

a presence of power to support, by a presence of goodness to supply, and a presence of light and love to cheer the heart, which no agonies can withstand, no terrors can vanquish, and which will finally triumph over all opposition.

In the approaches of death, and in our conflicts with that LAST ENEMY, GOD will give us the light of his countenance, as a kind and GRACIOUS FATHER : he will impress on our hearts a sense of the excellent honour he has done us in the great act of ADOPTION, which transcends all the other acts of sovereign grace : and if he shall be pleased to infuse into our souls the spirit of adoption in the agonies of death, we shall then realize the hand of a father, and say, I am dying at my father's command ; I die by my father's hand, and under the favour of his propitious smiles and approbation. *

This precious book throws open before our eyes the SUFFERINGS and DEATH of Christ, and the infinite worth and efficacy of his blood, as a rich consolation to our souls in the approaches and agonies of death. The true christian may say, " Christ, by dying, has taken away the sting of death ; he has exhausted the curse, dissolved my obligation to punishment, has altered the property and changed the face of death, so that
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* The last words Dr. Gill spoke, were, " Oh, my father ! my father ! " He died Oct. 14, 1771, aged 73.—See his Life in the Collection of Sermons and Tracts, vol. 1. 4to. 1773.

he cannot appear as the horrible king of terrors, but is changed into a messenger of peace to fetch me home to my father's house, and the bosom of God."

The gospel shews us Christ lying DEAD in his GRAVE to comfort us against the fears of death. See that dead body in that tomb: Whose is it? See his hands, his feet, his head, his side! How is that body drained of blood and bereft of life! and for what end? O! says Dr. Owen, he is lovely in his death; yea, therein, most lovely to sinners: never more glorious and desirable, than when he came broken, and dead from the cross: then he had carried all our sins out of the sight of divine justice: then had he made peace and reconciliation for us: then had he procured life and immortality for us.—See his admirable book on Communion with God. 1657. p. 86.

See the Lord Jesus in his RESURRECTION and absolute VICTORY over death and the grave. This is a delightful sight to a dying believer; and this view the gospel affords to every true christian in the world. See the angel descends from heaven in flames of fire; his countenance blazes like lightening; he rolls back the ponderous stone, and, in dazzling glory, he sits upon it, flashing fire and terror on the Roman guards: they become as dead men: they are not worthy to see the Lord arise. See him coming out of his

grave, like a mighty conqueror, never more to die; but always to triumph over Satan, death, and sin. Let the dying christian fix his eye on this rising God, and insult death: O! tyrant, where is thy sting! O! grave, where is thy victory!

This volume of Inspiration shews us the ASCENSION of JESUS into heaven with amazing triumph, and sitting down, surrounded with honour, at God's right hand. O! christian, in a few hours, perhaps in a few moments, thou wilt be with him where he is, to behold his glory, and to share in the joys of his triumphs over death: thou wilt look down on thy pale dead body, and smile to find thy soul released, and that death has done his worst to thy mortal frame.

This glorious and immortal book shews to the dying christian, in a strong point of light, the VITAL UNION between CHRIST and his SOUL, as an invincible and victorious CONSOLATION. O! believer, Christ is thy life; and, because he lives, thou shalt live also: his flesh is meat indeed: his blood is drink indeed: and thou hast eat his flesh and drank his blood by faith; therefore Christ lives in thee, and thou livest in Christ. His life secures eternal life to thy soul; and thou mayst defy death, and bid him do his worst; he can never touch thy nobler part; thy life from Christ is eternal as the duration of God himself;
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the first fruits of heaven are thine now.—See Dr. Watts on the First Fruits of Heaven, in his World to come. 8vo.

The gospel assures us, that death shall totally deliver us from all TEMPORAL EVILS. What a confluence of temporal evils do we meet with? Weariness, and sickness, and pains of the body—crosses and losses in business—the malice and slander of wicked men—the haughty contempt of the proud—the bitter words of the angry and quarrelsome—the baseness, deceit, and treachery of pretended friends; and the folly and fickleness of real ones—with the scandalous falls of the preachers of the gospel—the vile apostacy of splendid professors, and the horrible crimes that break out in their lives and conversation. All these, with a thousand other troubles, vex the true christian's soul, and excite him to wish for that world of blessedness, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Death will deliver us from all the sad IMPERFECTIONS of our INTERNAL CHARACTER, and free us from the power, deceit, and enmity of IN-DWELLING SIN; and this would make a christian not only willing, but ardently desirous to die. We all find a law of sin and death working within us: a powerful, efficacious principle, or mighty spring of corrupt and guilty action. We find that our heart is the seat or subject

