

CHAP. IV.

On the state, which the Believer is in: and what his experience and enjoyments are.

IT requires much divine light and unction from the Spirit of God to treat of his divine and sacred energy, influence, and operations within and upon the souls of the regenerate. In all attempts on a subject of such vast and eternal importance great attention ought to be given to what is revealed concerning his work in the written word. For though the Holy Ghost works like himself, as an Almighty agent, yet he works always agreeably to the written word. To talk of his workings and operations without the word is wholly enthusiastic. And to talk of the *word*, without his own life-giving energy accompanying it to our hearts, is to neglect him who only can make it unto us *spirit and life*. We can never fully conceive the infinite delight which the Father hath in his Son, as Mediator, and in his finished work. The everlasting acceptance, which Christ's person, righteousness, and sacrifice have found with Jehovah the Father, exceeds our utmost conception. In consequence of which our Je-

sus appears on his mediatorial throne, as *the lamb newly slain*, with his heart burning with love to his redeemed. He remembers them with everlasting kindness. He looks on them with inexpressible complacency, rejoicing in them and over them to do them good. As enthroned in glory, *made most blessed for ever*, being rendered *exceeding glad with the light of his Father's countenance*, and *invested with all power in Heaven and in earth*, he sends down his Holy Spirit to bring home *his banished ones*, whose work and office in the souls of the regenerate are wholly of grace,—the fruit and effect of the everlasting covenant. The Holy Ghost works within and upon them as *the travail of Christ's soul*. He views them as the objects of the Father's everlasting love, and out of his own free and sovereign love towards them, he works most freely and effectually within them. Like as the Father gave the greatest evidence of his everlasting love to the elect by the gift of his Son, to live and to die for them, when they were sinners, enemies, and ungodly; hence Paul saith, "God commendeth his love to-
 "wards us, in that while we were yet
 "sinners Christ died for us^a:" and as Christ manifested his love, when we

^a Rom. v. 8.

were in our sins and in our blood; for he loved us and gave himself for us, and was made sin and a curse for us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; so the Holy Spirit, whose love is fixed on the persons of his people, and who loves them as the elect of God and the members of Christ's mystic body with the same everlasting love, with which the Father and the Son do, is also on his part pleased to give such a demonstration of it, when they are dead in trespasses and sins, as proves it to be wholly of *grace*. His whole work within them and on them is but the fruit and effect of his love. God's election is an election of *persons*. Christ died for *persons*. The Holy Ghost works on *persons*. And his work is eternal and will last for ever. His work, when truly, scripturally, and properly explained, is strictly pure gospel. It consists in bringing the elect into the state of knowing the Lord, in furnishing them by his new-creation within them with those spiritual and supernatural faculties, which capacitate them for the enjoyment of the Father's love, and for communion with Christ in all the benefits and blessings of his salvation, and in leading them off entirely from every hope, but *in the Lord alone*. The foundation of which is laid in Jesus.

Of whom the believer says, “ He is the “ rock, his work is perfect^b.” The work of the Holy Ghost in the souls of the regenerate is great and glorious,—worthy of himself. It is perfect, and truly divine. As the spirit of the living God, he enters into the souls of his people, quickens them, and makes them alive to God: thus saith the *apostle*, “ You hath he quickened^c.” And having quickened them, he lives, dwells, and will abide in them for ever. He is a witness to us for JESUS^d, sets his seal to the eternal value, everlasting perfection, virtue, and efficacy of his obedience and sacrifice, and testifies that all the sins of the elect are freely and fully forgiven by the Father in consequence thereof. “ The blood of Jesus Christ “ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

He shews how Christ’s obedience unto death is the everlasting righteousness of his church,—that his people are complete in him,—that he works effectually on them in consequence of it, and forms them in regeneration for Jehovah’s praise. At which time they are born of God,—born the sons of God,—born heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,—interested in, and effectually introduced into the kingdom of grace, which cannot be moved. As the new-born,

^b Deut. xxxii. 4.^c Eph. ii. 1.^d Heb. x. 15.

