

*The Fountain
of Life*



Wm. Huntington. S.S.

The Fountain of Life

Collected Writings

of William Huntington S.S.

*"For with thee is the fountain of life:
in thy light shall we see light." Psalm 36:9*

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all those who value experimental religion not in the letter, but in the Spirit.

As Joseph Hart wrote...

*"True religion is more than notion,
something must be known and felt."*

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Gadsby's Hymns

*There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Washed all my sins away.*

*Dear dying Lamb! thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.*

*E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.*

*But when this lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave,
Then, in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy power to save.*

William Cowper

Preface

THIS work largely comprises six addresses taken from the works of William Huntington.

It is the publisher's hope that by re-printing these works in a modern paper-back format, in a smaller, more affordable volume than previously available, that the writings of the Lord's servant William Huntington might become more widely known and appreciated amongst God's people.

William Huntington's ministry was unique. His preaching was soul-searching, experimental, man abasing and Christ exalting. So steeped in scripture was Huntington that his writings are full of the word of God. Only now and then does God raise up men whom He so teaches by His Spirit and so uses for the good of His Church. Huntington was one such man, the like of which we may rarely see again. J.C. Philpot had the following to say about Huntington's ministry:-

"HUNTINGTON closely and faithfully discriminated between taking the mere lamp of profession in the hand and the vital necessity, upon which he insisted, of possessing the oil of God's grace in the heart if ever we are to enter heaven. (Matt. xxv. 1-13.) This it was which especially made him obnoxious to the professing world as well as to the profane. You may take away almost anything from a man but his religion. To pronounce his faith a delusion, his hope a falsehood, and his love a lie; to sift his profession till nothing is left but presumption or hypocrisy; to withstand his false confidence, and declare it to be worse than the faith of devils; to analyse his religion, beginning, middle, and end, as thoroughly and unreservedly as a chemist analyses a case of suspected poisoning, and declare the whole rotten, root and branch – can this be done without giving deadly offence? But this was the work that Huntington had to do."

William Huntington S.S. (Sinner Saved) wrote extensively during his many years of ministry, yet the treasure troves of his writings have been oft-neglected by professors of religion in the past two hundred years. This may be put down to various reasons including the fact that Huntington came from a poor, illiterate background and also because of the bad report which was put about by some of Huntington's opponents during and after his lifetime. Nevertheless God greatly blessed the ministry of the 'Coalheaver' by granting him much fruit for his labours and Huntington's writings remain very much as fresh and relevant today as when they were first written.

We trust that what is contained herein will prove a blessing and encouragement to those of this day and generation whom the Lord has given eyes to see and ears to hear.

May the Lord bless His word.

In Christ Our Saviour,

Ian Potts

October 2005

Chapter One

THE DIMENSIONS OF ETERNAL LOVE

A SERMON ON

THE DIMENSIONS OF ETERNAL LOVE

*"That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth,
and, length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which
passeth knowledge," Ephesians 3:18,19*

My Brethren,

The apostle Paul is so profound a scholar, that I cannot pretend to follow him; every time I read him he sets me, as it were, a task impossible. I therefore am obliged to make up a sermon of bits and scraps. In the beginning of this chapter the apostle treats largely of the dispensation of the grace of God towards him, verses 2 and 3. 2dly. He speaks also of a mystery hidden in God from the world, which was, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews of the promise of life, ver. 6. 3dly. That he was made a minister of this grace to the Gentiles, ver. 7. 4thly. He expresses, with all humility, his unworthiness of this grace; and yet to him was this grace given, that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ver. 8. 5thly. He informs us that even now is made known to the principalities and powers that reside in the heavenly places by the church the manifold wisdom of God, ver. 10. And the whole of this sprung from the eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus, ver. 11; in whom, that is, in Christ, we have holy boldness, and free access to God; and that with confidence of being accepted by the faith of him, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, to the glory of God the Father, ver. 12. The apostle desires that the Ephesians might not faint at the tribulation which he endured; signifying, that God did not set sufferings of his servants before them with a view to discourage, but to embolden them, and strengthen their faith; therefore they ought rather to glory in, than be dismayed at them, ver. 13. The apostle begins praying in the middle of this epistle, and addresses the Father of Christ, of whom all the elect angels, and all the elect of the human race, called the family of heaven and earth, are named, ver. 15. The blessing that the apostle craves of God is that the Ephesians might be strengthened by his Spirit's might in the inner man. By the inner man he means the whole work of grace which is in every renewed soul, and is called the new, or the inner man, as corruption and pollution are called the old man. It is as though the apostle had said, the grace and Spirit of God, which hath humbled and inclined your wills to choose Christ, in subordination to the will of God, has also appointed Christ to be your everlasting portion. And, as the apostle

