

bleffings; and at the fame time teaches us to work by love, and bring forth the richeft fruits of righteousnefs, which are by Jefus Chrift, to the praife and glory of GOD.

You fee here the wifdom of GOD in the free and full proclamation of this falvation, as an act of the moft boundlefs goodnefs, and in the moft winning addreffes to men, in order to apply this falvation to their immortal fouls, in the sweeteft methods of rational perfuafion and attractive love.

You fee the GOODNESS of GOD, in all its meridian fplendor and beauty, beam forth in our redemption. GOD's inclinations and active powers are all influenced by goodnefs, and terminate in contriving and accomplifhing the recovery of loft man to an unbounded happinefs in the fruition of GOD. \*

You fee goodnefs the original fpring of our whole falvation, and you fee here an higher degree of goodnefs to man than was fhewn to the fallen, or even to the ftanding angels; nay, higher ftill; here are greater difplays of goodnefs than were manifefted, for a time, to the Son of GOD himfelf.

You fee here the pureft and moft intenfè goodnefs forming the firft refolution to redeem. This is fuch a miracle of goodnefs, that it is above all admiration, 'tis more than unfpeakable, 'tis more than full of glory!

You

\* See Charnock on Goodnefs.

You see here the lost prospects of infinite *goodness* restored and enlarged unexpressibly beyond what man in innocence ever saw with all the powers of his bright understanding. Those prospects of the good and amiable nature of God were dreadfully withdrawn on man's vile apostacy, but are now restored with a thousand-fold advantage, to the wonder and joy of men and angels !

You see here God giving us a greater gift than all worlds, in sending his own son to redeem us : you see him given to rescue us by death of the most dreadful kind, and exalted and honoured for his humiliation and disgrace in acting and suffering for us !

How marvellously does this goodness appear, considering the first act of treason and revolt from God, and man's black ingratitude and rebellion ever since. He could have fallen no lower at first unless he had fallen into hell ; and the temper and conduct of mankind, in all ages, hath been an avowal of the first horrible offence.

You see higher wonders still : the unutterable goodness of God in the very highest advancement of our nature in Christ, after it had so dreadfully affronted his infinite majesty ; and likewise in dignifying our persons with the most endearing and honourable union to his eternal Son, as our vital head. This astonishing conduct of God appears to be the uttermost exertion of God's unfathomable

unfathomable love and grace ; it puts the very highest honour on our souls and bodies ; it raises them to such a dignity and glory as exceeds all the powers of language to express, or the minds of angels to conceive ; and if we add the consideration of the adoption of our persons to be the sons and daughters of GOD, what can we say ? but O ! the depth of the wisdom, and knowledge, and goodness of GOD !

In this most glorious and astonishing salvation, you see still farther the goodness of GOD in its meridian or noon-tide splendor and beauty in this point of view, (viz.) GOD restores us to a more excellent state of holiness and dignity than man had in innocence at his first creation ! We have a more intense union with GOD, a more vivid image of GOD stamped upon our souls, a brighter resemblance of all GOD's moral perfections ; and what is richer still, we have the infallible duration of this holiness secured to us beyond a second forfeiture and loss : we have a more boundless and durable felicity than man possessed in Paradise, and an eternity of empire in GOD, as lasting as his nature and immortal life.

GOD's rational and sweet persuasions of man to receive and possess all this happiness are equal to his unutterable love in providing it. Here goodness shines in its brightest radiance and attractive charms.

In

In the redemption of mankind we see the bright and burning HOLINESS of GOD shine out with the utmost splendor and beauty.\* Never did the shining purity of GOD's perfections flame out with such dazzling glory as in the salvation of sinners by the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Here we see the eternal consciousness that GOD has of his own dignity and excellence, which fills him with an infinite zeal for his own majesty, dominion, and glory. Here we see the radiant brightness of the divine essence, and his invariable dislike of all moral impurity and disorder in his empire, and his keenest hatred of all the violations of the order and beauty prescribed in his holy law. Here we see, that as power is his arm, omniscience his eye, mercy his bowels, and eternity his duration, so holiness is the beauty and life of GOD: and as sincerity is the life and lustre of every grace in a christian, so PURITY is the life and splendor of every attribute in GOD. Without holiness his patience would be an indulgence in sin, his mercy a fondness, his wrath a madness, his power a tyranny, his wisdom an unworthy craft, his justice a cruelty; but his holiness gives a decorum and beauty to all his perfections, and renders him incapable of acting unlike a God. 'Tis the enlivening spirit which spreads a glory and order through them all—'tis the crown and glory of the Godhead——'tis the life of all

\* See Charnock on Holiness.