they are brought into a state of grace openly and manifestatively. In their new birth also they are furnished with all those spiritual faculties, perceptions, senses, and affections, which qualify them for those spiritual enjoyments which belong to this state. The Holy Ghost is pleased to enlarge those faculties. He shines upon, quickens, and draws forth the senses and affections of the *inner man*, and exercises them on Christ and God in him. The state, into which the child of God is brought by regeneration and conversion, is a state of perfect acceptance with God, perfect justification before God, and of free and full pardon of all sin. God's eternal purposes of grace towards his people now begin to take place actually in them. Hence the apostle says, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." The believer hath a new understanding given him in regeneration to know the Lord his God. He hath spiritual ears to hear the voice of God in his word speaking unto him and saying, "I AM THE LORD THY GOD." He hath spiritual eyes, the eyes of his

understanding, which are opened by the Holy Spirit, that he may have a spiritual sight and perception of Jesus, the Son of God, as made by the Father unto him^f “Wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” He hath spiritual hands to handle the word of life,—a spiritual appetite to feed on the bread of life,—a thirst for Christ the water of life, and feet to walk in Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. In brief, the believer is exactly suited by the work of the Holy Ghost within him to take in Christ, and to enjoy fellowship with Jesus, who is all-sufficient to fill every faculty of the new-born soul, and to give and continue perfect joy and satisfaction to every one of the spiritual senses thereof.

One of the greatest blessings, and which includes all others which the Lord God bestows on his people, is contained in these declarations of his, “I will be thy God,” “I am the Lord thy God,” “I am thine:” which contain the utmost expressions of grace, that can be revealed on earth or made known in Heaven, where the Lord will be our everlasting light, and our God our glory.—God is the God of his people, and as such he hath bestowed himself in all his persons; and he exercises all his perfec-

^f 1 Cor. i. 30.

tions on their behalf. His love is the fountain and spring of all their happiness in time and eternity. His mercy, which is but the exercise of his love to them in their fallen state, and as perfectly corrupted in their fallen nature, encompasses them as with a shield. His compassions are expressed towards them every moment. His eye is continually upon them. His ear is open to their cry: and that greatest of all promises, which contains in it all others, he fulfils in them, "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God^h." The prophet Isaiah gives us a beautiful account of the divine procedure, and how the Lord acts with his regenerate ones. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," which Jehovah himself thus explains, saying, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." The effect follows, "And they (*under the outpouring of the Holy Ghost*) shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water coursesⁱ." The Holy Ghost, by putting forth his life-giving power through the word in their souls, by opening their renewed minds to receive the true know-

^h Jer. xxiv. 7.ⁱ Isaiah xliv. 3, 4.

ledge of God in Christ from the word, and by anointing them with his own unctuous influences, constrains them to acknowledge the Lord to be their God. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel^k." Thus God is pleased to acknowledge his people, to call them by name, to bring them near himself, to induce them to acknowledge him, and call him the God of their salvation. Thus he is pleased to speak unto them by the prophet, "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God^l." And speaking of them and his grace, which should take place in them^m, he says, "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." And to shew how much

^k Isaiah xliv. 5.^l Jer. xxx. 22.^m Chap. xxxii. 38, 39, 40.

his heart was in all this, he addsⁿ, “ Yea, I will rejoice over them to do “ them good—with my whole heart and “ with my whole soul.” Now, it is one great part of the Holy Spirit’s work and office in the souls of the regenerate to open and explain the scriptures to their understanding, to open their understanding to know the gospel as contained in them, so as to make them the foundation of their faith, and the experience of their hearts, and by this mean to bring them to a saving scriptural knowledge of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, which knowledge contains eternal life. So saith our blessed Lord, “ This is life eternal, that they “ might know thee the only true God “ and Jesus Christ whom thou hast “ sent^o.” And this knowledge is entirely received from the word through the divine teachings of the Lord the Spirit. It is a point of vast moment in experience to know, that what is revealed in the written word belongs to us, that God speaks to us in it, that he makes known to us his everlasting love by it, and that what he speaks to *one* belongs to *all* his saints. He said to his great favourite Moses, “ Thou hast found grace in my “ sight, and I know thee by name^p.”