of the law of sin; and that the heart, as possessed by sin, is deeply deceitful, and awfully unsearchable by man. That we are the subject of inveterate enmity against God: an enmity that admits of no peace with God, or rest in him: an enmity which strikes at the existence, attributes, and happiness of God; and which discovers itself by aversion to him, and a propensity to all sin, with an opposition to all that is in God, attended with a lusting or most violent and insatiable desire after all sorts of evil, surprising the soul into lust, and having an eagerness to close with every kind of temptation: acting with the deepest deceit, hiding of its ends and ultimate design, which is to draw the soul intirely off from God, and bring us into eternal death: poisoning and polluting the imagination, entangling and enflaming the affections, and making violent attempts, by its deceit, to bring the will and passions to consent to sin; which is, in Scripture, stiled the conception of sin. James i. 15. When LUST hath CONCEIVED, it bringeth forth SIN; and SIN, when it finished, bringeth forth DEATH. Every man is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. James i. 14, 15. But the moment we die, we are released from all the force, deceit, and enmity of this infinitely dreadful evil, indwelling sin,* and feel ourselves holy and

* See Dr. OWEN'S incomparable book on INDWELLING SIN, new edit. 12mo. recommended by six London divines, 1774.—Sold by Keith.

and happy to eternity : which leads us to observe, that

This revelation discovers the HAPPY STATE of our souls from the MOMENT of our DEATH. The Scriptures despise and scorn the absurd notion of the sleep or annihilation of the soul, at the death of the body : they assure us, that the moment we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord. 2 Cor. v. 8. And that to depart and be with Christ, is far better, (*pollo gar mallon kreiffon*, better beyond expression, transcendently better.) Philip. i. 23. This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Luke xxiii. 43. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, (*aparti*) immediately, or henceforth, they are blessed. Rev. xiv. 13. The spirits of just men made perfect Heb. xii. 23. Perfect in light, without any darkness : perfect in knowledge, without ignorance : perfect in holiness, without sin : perfect in joy, without sorrow : perfect blessedness, without the least misery ! What a flood of life, light, and beauty will pour in upon our ravished souls in a moment ! and how happy shall we feel ourselves, in the twinkling of an eye, when we have parted with this clod of polluted clay, and commence burning seraphs before the throne of God !

This divine book opens to our view the GLO-
RIOUS RESURRECTION of the body, and the rap-

turous meeting of soul and body at that happy hour when God shall fulfil his promises. Thy dead men shall live. *Isai. xxvi. 19.* They that be wise shall shine as the firmament; and as the stars for ever and ever. *Dan. xii. 3.* I will redeem them from death. O! death, I will be thy plagues; O! grave, I will be thy destruction. *Hof. xiii. 14.* Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their father. *Matth. xiii. 43.* They shall be like the angels which are in heaven. *Mark xii. 25.* There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory: so also is the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: the last Adam is an enlivening spirit, the first is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven: as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly: in a moment the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible: for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality: then shall be verified that saying, **DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.** O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks
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be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ; therefore let us be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. xv. 58.

You see the TERRORS and GLORY of the RESURRECTION of the DEAD, and the LAST JUDGMENT, set in the strongest light and evidence. You do, as it were, hear the last trumpet resound : you see the judge appear : angels blaze like millions of flames : the dead arise : the world is all on fire : the heavens pass away with a great noise : the elements melt with fervent heat : the books are thrown open : eternity is all disclosed to view : the criminals stand at the bar : all the private and public wrongs of impenitent sinners are laid bare before the whole attentive world of saints and angels : you see the judge, with all the blazing glory of a GOD, outshining ten thousand suns, riding on the clouds of heaven, and those clouds illuminated by gold and scarlet sun-beams : himself an object of the highest wonder and terror, wearing on his head many crowns, brighter than all the starry heavens united in one grand constellation : he comes to judge the whole world of souls and devils : he comes to give the grandest blessings, and inflict eternal deaths : he comes to be admired and adored by all the redeemed and
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saved sinners, who now see the most grand, new, and beautiful objects before their eyes: they see their favour at the head of more than a thousand millions of saved sinners, who were all sorts of characters in their state of nature and sin: they see the most stubborn rebels bowed in their wills to GOD—filthy wretches washed white in blood—destitute souls all cloathed in one divine righteousness; having all fought their way to heaven, through armies of devils and seas of blood, and the fiercest opposition: we shall then see how the most dark and adverse providences have all worked together for good: afflictions as bitter as wormwood, and dark as midnight and hell, all uniting to urge us forward into the performance of nobler actions, brighter graces, and good works; and into the bosom of Christ in heaven itself.

