

he carried it tenderly to poor people, and relieved them in ten thousand ways. Christ had a fund ready always to relieve the poor: his heart was delighted with acts of goodness towards them: he felt an high gratification in soothing the sorrows and relieving their wants: and he did all manner of good freely for the sake of pleasing and refreshing his own heart with the doing of it: he was a stranger to mean selfishness: he hoped for nothing again, but what in them was the fruit of his own grace: he continued in a course of doing good with resolute delight, without weariness or stopping his hand, though he met with base returns and ungrateful usage from his disciples and others around him: and he still continues in a course of active and unwearied benevolence to his people and mankind all over the world, every moment.

Christ's goodness and mercy to his bitter enemies.

This transcends all the conceptions of men and angels, and defies all the power of eloquence to display its riches and glory.

Christ was born to live and die for his enemies: he hungered, thirsted, prayed, and preached, for the sake of his enemies: he travelled, and laboured, and sweat, and wept, and bled, for his worst enemies: he was tempted, and mocked, spit upon, and buffeted, and crucified, and dead,  
and

and buried, and rose again, for the salvation and happiness of his enemies : he spoke good words to his enemies : he exerted good actions against their bad actions, and was unwearied in his kind conduct towards them : he never let the evil of his people's bad temper and actions get the power over him, so as to excite him to vengeance and wrath. Christ never retains a secret grudge against his people's souls, for their former provoking behaviour towards him ; nor does he desire that evil may befall his people, though they often affront him by their vile lukewarmness and black ingratitude. O ! the height and depth of the riches of the love of Christ ! how unfathomable are his gracious purposes, and his ways of mercy are past finding out !

## 2. JUSTICE and universal EQUITY in CHRIST.

Christ had the most righteous heart that ever was formed by God. In him you see the most perfect universal rectitude of mind and manners that ever was seen in the vast empire of God.

The justice of Christ consists in his ardent and immutable regard to the rights of the divine nature ; and to all the divine persons in that nature, with a determined attention to preserve those rights inviolate to eternity. He also felt the utmost regard to the rights of mankind, and resolved never to violate those rights in any instance

stance whatsoever. Never, no, never did any person pay such strict and invariable attention to justice in all his thoughts, words, and actions, as Christ. In his temper and conduct you see no rudeness, or harsh manners; no unkindness, or surly carriage; no violence, or spite; no bitterness of spirit; no oppressive and cruel conduct; no ingratitude for any kind services done to him; no tyrannic temper; no spirit of persecution, or injury done to men in their civil rights, on account of the faith they professed, or the worship they practised. When his fierce disciples were for calling for fire from heaven to burn the people that used him basely, he turned and rebuked them, with these pungent words: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Luke ix. 55. On the other hand, what affability and courteousness appear in all his temper and manners! what strict regards to the rights of conscience! how carefully did he avoid every thing that would injure the mind and spirit of others; and how ready to communicate wise thoughts and good affections, with every thing which one mind could do for another, in order to its becoming wise and good.

In Christ you see the utmost love of truth. There was the most beautiful conformity of his words and actions to the upright intentions of his heart: and he never violated the law of  
rational

rational and moral truth for one moment in the whole course of his life. These glorious qualities and perfections shone forth, like the sun in its meridian splendor, in the temper, life, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. But who can describe all his boundless beneficence, or his indefatigable delight in doing good? who can declare all his merciful, tender, and forgiving actions, which streamed from his heart every hour and moment?

O! how rich was his forgiveness to all humble penitents who fell at his feet? how totally did he suppress all vindictive sentiments? how did he preserve a kind, benevolent disposition towards the offender! what most solemn assurances did he give to Peter, and other penitents, of his perfect, hearty reconciliation! and how generously did he admit them into all the confidence of his friendship, and the tenderest feelings and melting mercy of his whole heart! With his last dying breath he begged of his father to forgive his murderers; and about seven weeks after, he washed three thousand of them in his blood, which they had shed, and took them into his very soul.

