“I have loved you saith the Lord.” Jeremiah xxxi. 3.—“Yea, I have loved you with an everlasting love.” John iii. 16.—“God so loved the world.” John xvii. 23.—“And hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me.”

But, *second*, though he is revealed in the Scriptures as a God of love, man, through his natural aversion to him, is incapable of viewing him in this sublime, and most endearing character, till *directed into the love of God, by the Lord*, (2 Thessalonians iii. 5.) the Spirit; whose prerogative it is to teach the spirituality of those writings, which were indited immediately under his Divine inspiration.

I know that the Divine authority of the Bible may be irrefutably evinced, by a variety of the most nervous arguments. Arguments, which are sufficient to stop the mouths of all the carnal, and deistical reasoners in the world. But, at the same time, I am bold to affirm, that no man can receive the Bible, in reality, as the Word of God, till he has undergone a Divine renovation of heart; till he is born again. The Spirit is the witness of Jesus, who witnesseth with our Spirits that we are the children of God: which is the powerful and indubitable evidence, to God's people, of the authenticity of Scripture. Their experience attests the truth of God's Word. This is provable, from the language of *Paul* to the *Thessalonians*—"For this cause, also, thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thessalonians ii. 13.) He did not ascribe any praise to *them*, for their

reception of God's Word ; but thanked God without ceasing, through whose power they had received it. It wrought effectually in them, for it was given unto them to believe. It wrought effectually, as a *hammer*, (Jeremiah xxiii. 29.) in breaking the rocky heart, as a *sword*, (Ephesians vi. 17.) in slaying the enmity of the carnal mind, as a word of grace, to encourage them, and as a word of consolation, to comfort them.

In discovering his love to a redeemed soul, the Lord exerts his Almighty power ; a no less power than that which created the world, and raised Christ from the dead. The necessity of this will obviously appear, if we consider how averse the human heart is to God, and what must be removed out of the way, before the soul can have any comfortable view of everlasting love in Christ. Under the influence of sin, and a natural enmity to God, the language of the soul is—"Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice." (Exodus v. 2.) *Job* thus represented the state of the wicked, and the rebellion of their language—"They say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways?" What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit shall we have if we pray unto him? (*Job* xxi. 14, 15.)—"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." (*Psalms* x. 4.) This is a true, because it is a scriptural representation of man in his fallen condition. What an Almighty power

then, must be exerted, in bringing such rebel, such monster of iniquity, near to the Lord; to embrace him in the arms of his affection, as the God of love! And till the Omnipotent exerts his exceeding great power, in removing the stubborn will, stony heart, darkness, and ignorance, all other efforts to make the soul acquainted with God's love and grace, are frustrated, and rendered abortive.

Let *Paul* reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; (Acts xxiv. 25.) and by the power of eloquence, touching the natural passions, or through the accusations of a terrifying conscience, *Felix* will tremble. But if *Paul's* master does not reveal himself as a God of love, if a Divine blessing does not succeed, his labours are rendered fruitless, and he reasons but in vain!

Let the terrors of the law, and the torments of the damned, be sounded in the ears of a sinner; this may alarm him, and fill his soul with a slavish fear of Jehovah; and like *Pharaoh*, when alarmed with judgment, he may cry out, *I am wicked*: still it leaves him destitute of a knowledge of Divine love, averse to the truth, and at enmity with God! The law worketh wrath—it is the “*ministration of condemnation*.” For if such convictions are not succeeded by a revelation of God's love in Christ, (which is always an evident proof, that the sinner was truly slain by the law, (Romans vii. 9—11.) they will very soon wear off, and “the



last state of such a man is worse than the first ;” for he becomes more hardened in his iniquity !

Further, all the engaging charms of the glorious Gospel of the ever-blessed God, will never effect this Work, till the Spirit gives a *new* heart ! Is the Gospel compared to the most delightful music ? The sinner is deaf, he hath no ear to hear it. Is the Gospel represented by a delicious feast ? The sinner hath no spiritual appetite ; he is unacquainted with his mental indigency, unalarmed in a starving condition ! Is a precious Christ exhibited on the pole of the Gospel ? (John iii. 14, 15.) Are the glories of Immanuel displayed in the preaching of his Word ?—Alas ! the sinner is blind, he cannot behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ; the god of this world (i. e. the devil) hath blinded his mind. (2 Corinthians iv. 4.) But, when the Eternal makes bare the arm of his salvation, what can repel his force ? Who shall resist his operations ? And when he communicates his loving kindness to a soul, the sinner feels,

First, the *attractive* power of Divine love. For thus saith the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet *Hosea*, “ I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love ; I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.” (Hosea xi. iv.) The yoke of the law, that galling yoke of bondage, is taken off ; the soul is no more under the *spirit of bondage to fear* ;

(Romans viii. 15.) no longer looks upon the Lord as full of vindictive wrath, but, drawn with the cords of the man, Christ Jesus; powerfully attracted by efficacious grace in him, comes near the gracious throne, washed and made white in his most precious blood; liberated from the eternal curse of the fiery law, and freed from the inexorable frowns of inflexible justice;—he views God as full of love and mercy in his dear Son: for it is the time of *love*, and the Lord saith unto him live. (Ezekiel xvi. 6—8.) The Prodigal is returned to his father's house, and the loving father falleth on his neck, and kisseth him!—Jehovah now *appeareth* unto him as a kind, forgiving, and affectionate Father, saying, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness have I *drawn* thee.”

These *cords* are attractive indeed, when the poor sinner sees his sins in the wounds of Jesus, and, by the eye of faith, views his loving, bleeding heart, receiving the sword of justice, and bearing, in his stead, the wrath of heaven!

And O! to hear him say, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.” (John xx. 27.)

Having such a view of a bleeding Christ, and hearing such melting language from his lips, the sinner exclaims, in ecstasies of love and praise,

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John iv. 10.) Thus viewing the man, God’s fellow, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness, he feels himself happily delivered from all terrific fear, and his whole soul dissolved in love to Jesus! *The love of God being shed abroad in his heart*, (Romans v. 5.) the “yoke is taken off his jaws.” Before he could neither speak *to* God, *of* God, nor *for* God—but his tongue is now loosened, and “behold he prayeth,” and finds sweet liberty in wrestling with his God, being brought nigh by the blood of Christ! His familiarity with the Lord is inexpressible; his soul thirsts for the blessings of his love, and his cry is, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.”—(Genesis xxxii. 26.) “Draw me, and I will run after thee.” (Solomon’s Song i. 4.)

These are the powerful attractions of *the bands of love*; the *bands* wherewith the Sacred Three are bound in everlasting covenant, and wherewith Christ and his church are bound, as eternally one, by an everlasting, and indissoluble union!

*And I laid meat unto them*, saith the Lord. Being brought to the banqueting-house of Jesus, his banner over them is *love*, and his *fruit* is sweet to their *taste*. For it is a feast of love—“a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,

of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined!"—They have bread to eat that the world knows not of—Christ, the living bread, who came down from heaven, as the fruit of the Father's love, is the very life of their souls!

*Second.* The renewed soul feels the *constraining* influence of the love of Christ. Not constraining him to do any thing contrary to his will; but his will divinely renewed, and divinely governed.—The *new* will, which is opposite to "the *will* of the flesh," always acquiesces, and delights in the will of God! He is carried, a willing captive, in the chains of love, to his adorable Redeemer, and lies with humility and submission at his feet. What a detestable light does *sin* now appear in! Sin, that before was his darling pleasure, is become hateful in all its glaring and specious forms. He looks upon it with a greater degree of abhorrence, than that with which men look upon a *murderer*: For he knows that it hath murdered thousands of souls, that are now sinking in irrecoverable ruin! And O melting thought! it caused a precious Christ to bleed and suffer—that *his* sin caused Christ to suffer! Sin was the enormous load under which he groaned, when crying in the most pathetic lamentation, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*"

He no more wants Mount *Sinai's* thunder to deter him from sin, nor *Moses'* rod to drive him to obedience. Sin appears, in his sight, ugly as

hell itself! And, powerfully constrained by the love of God, he yields the most cheerful, and unreserved obedience to the all-glorious commands of Jesus, the eternal king of Sion: and finds, by blessed experience, that *his* "yoke is easy and *his* burden is light." Who would not wish thus comfortably to walk with Jesus, and commune with the God of love? O Sirs! Is it our happy state? Can we say that we daily carry on a glorious intercourse with heaven? That our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ? (1 John i. 3.) If so, we know that God is love—we find him so, for we dwell in love, and therefore dwell in God, and God in us!