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took it for granted that humbling had subdued their wills, and purifying grace had renewed them in the spirit of their minds, so likewise he judged that the love of God had influenced their affections, and kindled an intense desire after the enjoyment of Christ Jesus. The apostle wishes and prays that the sovereign and all-conquering grace of God might reign and rule in their hearts and consciences.

Therefore he desires the ever-blessed Redeemer to reign and rule unmolested, and without a rival, in their affections, as if they were seated with him on his throne. The apostle well knew that erroneous men would be busy in besieging their understandings, and that carnal objects would be labouring, to engross their affections; vanity to entertain their minds, pleasures to attract their desires, and legality to entangle and govern their consciences. Therefore he wishes their inner man to be strengthened with spiritual might; hinting, thereby that all our resolutions, efforts, and watchfulness, would not be sufficient bulwarks against the attempts and attacks of Satan, unless they were strengthened by the spiritual might of God Almighty.

The apostle well knew, by his own experience, that Satan would lay strong siege to such souls; and he knew for a truth that, if one sin found acceptance and entertainment in the soul, that sin, when it had engrossed the affections, would let in many more, and consequently leave a gap, or breach, for a whole troop of specious sins to follow.

When any sin has gained the ascendancy, it will influence the saint's conversation, and prove a stumbling-block to those who are weak in faith; for the life and walk of such a saint would appear froward, and the tongue perverse; as saith the wise man, "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit," Prov. xv. 4. When sin is indulged by us the Spirit of God suspends, in a measure, his fortifying influence, that the back slider in heart may be filled with his own ways, Prov. xiv. 14.

When this is the case the hedge (to our feelings) is broken down, and we lie exposed to every temptation; as says the Psalmist, "Why hast thou broken down her hedges, so that all they that pass by the way do pluck her?" Psal. lxxx. 12. When thus entangled we try to resist, but are still rebuffed or beaten back; this causes rebellion and murmuring to take possession of our hearts; and it is thus that "the foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord," Prov. xix. 3.

We now expect Christ to step in to heal the breach, bind up the wound, and put all our false gods to flight; and for this we pray; but he says, No; "Where are thy gods?" And he adds, "The back slider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." When in our backslidings we find this to be the case, we begin to cavil and contend with the Saviour, and to ask why he has withdrawn his former loving-kindness from us? He, being the injured rival, disputes the point with us, and we impiously maintain a contention with him, rather than bear the indignation of the Lord, against whom we have sinned, Mic. vii. 9. Thus, sin having separated between Christ and the soul (Isa. lix. 2), a contention with him seems to fasten the bar of infidelity; as it is written, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle," Prov. xviii. 12. If a contention with Christ is as the bars of a castle, how much more so when rebellion strengthens them?

The apostle, knowing that this would unavoidably be the case where sin is indulged, earnestly prays that God would fortify each power of their renewed souls with spiritual might against all the invasions of the devil, Ephes. iii. 16. For he well knew that, if their souls were strengthened with divine might, the dear Redeemer would keep his residence in their hearts, without any rival being let into their affections; which he hints at in the 17th. verse, by praying, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith.

The apostle desires that Christ, as their king, might have his laws loved, obeyed, and meditated on in their minds; and, as king of righteousness, that his blessed sceptre might be swayed in

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affections and consciences; and, as he was their atoning Saviour that peace and pardon might be sensibly enjoyed in their souls and that the altogether-lovely Saviour might be enthroned, exalted, and admired in the throne of their hearts, "That Christ (said he) may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye may be rooted and grounded in love," ver. 17.