What an ASSEMBLAGE of GRACES and BEAUTIES are yet behind, which shone in Christ's temper and life with a lustre before unknown, and since  
absolutely

absolutely unparalleled!---See Dr. Doddridge's fine description of the temper of Christ, in his preface to Fam. Expos. vol. iii.

I. What TEMPERANCE and SOBRIETY !

His natural appetites were never too strong and impetuous: his desires never once became disproportionable to their object, so as to exceed the bounds of reason, and hurry him on to an unseasonable or excessive gratification of them: nor were his appetites ever improperly or unseasonably gratified. Not an instance can be given of the improper or unseasonable indulgence of any appetite in the whole course of his life. Our greatest danger arises from the *excessive* indulgence of our appetites: be they ever so innocent, or the gratification of them ever so seasonable, yet, if this be carried to an immoderate degree, it becomes sinful. But never; no, never, did Christ discover the least excess of indulgence of any appetite or passion: his appetites and passions were obedient to reason, and his reason was perfectly obedient to God.

2. What CHASTITY of BODY, MIND, and IMAGINATION !

Christ had a fixed abhorrence of every species of impurity, and the sweetest sense of the dignity of chastity: and he was conscious that he possessed that dignity in the highest degree of perfection  
in

in his body, soul, passions, and imagination! He inculcated the strictest chastity on all his disciples: not only an abstinence from the gross outward acts of uncleanness, but from impure thoughts and polluting desires: to this end he opened and explained the spiritual intention of the seventh commandment. Matth. v. 27--30. And his practice was the finest illustration of his own exposition; for he lived at the utmost distance from every thing of an unchaste nature in body, soul, and imagination! O! my friends, let us blush when we review our past temper; and let us, with infinite ardour, imitate the lovely example of our dearest and best friend, redeemer, and God!

### 3. What DILIGENCE and ACTIVITY for the GLORY and INTEREST of GOD!

Christ abhorred all sloth and idleness every moment of his life! he never spent one minute in trifling or impertinence: he never did one thing that was to no good purpose, nor did he mis-time the actions of life, or the business that God appointed him. You see no delays or put-offs in his conduct: he never deferred till to-morrow the great work that was to be done to-day. But you see in him a wisdom and dignity in the employment of every part of his time---he was always early in his business for God and man---he was all life, activity, and vigour,  
every

every hour of the day---he was constant in his labours, without ever fainting or going back; and gloriously persisted in his labours with a noble resolution, and steadfast perseverance, to his death. O! that we did but blush at our laziness; and may we be animated by his lovely example to be always abounding in the work of the Lord to the very end of our life!

4. What HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS and continual SELF-ADVANCEMENT appear in CHRIST!

Our glorious master had the most vivid and realizing views of the heavenly glory: he had the most confident expectation of things hoped for; and the evidence, the demonstration, the most piercing conviction of things not seen; i. e. invisible persons, transactions, and blessings: these are things which could not possibly be seen by an eye of sense: he knew there was a glorious heaven, and he felt it in his soul: he was a living, moving heaven, wherever he went, by day and by night: he had all the dispositions of heart that were suited to the heavenly state and world: he lived and breathed in the very air of heaven: his life and imagination, passions and taste, were all in heaven, every moment: and from this fixed and ardent desire of heaven, he had the most sublime views of self-advancement, which made him wise in the conduct of himself, and kept him continually in a proper frame of mind.

The

The great Dr. Samuel Wright wisely observes, " We are all sensible of the happy frame and temper a person may be put into, by a good PROSPECT OF ADVANCING HIMSELF TO any thing desirable and *honourable* in life."---If we have regular and well-grounded views of such ADVANCEMENT, it gives an easiness to our minds under present difficulties and disadvantages; it puts us upon a dignity of conduct that is more suited to our expected state than to our present state. Our spirits are amplified, greatened, and moulded, by our hopes, in proportion to the *value* we set upon that exalted station we have in our eye, and the desire we have toward it. Thus it was with our adorable Lord and master: heaven was full in his eye, and his whole soul darted out in one continued ardent desire after the full fruition of his father's glory, and the deepest depths of his boundless love. These views of being advanced to be the wonder and ornament, the sovereign and commander of the whole creation of God, inspired him with such a sublimity of spirit, such a serenity of mind, and such decorum of action, as struck all the angels with the utmost veneration and astonishment.