Love is the foundation, and very essence of true religion. It is the sum and substance of Christianity. Without love, whatever may be our religious pretences, we are nothing. (1 Corinthians xiii. 2.) Can we say then, and express it from the most affectionate sensations, "We love God, because he first loved us."—And we have known, and believed the love that God hath to us?

If this is our happy experience, observe, by way of conclusion to this head of discourse,

1. That we are delivered from FEAR; for "perfect love casteth out fear." Not the filial fear of a child of God, which is "wisdom:" (Job xxviii. 28.) nor does this fear intend those doubts and fears, with which the children of God

are frequently exercised. Not that these are commendable, nor consistent with that strong faith which gives glory to God; neither do I assert this to encourage any in their doubts, who sincerely love Christ; no, not for a moment; for they are evidences of our weakness: notwithstanding, God's people are troubled with them. If not, why should the Lord, so affectionately, and so very frequently say, *Fear not*? Blessed be God for such comfortable exhortations, which have so often administered unspeakable consolation to my soul! When alarmed by the formidable appearance of my spiritual foes, I have forgotten the rock of my salvation, and have been ready to give up all for lost! But such an exhortation, as, *Fear not, for I am with thee*, has stimulated my soul with fresh courage and magnanimity, and in the strength of Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, I have bidden defiance to all my threatening enemies!

But the *fear*, which love casteth out of the regenerated soul, is that which is always accompanied with terror, and which causes those, who are under its enslaving influence, to look upon God as an enemy and an avenger. This is what *Paul* means by the *Spirit of bondage*.

2. That we *love* the *people* of God. "If any man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "For every one that loveth him

that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." Those that bear the image of Jesus, and receive the *truth*, in the love of it, sincerely love one another. "Whom I love (saith *John*) IN THE TRUTH."

3. That we *love* the *worship* of God. "Lord, I have loved (exclaims the Psalmist) the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth!"

Now, my dear brethren, if this is your spiritual and comfortable state; if under the insuperable power of the Holy Spirit, your hearts are directed into the love of God, you will participate in my pleasure, and continue to give me your earnest attention to this very interesting subject, while I proceed to consider,

## II. *Wherein God has manifested his love.*

So wonderful, extensive, and innumerable are the manifestations of God's love to sinners, that I am almost silenced—What should a worm of the earth say? How should he express himself, in presuming to declare the marvellous loving kindness of the unsearchable Jehovah? I feel myself entirely unequal to my undertaking; for could I call in to my assistance, all that penetrating sagacity, and all those rapturous tongues, of the myriads of flaming seraphim above, in conjunction with all the glorified spirits of just men made

perfect, I should still fall infinitely short of describing one thousandth part of the love of God! May the God of love, then, direct me, in attempting to speak,

1. Of the *love* of the FATHER. And before we take under consideration the manifestations of the Father's love, we do well to observe, that this love is in Christ: he hath loved his people in his dear Son; therefore the apostle calls it "The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." There is no love in the Deity out of Christ. How vain then are *his* hopes, and what sandy foundation is *he* building upon, who presumes to approach an absolute God, without fleeing to Jesus for refuge, and pleading the efficacy of his blood!

Deluded wretch! Do you suppose that a God of holiness can see any thing amiable or pleasing in your pretended righteousness? Remember he searches the heart; and whatever you may think of yourself, be assured that your "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The Lord is a God of justice, and without iniquity, who will never leave one sin unpunished, nor clear the guilty without atoning blood! Permit me then to say, (for I speak in love to your soul; and O may the Lord use me as an instrument in undeceiving you!) that except you are found in Christ, (Philippians iii. 9.) accepted in him the BELOVED, (Ephesians i. 6.) you have neither part nor lot in



the love of God ; but with all your sins on your head, must sink for ever, under the frowns of a God of Justice, in the gloomy confines of a dismal hell ! For as there is salvation in none other, (Acts iv. 12.) neither is there love in any other but the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the BELOVED of the Father, *in whom* he is well pleased ; (Matthew iii. 17.) and as his people are *in him*, the Father looks upon them, with complacency, delight, and *love*. His love is manifested, first, in their *adoption* ; “ Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ! ” (1 John iii. 1.) High and dignified title ! Honourable and exalted state ! Is it not enough to be the Lord’s servants, but must we be his sons ? “ This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. ” (Psalm cxviii. 23.) O Christian, it was everlasting love that numbered us with the family of heaven, put us among the children, and gave us in covenant to Christ ! Second, the Father’s love is further discovered, and still more astonishingly magnified in the unspeakable gift of his dear Son : “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. ” (John iii. 16.) O amazing love ! he spared not his Son—his only begotten—who was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. (Proverbs viii. 30.) That he should deliver him into the hands of justice, to rescue guilty rebels ! This is love indeed !

2. The love of the SON. The love of the dear Lord Jesus has always been a most pleasing theme to the saints of God; upon which they have dwelt with increasing affection, and upon which all the ransomed of the Lord shall dwell, with hearts expanded, and overflowing with love to the exalted Lamb of God, when they shall surround his throne, for ever exempted from all sin, sorrow, coldness, and darkness of heart, to praise him in the full blaze of eternal day!

My brethren, I would now pray in your behalf, as *Paul* prayed for the *Ephesian* church, (O let us all unite in the petition to heaven,) "That ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Ephesians iii. 17—19.)

And wherein hath the precious Jesus discovered his love for our souls? *First*, in his covenant undertaking. Does he not voluntarily propose to become our surety, and willingly undertake our cause?

Hear his loving language; "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." (Psalm xl. 6—8. Hebrews xviii. 5, &c.)—*Second*,

in his amazing condescension. He leaves the bosom of the Father, the inexpressible joys of heaven, where he was highly exalted as the eternal God, receiving the homage, the worship, and rapturous praises, of the bright inhabitants of the glorious world of bliss—to lay aside his dignity, glory, divine grandeur, and happiness itself!—To veil his divinity in human flesh—to become a man of sorrows, and to be acquainted with grief—to be treated with indignity and contempt by sinful worms, and to be tempted of the Devil!—Thus to exchange the incalculable heights of bliss and happiness, in glory, for the unfathomable depths of sorrow, distress, and ignominy, in this lower world, is love that soars beyond all possible imagination!

Meditate upon this wonderful contrast; and ask, what but love, unparralleled love, could ever excite the Saviour to this wonderful condescension?

But in these, our researches, we are not yet arrived to the summit of his sufferings, nor to the extensiveness of his love. For, *third*, his love is particularly manifested in his agonizing *death*. Here the great love of Christ appears in a most conspicuous light. Here is love unequalled—“Love beyond degree!” “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John xv. 13.) But, when we were his most malicious enemies, Christ died for us!

What! love enemies, traitors, the most sinful, and most rebellious; whose demerit cried for Jehovah's vengeance?

Yes, his church was involved in sin and ruin, yet he LOVED the church, and gave himself for it. (Ephesians v. 25.) A sacrifice, a ransom price—hath *purchased* his *church* with his own blood. (Acts xx. 28.) “In his LOVE, and in his pity he redeemed them.” And in accomplishing this everlastingly complete redemption, O what did he endure! Not only the contempt of men, and the temptations of the devil—not only the pains of body, when the thorns pierced his temples, when lashed with the cutting scourges, when the nails tore his tender hands and feet, and the spear entered his loving, bleeding heart!—The sorrows of death not only compassed him, but the pains of hell gat hold upon him. (Psalm xi. 63.) He must endure the wrath of heaven—the Father frowns, and his *soul* is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was, as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground!—And O on the accursed tree!—The wrath of men and devils united, and a fierce storm of heaven's tremendous vengeance, were then fully experienced, by the bleeding Lamb of God!

Still his love to his people is immoveable. “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.”

Who that knows the Saviour, can reflect on this without feeling the warmest emotions of love?