The apostle well knew that Christ, as king of righteousness and king of peace, did not reign in the world; as it is written, "I came not to send peace upon earth, but a sword and a fire; and what will I if it be already kindled?" The whole world is not under the blessed sway of the sceptre of grace; Christ reigns on Mount Zion; but all men are not come to Mount Zion, and the heavenly Jerusalem. The elect, and them only, constitute the gospel Mount Zion, as it is written, "The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation." And hence it is that he displays his admirable beauty and omnipotent power; as says the Psalmist, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." But there are some who plainly affirm, and still adhere to this, that they will not have this man to reign over them. And, if the Lord hold his peace at them when they make these vows, it is a dreadful sign that they are not elected; and consequently all their vows are established that they have bound their souls with, and all their vows shall stand. None can make their vows void but a father and a husband; and Christ is that father and that husband, who can make them void, so as for the Lord to forgive them, Numb. xxx. 4-8.

But to proceed; the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, therefore it is not to be taken or defended by carnal weapons. It is true that Christ is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and by him kings reign, and princes decree justice. But this is under his uncontrollable power as the universal monarch of nations.

But his spiritual kingdom is not of this world; the throne of grace is in heaven; his laws are from heaven, and written in the minds of all his subjects; his sceptre is swayed over every justified soul that believes in his name for justification, and takes him for his

everlasting righteousness and strength; his kingdom is set in the souls of believers, as it is written, "The kingdom of God is within you." This kingdom is altogether spiritual; for the kingdom is not in word, but in power; it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Thus, my friends, the Saviour's laws are written within us, and he must have the pre-eminence in our affections, and sway his peaceable sceptre in our consciences, which I trust is our soul's delight. But, if we speak of this, it appears a bane to the world; they cannot endure his binding laws; therefore they say, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us." But why? What are his cords and bands, that are so offensive to those who are so violent? Why; one of the bands is the binding cord of everlasting love, which the carnal mind, fortified with infernal enmity, cannot brook; as it is written, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can-be." The other hand is the bond of gospel peace; as it is written, "Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." But the sinner had rather have peace with his sins, and continue to maintain war with God, than cast down his rebellious arms, and send an ambassage, desiring conditions of peace. The other cord or girdle is truth, intended to gird up the loins of the mind, in order to make the sinner watch, and be sober.

However, the ungodly say, "Let us break these bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us." Well, if this must be the case, he that dwells in heaven shall laugh at such: "Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill."

And now we will proceed to consider the words of my text; "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. In these words there seems to be something like a contradiction. In the first clause he wishes us to comprehend, and in the last clause he says it passeth knowledge. But does the apostle contradict himself here? By no means. He would wish that the Ephesians should comprehend with all saints,

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&c. He means, he would wish that the Ephesians, who were children in the faith, should arrive at as high a pitch of knowledge, experience, and enjoyment of God's eternal love, as any other saints whatever. That ye may comprehend with all saints; that you may see eye to eye with the best of them. And yet he insinuates to them that, when they have arrived to the highest pitch of knowledge, they would then know but in part; for the whole of Christ's love passeth knowledge. His plain meaning, seems to be this; I would wish you to know, to your soul's establishment, as much of Christ's love as can be known; but I must tell you that the greatest part is to be known only in the bright regions of eternal day; as it is written, "For we know in part, and prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," I Cor. xiii 9, 10. The apostle's meaning then amounts to this; he would wish that the Ephesians should know, or comprehend, as much as other saints ever did; and yet would intimate that their knowledge and enjoyment was nothing, when compared to that knowledge and enjoyment which the saints will have in the world to come.

Having thus briefly opened my text, I must beg leave to invert the order of it a little. The words are, "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." If I have obtained your leave to invert the order, I will now deliver my thoughts on the subject in the following manner.

1. I will treat of the love of God.
2. Of the length of this divine love.
3. Offer my opinion on the breadth of it.
4. On the depth of this love.
5. On the height.

And conclude the whole with a word of application.