all God's decrees, and the brightness of all his actions. Nothing is thought of or decreed by him; nothing is acted by him; nothing is declared, proposed, promised, threatened, or foretold by him in his word, but what is worthy the dignity, and becoming the honour of this attribute. His law is spiritual and holy in the highest degree, reaching to the very essence, life, and powers of the soul, and all the inward bents, inclinations, and actings of the heart. This law prescribes bounds to the spirits of men, obliging them to inward conformity to it in all their motions and affections. Not a single motion of a thought, nor the quality of a thought, nor the property and circumstance of a thought, in the soul of man, but falls under the cognizance of this spiritual, extensive, and immutable law. And in the sufferings of Christ, who was made under the law, and who redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. we see the holiness of God shine out with a brighter lustre than it had done before for four thousand years in all the terrible judgments of God on the guilty nations and empires of the world.

God had an ardent and infinite desire to have his holiness honoured to the uttermost, in the sufferings and death of his son; and his holy nature shone out brighter on the cross than had

been shewn in heaven amongst the holy angels for thousands of years. And we may go a step farther, and affirm, that in this method of REDEMPTION by the death of the Son of God, his holiness in the most intense hatred of sin appears to be valued above all his other glorious perfections. Yea, farther, it appeared for a time to be valued above Christ himself; and what is still more astonishing, if possible, Christ appears to have valued the holiness of God above his own life, blood, and character: yea, farther, he was willing to have his own divinity eclipsed for a time, that God's holiness might shine out with the brighter blaze in the hatred and punishment of sin. The holiness of God had powerful reasons for not being neglected in the salvation of sinful man; and it is an awful truth, but we must express it, if God had not shewn such zeal for his own purity, he would have concealed and despised his own life, and have looked like a sinner to eternity.

The JUSTICE of God shines wonderfully in our redemption. Divine justice is a certain and peculiar manifestation of his holiness in the government of his rational creatures; by which, as the supreme law-giver, he prescribes equal and fit laws; and as the supreme judge, he dispenses equal rewards and just punishments.

God alone is fit to fill and manage so great a  
province

province as that of giving laws to the whole world of souls and angels. There is none like unto thee, O! king of nations. Jer. x. 6, 7. His preservation of all things every moment, and his determining our rational existence, powers, actions, and happiness, from moment to moment, with the profusion of blessings he bestows every minute of our life, give him a just title to absolute dominion over all: and his glorious perfections of wisdom, power, holiness, and justice, do not only fit him for government, but must make his rule over us the most desirable and delightful to all who understand their own interest and happiness. His dominion over us, and in our souls, is the most rational, lovely, beautiful, and endearing government that men or angels can conceive or desire to eternity. 'Tis the truest and sweetest interest of man cheerfully to obey his God: and no man can break the bounds of God's law till he acts in direct contradiction to his very soul, and he must be guilty of a mad outrage on all his best powers and interests for eternity. \* These are thoughts that deserve our utmost attention in every minute of our life.

In our redemption we see the Son of God yielding the most perfect assent of understanding, and consent of will, to the holiness and justice of the nature of God; and freely and fully restoring  
all

\* See Halyburton's Great Concern, 12mo.

all the rights of GOD, which finners had violently and insolently taken away. And we see the just GOD, for four thousand years before his death, admitting no souls to happiness but upon the credit of a payment in blood, even the blood of the Son of GOD.

Not the soul of a patriarch, of a prophet, of a great king, of a great statesman, who faced lions; and heroes who dared the flames for GOD; nor apostles and martyrs, rolled and dipped in their own blood, could procure the least acceptance with divine holiness and justice, or admission into the glory of heaven, but on the bond and oath, and payment in blood of the Lord Jesus.

And we may proceed still farther and see the tremendous and adorable GOD preferring the glory of his justice above the display of love to his eternal son. It appeared for a time, that GOD's affection and zeal for his own justice exceeded his esteem and value for his divine and glorious Son; and Christ appeared to have a greater love for GOD's justice than he had for his own soul, character, and blood.

What objects are these revealed in this most glorious and immortal volume! Who can for one moment believe, or with patience endure to hear that these are cunningly-devised fables, invented by bad men to put a cheat upon the world! No, sirs, these are the wonderful discoveries



coveries of the boundless wisdom and love of God to perishing mortals, to strike all the passions of fear, hope, gratitude, pleasure, ambition, and glory, with the most persuasive and commanding energy.

O! my dear fellow christians, how should you love God, and habitually rejoice in your dear redeemer for the grand discoveries he has made of the divine perfections, above all that men or angels could *ever* imagine!

How has Christ recovered, restored, and enlarged the lost prospects of God's justice and goodness, mercy, grace, and truth, to men on earth and angels in heaven, beyond what was known for thousands of years before; yea, beyond what will be known of God's justice in the conflagration of our world, and the damnation of devils and wicked men to eternity!