You see, in the light of divine revelation, how heaven is richly filled out of this hell on earth: and our hell on earth replenishes the vast expanse of heaven with ten thousand times ten thousand souls, attracted from sin to holiness, from misery to happiness, from impotence to divine activity, from filthy vile bodies, and devilish tempers, into the beautiful resemblance of the perfections of God.

But we must conclude this Contemplation with observing, that this astonishing book discovers,
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in the most clear and vivid light, the two eternal worlds of heaven and hell. We see heaven to be a state of light, without darkness; of holiness, without sin; of joy, without sorrow. 'Tis the perfection of the intellectual, moral, social, and divine life: the eternal repose and delight of the happy soul in the perfect love and blessedness of God.

This awful and sublime book sets before us the eternity and extremity of the terrors of hell: we see, in the light of this tremendous volume, the final state of all wicked souls and damned angels: you see here the final triumphs of holiness over sin, of justice over unrighteousness, of virtue over vice, of wisdom over the craft of men and devils, and of the absolute, independent, and eternal dominion of God over the madness, rebellion, and treason of men and devils: here you see that sin is an infinite evil, as it strikes at all possible and infinite good, exposes to an infinite loss, and fixes a stain in the soul of a sinner through an infinite duration!

Now, what book but this could ever give us such astonishing discoveries of the two eternal worlds! What book but this could ever shew us millions of happy saints saved by one, redeeming God; and millions of miserable sinners deceived, cheated, bewitched, and damned by one devil: millions of poor feeble bodies, made up

of dust and ashes, raised to life and immortal glory; and millions of ugly, putrid carcases raised to shame, contempt, and eternal deformity; ten thousand times ten thousand souls made the reflecting mirrours of the ugly, detestable devil; and millions of holy souls outshining the sun in the kingdom of their father, and made reflecting mirrours of the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person and perfections for ever and ever.

R E C O L L E C T I O N.

And now, my reader, let us review the force of this argument, for the divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, drawn from the goodness of the doctrine, or its tendency to remove all the evils we feel or fear, and to promote our truest pleasure and highest happiness in the eternal fruition of God!

We have seen the astonishing advancement which God has made on the glory of his own character, in the work of redemption—the relations of God to our world, and to man, cleared up—the original purity and perfection of human nature—its present depravity, ruin, and impotence—the grand and surprizing burst of grace and mercy to lost man in the gospel—the real, perfect, and infinite satisfaction of Christ—the glory of his righteousness and vital union with
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him—the special aids of his spirit—the dignity and immortality of the soul set in the most striking light by the gospel—the law of nature cleared up, enlarged, and enforced, beyond all that meer reason ever knew—the nature, beauty, and glory of evangelical holiness and social virtue displayed in the most vivid colours—the richest and most alluring examples of holiness proposed for our imitation—the strongest supports under the troubles of life, and the approaches of death—the glory and terror of the general resurrection and the last judgment—with the brightest discoveries of final happiness and misery in heaven and hell.

And now, my reader, lay your hand upon your heart, and honestly ask yourself these questions. Can a book, full of such tremendous and adorable discoveries, be false? Can it be the invention of men? Are these the words of bad or of good men? Is it possible that these should be cunningly-devised fables? No, no; 'tis impossible! this book must be the work of GOD! it must be the production of his eternal spirit: and if this be a most undoubted and important truth, then what deep regard, what ardent affection, and veneration are due to this precious, this divine and immortal book!

We will, therefore, refer the consideration of the miracles, and the fulfilment of prophecies,

to the second volume; and proceed now to a delightful Contemplation on the holy Dispositions and devout Affections, which are due to the inspired Scriptures of God.

Select BOOKS to be read on the above CONTEMPLATION, concerning the GOODNESS and BEAUTY of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. The BEAUTY, CERTAINTY, and PLEASURES of RELIGION are displayed with peculiar clearness of thought, and elegance of style, by the pious and ingenious Mr. HENRY GROVE.—See his works in 8vo.

2. On a more evangelical plan, and with greater amplitude of thought, read Dr. SAMUEL STENNETT'S two volumes of Sermons on PERSONAL RELIGION. These discourses are composed with great perspicuity of thought and expression; and contain such an extensive view of the nature, rise, progress, and perfection of vital religion in the soul, as must necessarily charm every man of true taste and devotion in the world; and, if considered in connection with Dr. EVANS on the CHRISTIAN TEMPER, and Dr. DODDRIDGE'S Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, will form the brightest scheme of practical religion.