Where shall I begin in delivering my opinion on the subject? "I must begin with God, "for God is love," I John, iv. 8. This is clearly

revealed in the scriptures of truth, that the nature of God is love. But is this divine affection fixed on all the human race, so as to save them in Christ with an everlasting-salvation? That cannot be proved; for God says that multitudes are in hell already; as you read in the 31st and 32d chapters of Ezekiel. "God loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment," Deut. x. 18. But the elect are not strangers. "I know my sheep (says Christ), and I lay down my life for them, and they shall never perish." It was self-moving love in God to choose his own elect, and is the first cause of all our happiness. His own will was his counsellor; as it is written, "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." That his wisdom drew up the plan of our salvation is plain from the word of truth; the gospel is "the wisdom of God in a mystery." And by his omnipotent power God performs what self-moving love secretly purposed in himself.

This love of God to his elect cannot be traced by us from its first rise. We can only go by the light of scripture, and affirm what God's witnesses have done before; viz. that God loved his elect with an everlasting love. But the idea of eternity will drown every thought that a mortal is capable of in launching forth into that unfathomable abyss. We may trace his word and works, and conclude as Job did, "Lo these are some of his ways; but how little of him is understood!"

In these profound depths of everlasting love we can find no bottom; like the dove, we must settle on the ark of the covenant, and then we shall be able to look about us.

First, then, God's love to his people is unutterable; we cannot express it, but can only furnish imperfect hints of its parts, as the scriptures do. For instance, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," &c. John, iii. 16. And again, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! And it doth not yet appear what we shall be," 1 John, iii. 1.

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The love of God to his elect is not only unutterable, but it is likewise inconceivable; and therefore called, in the last clause of my text, a love that passeth knowledge. It is a love that has been enjoyed by thousands, but cannot be fully described by any. This unutterable and inconceivable love is entirely sovereign. It lay entirely in the absolute and uncontrollable will and mind of God, whether he would create creatures out of the earth or not; and whether he would raise them to heaven (out of sin, when fallen) as the objects of his eternal love, or not.

It is sovereign, because fallen angels are excluded. And many of the human race are also excluded; as it is written, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." But when did this love and hatred take place, after Esau had sold his birth-right? No, says God; "for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated," Rom. ix. 11-13.

God's elect are said to be loved with an everlasting love. And there is a people that are to be called "The border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever," Mal. i. 4. As this love of God is sovereign, so it appears to be entirely free in its fountain; as it is written, "But God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. If God commended his love towards us while we were yet sinners, and reconciled us to himself when we were enemies and without strength, his love must be free and unmerited, unless we can suppose that sin, enmity, and sinful infirmities, are meritorious in the sight of God.

As this love of God appears free in its fountain, so also it appears to be free in its administration. It cannot be purchased by human merit (falsely so called). "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned," Song viii. 7. Simon Magus bid high for the Spirit of love; but the bidder and the

price were both to perish together, for thinking that the gift of God was to be bought with money. So we conclude that Simon Magus, who wanted to buy, and the pope of Rome, who offers to sell, the gifts of God, are both "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." If that man is condemned who offers to buy the gifts of God, and if all the substance that a man offers for this love is to be utterly contemned, this love must be free; free in its fountain, and free also in its administrations.

This will appear still plainer if we consider the many work-mongers that have laboured in vain to obtain it. Some have strived for it; but none are crowned unless they strive lawfully, 2 Tim. ii. 5. And none can strive lawfully till that love that fulfils the law be in their hearts. Some have run for it; but "the race is not to the swift," Eccl. ix. 11. No, says the Saviour, "Many that are first shall be last" Matt. xix. 30. Others have fought for it in heavy persecutions but "the battle is not to the strong," Eccl. ix. 11. The victory of faith is nowhere promised to the strength of the free-will or the power of the human arm. No, "Let the weak say I am strong," Joel, iii. 10. Herod did many things, but never got the gifts of God for his labour. The Pharisees fasted often; they made many prayers, and long ones too, and honoured God with their lips, and yet were rewarded with the greater damnation for their pains, Matt. xxiii. 14. The young man in the gospel told the Saviour that he had kept the law from his youth up, and was sent away with the sorrow of the world (that worketh death) in his heart. Esau wept for it; but got it not, "though he sought it carefully with tears," Thus it appears then not to be of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, nor of him that fighteth, nor of him that worketh, nor of him that striveth, nor of him that weepeth, nor of him that buys, nor of him that sells, "but of God that sheweth mercy." "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely," Hosea, xiv. 4. This will appear still plainer if we consider what those who obtained it had to recommend them.