Here his whole name appears compleat;  
Nor wit can guess, nor reason prove,  
Which of the letters best is writ,  
The power, the justice, or the love.

Dr. WATTS.

The SINCERITY and FAITHFULNESS of God in our REDEMPTION shines out through heaven and earth with the brightest lustre. God is the most sincere being in the upright intentions of his heart; he is determined never to deceive his creatures:

creatures : he is a being of infinite veracity, in speaking his real sense and thoughts of all things which concern himself and his creatures : he is a being of infinite faithfulness in his conduct, as his actions are conformable to his upright intentions, and the declarations of his words :—so that the whole idea of the divine SINCERITY consists in the upright intentions of his heart, the declarations of his mouth, the operation of his attributes, and the self-consistency of his conduct and character, without the least degree of duplicity or fickleness in his whole deportment in time or to all eternity.

GOD is sincere by nature and principle, and not only by interest : for GOD, to be sincere, is to be and to appear the same thing, to scorn all shiftings and disguises in his words of promise and threatenings, and in his conduct ; so that GOD's actions will bear the sun-shine, and to be examined in the clearest light of heaven itself.

How ravishing and delightful is the thought, O ! believers, to consider that GOD acts in such a manner, as that the ends and motive of every action, as well as the action itself, may bear the open light, even the day of eternal, meridian sun-shine in glory.

GOD would not do an ill thing or speak a false word, although he was absolutely secure against all discovery of it by all creatures in heaven,  
earth,

earth, and hell.—'Tis impossible for God to lye. Heb. vi. God cannot lye. Titus i. 2. All the springs of lying and falshood are excluded from the nature and conduct of God. He cannot lye through any defect in his understanding; there is no weakness, darkness, or prejudice and error in his mind. He cannot lye through any corruption in his will; there is no wrong direction or vitious determination in his choice. He cannot lye through any irregular passions in his heart. He has no extravagant self-love, no vain ambition, no unjust self-admiration, nor rash anger or unrighteous revenge, no avarice or covetousness to tempt him to speak a lye.—All the above springs of deceit and lying abound in the hearts of men and devils, but they can have no place in God. He cannot lye to keep what he possesses, or to get what he has not, or through shame to save himself from disgrace, or desire to increase his honour and fame. He cannot lye through fear and dread of a superior power, or through weakness of nature or want of strength, to be as good as his word. All these are springs of the most horrible lying amongst men, but they can never have place in God's heart or conduct. O! reviving, ravishing thought! to true christians; for God's sincerity is our immutable and immortal security!

The habitual and immutable sincerity and  
faithfulness

faithfulness of GOD consist in his upright intention and aim to promote the holiness and happiness of every one of his people, without the least variation or reluctance, at all times, and through the whole course of his providence and grace, without the least thought or wish to the contrary entering into his heart. Nothing that GOD says or does interferes with our true sanctification and happiness; nor does he pursue, as his main aim, any thing that shall hazard the salvation of his people, or render their happiness doubtful in itself: the holiness and felicity of their souls is actually GOD's intention in every action he performs in the natural and moral world, as well as in the church of Christ.

GOD speaks the sense of his own mind concerning all things in heaven, earth, and hell; he speaks the real sense of his own mind concerning all his perfections, and especially with regard to his justice in his threatenings to the wicked, and likewise his goodness and grace in his promises to his people, as also concerning the glories of his son's person and offices, and the person and operations of his eternal spirit.

GOD gives an impartial, clear, and fair representation of his whole heart, concerning all his rational creatures, without the least reserve or deceit, clearly expressing his thoughts, so as to leave us at no kind of loss, what he will do with

us, what he will do for us, in this world and in eternity, if we are his friends ; and what he will do with us and against us if we prove his final and impenitent enemies.—I will here give a short, but clear, copy of God's heart towards his people, and towards all those that hate him, and live without God in the world.—The first I would stile,

The DECLARATION of GOD's HEART towards  
his FRIENDS.