5. What SINCERITY and INTEGRITY of HEART!

Christ had always a single intention and aim to please God, and approve himself to him,  
D d through



through his whole course. The pleasing of God was his prevailing aim, and the ardent design of his heart and life. He made an impartial enquiry into the whole extent of his duty to God and man; and exerted himself to the very utmost in an intire and universal application to the practice of obedience, without any reserve, or exception to the least part of the will of God. His pure and noble sincerity comprehends INTEGRITY in its bright burning lustre, or the making conscience of the whole compass of duty to his heavenly father, and all mankind. His governing end was to please God, which made him as carefully pursue that end as though there was nothing else in the whole universe that deserved one moment's attention through every period of his immortal existence: and in every minute of his life he was impartial in his searches what the mind and will of God was; and universal obedience to all the known will of God was his stated aim, his steady resolution, and zealous endeavour: and through the whole there was a lovely correspondence and harmony between the inward sentiments of his heart, the words of his mouth, and the actions of his life.

6. What TENDERNESS of HEART ran through all his TEMPER towards GOD and MAN!

There never was a soul in the world, which had such a lively sense of spiritual and eternal objects,

objects, as the precious soul of Christ: he had a quick and ready sense and feeling in spiritual things: he had a keenness and life in his apprehension of all divine objects: light in the mind was the guide of all his powers and actions: he had ready reflections of conscience, to mark the precise difference between moral good and evil, with as much exactness as the EYE perceives a difference in COLOURS, or the EAR a difference in SOUNDS, or the TASTE a difference in FOODS: he had a tender, pliable disposition to yield to all divine influences of the holy Spirit, and to engage him in the practice of universal obedience: he had a tender regard to the word of God in all its discoveries: he had a ready and reverential subjection of soul to the absolute prerogative and dominion of God in its utmost extent, without the least exception or reluctance for a single moment of his life: he had a tender aversion to all sin, a tender submission to all the events of providence, and a most tender regard to the honour and dignity, and glory of God: he did all in his power to promote the divine glory: and he rejoiced in every thing that had a tendency to advance the dignity of God's moral character through the whole course of his life.

7. What resolute PERSEVERANCE and CONSTANCY  
in great and good ACTIONS!

His exercise of grace and duty to GOD and  
D d 2 man,

man, was habitual and constant, in opposition to that which is merely occasional, or by fits and starts of duty. It was the steady, and determinate design and purpose of Christ to adhere to God and his duty at all times. Vital religion was the stated and ordinary business of his life: and in this glorious temper and course he persisted to the end of his days. The steadfastness of Christ in religion was the glory of his character: his course of obedience was exactly uniform, regular, and without any fickleness or variation: he was strenuously obedient unto death, and finished the work that God gave him to do. O! that we, my dear brethren, may follow him to the end of our course, and be generously faithful to death.

8. What ZEAL for good works appears in  
CHRIST!

Zeal is a mixture of love and anger; of love to God, and anger at all things which injure the character and glory of God.

The glory of God is the most illustrious appearance of all his perfections in the works of creation and redemption.

Zeal is a most deep and ardent concern for the best and dearest objects in the world; i. e. the glorious God and the souls of men. Christ had these objects deeply at heart, and they never escaped

escaped his attention for a single moment of his life. The zeal of God's house eat him up; i. e. devoured his very spirits, and absorbed his whole soul. In God's house the lost prospects of God are restored to precious souls; and the lost souls of men are restored to the image and fruition of God. Christ had a strong and forcible desire to promote the genuine influence of the most important and glorious principles of the gospel in the souls of his people, attended with a kind and candid spirit, tempered by benevolence, guided by knowledge, sweetened with meekness, unleavened by a party spirit and blind bigotry, conscientious in his regards to the utmost obligations of God, and adjusted to the evidence and importance of the glorious truths of divine revelation.