Let us see what God's elect have done to merit this love of God. Pray what merit was there in Mary Magdalen? How had she improved her supposed talent, will, power, or light within, or stock

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in hand, or by whatever other name you are pleased to call this phantom? The scriptures say she was possessed with seven devils; but her being a habitation for devils could not recommend her to the love and favour of God; nor could that possibly merit it at his hands. And, as for her body, that was a hackneyed vehicle for every son of Belial who chose to hire it. Yet this woman received the gift of gospel repentance, the forgiveness of all her sins; and she loved much, because she was much beloved; as it is written, "We love him because he first loved us." Simon the Pharisee disdained this humble suppliant, and censured the Saviour as not being of God, because he supposed him ignorant of Mary's character; however, the Lord stopped his mouth by bringing him in debtor fifty pence, without a farthing to pay his debts. But Mary received her full discharge first, though she owed five hundred. Thus the harlot got the start of the Pharisee; as it is written, "Publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of God" before the Pharisees.

If we turn to Nicodemus, he is the most likely of any to merit it at the hands of Christ; for he took his part among the council and complimented the Lord when he came to visit him. But the Lord doth not commend him for these things; and we know he had no other merit to plead, unless we allow that the fear of men and ignorance of real religion can be accounted meritorious.

First, there is no merit in the carnal fear of man; for "the fear of man bringeth a snare." And, as to ignorance, it is never supposed to merit any thing either at the hand of God or man. It merits nothing, at the hand of God, because the law allows a sacrifice for the sin of ignorance, which presupposes that ignorance is sin instead of merit, Numb. xv. 25.

Pray what did the harlot Rahab do to merit this love of God? Why (says the workmonger) "she received the spies with peace." Yea, but she was a daughter of peace before she received them: as it is written, "And into whatsoever house ye enter, say, Peace be to this house; and if the son of peace be there (mark that, if the son of peace be there), your peace shall come upon it." But suppose there

be not a person ordained for peace in that house! Why then peace has nothing to do there; for if the son of peace be not there it shall return to you again, Luke, x. 5, 6, and you shall carry it to its right owner. Thus, then, her receiving the spies was only the blessed effect of an eternal cause, which is the eternal council of the Trinity ordaining peace for us in Christ: for thus saith the Holy Ghost to the prophet, Christ shall be a priest upon his throne; "and the counsel of peace shall be between them both," Zech. vi. 13; that is, between the Father and the Son; and thus Christ is our peace. And that Rahab had no merit to boast of but her receiving the spies, is plain; for her very name, Rahab, is one given by Isaiah to the devil, and to Egypt; and applicable enough, for it signifies furious pride. This woman was a heathen by nation, a harlot by trade, and a devil by name; and yet she tumbled into the bosom of everlasting love. Thus the love of God appears to be sovereign, discriminating, and free, in its fountain Jehovah; and it is likewise sovereign, discriminating, and free, in its administrations under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. But I pass on to my second general head, which is to treat of the length of this love.

On this subject I must be permitted to make an extended, or even improper, use of words.

The dimensions of this love that I am to treat of are fourfold. It is height in a superlative, and depth in an infinite degree; its two axes or poles may be compared to two eternities; and thus we must measure, if I may be allowed the expression, the length. Immensity seems to be its circumference; but our business is with the diameter, which the apostle calls the breadth.

However, Paul allows that it passeth knowledge; and indeed it is better felt and enjoyed than described; for this pleasing theme has employed, more or less, the tongues and pens of all God's eminent servants for many ages past, and I hope our tongues will never be silent on the subject.