ⁿ verse 41.^o John xvii. 3.^p Exod. xxxiii. 17.

It is equally true of all his people, that they have found grace in his sight; and it proves to a demonstration that he knows them by name, when in the day of his power he brings them to an effectual knowledge of *themselves* and of *himself* as the Lord their God. As the Lord's people are the high favourites of his grace, so he delights to acknowledge them to be his peculiar ones. He says of them, "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise." He opens his whole soul unto them, "Thou wast precious in my sight, and I have loved thee." Which expressions the Holy Ghost fills with divine energy, sets home upon the mind, and through them conveys such ideas of the Father's love as fill the believer with unutterable joy. All the communion, which saints have with the Father and the Son, is carried on by this mean, which brings them most highly to prize and esteem the sacred word of inspiration. In it they read that "*God is love.*" By mixing faith with the revealed account of it, they have the actual experience and enjoyment of it in their souls. By which means they become witnesses for God; setting their seal to the truth of what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken. They see Christ in the word, have a spiritual perception

of him from it, believe in him by it, rest on him from the warrant they have for so doing in it, and have an inward knowledge of what he saith, “ Verily, “ verily, I say unto you, he that heareth “ my word and believeth on him that “ sent me hath everlasting life, and shall “ not come into condemnation, but is “ passed from death unto life^q.” They have a spiritual knowledge of Christ in their renewed understanding: “ We “ know that the Son of God is come, “ and hath given us an understanding “ that we may know him that is true, “ and we are in him that is true, even “ in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the “ true God and eternal life^r.” And what they know of Christ in their understanding they believe concerning him in their hearts; “ With the heart man believeth unto righteousness^s.” And by believing Christ dwells in their hearts. Hence the apostle prays, that “ Christ “ might dwell in the hearts of the saints “ of Ephesus by faith.” And thus faith, which John makes the evidence of the new birth^t, is exercised upon our Lord Jesus Christ, as our righteousness and atonement; and on God our heavenly Father, as reconciled unto us by the death of his Son; so that the state

^q John v. 24.^r 1 John v. 20.^s Rom. x. 10.^t 1 John v. 1.

of the believer before God is truly blessed. He is manifestatively justified from all things. God hath forgiven him all trespasses. He is freed from all condemnation. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made him free from the law of sin and death". He shines in Christ, and outshines the angels in glory. Having received life from the spirit of Christ, he is quickened up unto life eternal. The whole body of sin within him has received its death-wound; the heart and life-giving influence in and throughout every one of his corrupt affections are mortified. So that he can sing, (though he feels them struggling within him) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus". And he rejoices at seasons in hope of the promised glory, which the God of all grace hath by Jesus Christ called him unto, having fully invested him with a right and title to it, and a complete meetness for it: and he saith, by way of encouragement to him, (let him see and feel what he may of his inward corruptions and spiritual enemies) "Fear not, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward". As it respects the experience of a regenerate and believing person, especially when first brought home

^u Rom. viii. 2.

^v Rom. viii. 1.

^w Gen. xv. 1.

to God by effectual calling, it consists in, and may be expressed as containing, the following important inward perceptions. The person feels, and is sensible of the effectual change wrought in the mind, *viz.* that he is passed from a state of darkness into a state in which God's marvellous light shines and enlightens him. He finds himself a *new creature in Christ Jesus*, in a new world, and entered on a new and spiritual state;—that he hath a new heart given him, new affections and desires formed within him,—that old things are passed away, and all things are become new. He clearly perceives, that he was once darkness, but that he is now *light in the Lord*. In the light of everlasting life he clearly sees the whole world out of Christ is in the arms of the wicked one,—that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified. Which truths enter into his very soul, form a true part of his experience, and lead him to admire the grace of God in opening his eyes, in awakening his mind, and in shewing him the way to experience the blessings of pardon and salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. A true sight of sin comes from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and is the fruit of spiritual life imparted in rege-

neration. And believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is the *best*, and may be said to be the *only evidence* of our regeneration, because all other fruits and effects truly spiritual flow from it. Hence the apostle John says, “ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God*.”