My brethren, if our hearts are not hardened to stone, or frozen to ice, under the influence of the monster *sin*, surely upon these considerations, we must feel an unfeigned love to this loving and altogether lovely Saviour; who hath omnipotently vanquished the powers of darkness, extracted the dreadful sting of the last enemy death, and unbarred the dreary prison of the grave! “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Colossians ii. 15.) “God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet;” (Psalm xlvii. 5.) and is highly exalted, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. (Ephesians i. 21.) And having loved his own, he loved them unto the end;—he loves them perpetually, and expects to see his enemies made his footstool, (Hebrews x.) and all the objects of his redeeming love brought home, to those mansions that he is gone to prepare for them.

3. *The love of the Spirit.* It is a most striking proof of the Spirit's personality, that his love is spoken of in contradistinction both to that of the Father, and of the Son: as in Romans xv. 30. “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for *the love of the*

*Spirit*,"—And he hath in a most gracious and endearing manner, manifested his love :

*First*, in convincing us of our sin, alarming us of our danger, and converting our souls to God. (Ephesians ii. 4, 5.) *Second*, in taking possession of our hearts. Herein appear the freeness and perpetuity of his love : That he should take up his abode in us, who are in ourselves nothing but sin, is love amazingly free : and there could not, in this respect, be any thing amiable, or inviting in our sin-polluted hearts, to excite such an holy inhabitant there to dwell. Neither did he ever receive an invitation from us, previous to his first gracious visit. We never once desired, or requested the comfortable presence of this celestial visitant ; but, on the contrary, did every thing in our power to oppose his Divine operations. But, is it possible for a worm of the earth to withstand Omnipotence ? Presumption to suppose ! No, we could not, rebellious as we were, withstand his omnipotent influence ; no, not for a moment. In his great love, he made us willing in the day of his power.

While I am speaking of the Spirit's operations, and of his dwelling in our hearts, it is very probable that some persons may be condemning me for an *Enthusiast*. But, if this be Enthusiasm, may the Eternal Spirit make us all Enthusiasts ! For, *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. (Romans viii. 9.) (And how

awful the consequence of not being Christ's!) And farther, if this be *Enthusiasm*, then Paul was as much of an *Enthusiast* as ever existed; and, even in this case, includes all believers with himself, in this very intelligent and important interrogation: "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU?*" (1 Corinthians iii. 16.)

And the Spirit not only demonstrates his love in taking possession of, but also in *abiding* in us. The Father sends us his holy Spirit, that he may *abide* with us *for ever*! And this is a convincing proof of his love. For do not we particularly court the company of those whom we dearly love? And do we not wish always to abide with them? But if *our* friends slight us, or treat us with a cold indifference, our love for them daily declines; and instead of desiring, we gradually withdraw from their company. Not so the ever-blessed Spirit. O how transcendently glorious his love herein shines! Though we have grieved him, and slighted his love, still he abides with us, to convince us of our folly, and to restore our wandering feet to the paths of peace!

"Midst all our care, and sin, and woe,  
The Spirit will not let us go."

*Third*, He manifests his love, by revealing pardon and peace to our souls, through the blood

of Christ; and by witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God. (Romans viii. 16.)

“ All praise to the Spirit, whose whisper Divine,  
Seals mercy, and pardon, and righteousness mine.”

*Fourth*, By affording us his most gracious assistance in prayer, and in every other act of worship;—“ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans viii. 26.)

*Fifth*, In *comforting* us. And this he does by teaching us the most comfortable, and instructive lessons of spiritual wisdom; by shewing us the things of Christ, and by a powerful application of the Divine promises to our souls! Herein consists our solid, and substantial comfort.

When our souls are bowed down in us, through the prevalency of indwelling sin; or, under the darkness of unbelief, exposed to the most powerful, and most malicious foes; who, but the gracious Spirit, can administer a cordial of comfort, soothe our sorrows, remove our fears, and restore us to perfect tranquillity of mind? On this account he is emphatically denominated **THE COMFORTER**—*the only real Comforter*! The world may talk of comfort, happiness, and pleasure, as long as



they please; but, while they remain strangers to the ever-blessed Comforter, they never will experience one drop of *real* comfort; for as they are, “in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity,” the *gall of bitterness* must, unavoidably, be mingled with the cup of their pretended pleasures!

May we admire, then, the distinguishing love of the Lord, who has taught us willingly to depart *from*, and to look with an holy contempt upon, all those carnal amusements that the world call pleasure, and that we ourselves once delighted in! —That he hath taught us to persue celestial pleasures, and given us to taste that joy which is unspeakable, and full of glory! O how comfortable! to walk in the “green pastures (Psalm xxiii.) of the Gospel, enjoying perfect liberty, uncontrolled by sin and Satan; no more alarmed by the terrifying voice of an accusing conscience, nor by the melancholy apprehension of divine vengeance; but, breathing in celestial air, fanned by the sweet and refreshing zephyrs of redeeming love, charmed by the most melodious sounds of *Praise unto our God*, and gazing, with increasing delight, upon the Sun of Righteousness, shining in all the refulgence of his eternal Glory!

As the Spirit hath thus loved us, and manifested his love, in such a variety of pleasing, and satisfactory instances, what ingratitude it must be in us, to walk contrary to the holy direction which

he has given us in the scriptures! But, alas! such is the base ingratitude of our carnal nature; and will frequently be again! For it is *unavoidable*, only as we are *kept by the power of God*. (1 Peter i. 5.) O may he teach us, then, seriously to attend to that weighty exhortation, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” (Ephesians iv. 30.) If he leave us to ourselves, we feel nothing but ingratitude; with every thing that is carnal and rebellious, for our nature possesses nothing else: but, when he is pleased to shine upon us, and direct our hearts into the Love of God, we cannot but be *grateful* and *obedient*, under a firm persuasion of our interest in that love! If we are firmly persuaded that a friend loves us, we would not wish to do any thing to grieve that friend: how much more, then, will this principle influence our hearts, and govern our actions, under a consideration of the Spirit’s love to our immortal souls! *This, I say then, walk in the Spirit*, (contemplate his amazing love, look to him for assistance, follow his gracious directions,) *and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh*. (Galatians v. 16.)

Thus I have concisely stated, and irrefutably proved from the Scriptures, some of the manifestations of the love of the sacred THREE; FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT; the one true and eternal God over all, blessed for ever! And now, by way of conclusion to this part of the subject, shall make the following observations: that if the

Lord hath thus made known his love to your souls,

1. He hath given you everlasting consolation, and good hope; according to the language of inspiration: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father which hath LOVED us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope, through grace, comfort your hearts." (2 Thessalonians ii. 16.)

This consolation is derived, from a view of the immutability of Jehovah's gracious counsel, and the stability of his covenant and promises; whereby the salvation, and eternal glorification of his people are everlastingly secured. (Hebrews vi. 18, 19.)

And the *Hope* is denominated *good*, because, like precious faith, it is the gift of God; and is well-grounded, having Christ for a *sure* foundation, and is, therefore, an anchor to the soul, both *sure* and stedfast! And also, because it hath *good objects* in view; a complete deliverance from all sin, and eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ!

2. You experience his chastisement: "For whom the Lord LOVETH he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;—but, if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons:" for-

mal professors, and not the heaven-born children of God. (Hebrews xii. 6—8.)

3. He giveth you the victory over your spiritual enemies: “We are more than conquerors *through him* that LOVED *us*.” (Romans viii. 37.) For thus saith the Lord, “No weapon formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee, in judgment, thou shalt condemn.” (Isaiah liv. 17.) The Lord will manifest his love to his people, even in the face of their enemies; according to his gracious promise, and encouraging declaration: “Behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have LOVED thee.” These are the promises of EVERLASTING LOVE; which, notwithstanding all our present troubles, and threatening foes, shall be *completely fulfilled*, to our comfort and astonishment, to the confusion of our enemies, and to the eternal glory of DIVINE FAITHFULNESS! (Revelations iii. 9.)

We now proceed to consider,

III. The nature, and properties of the love of God.—And O, how comfortable, for poor lost sinners, as we are, to consider that it is,

*In the first place, free and unmerited!* There is nothing in us that Jehovah foresaw, sees now, or ever will see, to attract his gracious notice, or,

merit his divine love. You who are acquainted with yourselves, as sinners, will readily acquiesce with me in this sentiment, and confess, to the glory of God, that his love is infinitely free, both in its nature and communications.