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You know, my dear friends, that I am called an enterprising man; I will therefore venture to say what I find warranted by the word of God, notwithstanding our utter inability to find it out to perfection; only let me observe the golden rule, and I will proceed. First, then, let it be noticed that God is love. This love shines from pole to pole, and is from everlasting to everlasting; as says the Psalmist, "from everlasting to everlasting thou art God," Psal. xc. 2. We will begin with that everlasting which is behind us, and to which the word *from* is prefixed-from everlasting; and so travel on till we come to the other eternal pole, which has the preposition *to* prefixed. Do not be startled at my adventurous flight, for we are most surely concerned in these two eternities. Let us begin where the scriptures declare God has begun. His glorious footsteps of mercy and love towards his elect are dated from everlasting; as it is written, "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him," Psalm ciii. 17. And the Redeemer's going forth in covenant undertakings for the elect bears the same date: "whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting," Micah, v. 2.

But to proceed: The first step that the Father took, in the path of love to his elect, was in treating with Christ in their behalf, and appointing him to be their head, their husband, their surety, their mediator, their father, and their brother. But when was this living head, surety, husband, mediator, father, and brother, elected, ordained, and appointed? Why, it is dated from everlasting; as the Saviour declares, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way (mark, here are his goings forth from everlasting, called the beginning of his way), before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there was no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water: before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth," Prov. viii. 22-25. Thus it appears that Christ was elected, appointed, pre-ordained, and set up from everlasting to be future man and mediator; and was delivered to death for his elect by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Thus God the Father makes known his electing and

everlasting love to his chosen people, in appointing and giving Christ to them before the world was.

When he set up Christ for our living head he gave us eternal life in him; as it is written, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began," Titus, i. 1. Christ is the quickening Spirit, that quickens all his redeemed; for he is our life, who has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. In another passage he himself saith, "Because I live ye shall live also." And it must be so; "For, as in Adam all (his natural seed) die, even so in Christ shall all (his spiritual seed) be made alive." But I proceed.

When Christ was set up he was appointed to be the husband of God's chosen daughter. And as man and wife they were viewed one in union from everlasting; for the covenant of grace is a covenant of eternal wedlock: as it is written, "A certain king made a marriage for his son," Matt. xxii. 2. And thus likewise runs the tenor of the covenant of wedlock, as God the Father speaks to his elect, "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee," Isa. lxii. 4, 5. Thus the elect were chosen as the king's daughter-in-law from eternity, Ps. cxxxii. 13. They are espoused in time, 2 Cor. xi. 2; and the marriage shall be consummated in bliss, when the mystery of God is finished; as it is written, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," Rev. xix. 7. And then she shall be clad in gold of Ophir, and be brought with joy and rejoicing to enter into the king's palace, Ps. xlv. 15.

This mystery was exhibited by Eve's existing in Adam before she was extracted from him; so our life was hid with Christ in God. And, when Eve was taken out of Adam, she was a help-meet

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formed for him; so the elect are created anew in Christ Jesus. When Eve was formed, God brought her to Adam; so no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him. When she came to Adam he received her as God's gift; so the elect are given to Christ. Adam and Eve are said to be one; so also are they that are joined to the Lord one spirit. Adam said, "Man shall leave, his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife;" so Christ came forth from the Father, leaping upon the mountains. And, when some of the Saviour's followers said, "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee;" he answered, "Who is my mother and my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!" Matt. xii. 47, 48. Thus Christ left his father and mother, and clave to his wife. Adam had one wife brought to him and no more: so Christ says "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number; my undefiled is but one," Song vi. 8, 9. When Eve fell Adam was in the transgression, though he was not deceived; so when the elected spouse fell, Christ was not deceived, yet he was made sin, "and was numbered with the transgressors," Isa. liii. 12. When Adam and Eve fell, their marriage was not made void; so the fall of the elect did not break the bond of God's everlasting covenant, but rather paved the way to display eternal love towards the miserable. It appears that both Adam and Eve were chosen vessels; and, when they fell by eating the apples, they fell into soul travail, and were shortly after born again. Eternal love raised them up under the same tree where they fell; as it is written, "I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth, that bare thee," Song viii. 5. This mother (according to Paul, Gal iv. 24) is the heavenly Jerusalem; and the heavenly Jerusalem is the covenant of grace and God's elect in it; both typified by Sarah and her son Isaac. To Adam and Eve was the first promise of the covenant of grace revealed; and by the application of the promise were they brought forth from black despair to hope in God's mercy through Christ.