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H O L Y S C R I P T U R E S.

ADMIRATION and VENERATION are due to the BOOK of GOD, on ACCOUNT of its NEWNESS and awful GRANDEUR.—VITAL FAITH in the TRUTH of the BIBLE.—ESTEEM for the SCRIPTURES, as most excellent in themselves.—Ardent DESIRE after the KNOWLEDGE of them, and the POSSESSION of the infinite GOOD contained in the PROMISES.—BENEVOLENCE, or GOOD WILL is due to this sacred BOOK in the highest EXERTION.—GRATITUDE to GOD for a divine REVELATION; and to the SON of GOD for sealing this precious VOLUME with his BLOOD; and to the HOLY SPIRIT for his INSPIRATION of the PROPHETS and APOSTLES.—GRATITUDE to DIVINE PROVIDENCE that we have a BIBLE perfected, preserved, translated, and now expounded by the best of our BRITISH DIVINES.—DELIGHT in the SCRIPTURES, as the richest DISCOVERY of the supreme GOOD,

CHRIST

CHRIST JESUS.—HOPE, a lively vigorous HOPE in the exceeding great and precious PROMISES and BLESSINGS revealed in the SCRIPTURE.—SUBJECTION and entire OBEDIENCE of SOUL and CONSCIENCE to the whole WILL of GOD in SCRIPTURE.—ZEAL for the HONOUR and PROPAGATION of the GOSPEL at home and abroad.

I. **A**DMIRATION and veneration are due to the sacred Scriptures of God! Admiration is a pleasing emotion of the soul, arising from the perception of any object which is new and agreeable. Veneration arises from an object, grand, awful, and sublime.—Now, my dear readers, what can be so new and agreeable to our souls as to see the glorious discoveries of the nature, perfections, and thoughts of God, displayed before our ravished souls: to see ten thousand new and strange ideas, concerning objects before time, in time, and after time; objects which are quite beyond the verge of the human understanding, and out of the province of reason to explore. 'Tis astonishing goodness in God to give creatures a divine revelation, who had abused the light of nature in the works of creation, and who had so horribly violated the law of nature within us. 'Tis wonderful condescension in God to give us a superior light to direct us to happiness, when we had played the
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fool with the powers of reason and conscience. Surely we ought to tremble at the profusion of divine goodness, and, with the deepest reverence and adoration, receive this immortal book as from the immediate bosom and hand of God.

Great God of heaven and earth! what do we owe thee for a divine revelation! what do we not owe thee! We owe thee more than ten thousand worlds can pay. We are overpowered, we are delightfully oppressed with the exceeding riches of thy grace, we are lost in wonder, we are overwhelmed with veneration and holy awe of thy majesty and mercy to creatures so unworthy and provoking, so guilty and abominable; we tremble at the profusions of thy goodness, and we receive the infinite blessing of a divine revelation, with a mixture of grateful confusion and sacred astonishment, being conscious of our utter unworthiness of such an unspeakable favour of God to man.

II. VITAL FAITH in the TRUTH of this REVELATION is another disposition of soul due to the holy Scriptures. Faith is the confident expectation of blessings desired, and the convincing evidence of invisible transactions. Heb. xi. 1. Faith is a firm and steadfast assent of the understanding to the testimony of God in his word; and an hearty consent of the will to the goodness
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and sweetness, the fitness and beauty, of that testimony. It is my own real sentiment, that no demonstration in geometry can be more certain to the mind of a mathematician than the testimony of GOD is to the mind of a christian. Yea, I will advance a step farther, and dare to affirm, that GOD, speaking in his word, gives greater satisfaction to a wise and sound believer than any geometrical truth could ever give even to the mind of a NEWTON : and my reason for it is this, The mind of a serious and honest christian, being enlightened and rectified by divine grace, is better fitted to discern and receive the grand truths of revelation than the mind of a mathematician is to discern all the steps of a laborious demonstration in geometry : it requires great strength of understanding and memory to grasp ten or twelve ideas at once, and to discern the agreement of those ideas with each other, so as to draw a genuine and just conclusion from the whole, that shall be as certain to the mind as the very first principle with which you set out : every man that has exercised himself in EUCLID'S ELEMENTS knows this to be fact. But a christian has a shorter and a clearer road to divine truth : his first business is to sit down with a calm and honest mind, and with this simple and solid axiom in his understanding, " WHATEVER GOD SAYS, MUST BE TRUE." He is then to consider