In order to express its freeness, and to convey to our minds, in a forcible, and comprehensive manner, its independent, and unmerited nature, it is represented by the singular love of an husband to an *adulterous* wife. Thus the Lord speaks to his revolted Israel, in Hosea iii. 1 : “Go, yet love a woman (beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress) according to the love of the Lord towards the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.” Is there any thing in the detestable adulteress to attract the love of the deceived, injured, and forsaken husband? No; but, on the contrary, every thing calculated to create in his breast, a most implacable hatred to such a filthy, and degenerate character! We should think him a singular man indeed, possessed of very unusual, and almost immoveable affection, who, in such aggravating circumstances, could yet love that woman! But strange, and singular as this may appear, it bears but a very faint resemblance of the love of God, to those *who look to other gods* —who willingly obey the god of this world, which is the devil:—who are filled with pride, which is an abomination to the Lord; (Proverbs vi. 16, 17.) with *covetousness, which is idolatry*; (Colossians iii. 5.) with open and continual rebellion to the

King of kings, which is as the sin of witchcraft; (1 Samuel xv. 23.) whose very nature is polluted and corrupt—who are earthly, sensual, and devilish! Will any one presume to say, that merit is attached to such? who are guilty of the grossest enormities, and whose hearts are contaminated with every iniquity! Wherewith should they come near the Lord? Or upon what ground expect any favour from him? Whose commands they have violated, whose authority they have trampled under-foot, and with whom they are at the bitterest enmity!

But, while I am giving this sad (though just) description of human nature, I know, poor self-condemned sinner, you readily confess, it is a striking delineation of your miserable state, and rebellious, ungrateful conduct to the Lord! And, under such a conviction, are you earnestly enquiring what you shall do to be saved?

To you I proclaim, with increasing pleasure of soul, the *freeness* of God's love, to the most unworthy sinner.—*But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet SINNERS, Christ died for us!* (Romans v. 8.)

And as unworthy *sinner*s, we are invited to approach this great and precious Saviour! Hear his free invitation, and gracious direction, “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us gra-

ciously:" and concerning such as thus approach him, he declares, "I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY." (Hosea xiv. 2—4.)

And as God's love is infinitely free, it must be,

Second, SOVEREIGN LOVE. But, alas! I am touching upon a subject that is become almost obsolete; and that is, to many professors of christianity, unbearable; and to some other, altogether detestable! For men and devils are up in arms against the sovereignty of God.

Poor proud man, not only wants to make *demands* upon the Lord, for his *supposed* merit, but, in his natural and ambitious rebellion, would even *command* the eternal God himself!—Would take away his power of *working all things after the counsel of his own will*. (Ephesians i. 11.) Would usurp the eternal throne, and call the Deity to an account for his sovereign transactions!—Would,

" Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,

" Re-judge his justice, be the GOD of God!"

POPE.

But, whatever man may attempt to do, in his satanic pride, God is a Sovereign still; and his love to his people is the result of his Divine sovereignty. He did not set his love upon them, because they were more excellent than other people—he was under no restraint whatever, but

loved because he would love! As it is written, "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, (for ye were the fewest of all people) but because the Lord loved you." (Deuteronomy vii. 7, 8.)

My friends, have we *known and believed the love that God hath to us?*—O let us not attribute any merit, or glory to ourselves, but ascribe all the glory to *sovereign* grace!

"Pause, my soul; adore, and wonder,  
Ask, O why such *love to me?*  
GRACE hath put me in the number,  
Of the Saviour's family!"

And as this love is *sovereign*; as there can be no restraint laid upon the KING OF KINGS; but, as it rests entirely with himself, whether to love or hate; and, as his love flows *freely*, without any motive, attraction, or expectation from us, we are naturally led to enquire, *Who are the objects of his love?* In reply to this enquiry, as authorized by Scripture, I shall venture to appropriate to the DIVINE LOVE, the epithet *distinguishing*. And, O Sirs! Let not the term disgust you; but first enquire, is it *scriptural*? Weigh every sentence that I shall utter, impartially in the balance of the sanctuary, while I take upon me to prove, by biblical expressions, that God's love is,

THIRD, *distinguishing* love. There certainly



is a universality attached to God's love, which is spoken of by Christ himself—"God so loved the WORLD." But is every individual of *Adam's* posterity here intended by the word *world*? No; this word has very seldom such a signification in Scripture. And were that the intention, how violently would this Scripture clash with those, where Jehovah expresses his hatred to certain characters. *Malachi* speaks of a "*People against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.*" (*Malachi* i. 4.) And who are they? Certainly they are a part of *Adam's* fallen progeny. But, you will say, "*He once loved them.*"—I would ask, then, how it is that he now *hateth* them, since he hath informed us, that HE CHANGES NOT? (*Malachi* iii. 6.) How is it, that HIS *love* is become *hatred*, with whom there is no variation, nor even the *shadow* of turning! (*James* i. 17.)

God's loving the *world*, then, cannot imply his loving every individual of the human race, without distinction, or discrimination. But it evidently implies the extension of his love to his people, in every *age*, and *nation* of the *world*; which is abundantly confirmed, by a variety of corresponding passages, both in the Old and New Testament. (*Isaiah* xliiii. 6, and 1 *John* ii. 2, compared with *John* xi. 52.)

My dear people! read the Bible for yourselves; and hear what the inspired writers say, respect-

ing the objects of God's love. Read Deuteronomy xxxiii. 3. *Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand.*—Those whom the Lord hath loved are in the hand of Christ. And who are they? A people *distinguished* from the rest part of mankind, and, who are particularized in the *tenth* chapter of *John*, under the character of *sheep*, in contradistinction to the wicked, who are characterized *goats*. And what saith the precious Jesus concerning the sheep, which everlasting love put into his hand, to redeem? He speaks with all the dignity, and authority of the Omnipotent, in vindicating their eternal security in him. “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. Is not here distinguishing love?”

And doth not the discrimination of Divine love farther appear in conversion work? In calling some by Divine grace, while others, equally as worthy (for we are all unworthy sinners) are left to perish in their sins? I will appeal to you, my Brethren, *who have known and believed the love of God*. Doth not *distinguishing* love shine perspicuously, and refulgently clear, in your regeneration?—When you review the state of the wicked,—when you look around upon your unconverted neighbours, what are your reflections? Can you say, I am more worthy, I have been more obedient than they; and *therefore* the Lord hath taken possession of my soul? Ah! no;—for we are children of wrath *even as others*; conse-

quently you must be led to exclaim, "Why me and not others? How is it, that the Lord should thus love me? For, am I better than they? No, in no wise. I might have been left to have filled up the measure of my iniquity, and to have sunk under the ponderous weight of my guilt, in irrecoverable ruin!—All glory to *distinguishing* love! So eminently displayed in the salvation of the chiefest of sinners." Farther, by the prophet *Malachi*, Jehovah calls upon his people to remember, how peculiarly, and discriminately he has loved them, in these most endearing expressions, and striking interrogations: "I have loved you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." (Malachi i. 2, 3.)

FOURTH,—The love of God is ETERNAL. It never had any commencement—"I have loved thee, saith the Lord, *with an everlasting love.*" And it never will have any change, alteration, addition, diminution, or termination.—"*He rests in his love.*" Eternity itself will not impair it; it is of eternal duration. It must be so; for God, the great UNCHANGEABLE and ETERNAL, himself is LOVE! He loves his people with the same love wherewith he hath loved Christ! And will any person presume to say, that the Father did not love the Son from everlasting! Or, that he will cease to love him! No, that man who should only presume to suppose the possibility of

such a thing, would be very justly charged with the most pitiable irrationality; and even in the supposition, would be guilty of horrid blasphemy! It is a plain and uncontested truth, that the Father's love to the Son is *eternal*. If then we have but one plain text of Scripture to prove, *that the Father loveth his people with the very same love wherewith he loveth the Son*; we shall immediately establish it, as an undeniable fact, that God's love to his people is *eternal* love. Now, have we a Scripture that will fully answer this purpose?—Yes, a most glorious passage, uttered by Christ himself, in his fervent and pathetic addresses to the Father: which you may find in John xvii. 23, 24.—*And hast loved them as thou hast loved me—for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

With this Scripture, we may boldly declare, and defy all the enemies of truth, ever to contradict us in the declaration, that God's love to his people, in Christ Jesus, never had beginning, and shall never never cease!