I shall conclude this head with the apostle's mystery, "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even

as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church," Eph. v. 29-32. This therefore is another blessed effect of God's everlasting love. But, as a surety Christ was set up from everlasting; as it is written, "But Christ was made with an oath by him that said unto him The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament," Heb. vii. 21, 22. First, Christ, as a surety, was to pay the debt of perfect obedience to the preceptive part of the law for his elect; as it is written, "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable," Isa. xlii. 21. "So by the obedience of one (Jesus Christ) shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. As a surety, he was to pay the penal sum of suffering for his elect, by dying in their room and stead; as it is written, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death," Hosea, xiii. 24. And thus it behoved Christ to suffer these things, because he had undertaken our cause. And by his precious blood he blotted out our transgressions as a thick cloud from the book of God's remembrance, agreeably to the following text, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day," Zech. iii. 9. "Who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Rom. viii. 33. This is another blessed effect of everlasting love. But...

Christ was set up from everlasting, to be a mediator between God and the elect; as it is written, "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel," Heb. xii. 22-24.

Christ, as our mediator, appeased the wrath of God, removed the curse of the law from us by his death, made reconciliation for

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iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. He appears both our peace-maker and our peace; as it is written, "He is our peace, who hath made peace for us by the blood of his cross," Col. i. 12. Thus we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. This is another blessed effect of God's everlasting love.

Christ was also set up from everlasting to be a second Adam, or an everlasting Father; as it is written, "And his name shall be called wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," Isa. ix. 6. And, as a Father of the elect family, he received the promise of eternal life, together with the promise of the Spirit of God, for all those who are called his seed, agreeably to the following scripture: "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever," Isa. lix. 21. Thus God shewed his eternal love to the chosen seed in Christ before the world was. But in this covenant he made a parental reserve for himself; as you read, "But, if his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail: my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips," Psalm lxxxix. 30-34. Then, saith the Saviour, "Behold, I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion," Isa viii. 18.

And now the prophet puts forth a riddle to the world, when he says that Christ "was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living," Isa. liii. 8. "Yet he shall see his seed" v. 10. And blessed be his name, he has got a glorious offspring out of the spoils of death, as saith the Psalmist, "Unto God the Lord belong, the issues from death," Psalm lxviii. 20. And this is the seed that shall serve

Christ, and be counted to him "for a generation," Psalm xxii. 30. And that seed shall all one day appear in the blessed image of the second Adam; as it is written, "And, as we have borne the image of the earthy (Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly: (for) as is the earthy (Adam), so are his seed also that are earthy; and, as is the heavenly (Adam), such are they also that are heavenly," I Cor. xv. 48, 49. And this is another blessed effect or result of God's eternal love.

Christ too in this eternal covenant is called the first-born: "I will make him, my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth; that in all things he may have the pre-eminence." And God promised to be to Christ, in human nature, his "Father, his God, and the Rock of his salvation," Psa. lxxxix. 26. God having promised to be the Father and God of Christ, this blessing was transferred to the elect when the Saviour had finished the work of redemption, and was risen again from the dead; as it is written, "Go, tell my brethren that I am risen; and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." God therefore is become our God, and we are heirs of him, as our eternal portion; as it is written, "And, if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. In this covenant Christ and his elect brethren are said to be of one; as it is written, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren," Heb. ii. 11, 12. The glorious result of all this is to bring many sons to glory, Heb. ii. 10. This therefore is another blessed effect of God's everlasting love. But I proceed.

As God's servant Christ was set up from everlasting to serve under the law, and to redeem them that were under the law; and then to gather together in himself all the elect sheep, as their chief shepherd; as it is written, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth," &c. As a shepherd he was appointed to redeem and gather in the sheep that were given to him; as it is written, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and I lay down my life for the sheep." And again, "This is the will of

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my heavenly Father, that of all that he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." It appears plain, in the word of God, that Christ received the sheep, their names, and the number of them, before all worlds as it is said, "In thy book were all my members written when as yet there was none of them." This appears very plain; for God calls them sheep before they were either redeemed, or called, or born: "He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" Isa. xl. 11. And this fulfils the ancient prediction, "And to him shall the gathering of the people be," Gen. xlix. 10. "I will (says God) set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd," Ezek. xxxiv. 23. This doctrine will be proclaimed on the judgment-seat; as it is written, "He shall separate them, even as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 32-34. This also is another blessed effect of everlasting love.