Regeneration is faith in the habit: and the exercise of it *in believing on the Son of God* is the evidence and manifest proof of inward regeneration. Now it forms and constitutes a peculiar part of the experience of one who is new-born to think much of Christ, of his love, and most precious bloodshedding. The Holy Ghost forms and creates in the newly enlightened mind some precious thoughts of Christ, and draws them forth as he leads the new-born person to meditate on some portions of Scripture, in which Christ is revealed; so that he is by the secret and mysterious influence of the Holy Ghost engaged in thinking on Christ just as most exactly suits his case. And the subject is found in real experience, especially at first, to be *Christ crucified*. Jesus in his bloody sweat—as made sin—as having been wounded in soul and body, when he sustained the whole curse and punishment due to the sins of all his people, is what

* 1 John v. 1.

the mind dwells chiefly on. The new-born soul takes its life from Christ's death,—its health and cure from Christ's wounds,—its purity from Christ's blood-shedding, and its consolations from Christ's sorrows, agony, and bitter passion. By these views of Christ, and as the mind is engaged in spiritual meditations thereon, the Holy Ghost exalts Christ in the heart, and makes him ineffably precious. So that Paul's experience and high prizings of Christ now suit the case and frame of the new-born soul, that can join him, saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." And the Holy Ghost lets in a view, and gives a sense and enjoyment of the Father's everlasting love upon the mind, as he creates views of it in the conceptions of the new-born soul from the following passage of holy writ. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." On this inestimable love, expressed in this ineffable gift, the mind is for a season swallowed up, lost in wonder, and filled with admiration. Yea, there are seasons with the believer, when his silence speaks his praise. What he sees in this love, feels,

^y Gal. vi. 14.

^z John iii. 16.

and enjoys of it, exceeds all expression. In the enjoyments of it, sin is perfectly hated, self perfectly hid, the world trampled on, the heart perfectly happy, and the soul is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Thus the Holy Ghost is pleased to reveal Christ, and in due season to shed forth the glories and perfections of his righteousness, and to lead the mind of the believer to fix itself on him, and cleave to him, as his righteousness, for ever and ever.

In believing on the Lord Jesus it pleases the Father to manifest his pardoning mercy, which is received and enjoyed in the hearing and believing of God in the simplicity of his own word; wherein he says, "I have blotted out as
 " a thick cloud thy transgressions, and
 " as a cloud thy sins: return unto me
 " for I have redeemed thee^a." Which as it was uttered upon the footing of Christ's atonement, so it is made known in its divine efficacy to the regenerate in their believing on Jesus. Peter tells us, "To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him
 " shall receive remission of sins^b." When these words, "I will be merciful
 " to your unrighteousness, and your sins
 " and your iniquities will I remember
 " no more," are received by faith

^a Isaiah xliv. 22.

^b Acts x. 43.

through the influence of the Holy Ghost, the soul hath a manifestative apprehension of God's pardoning mercy, and from the experience of it is led to break forth thus, "Who is a God like
 "unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity,
 "and passeth by the transgression of
 "the remnant of his heritage, he re-
 "taineth not his anger for ever, because
 "he delighteth in mercy^c." So that the blessings of that state, into which the believer is brought when born of God, are as follow. As a partaker of a spiritual birth, he hath a nature inherent in his soul, which cannot sin:—in which all grace and holiness are contained. He is sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. He is in a state of justification, and therefore he is *blessed*: for the Lord himself says, "Blessed is
 "the man whose iniquities are forgiven,
 "and whose sins are covered. Blessed
 "is the man to whom the Lord will not
 "impute sin^d." He is favoured with a spiritual view of the righteousness of Jesus, which leads him to count all things but loss and dung in comparison with Christ and his obedience unto death.