Christ paid the greatest attention to all those persons and things that are allowed to be of the highest concern, and was affected towards them in proportion to their importance, usefulness, and glory, which he, as the wisest and greatest person, did always desire to feel, in order to secure the greatest possible good; i. e. the very utmost exertion of all the perfections and persons of the Godhead, in the effectual and boundless salvation of the whole world of his people.

Christ's zeal was the sprightly vigour and strenuous activity of every holy affection and disposition of his pure and spotless soul; and his earnestness

earnestness and intenseness in every spiritual act, of love, of faith in God, of hope and trust, of resignation to God, and resolution for him. It was the performance of every act of devotion with life and close application, as the most upright servant of God; and with the exercise of those holy dispositions which are suitable to it.

Christ was exceeding zealous for all manner of GOOD WORKS, that were for the honour of God and the happiness of immortal souls. To be zealous of good works, is to be very *forward* to engage in them, *cheerful* in performing them, *solicitous* to do our very utmost in them, that they may be more for QUANTITY and better for QUALITY than ever. And, O! where can we find a soul so zealous as Christ, for the promotion and practice of the richest good works every hour of his life. Surely, he was *forward* to engage in them, *cheerful* in the performance, and *solicitous* to exert himself to the very utmost in them. Never, never, did men or angels behold such amazing good works for the vast abundance in quantity, and so superlatively beautiful in quality, as those performed by our Lord Jesus Christ! O! believers, strive to imitate your blessed Lord; and let your good works be more for QUANTITY, and better for QUALITY, than ever appeared before since you made a profession of faith, and entered into a vital connexion with your blessed Lord.---This leads us to observe, 9. What

9. What astonishing and boundless **BENEFICENCE** and **MERCY** appear in the **TEMPER** and **CONDUCT** of **CHRIST**!

Christ loved to do real good\* to all round about him; and was as ready to promote their interest as his own. Indeed, he made the interest of his dear people his own to all intents and purposes. He came into the world on purpose to diffuse the immense goodness of God all through the nations of the earth to the end of time. Christ was quickened in his ardour to do good, by the consideration that the objects to whom he did good, were dying creatures, stepping fast into eternity; and that if good was not done to them now, they must be lost for ever. Therefore his whole life was one incessant act of kindness, one uninterrupted series of godlike beneficence. This yielded him the sweetest satisfaction of soul; and it was the joy of his heart to exert, to the uttermost, all the talents of his holy mind, in the very best manner, to do good to the souls and bodies of mankind: and he prosecuted his design with indefatigable industry, so that no ingratitude could bear down or extinguish his generous temper: mercy to the guilty, to the poor, and to the miserable, was the constant triumph of his godlike heart. O! my reader,

\* Dr. Cotton Mather was a glorious imitator of Christ. Every morning, for forty years, he asked himself this question, "What good shall I do to DAY?"

reader, is not your soul struck with wonder and delight at this lovely temper, which is so full of beneficence, mercy, and forgiveness? and doth not your heart glow with the utmost ardour to resemble, as much as possible, so charming and godlike a temper!

10. What SUPERIORITY to the WORLD and all its attractive BLANDISHMENTS!

He clearly discerned the vanity\* of all things here below, and the utter insufficiency of worldly good to make a soul happy. You see in Christ's temper and conduct a visible contempt of those things in which worldly men place their chief joy. Earthly wealth, pleasures, and preferments, (that three-fold cord whereby the god of this world is drawing the men of it into everlasting perdition) he refused and despised, as vain and dangerous; and chose to appear in a low state of life to set an example to the poor people of God.

