

such striking and lively colours and characters, as evince a great distinction between the people of God and the children of the devil; so that they may be clearly known to themselves, and certainly discerned by others. Such characters are these, "That they are not of the world." John xvii. 14. They do not wilfully commit sin. 1 John iii. 9. They have crucified the flesh with its *passions* and *lusts*. Gal. v. 24. They have set their affections on things above. Colos. iii. 2. They hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God our Saviour. Matth. v. 6. They are sensible of a present conflict between flesh and spirit. Rom. vii. 21. Gal. v. 17. They forget the things that are behind, and reach out like active racers towards things before; they press towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philip. iii. 13, 14. They aspire after God, and ardently pant to have more knowledge, resemblance, and enjoyment of his infinite perfections, as the supreme truth, beauty, and good to an immortal soul: and this is the true state of things in the believer's experience.---See this admirably described by the judicious Fleming, in his Fulfilling of the Scripture. Part 1. in 8vo. page 39.---And this leads us, by an easy transition, to another view of true believers.

3. The Scripture is fulfilled in the infirmities,
follies,

follies, corruptions, bad passions, vile prejudices, and carnal contentions of God's people.

Although the people of Christ are stiled saints, yet the Scriptures speak of them as imperfect in the present state; as having a body of sin and death; a law in their natural and moral powers warring against the law of grace in the mind; the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit lusting against the flesh. Gal. v. 17. As having not yet attained, nor being already perfect. Philip. iii. 12. As having a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Jer. xvii. 9. And this, all wise and judicious men find to be true in their own daily experience: they know to their cost, that the carnal spirit in them lusteth to envy, pride, and impurity: they feel inward conflicts and frequent struggles with their foul and raging corruptions: that they are in a great variety of frames and inward feelings of mind: sometimes their hearts following ardently after God, triumphing in his favour, exulting in his love: at other times over-spread with clouds and darkness, filled with doubts and fears, sadly indisposed for spiritual converse with Christ, and all the devout exercises of the heart.

The Scripture represents the best and wisest of men as weak and defective, as sometimes off their guard, secure, presumptuous and slothful, carnal, proud, sensual, and lukewarm: and the terrible
consequence

consequence of these vile dispositions is open back-sliding and falling into sin; for which end the sad behaviour, the scandalous deportment, and criminal passions, awful falls, and temporary apostacies of the people of GOD, are left upon record in Scripture, to shew us what we and our fellow-christians should be sure to fall into, in the same circumstances, if we were left to our own deceitful, wicked hearts, by the sovereign GOD. Let us never forget, that all the falls and blemishes of GOD's people are left on record for our warning and caution, and not for our imitation.

4. Scripture is most delightfully fulfilled in the exceeding great and precious PROMISES to all believers. Gospel promises consist in the free discoveries and full assurances of GOD's good will to sinners through Christ, in a covenant of grace; wherein, upon his honour, sincerity, and oath, he engages himself to be their GOD, to give his Son for them, and to them; and his Holy Spirit to abide with them; with all other GOOD THINGS whatever that are either *required* in them, or are *necessary* for them, to make them accepted before him, and to bring them to an enjoyment of him through the boundless ages of eternity.---See Dr. Owen on Final Perseverance, folio, 1654, page 112; and Dr. Spurstowe's admirable
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mirable book on the Promises, 12mo. intituled, "The Wells of Salvation Opened." 1655.

A promise is a voluntary declaration by words, or by an action equally significant of our resolution, to do something in behalf of another, for his service and happiness.

When a promise is made, the person who makes it, is by all men supposed under an obligation to perform it; and he to whom the promise is made may demand the performance as his right. This is a clear idea of the nature of a promise; let us once more apply this idea to the rich promises of the gospel.

A promise of GOD is when, upon the consideration of Christ's pure obedience, perfect satisfaction, and powerful intercession, GOD binds himself, by his word, to perform such actions for his people as shall increase their knowledge, holiness, and happiness, through an eternal duration: and every true christian may firmly expect, and humbly and boldly plead for the performance of all the promises as his right, by virtue of his interest in, and vital union with, his head Christ Jesus.

This is our strong CONSOLATION, that not a syllable of a promise shall ever perish or be lost. Every believer, from the beginning of the world, has tried the promises, and found them true to this very day. All the exceeding great and precious

cious promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us. 2 Cor. i. 20. And they will be found to be true and sure in the experience of every real christian on earth.