I will be to them a GOD, and they shall be to me a people. Heb. viii. 10. I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people. 2 Cor. vi. 16. GOD himself shall be with them, and be their GOD. Rev. xxi. 3. GOD is not<sup>e</sup> ashamed to be called their GOD. Heb. xi. 16. Ye shall be my people, and I will be your GOD. Jer. xxx. 22. I am your GOD, saith the LORD. Ezek. xxxiv. 31. Fear thou not, I am thy GOD. Isai. xli. 10. Thy maker is thy husband ; the GOD of the whole earth. liv. 5. This GOD is our GOD for ever and ever. Pf. xlviii. 14. I will give them a heart to know me that I am the LORD, and they shall return to me with their whole heart, Jer. xxiv. 7. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. Jer. xxxi. 3. Precious in my sight, and honourable, and I have loved thee. Isai. xliii. 4. I will rejoice over them to do

them good—with my whole heart and my whole  
 soul. Jer. xxxii. 41. I will love them freely.  
 Hosea xiv. 4. The LORD thy GOD in the midst  
 of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice  
 over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he  
 will joy over thee with singing. Zeph. iii. 17.  
 The LORD delighteth in thee. Isai. lxii. 4. As  
 the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall  
 thy GOD rejoice over thee. Ver. 5. Herein is  
 love, not that we loved GOD, but that he loved  
 us. 1 John iv. 10. GOD is love; he that dwelleth  
 in love, dwelleth in GOD, and GOD in him.  
 1 John iv. 16. He shall feed his flock like a  
 shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his  
 arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently  
 lead. Isai. xl. 11. If any man love me he shall  
 be loved of my father, and I will love him, and  
 will manifest myself to him; and we will come to  
 him, and make our abode with him. John xiv.  
 18, 21. Truly our fellowship is with the father,  
 and with his son Jesus Christ. 1 John i. 3. If  
 any man hear my voice, and open the door, I  
 will come in to him, and will sup with him, and  
 he with me. Rev. iii. 20. I will pour out my  
 spirit unto you. Prov. i. 23. My spirit shall  
 not depart. Isai. lix. 21. The spirit of the  
 LORD shall lift up a standard against him. lix. 19.  
 I will put my spirit within you, and cause you  
 to walk in my statutes. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. How  
 much

much more shall your heavenly father give the holy spirit to them that ask him. Luke xi. 13. If thou knewest the gift of God—he would have given thee living water—the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up to everlasting life. John iv. 10—14. Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water—this spake he of the spirit. John vii. 38, 39. I will pray the father, and he shall give you another comforter; even the spirit of truth—who shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. John xiv. 16—26. Ye have received the spirit of adoption—the spirit helpeth our infirmities. Rom. viii. 15, 26. The spirit beareth witness with our spirit. Ver. 16. Ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise. Eph. i. 13. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, which is given to us. Rom. v. 5. Another comforter shall abide with you for ever—I will not leave you comfortless. John xiv. 16, 18. The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost. Rom. xiv. 17.

These glorious declarations are a copy of God's gracious heart towards his people on earth; and it will be your wisdom, as much as it is your duty and happiness, O! believers, to revolve these rich portions of the covenant of grace every day in your mind and affections. These precious

and fair representations have the highest tendency to raise your understanding to higher esteem for the excellent nature of God, excite you to a more intense desire after his presence, urge you to a more ardent good-will towards him and his interest, and cherish in your souls a more vigorous and intense delight in his lovely character, and bring you by degrees to an habitual joy in God, which will give an invincible strength to your hearts, and be an happiness as large as your wishes, and immortal as your existence.

We will now give a short clear representation of God's heart towards his enemies, to the end that they may know what they are to expect from his justice if they proceed in their TREASON and REBELLION. The LORD Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the GOSPEL of our LORD Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired by all them that believe. 2 Thes. i. 7—10. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Pf. ix. 17. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Pf. l. 22. It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that  
made



made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour. *Isai. xxvii. 11.* Surely these are poor, they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment, i. e. the wise determination and counsel of their God—I will get me to the great men; for they have known the way of the LORD: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. *Jer. v. 4, 5.* He that believeth not shall be damned. *Mark xvi. 16.* He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. *John iii. 18.* If thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, in the field, in thy basket and store, in the fruit of thy body and thy land, in thy kine, sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou goest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. *Deut. xxviii. 15—21.*

Who shall dwell with devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? *Isai. xxxiii. 14.* Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee? *Ezek. xxii. 14.* The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived: neither FORNICATORS, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves

themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor COVETOUS, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of GOD. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. If any man love not the LORD Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha, i. e. accursed when the LORD shall come. Whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge. Heb. xiii. 4. If any man shall worship the beast and his image, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of GOD, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the lamb. Rev. xiv. 9, 10. This is one of the most dreadful threatenings in the whole book of GOD! (Doddridge in loc.) may the friends of the most corrupt religion weigh its awful contents, that they may keep at the greatest possible distance from this horrible curse! He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. For without are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lye. Rev. xxii. 11, 15.

Thus you see, my dear reader, that GOD'S SINCERITY gives us a plain account of all the GOOD things we may expect from him in a way of duty, and all the EVIL and dreadful things we may expect from him in a way of sin and rebellion  
 against