11. The DIGNITY of CHRIST'S SOUL, and the DECORUM and BEAUTY of his CONDUCT, as the RESULT of that DIGNITY.

Christ was in a state of settled honour in his soul, arising from a vivid consciousness of the  
supreme

\* See that smart little piece, *The VANITY of the WORLD*, 12mo. 1668, by the eloquent and nervous bishop Hopkins. I wish it was reprinted in a small size for the pocket, like Mrs. Rowe's *Devout Exercises of the Heart*, 24°.

supreme powers of his understanding and reason, and the lovely qualities of holiness and beauty in his heart, which rendered him infinitely superior to all the race of mankind: these godlike qualities inspired him with an habitual, ardent self-esteem, on account of his intense union of soul with the Godhead in the person of the eternal Son, in all his infinite perfections; and from this vital union he felt the most dignified dispositions, and the utmost grandeur of the passions; carrying him into the most noble actions and honourable conduct; introducing him into the most glorious distinctions that God's intense love could bestow; in the holy life of God; in the empire of God; and in the tenderest approbations and sweetest delight of God.

Let us review this a little farther.

I repeat it again, what decorum and dignity appear in his character and conduct!

The propriety and consistency of his behaviour he maintained to the last; and it demands our observation, delight, and imitation.

The character he sustained was indeed very extraordinary and various; but in every part of it appeared a beautiful congruity.

In the mighty and miraculous works he wrought, the AUTHORITY with which he de-



livered his doctrines and precepts, and his unbounded GOODNESS---in these appeared the God.

His humility, meekness, mildness, condescension, courteousness, affability, pity, EASINESS of ACCESS, INOFFENSIVE TEMPER, compliance with the innocent CUSTOMS of life, and on a proper occasion encouraging VIRTUOUS CHEARFULNESS. These things shewed the man, the God-like man; and set HUMAN NATURE in its most AGREEABLE LIGHT: and surely a more lovely PICTURE of the dignity of human nature, men, angels, and God himself never saw or can see to eternity.

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

We have here surveyed the greatest character in life; and, from the depth of my soul, I adore God for sending his dear son to exhibit such a character to a lost, perishing world. And now, my dear readers, with this lovely and venerable object full in your view, let me intreat you to ask yourselves such questions as these:

Could a person who appears to have such a deep and divine sense of God upon his soul, such a trust in the divine providence, such a spirit of free and chearful obedience to the whole will of God, and such an ardent and sublime worshipper of God! could such a person be a wild enthusiast, or a base, deceitful impostor, engaged in an artful design to enslave and ruin mankind? Your heart

heart rises with a generous indignation at the thought, and you reply, No; these are not the dispositions or the words of him that hath a devil!

You have here seen the wisest consideration, the deepest humility, the sweetest meekness, the most perfect contentment, the finest prudence, and the most invincible fortitude, all united in one and the same heart and character! and can you for one moment admit of the least suspicion, that he was any other than the eternal Son of the most high God! and therefore must you not give the utmost credit to his sublime doctrine and mission!

We have surveyed his love to his people, and his benevolence to mankind: we have seen the most perfect justice in his temper and deportment to all the world.

We have viewed his personal and social graces, and have seen, with rapture and delight, his temperance, chastity, diligence, and activity---his heavenly-mindedness and aim at continual self-advancement in God---his utmost sincerity and integrity---his sensibility, or tenderness of heart towards God and man---his resolute perseverance in all great and good actions---his most ardent and unwearied zeal for the divine glory, and for the practice of all manner of good works---his boundless beneficence and mercy---his glorious superiority to the whole world and

all its blandishments---the dignity and grandeur of his soul; and the beauty and decorum of his daily conduct, as the result of that internal dignity! And now, O! ye men and angels, speak, and tell me, if it be possible that this person should be an impostor, to cheat, ruin, and destroy thousands of millions of his followers, for near eighteen hundred years past! Does the thought shock you, my reader? does the bare supposition fill you with astonishment and grief! then, O! then, how ought you to mourn in tears of blood to think of millions of wretched Britons, who, at this very moment, treat him as the most contemptible enthusiast, or the most abominable impostor: who treat his gospel as a bundle of cunningly-devised fables, or ruinous lies, obtruded on mankind.

A S U P P L E M E N T to this  
C O N T E M P L A T I O N.