We may divide all the promises of God into two classes. The absolute and standing promises, which are always fulfilling; and the descriptive and occasional promises adapted to the various conditions and circumstances of a christian life.

1. There are many rich **STANDING PROMISES** which are absolutely fulfilling to all believers every day and hour of their lives. Such are these, I will be to you a God: you shall be to me a people. Heb. viii. 10. He will give his Holy Spirit, and put his Holy Spirit within them. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. We will come and make our abode with him: and, says Christ, I will manifest myself unto him. John xiv. 21, 23. All things shall work together for good to them that love God. Rom. viii. 28. God is faithful, and he will not suffer you to be tempted, or tryed, or put to the proof, above what you are able to bear. 1 Cor. x. 13. My grace is sufficient for thee. 2 Cor. xii. 7. I will never, never leave thee: no, no, I will never forsake thee. Heb. xiii. 5. The comforter, the Holy Spirit shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. John xiv. 26.---These, with a thousand other absolute promises, are in some
good

good measure fulfilling every moment to all real christians on the face of the earth.

2. There are DESCRIPTIVE and OCCASIONAL PROMISES adapted to the special cases and circumstances of particular believers in their various conditions and duties in life. Such are these, “that he will support us under the burthens and pressures of affliction, and be with us in trouble, and deliver and honour us. Pf. xci. 15. That he will give us direction in difficulties: thy God shall guide thee continually. Isai. lviii. 11. I will instruct thee, and guide thee with mine eye. Pf. xxxii. 8. He will help our infirmities in prayer by his Holy Spirit. Rom. viii. 26. He will answer our prayers. Isai. lxxv. 24. He will succour us that are tempted. Heb. iii. 18. He will deliver the godly out of temptation. 2 Pet. ii. 9. He will supply all our needs. Phil. iv. 19. He will give wisdom liberally, and not upbraid those that ask him, when we are sensible of our darkness, weakness and folly, and trust in Christ with all our heart, and lean not to our own understanding.” Jam. i. 5. And you cannot but see a vast variety and multitude of precious promises wonderfully suited to all the cases, conditions and wants, and reaching to all the POSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES of every true christian in the whole world. And not a syllable of one promise shall ever fall to the ground without accomplishment.

accomplishment.----The rich collection of the promises, by Dr. Samuel Clark, is a most precious companion for every believer. The Voice of God in his Promises, by the pious Mr. Jos. Alleine, 8vo. 1s. and the incomparable Fleming, on the Fulfilling of the Scripture; with the excellent Mr. Benjamin Bennett, on Inspiration; are books which should always lie at the right hand of every minister of the gospel, and every private christian, as far as his ability can reach to purchase them.

5. Scripture THREATENINGS of corrections and fatherly chastisements, are fulfilled in the clearest manner to true believers.

Threatenings are clear and awful declarations of God's hatred of sin; and his invariable will to punish it either in the sinner or in his surety; and of his determined resolution to bring the temporal evils of dishonour, losses, and pain, on his own people, if they depart from the wise and beautiful order of his holy law.

A threatening is a dreadful denunciation of the evil of pain towards a breaker of the divine law: 'tis a declaration of God's will to punish every man that shall violate the holy law, which commands all that is right, and forbids all that is wrong.

'Tis an awful proclamation of the sovereign magistrate of the moral world, that he is in-
variably

variably determined to inflict pain, and shame, and death on every rational creature who shall be guilty of an outrage on the wise and beautiful order of the divine law.

The threatenings of God are very clear and expressly determinate---they are very precise, and particularly pointed like daggers and darts at all kind of sinful actions---they are very keen, and like flaming fire---they are godlike in the highest degree, that is, they are lofty and sublime---they are very terrible, as they flow from the essential justice of an offended God---they are rational terrors, as they issue from the affronted reason of a God---they are very true threatenings, and will most surely be executed. And these threatenings are of eternal duration: they are as everlasting as the nature of God, and immortal as the soul of a sinner, unless he is pardoned and purified by the atoning blood and spirit of Christ.

The reason why the people of God do not suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, is not because their criminal actions are less heinous than others: no, if we consider the aggravations of their sins, as committed by persons under such peculiar obligations, they appear the most heinous of all the crimes of mankind: but the reason why they are not eternally punished is, because all their sins are punished in their glorious surety, the Lord Jesus. But their covenant God is determined to
shew

shew his holiness in their pardon ; and to evince his hatred of sin in the chastisement of their souls or bodies with temporal evils, that they may not be condemned with the wicked world.