The love of Jehovah has many other epithets in Scripture, and is beautifully and strikingly represented, as possessing many other very engaging properties, such as *strong*, (Solomon's Song viii.) *great*, (Ephesians ii. 4.) *incomprehensible*, (Ephesians iii. 19.) *inseparable*, &c. (Romans viii. 35—39.) And it is with a degree of reluctance, that I now deny myself the pleasure of enlarging upon

each of them : but in order to avoid a tedious and unpleasant prolixity, I shall conclude ; commending you to the love of God, and beseeching the ever blessed Spirit, to make a powerful, and comfortable APPLICATION of this infinitely important subject, to your immortal souls ! I pray for such a Divine application, under the firmest persuasion, that *Paul* may plant, and *Apollos* water, but God only can give the increase ! To him be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*The Person of Immanuel; or Christ Very  
God, and Very Man, in One Person.*

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A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT LEICESTER, DECEMBER 13, 1801.

Taken in Short-hand.

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HEBREWS II. 17.

WHEREFORE, IN ALL THINGS IT BEHOVED HIM TO  
BE MADE LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN.

**T**HE glorious and ever-blessed Personage that now claims our attention, from the words of my text, is the precious Redeemer, and Saviour of sinners; to whom we have fled for refuge, in whom we are taught to believe, on whom we build our hope, and in whom we are loved, chosen, and accepted of the Eternal Father!—That precious Christ, who hath everlastingly satisfied divine justice, and magnified the holy law—who is our resurrection and life, and the bread which came down from heaven, of which, whosoever eateth shall never die!—The way, the truth, and the life; for no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son, Jesus Christ; who through his death, has gained a gloriously complete, and everlasting con

quest, over all our mighty, and malicious foes; even over the last enemy, death; whose terrible sting he hath extracted, for his dear people, and made that gloomy vale, a most easy and delightful passage!

Our adorable Redeemer, is our all in all; the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever! May we find him such to our souls, while we take under consideration the admirable Person, and the unsearchable glories and excellencies of this celestial Visitant! And O may a soul-animating view of him, by the eye of faith, constrain us, spiritually to adopt the language of the church, (Solomon's Song v. 10—16.) "He is the chiefest among ten thousand—yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend!"

I have selected this text, in order to prove, as the Lord shall give me ability, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God—that he whom my soul loveth is the great and eternal God; and yet truly and properly man. *God and man in union*; by virtue of which wonderful, and mysterious *union*, the two natures constitute one glorious Person, IMMANUEL, *God—with—us!*

It is, therefore, my design, principally to treat of the adorable and wonderful Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, looking to the Lord for divine assistance, I take upon me to prove,

I. That he is the very and eternal God.

II. That he is very man.

III. The union of the two natures, constituting but one person.

It may not be improper to give a few words of advice, before I enter upon the momentous subject. A subject inexpressibly momentous! for if we err in this, we err in every thing; if we are right here—if we have a true spiritual knowledge of this—we are right in every thing: having a steady, immovable foundation for our hope; the rock Christ, the God of our salvation!

It has been my prayer, repeatedly, ever since this subject has so particularly demanded my attention, that I may speak nothing but what is perfectly consistent with the pure word of God. And are there any here that dare fly in the face of God, by contradicting his word? No; I trust I have, upon this occasion, the pleasure of speaking to those, who are divinely taught to renounce all carnal reason so far as it opposes the mysteries of the gospel; for though gospel mysteries are, upon no consideration, *inconsistent* with human reason, they soar so immeasurably high, and shine so transcendently bright, that *blind*, limited reason cannot comprehend them! They are a great and unfathomable deep, where all human thoughts, of the greatest magnitude, are lost in wonder and



astonishment; and, because, dazzled with their divine brightness, *Deists* have had the consummate audacity to affirm, that it is not of divine authenticity! That, instead of *divine light*, it is the darkness of superstition, priestcraft, and delusion!—Thus, by preferring *carnal reason* to the Scriptures, they evidently call “*darkness light, and light darkness!*”

But we, my brethren, through the free, distinguishing grace of Christ, are better taught.—Nevertheless, you know as well as I do, what sinful creatures we are! How prone to err!—Indeed, I am convinced from my own feelings, that we are liable, implicitly, to imbibe the sentiments of men who stand high in our esteem, without ever inquiring into their nature and consequence. But, my brethren, shall we follow man any further than he follows Christ? God forbid! “Be ye followers of me,” saith the great apostle, “even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians xi. 1.) Believe no man, any farther than he speaks according to the Scriptures of truth. Though his sentiments may meet your ideas, examine, are your ideas founded upon, *thus saith the Lord*. I hope it will be your conduct, while this most precious subject claims your attention. O for an eye singly fixed upon Christ, that our whole bodies may be full of light! Looking unto Jesus for wisdom and direction, I shall endeavour, as I have proposed, to prove,

## I. That Jesus Christ is the very and eternal God.

This being admitted, you cannot expect me to give any adequate definition of his divine essence: for who can discover *what God* is? Had I the sagacity and penetration of Gabriel, the archangel, I could not define God. Who can comprehend the eternity, immensity, and infinity of Deity? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? Can *finite* creatures comprehend the infinite Creator? Impossible!

“ Reason may grasp the massy hills,  
And stretch from pole to pole,  
But half *his* name our spirit fills,  
And overloads our soul.”

But, though the eternal God is altogether unsearchable, it is with all possible confidence, that I now come forward to proclaim Jesus Christ, that very, true, eternal, and unsearchable God!

Were I not sure that Christ is God, I dare not trust my naked soul in his hands, for salvation. If he is not the omnipotent, he cannot save sinners from Divine wrath, and everlasting ruin. If he is not very God, as well as very man, I do not hesitate to affirm, that there is no more efficacy in his blood, than in the blood of *bulls* or of *goats*!

To proceed then, I observe,

1. That there is but one true and eternal God. "For though there be, that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) to us there is but one God" (1 Corinthians viii. 5.) whom we can address now in the language of Isaiah (xxvi. 13.) "O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." We have gone a whoring after other gods, but now, by the quickening influence of the Spirit of God, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, are made nigh to the only true God—and are taught to believe in him, love him, and enjoy sweet communion with him; to obey him with an heart-felt delight, and, with unfeigned ardour of soul, to ascribe unto him, all worship, praise, and adoration.

2. Though there is but one true and unsearchable God, the Scripture fully testifies, that there are three distinct *persons* in the Godhead. Not three distinct *essences*: but three distinct *persons*, in one eternal and indivisible essence. (1 John v. 7.) "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

That they are distinct persons is evident:

*First*, from their distinct names. In adminis-

tering the ordinance of baptism, Jesus commands his ministers to baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

*Secondly*, from their distinct manifestations. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." (Galatians iv. 4.) Here is, the *Father sending*, the *Son sent*, and we read (John xv. 26.) that the Comforter *proceedeth* from the *Father* and testifies of Christ.

*Thirdly*, Their different and distinct operations prove them to be distinct persons. The infallible word of God speaks of the Father *electing*, the Son *redeeming*, and the Spirit *regenerating*, and *sanctifying*, his people, (1 Peter i. 2.)

Thus, there are evidently three distinct persons in the Godhead, yet but one essence. I do not pretend to say *how* it is, for the mystery is incomprehensible. I repeat it from that deep conviction I feel, both of the importance and sublimity of the subject, that though it is an undeniable (because a scriptural) fact, that there are three distinct, and equal persons, in one undivided essence, it is impossible to comprehend, or describe *how* it is. Nevertheless though undescribable, and incomprehensible, it is a glorious truth, clearly stated, and defended, by the inspired penmen, in the precious Bible. And shall we presume to deny scriptural testimony, because the sublime mystery lies beyond the reach of our shallow com-

prehension? No, let us rather take the mysteries of the Gospel, as a striking proof, that the Bible is of *heavenly* origin, of Divine authority! For as an *earthly* minded man cannot comprehend heavenly things, which are, evidently, the professed contents of the glorious Bible, it follows, unavoidably, that a man, unrenewed in the spirit of his mind, cannot receive, and believe it, as the Word of God. The Lord himself must teach the divinity of the Bible!