A short VIEW of the MORAL CHARACTER of the  
PEN-MEN of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

If we survey the characters of Moses, Job, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the lesser prophets: if we survey the characters of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude: we shall find that they all had a deep and powerful sense of God, a firm trust in providence, a cheer-  
ful

ful obedience to the universal will of God, and were the most fervent and sublime worshippers of the divine perfections. If you view their temper and character with respect to themselves, you will see the most serious consideration, humility, meekness, contentment, prudence, and fortitude. If you view their temper and conduct with regard to the people of God and the people of the world, you see the most generous love, mercy, forgiveness, and beneficence: you see the purest justice and integrity of soul that ever dwelt in mortal breasts: you see the utmost sincerity, tenderness, perseverance, prudence, and zeal, running through all the branches of their temper, and spreading a life and beauty through their whole conduct to death. And can you with patience hear these most excellent men stiled mad enthusiasts, or rascally impostors! Can you believe that these men were deeply concerned in a villainous plot to cheat, rob, and delude the thousands and tens of thousands who received the Bible as a divine revelation at their hands?

In a word, that infidel who can suppose these men to be deluded enthusiasts, must himself be the most absurd and outrageous madman in the world: or if he can dare to think that they were artful impostors and designing knaves, he himself must be the most base and hell-hardened villain

villain that ever cursed the earth: he must necessarily be one of the most odious, the most abominable characters that ever appeared in the world.

On the other hand, the best and wisest of men will always have the highest esteem, the most generous good-will, and the utmost veneration and delight in these glorious writers, who were distinguished by the peculiar favour of God, and dignified with the inspirations of the Holy Spirit above all the men that ever lived or shall live to the end of time.

I now close my evidences of the divine authority of the Scriptures drawn from the GOODNESS of the doctrine, the working of MIRACLES, the fulfilment of PROPHECIES in ten views; and, lastly, the moral CHARACTER of the pen-men, especially the glorious CHARACTER of the DIVINE FOUNDER of the christian religion. And I beg my sensible and inquisitive readers would recollect the whole evidence at once, as far as their understanding and memory will reach, and then let them rise with me into the most respectful and ardent gratitude to God our saviour for so great, so unutterable a blessing as a clear, infallible, and DIVINE REVELATION!

O! thou great, eternal fountain of truth, goodness, and beauty, we adore thee for thine infinite compassions to lost, ruined man, discovered by  
giving

giving him a revelation of all those gracious intentions which were hid in God from eternal ages. We, by our most desperate rebellion and total apostacy, had lost all right ideas of God, all clear ideas of our duty and happiness. Reason and conscience thundered in our ears, that we were guilty, but we knew not where to look for pardoning mercy. Our vile appetites and mad passions plunged us into fresh acts of treason, rebellion, and filthiness. Our lusts reigned over us; and although conscience told us we were slaves and drudges of the basest kind, yet we had no heart to burst our fetters, and fight our way into liberty and the dominion and empire of virtue. We were such mean-spirited wretches, such foolish and abandoned slaves, that we had no head to contrive a way in which we might be recovered to holiness and the lost image of God; nor a heart to rise to a spirit of freedom, and glorious sovereignty over all tyrant passions and lusts: but thy revelation, O! our God, opens a blessed method of sanctification in a full and perfect recovery to a more intense holiness than that which our apostate father lost. We desire that our understandings may adhere to thee as the supreme truth; our wills adhere to thee as the supreme good; and our affections adhere to thee as the supreme beauty. We would live from thee as our vital principle;  
live

live like thee as our lovely pattern ; and live to thy glory as the last end of our being. This is the whole of our faith, our hope, and our utmost desires. Amen.

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Select BOOKS on the CHARACTER of CHRIST,  
and his inspired PEN-MEN.

1. That great and excellent divine, STEPHEN CHARNOCK, vol. i. in his admirable discourse on Spiritual Worship, has given me great insight into the spiritual worship which Christ paid to God.

2. The wise and serious Dr. SAMUEL WRIGHT, in his Scriptural View of the HUMAN and SOCIAL GRACES, has given me much help to describe the HUMAN and SOCIAL VIRTUES of CHRIST. I wish I had seen these excellent tracts thirty years ago.

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A C O N -

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