And the people of God may depend upon it, that all carnal SECURITY, all unwatchfulness against sin, neglect of fervent PRAYER, unmortified love to worldly objects, and especially all cowardly DEPARTURES from the glorious GOSPEL,* and all outrages on the LIGHT of CONSCIENCE, or doing violence to the light of reason and grace in the soul, are highly injurious to the divine perfections ; exceedingly dishonourable to the person, offices, and death of Christ ; highly grieving to the blessed Spirit : and these crimes must inevitably meet with the awful disapprobation and displeasure of God, who is eternally bent against all unrighteousness, ungodliness, and worldly lusts in his own people.

Let us take a short view of the THREATENINGS of God against the sins of his own people.---If his

* There is nothing that Christ so deeply resents in his own people as wilful departures from the pure doctrines of free rich grace, and sinning against the precious light of the spirit of God in the soul. Let all professors of the gospel, and particularly all preachers of the gospel, above all things beware of this most provoking offence. For my part, I had rather suffer martyrdom, in all its most dreadful forms of terror, than wilfully act that which the light of God in my soul condemns as an evil thing ; and which my conscience tells me is a crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame before devils, men, and angels.

his children forsake my law---I will visit their transgression with the rod. Pf. lxxxix. 30. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Heb. xii. 6. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth : therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. Job v. 17. He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. He is chastened with pain, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain. If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not ; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Job xxxiii. 16--30.

I. THREATENINGS against carnal SECURITY.

Grey hairs are here and there upon him ; yet he knoweth it not. Hosea vii. 9. Trust not in lying words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. Jer. vii. 9. I will hedge up thy way with thorns ---thou shalt not find thy lovers---thou shalt say, I will go and return---for then it was better with me than now. Hosea ii. 6, 7. Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and that makes flesh his arm. Jer. xvii. 5. I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees. Zeph. i. 12.

2. THREATENINGS against UNWATCHFULNESS.

Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.
Matth.

Matth. xxvi. 41. Stand in awe, and sin not.
 Pf. iv. 4. Happy is the man that feareth alway.
 Prov. xxviii. 14. Watch and pray always, that
 ye may be accounted worthy to escape. Take
 heed lest your hearts be over-charged with sur-
 feiting and drunkenness. Luke xxi. 34. Be
 watchful and strengthen the things that remain,
 that are ready to die, i. e. the doctrines of grace,
 and the practice of vital godliness---if thou dost
 not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and
 thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon
 thee. Rev. iii. 2, 3.---Note, we are now in the
 Sardian state of the church; and these awful words
 are spoken to the present race of preachers and
 professors of the gospel!---And while the bride-
 groom tarried, the wise and foolish virgins ALL
 slumbered and slept. Matth. xxv. 5. Do not
 sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.
 1 Thes. v. 6. Behold, I come as a thief---blessed
 is he that keepeth his garments, lest he walk
 naked, and they see his shame. Rev. xvi. 15. Wo
 to them that are at ease in Zion. Amos vi. 1.

3. THREATENINGS TO A NEGLECT OF FERVENT PRAYER.

See Dr. Gill's Sermon, 1754, on a Neglect of
 fervent Prayer.---There is none that calleth upon
 thee: there is none that stirreth up himself to
 take hold on thee. Isai. lxiv. 7. Thou restrainest
 prayer before God. Job xv. 4. A neglect of

ardent prayer always gives life to sin: and the power of lust will ever increase in a believer's heart when prayer is omitted, or carelessly performed. Dr. Doddridge used frequently to observe, that if he was negligent in prayer, all his studies withered; and even his progress in human learning and the sciences was retarded. And every christian must say, that if prayer does not go on prosperously, nothing else will prosper or flourish in the soul.

4. THREATENINGS TO UNMORTIFIED AFFECTIONS TO worldly THINGS.

To be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom. viii. 6. ---See a most excellent discourse on the Grace and Duty of being spiritually minded, 4to. by the incomparable Dr. John Owen. There is a very good abridgment of this book lately published by Dr. Henry Mayo, 12mo. and sold by messrs. Dilly. ---If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Rom. viii. 13. ---We have a most judicious little tract on this text, intituled, the Mortification of Sin in Believers, by that deep and experimental writer Dr. Owen. O! that I could but revive the attention of my brethren to these heavenly works.