3. These Three are One. *First*, in nature and essence; the Son being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, (Hebrews i. 3.) who, though in amazing love, and condescension, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, to deliver us from the ruins of sin; yet, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. And as the Spirit proceedeth from the Father, reveals and testifies of Christ, and re-creates the soul of a sinner in the very *image* of God, (Ephesians ii. 10. and iv. 24.) he must, undeniably, be of *one* and the same essence with the Father, and the Son. *Secondly*, they are one in will and power; "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth whom he will, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;" and again, "It is the

Spirit that quickeneth.” Here, they are evidently one, and the same, in *will* and *power*, in quickening a dead sinner, who is dead in trespasses and sins. *Thirdly*, one in receiving homage, and worship from his people. (John v. 23.) “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” *Fourthly*, one in blessing his people; which we learn from the benediction pronounced by the apostle Paul, upon the church at Corinth: and which is everlastingly the blessing of all the dear Israel of God. (2 Corinthians xiii. 14.) “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Where the grace of Christ is, there is the love of the Father; and where these are, there is the communion of the Holy Ghost. This most necessary, desirable, and incalculable blessing of the Triune God, was, in the everlasting covenant, prepared for, and shall, in due time, be discovered to, and conferred upon, all those *ransomed* by the blood of the Lamb, as their everlasting portion!

I shall now attend particularly to the divinity of Christ; and the Scriptures positively assure us, that he was truly and properly God, from everlasting. (John i. 1.) In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.—All things were made by him—And *Jeremiah* saith, “The portion of Jacob is the *for-*

*mer* of all things—the Lord of Hosts is his name.” (Jeremiah x. 16.) And who is the portion of Jacob, but a precious Christ? Therefore, if scriptural language is allowed to have any real meaning, Christ must, beyond all possible hesitation, be the eternal God. Not pre-existing in *human form*, or *shape*, as some have asserted. His being *one* in *nature* and *essence* with the *Father*, positively contradicts it, and powerfully evinces the fallacy of such an idea. An idea, altogether derogatory to the glory and dignity of Christ, as the true God. What! the great Eternal, the Creator of all things, existed in the *form* of *man* from everlasting! Shall we presume to describe the *form*, or *shape* of him, by whom all things were created, and who fills boundless space with his person and presence? Was boundless space filled with the *form* of a man! Mortals forbear to entertain such sentiments of the great UNSEARCHABLE! “All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye LIKEN God? or what LIKENESS will ye compare unto him.” (Isaiah xl. 17, 18.)

I have already proved, by scriptural evidence, that Christ is of *one essence* with the *Father*; and I repeat it, with a feeling concern, and zeal, for the glory of Christ, the Lord of Hosts, that it is awfully derogatory to his glory and dignity, as the eternal God, to say, that he pre-existed in *human form*!

But farther, in proof of his Deity, let us enquire what the blessed Jesus saith of himself; for surely his own language, is, upon all occasions, with us, truly decisive: I am persuaded better things of you, my Brethren, than once to suppose, that I am now preaching to an assembly of professed *Deists* and *Sceptics*! Though Christ was, in the days of his humiliation, and is at the present day, blasphemously accused with imposture and deception; with us it is beyond a doubt, that he was the true Messiah, and spake the words of truth. And now attend to his own language, and you will hear him claiming equality with the Father. (John x. 30.) I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE. The Jews very rightly understood by this assertion, that, though he was very man, yet he *made himself God*; for which they were about to stone him. Observe, here, that he speaks particularly of his Divine nature; which, being in union with his humanity, as GOD and MAN in one person, he claims our worship and adoration. Some have asserted that his divinity is nothing more than a *Divine soul*, that he had not a human soul distinct from his divinity, but that his soul is his divinity, and his body his humanity. Nothing can be more antisciptural than this notion of the person of Christ. It robs my dear *Immanuel* of his essential glory, as the true God, over all, blessed for ever! His divinity must be far superior to a *Divine soul*! What! the *Divine* essence a SOUL! infinite Deity, nothing more than a soul!



A *divine soul*, that pre-existed? Sure I am, that he is infinitely greater, or he cannot be the eternal God who fills boundless space! For God is not  $\psi\chi\eta$  a *soul*! (Matthew xxvi. 38.) but (John iv 24.) Πνεῦμα ο Θεός—*God is a Spirit*! An infinitely perfect Spirit, possessed of unsearchable perfections: eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent, alwise, and almighty. If Christ's divinity is no more than a *Divine soul*, it must be something inferior to, and *derived* from Deity. But Jesus is the mighty God himself: (Colossians ii. 9.) "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Not a *Divine soul derived* from God—away with the word *derivation* in this connection—his divinity is not *derived* from, but *is* the eternal God himself; and his soul, mentioned in Matthew xxvi. 38. with his *human body*, constituted him properly man—*made in all things like unto his brethren*—of which I shall speak more fully, under that proposed head of discourse.

To go on, then, in defence of his divinity, it is further proveable from the sweet harmony between the *Old* and *New Testament* writers, upon the subject. *Isaiah*, prophetically exulting in the birth of Christ, saith, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, (or the Father of Eternity,) the Prince of Peace." (Isaiah ix. 6.) And *Jude*,

with all his immortal powers expanded with love to the Holy Jesus, unites with the enraptured prophet, in celebrating the praises of the dear Immanuel, and thus expresses his love and adoration. "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever." (Jude ii. 5.) The divinity of Christ was the joy and strength of *David's* heart, in whom he thus triumphs: For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?—The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock: and let the God of my salvation be exalted." (Psalm xviii. 31—46.) And the only true God, who was David's rock, and the God of his salvation, I can prove, from *New Testament* language, to be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ: for he saith of himself, "On this *Rock* I will build my church." And Paul saith, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." The *Psalmist* calls this *Rock*, the God of his salvation: And who is the God of salvation but the Lord Jesus Christ? The apostles were bold to say, "Neither is their salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) This is so indubitably clear, that surely nothing more need to be added, to prove the ETERNAL DIVINITY of the Saviour of sinners: Nevertheless, if possible, more completely to stop the mouths of all gainsayers, and to triumph yet more gloriously, with all confidence in the Redeemer, as the ETERNAL GOD; it is the joy and

boast of my soul, that I can prove, from plain scriptural assertions, that he possesses all the *attributes* of Deity! He is declared to be the Son of God with power. (Romans i. 4.) What power? All power, *omnipotent* power: (Matthew xxviii. 18.) “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *all power* is given unto me in *heaven and in earth.*” O unsearchable mystery! While in the manger, a new born infant; the myriads of the flaming seraphim above, with all worlds, and all creatures in all worlds, were then upheld by his invisible and unlimited power! Well might he challenge the Jews: saying, “Destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days;” this he spake as the *omnipotent* God, of the temple of his body: for we know his body was raised from the dead, by the power of God—it is by the apostle, in Ephesians i. 17—20, attributed to the power of the *Father*, because Christ is *one in essence* with the Father. He is also declared to be *omniscient*. (John ii. 24, 25.) “But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.” And who can know all men, and what is within them, but God? He claims it as his prerogative alone.—“I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.” (Jeremiah xvii. 10.)

I come now to prove that the Eternal Son of God became the Son of Man. In infinite condescension he took upon him our nature, sin

excepted,—veiled his divinity in humanity, and was made in *all things like unto his brethren*. And I feel myself happy, that I can, positively, prove him to be, as truly, and properly man, as he *is* truly, and properly God. Not merely from a few far-fetched arguments, which require the aid of sophistry to make them appear plausible; but upon the solid ground of Scripture. And my happiness, in being able to prove this, does not arise, particularly, from the gratification of refuting those who have opposed this comfortable truth: No, it flows from a higher, and nobler source;—from a consolatory view of my own soul's salvation, by the dear Immanuel. For if he is not very Man, as well as very God, he cannot save poor lost *man*.—Take away the humanity of Christ, and my eternal all is at stake; equally as much so, as if divested of his divinity. But, for ever adored be that dear, and lovely name, he is IMMANUEL! O soul-ravishing word! *God-with-us!* O *wonderful* condescension! *wonderful* union! His name is called WONDERFUL, and well it may: for, O what wonders meet in his adorable Person! I see him made a little lower than the angels!—In my nature, that he might become my surety—made *under the law*, that he might redeem them that were under the law. This powerfully argues the necessity of his being very Man—For the *soul* that sinneth shall die; he must therefore have *soul* and *body*, like unto his brethren, and thus be made *under the law*, that he might, as the mighty God, the great high Priest of his people,

offer, upon the altar of his divinity, *soul* for *soul*, *body* for *body* : an infinite satisfaction to Divine justice ; as it was offered by an infinite God ; and, as the divinity and humanity constitute but *one Person*, the latter, alone by virtue of this union, is exalted to an equality with the former : hence his blood is, with the strictest propriety, called the *Blood of God*, by which his people are everlastingly redeemed ! (Acts xx. 28.)