The blessing of adoption belongs to him, and he cannot but admire this marvellous grace, which God has be-

^c Micah vii. 18.

^d Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

stowed most freely upon him. He has union with Christ and God in him, which the Holy Ghost makes evident by the communion, which the believer hath with the Son and with the Father in him, through his divine indwelling in the soul. In Christ the believer is built up, and builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. And his comforts are the fruits and effects of these blessings, which he is made a free partaker of, and put into actual possession of, when it is given unto him to believe in the Lord Jesus for everlasting life. *The God of hope* fills him with all joy and peace in believing, and he abounds in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. These peculiar comforts, which the soul hath the first enjoyment of upon its return to God, flow from the sight and sense it hath of its salvation from sin, of its deliverance from its former state, and of its being delivered from the wrath to come. They chiefly consist in a sense of God's pardoning mercy, in an enjoyment of his peace which surpasseth all understanding, in an apprehension of free, full, and plenteous redemption in the blood of the Lamb, and in sweet intercourse with Christ, which produces warm frames, and truly comfortable im-

prefsions, and feelings. So that from the testimony of sense, as well as from the record which God hath given of his Son, the believer cries out with rapture, "Behold God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation^e." The soul is now admitted to know and feel that the love of Christ passeth knowledge. Thus, *the kingdom, which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, is enjoyed in the believer's heart. The Holy Ghost brings down into the mind, and sheds abroad therein the love of God. He reveals Christ in the word and by the word, to the believer, as his hope of glory, opens to his view the unsearchable riches of Christ, shews him that his every lust, even the whole body of sin, hath received its death-wound, giving him to experience, that "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts^f," that the death of Christ extends its influence over the whole body of sin and death, and gives him to see, that living by faith on Christ is the life and spring of all spirituality. He opens to his view this inestimable truth, that whom Je-

^e Isaiah xii. 2.

^f Gal. v. 24.

hovah did “predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified,” teaching him herefrom that effectual calling proceeds from, and is the first evidence of election, that manifestative justification follows upon effectual calling, and that such are as fully entitled to Heaven, as though they were instated in glory; which blessed lessons the Holy Ghost accompanies with divine power and comfort, so that the believer rejoices in God, “Through our Lord Jesus, by whom he hath now received the atonement^s.”

O my soul! here is matter for wonder, gratitude, and praise, which thou mayest well exercise thyself in. Yet when thou hast done thy best, the subject and the grace of it will exceed all blessing and praise. Thou canst not express thy sense of the subject better than by an address to the Holy Trinity for their inestimable grace! O, thou God and Father of all thy family in Heaven and earth! They are all *one* in Christ Jesus, and thou lovest them *all* in him with *one* and the *same* everlasting love and invariable affection. Thou art pleased to bring them in thine own

good time into the kingdom of thy dear Son. I praise thee for thy love to me **IN JESUS**. I adore thee for thy mercy in sending down the Holy Ghost into my heart, and for making me a partaker of a spiritual birth, whereby I am capacitated for the enjoyment of thy love, and to hold communion with thee by faith in Christ Jesus through the gracious influences of thine eternal spirit. I would present my best praises to thee, O thou blessed Jesus! who art the Son of the Father, *in truth and love*, that I am born into thy kingdom of grace, made a partaker of thee, and brought into communion with thee. O thou Spirit of Jehovah! it is to thee I owe my second birth and every faculty of the new man. O thou divine spirit of all grace! I bless thee for quickening me with new and spiritual life, for enlightening the eyes of my mind to know Jesus, and the Father's love in him,—for revealing Christ in me, and giving me a view of him, as the everlasting treasury of grace and glory. Secure all the praise to thyself, and go on to shew me more of the riches of the Father's love and glory, and exalt in my heart the Saviour's work and fulness. Let me set the crown of grace and glory on the head of Jesus, and be

engaged in crowning him daily in heart and life, by living in constant dependance on him. Grant this, Holy Spirit, to the honour of the Father and the Son, to whom as co-equal and co-eternal in one JEHOVAH be everlasting praise, Amen.