5. THREATENINGS

5. THREATENINGS TO APOSTACY, OR WILFUL DEPARTURES from the pure DOCTRINES of the GOSPEL.

If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. Heb. x. 38. No man looking back is fit for the kingdom of God. Luke ix. 62. Remember Lot's wife. Luke xvii. 32. NONE VALIANT for TRUTH upon the earth. Jer. ix. 3. They have forsaken my law, or doctrine, i. e. the doctrines of truth. Ver. 13. Therefore, behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. Ver. 15. As he has done to the Americans these six years past, for their departures from the true and precious gospel of Christ. Tremble, O! England, for if God spared not them, depend upon it, he will not spare thee!---Take heed, lest there be in you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Heb. iii. 12. If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Heb. x. 26, 27. Let all SOCINIANS read this, and tremble to the very foundation of their IMMORTAL SOULS.---It had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness; than after they have known it, to turn from the HOLY COMMANDMENT delivered to THEM: but it is

is happened unto them according to the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.---See Dr. Guise, Dr. Doddridge, and Mr. Henry's Continuation; with Dr. Gill on this dreadful passage.

6. THREATENINGS to sinning against the LIGHT of GOD in the SOUL, and doing VIOLENCE to an enlightened REASON and CONSCIENCE.

I repeat it again, there is nothing in the whole course of a christian's life which God the Redeemer so deeply resents as a betraying the truths of the gospel, and offering an outrage on our best light and knowledge: and therefore, let all believers beware, as for their lives and souls, how they make a trivial matter of rebelling against the light of the holy Spirit of God.---Wo! Wo! to those that rebel against the LIGHT, nor abide in the PATHS of the LIGHT. Job xxiv. 13. Wo to those who refuse to hearken, who stop their ears, and make their heart as hard as an adamant, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord sent in and by his Spirit, by the prophets: therefore great WRATH came from Jehovah of hosts. Zech. vii. 11, 12. My people would not hearken to my voice; Israel would none of me: so I gave them up to their own hearts LUST. Ps. lxxxix. 11, 12. Wo to them
who

who are like the deaf adder, who hearken not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. Pf. lviii. 4, 5.

7. The safe and happy DEATH of every true BELIEVER is a glorious FULFILMENT of the holy SCRIPTURES.

We have seen the dreadful death of the wicked, page 126--130. Let us now view the death of the righteous in contrast, in order to excite us to adoration, wonder, and delight, towards that dear REDEEMER who has set this contrast before our eyes by the pen of Solomon: "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death. Prov. xiv. 32.

Death is a disunion of soul and body---'tis a dissolving of this earthly house of our tabernacle. 2 Cor. v. 1. A departure out of this world. 2 Tim. iv. 6. The time of my departure is at hand: 'tis going the way of all the earth. Josh. xxiii. 14. A return to the dust from which we were taken. Eccl. xii. 7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was. Death is described by a sleep, because sleep is an image of death. John xi. 11. And there is a striking resemblance between sleep and death in many instances. Persons of each sex and of all ages sleep, and all must die. Persons of every rank and character sleep, and so kings and beggars, philosophers
and

and fools, must all die. Good and bad men sleep, and so all bad and good men must die.*

In Scripture we see the death of good patriarchs, prophets, law-givers, apostles, and martyrs; but 'tis delightful to observe, that they all died happy, and departed to the bosom of their God for ever and ever.

Here you see righteous Abel, the very first man that ever entered the kingdom of heaven; and he was wafted thither in a stream of his own blood: but not on the worth of his own blood, but on the credit of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness was he admitted into his father's presence. Enoch is taken to heaven without dying. Noah goes to glory at nine hundred and fifty years of age. Gen. ix. 29. Abraham, the great father of believers, lives to be an hundred and seventy-five, and then departs in a good old age to his God. Gen. xxv. 8. Isaac lives longer than his honoured father, and at an hundred and fourscore goes to the bosom of his divine redeemer. Gen. xxxv. 29. Jacob, at an hundred and forty-seven, yields up the ghost, and is gathered to his people in heaven. Gen. xlix. 33. Joseph, the lovely, the excellent, and generous patriarch, dies at an hundred and ten years of age; and, with a full confidence in the immor-

tality

* See Dr. GILL's excellent Discourse on DEATH. Body of Divinity, vol. ii. page 914.