Keep in view this wonderful *union* of the two natures, and the consequent exaltation of the *human* nature to an equality with the *Divine*, while I am proving the real humanity of the blessed JESUS. And that he was truly and properly man, appears undeniably plain,

*First*, from his being made *flesh*. In Timothy iii. 16. the apostle, lost in contemplation, and overcome with amazement, breaks out in this emphatic, and expressive language, “ *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh.* ” Now, if his *soul* was his divinity, and his *body* his humanity, the subject is comprehensible and plain, and the mystery ceases. But he must have more than a *mere body* to be man, and more than a *soul* to be the INFINITE GOD. For observe here, not a “ *Divine soul*,” a *something* that pre-existed with God in *human shape*, but GOD, the GREAT GOD *himself*, was manifest in the *flesh*. A mystery this, so sublime and inexplicable, that it will not admit

of any controversy. "All that we can comprehend of it, is, that he was *truly God*, veiled in human flesh." The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. (John i. 14.) It is with a solemn, and heart-felt reverence that I now treat this subject. My dear hearers! I dare not presume to define God! Or to say what the ETERNAL ESSENCE is! I dare not presume to say that the ALL-SEEING GOD, before whom my soul now stands with trembling, yet affectionate awe, is nothing more than a "*Divine soul*." He has not given me such an authority in his word: but I am hereby authorized to declare him, though the eternal God, yet *very Man—made FLESH*. And this word *flesh* implies more than a *human body*. It implies man, *perfectly* man, the *whole* of man, both *soul* and *body*: and this I can make undeniably evident, by other passages of Scripture, where the same word occurs, and where it cannot, consistent with good sense, imply any thing less than *perfectly* man, both *soul* and *body*. In Matthew xxiv. 22. The Lord saith, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no *flesh* be saved." And, now, I would ask, when God saves sinners, does he save only the *body*? Are not the *souls* of his people saved as well as their *bodies*? Surely they are. Again, in John xvii. 2. What does the blessed Jesus intend by the word *flesh*? "As thou hast given him power over all *flesh*."—Dare you to say that he does not intend *all men*? No, you *dare not*—consistent with good sense you *cannot*—for the word *flesh* here,

incontestibly, means *man*, the *whole* of man, both *soul* and *body*.

Hence, you find it will not do to argue, that the word *flesh* means only the *body*; the passages I have already quoted clearly prove the contrary. But, if it is *possible* to make it still more evident, that *flesh* in the Scriptures, very frequently implies both *soul* and *body*, I can refer you to a Scripture that will do it; which you will find written in Genesis vi. 12. "God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon the earth." And now, Christians, I appeal to your own experience; what are corrupted? your *bodies* only? Alas! painful experience daily convinces you, that your very *souls* are impregnated with every thing that can be called *corrupt* and *abominable*. (Matthew xv. 19.) But blessed be the Lord! Though our souls are corrupt, the soul of Christ, which, THROUGH THE ETERNAL SPIRIT, he made an offering for sin, was without *spot* or *blemish*. Heb. ix. 14. compared with Isaiah liii. 10. will plainly demonstrate, that the soul of Christ was a *human soul*, like unto the *souls* of his brethren, except sin. For observe, it was not the *Eternal Spirit* that was *offered*, but *through* the Eternal Spirit, he offered *himself*, or made his *soul* an offering for sin. And as it was the *Eternal Spirit*, or the ETERNAL GOD, that *made* the offering, it is ETERNALLY efficacious, and meritorious; and most gloriously gives infinite satisfaction to infinite justice!

Therefore, upon this ground, it is established as an undeniable fact, that Christ is *very Man*, and very God in *one Person*.

He took upon him a *body* perfectly human, like unto his brethren. (Hebrews x. 5.) Speaking, in his mediatorial character, to the Father, he refers to the ancient settlement of Divine love, in the everlasting covenant, and saith, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a *body* hast thou prepared me." Some, probably, may be ready to exclaim, "We believe he had a human body, of which he plainly speaks in this passage; but he does not so much as intimate, that he has a human soul: he expressly speaks of his body, and nothing else."—It is very clear to me, that by the term *body*, we are here to understand the whole of human nature: but admitting that it implies *only* his *body*, distinct from the soul; does it argue that he is destitute of a soul? shall we say that he has no soul, because he does not expressly mention it in this one particular passage? We might as well argue, that he has no human *body*, because, in some other passages, he mentions *only* his *soul*. Or, that he has no humanity, because he frequently speaks *only* of his divinity.

This noble sentence, *a body hast thou prepared me*, is beautifully expressive of his infinite condescension, in dwelling in human flesh: the word was made flesh and dwelt, or *tabernacled*, among us. Compare this with our text, and you can-



not be so inconsistent as to deny that he had a *soul*, a real *human soul*, as well as body. **A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME!** What does it mean? The text informs you: *In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren.* And have not his brethren *human* souls, as well as bodies? Is not the soul one grand, and essential constituent of our nature, whereby we are distinguished from the brute creation? And whose nature did the Lord of glory take upon him? "Not the nature of angels" but of his *brethren*; and as his brethren, all, indiscriminately, possess *human* souls, he must, upon necessity, have a *human soul*!

3. That he might be in all things like unto his brethren, he took upon him *flesh* and *blood*, which are essential constituents of human nature. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself, likewise, took part of the same." And this blood, in itself considered, separate from his Divine nature, was properly *human*; but in union with it, is, virtually, the *blood of God*! Here we see the necessity of the two natures, constituting *one person*: because it is only by such an amazing union, that his blood can be really the blood of God. For God, in himself, cannot bleed, and suffer. Omnipotence can never *bend* and *groan* beneath a heavy load; neither can the Divine *essence* bleed. God is a Spirit, and a spirit hath no blood to shed, no body to be

martyred. As the blessed Jesus himself declared, immediately after his resurrection: proving his real humanity, (Luke xxiv. 39.) “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a *spirit* hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” And, what alone renders his blood so efficacious, in atoning for sin, is, the *union* of the two natures: for though in its own nature, simply considered, it is *human* blood, yet, the union of the *Divine* nature with the *human*, renders it as truly, and properly, the blood of God, as if Deity itself had bled and suffered! for as the human nature is *one* with the Divine, it must be exalted to an equality with it; therefore, as Mr. BERRIDGE, observes:

“Blood of the *human* friend,  
The blood of God is nam’d.”

And as a greater than he, to whom he has reference, “God—hath purchased the church with his own blood.” (Acts xx. 28.) What strong consolation this, to those who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before them! Have *human souls* offended? the sacrifice is offered in *human nature*! Is it an *infinite* offence, and does it require infinite satisfaction? The sacrifice is offered up by the *infinite* God!

4. To be made like unto his brethren, he passed the angelic nature by, and took upon him the *seed* of Abraham. Angels had fallen, but no salvation was provided, wrought out, and accom-

plished for them! He passed them by, while *man*, more rebellious than they, (O amazing free and distinguishing grace) became the object of that great salvation, which he so fully accomplished by his agonizing death! For the accomplishment of which, he assumes *our* nature. The angelic nature would not have been sufficient; no adequate compensation could, therein, have been made for crimes perpetrated by *men*. The very nature of the delinquents must be assumed, to make a perfect atonement for their sins. *Man* had offended, and of man satisfaction was required—an *infinite* satisfaction, therefore the *infinite* God became *man*, that, in the very nature of the *offenders*, he might give a plenary, and infinite satisfaction to *offended* justice. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him *the seed of Abraham—the seed of David*, (Hebrews ii. 16. Romans i. 3.)

And if Abraham's *seed*, a *human soul* he must have; or he could not be properly his *seed*. For who are, or what is, the seed of Abraham, and of David? The word Σπέρματός, translated *seed*, signifies, an offspring of the same *nature*, *breed*, and *quality*. So that Christ, as man, was of the *natural seed* of Abraham; and yet, by a miraculous conception in the virgin's womb, was without *spot* or *blemish*!

Now, as the ETERNAL WORD took upon him the seed of Abraham; it must be reduced to an

incontestable truth, with those who will allow words their evident signification, that he must, in consequence, take upon him a *human soul* and *body*; for destitute of either, he could not be *man*; as these are the two grand and necessary constituents of manhood: and if not *man*, he could not be of the seed of Abraham; for who are the seed of Abraham but men? In Romans iv. 16. we read of the promise being sure to all the *seed*: the spiritual seed of Abraham—the children of the promise—possessed of precious *souls*: and these are the brethren of Christ, that he was made *like unto, in all things*. Like *them* he was of Abraham's *seed*, like *them* he was truly man, and like *them* he had a *soul*, and *body*, which constituted his *human nature*.

When *Eve* bore *Seth*, she called him her *SEED*: “God,” said she, “hath appointed me another *seed* instead of *Abel*, whom *Cain* slew, (Genesis iv. 25.) and, had not *Seth* a *human soul*? Paul declared himself of the *seed* of *Abraham*, (Romans xi. 1.) and had not Paul a *human soul*? Then, as it is demonstrated, by indubitable evidence, that Christ is of the *seed* of *Abraham*, shall we be so absurd as to say that he had no *human soul*? If Paul had a *human soul*, so had Christ, for they were both of the same seed, race, and posterity. What wonders meet in his person—Abraham's *seed*, yet Abraham's God! The God of David, yet David's offspring!

That righteous branch, that fruitful bough,  
Is David's *root*, and *offspring* too.      *WALTS.*

A paradox this, inexplicable to all, except those who have a view of Christ as GOD and MAN, in *one* Person, and such only can rightly understand, and resolve the question, put by the blessed Jesus, to the gain-saying Jews; "If David, then, called him LORD, how is he his son?" (Matthew xxii. 45.)

Is it necessary to say any thing more in defence of Christ's REAL humanity? Shall I proceed any farther in the investigation of a subject, upon which the word of God is so clearly decisive? Infallible evidence has already been deduced from the Sacred Pages, upon which ground I glory in proclaiming the blessed Jesus, VERY MAN; which none can possibly refute, without giving God's word the lie! Nevertheless, effectually to stop the mouth of every gain-sayer, and to triumph without fear, or controul, in him, who was "made in ALL THINGS like unto his brethren," I proceed,

To produce plain scriptural assertions, that positively declare Christ to have a human soul. Read in Isaiah liii. 10, 11. Matthew xxvi. 38. John xii. 27. The prophet saith, "When thou shalt make his SOUL an offering for sin, he shall see his seed—he shall see of the travail of his SOUL, and shall be satisfied;" and Jesus, when his *soul* was

in travail, bitterly exclaimed, "My SOUL is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Probably some may reply, "It was a DIVINE soul." I would only ask such persons, where they find such an extraordinary term? Not in the Word of God, I am positive; no such a term ever occur in that blessed book. *Divine soul!* Unmeaning term! Equally as *unmeaning*, as it is *unscriptural*. Doth Isaiah say his DIVINE soul? Does Christ say my DIVINE soul? No, the word *soul*, is used by both, without any epithet. To understand it aright then, we have only to ask the meaning of the word SOUL. Which, by consulting the Scripture, we shall find invariably implies a *part of MAN*; the *nobler part of man*; his *deathless part*. And, as the word has one universal implication, it wants not the explanatory assistance of any epithet whatever. It is self-explanatory, because generally used in the Scriptures, as having one certain, determinate signification—a *part of man*;—and when we read of Christ's SOUL, to allow the word its real import, we understand by it, the *nobler part of his humanity*, without which, he could not be truly MAN.

6. In the days of his humiliation, he displayed all the faculties of a *human soul*.

*First, Understanding:* In which we are told he increased. And as the Eternal God, who is infinite in wisdom, he could not increase in that

faculty: it follows, then, unavoidably, that he had *human* understanding, in which, as man he increased; therefore must have a *human* soul.

*Secondly*, He had a human *will*, which he speaks of, as distinct from the Divine will: (Luke xxii. 42.) *Not my will but thine be done*. If he had not possessed a human will, what could he intend, by saying, "NOT MY WILL?" As the eternal God, of one essence with the Father, his *will* shall be done on earth, as it is in heaven. But here he speaks of a will, in subordination to the will of heaven; and must be a *human* will, which, though not contrary to, is clearly distinguished from the will of God.

*Thirdly*, He possessed *human* affections, and, as a *man*, loved *Martha*, and her sister, and *Lazarus*; (John xi. 5.) and in the 35th, 36th, and 38th verses of the same chapter, he discovers the most prominent marks of love, and concern for Lazarus, as a man. When coming to the grave, Jesus wept:—he groaned in Spirit, and was troubled; the strongest indications these, of *human* affection; which he discovered to such an affecting degree, that the Jews, touched with the melting scene, were constrained to cry, "*Behold how he loved him!*" Moreover we read of "that disciple whom Jesus loved." What does it mean? As the great God, did he love him superior to his other disciples? Or to any one of his dear people? Impossible. Christ, as God-man Mediator,

loves me as well as he does Paul. He loves you, who have the root of the matter in you, as well as he does *Paul*, or *Peter*, or *John*, or any other of his dear people; for they are all loved with the same love. The love, then, that he, in a peculiar manner, displayed to that beloved disciple, could be, in that sense, no more than *human* love, which is another proof of his having a *human* soul.

*Fourthly*, As *man*, with his whole soul, he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared. And his, certainly, were not hypocritical prayers—he prayed with his *whole heart*, which like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels. (Psalm xxii. 14.)

*Fifthly*, He felt pity and compassion as a man. When he saw Jerusalem in such a degenerated and destructive condition, *He wept over it!* With tears trickling down from his eyes of pity, he poured out this bitter lamentation; “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.” As a *prophet* he would have gathered that nation together, but they stoned him, as they had done all the prophets sent unto them. Having the compassionate feelings of a man, he wept



over them. Like Jeremiah, when he cried, Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people! (Jeremiah ix. 1.) As a prophet, Jeremiah wept over Jerusalem—and as a *prophet*, sent, first, unto the Jews, Jesus wept over them. The *tears*, not of Christ, as *God*, but as *truly* man.

*Sixthly*, When his *soul* was sunk in sorrow even unto death, “there appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening him.” (Luke xxii. 43.) His *soul*, then, could not be his *divinity*. His *divinity* is the *everlasting* God, and, “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard? that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, *fainteth* not, neither is *weary*?” But the *soul* of Christ was *strengthened* by the angel, and, therefore, must be properly *human*.

*Finally*, Being made in *all things* like unto his brethren, he was in *all points*, tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews iv. 15.) His *Soul* was exercised with every kind of temptation: but as God he could not be tempted. (James i. 13.) *God cannot be tempted with evil*. And as God cannot be tempted, could the soul of Christ be all the divinity he had—which was tempted in *all points*? Impossible!

But being properly man, in *soul*, as well as body, exercised with the same trials and tempta-

tions, he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and knoweth how to succour those that are tempted!

By way of conclusion, I shall just take notice of the myterious union of the two natures, as was proposed; but need not to enlarge upon it, having frequently defended that most glorious part of my subject, as occasion offered, under the two foregoing heads of discourse: Therefore I shall only observe farther, that Christ's soul being *human* could not render the sacrifice the less efficacious: because his divinity and humanity are allied in ONE PERSON, and the *manhood*, thereby exalted to an equality with the *God-head*; not in *nature*, but in *glory*: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily! Glorious and ever blessed *union*! Though Jesus Christ is truly *man's fellow*, (Psalm xxxv. 7.) yet by this union he is the *Man*, *God's fellow*! (Zechariah xiii. 7.) Observe, here, the *Man* is God's fellow, the *Manhood* is equal with the *God-head*; which can be in no other way, than by an inseparable *union* between them. And thus it is, that the Lord hath *exalted one chosen out of the people*. (Psalm lxxxix. 19.) The precious Jesus; *God* and *man*; God in our nature; who is *exalted* far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come! To whom be ascribed, with the *Father*, and the *Spirit*, the ONE TRUE, and UNSEARCHABLE GOD, all praise, worship, and adoration, for ever and ever! Amen.