Thus God has shewn his everlasting love to the elect in appointing them such a glorious head, set up from everlasting; in whom he has given them eternal life, and eternal union with him as a husband, an honourable discharge by him as a surety, peace by him as a mediator, adopting grace in him as an everlasting father, and an eternal portion with him as an elder brother. So much for the eternal and unchangeable love of God the Father.

But my dear hearers may object and say, Your text treats only of the love of Christ. I answer, When we speak of the love of Christ we do not exclude the love of the Father, nor of the Spirit, for it is one love. The glorious Trinity loved the elect from everlasting. But of each of these in particular.

Of God the Father's love I have treated already; I next proceed to speak of the love of Christ.

The Saviour manifested his love to the elect in undertaking their cause, accepting their names and persons, and substituting himself in their room and stead from everlasting; in veiling his infinite Deity in flesh and blood, suffering shame, reproach, and ignominy, to procure our eternal salvation in time; and lastly, in laying down his life to redeem us from all evil; as it is written, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John, xv. 13.

The dear Saviour had much to suffer; the flood gates of wrath were opened on him, the floods of death compassed him about, and also the floods of temptation. All these met together on the dear Redeemer's head; and our frail nature, and the infirmities of it, with which he was compassed about, shrunk back at the thought of the approaching tragedy: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." However, love was strong as death, and stronger too; for many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it, Song, viii. 6, 7.

Is this the eternal love of Christ to his elect? It really is; "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us," Rom. viii. 35-37.

I next proceed to shew that the love of the Spirit appears from the same date; I mean from everlasting.

The Holy Ghost shewed his eternal love to the elect, in bearing witness to this everlasting covenant; as it is written, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," I John, v. 7. He not only appeared a witness of the covenant, but the seal and sealer; as it is written; "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within, and on the back side, sealed with seven seals," Rev. v. 1. Thus the Spirit undertook to bear witness to the covenant, to ratify it, and to reveal to all God's elect the glorious benefits arising

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from it; as it is written, "He shall take of the things that are mine, and shall shew them unto you," John, xvi. 15. And, blessed be his name, so he does; he leads us into all truth; works faith in us; sheds abroad the Father's love in our hearts; and I believe that love, joy, and peace, are the first-fruits of the harvest of glory; and the Holy Spirit himself is the earnest of our eternal inheritance; and he is to abide with us for ever, as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Thus we see the Holy Spirit's love; as it is written, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit," (mark that, the love of the Spirit) Rom. xv. 30. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love," Gal, v. 22.

Thus, my friends, we have gone through the second head. I will next shew you the stability of this covenant; and then proceed to consider the third head.

This blessed covenant is signed and witnessed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; ratified by the sevenfold sealer and seal of heaven; confirmed by the oath of God, and by the blood of Jesus Christ the immutable testator; and thus it is made sure to all the seed, Rom. iv. 6. How sweetly are the elect secured from the wrath of God, blessed with eternal love, and a sweet foundation laid for a strong consolation in all our troubles! First, they are secured from wrath; as it is testified, "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for, as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Oh blessed and sweet security! His loving-kindness too is as strongly secured. "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." It is true, the elect may be tossed in the storms of affliction, and be almost drowned at times in distress; but their situation can never alter the covenant: "O, thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundation with sapphires." This, I think, means all the attributes of Jehovah, which are engaged in behalf of the elect, and who are secured in this covenant; for it immediately follows,

"In righteousness shalt thou be established," Isa. liv. 9-14. Thus the covenant is signed and witnessed by three immutable and unchangeable witnesses; sealed and ratified by divine veracity; and confirmed by the oath of an immutable God, who can never be perjured. Eternal life is promised by him who cannot lie, and confirmed by the efficacious blood of him who is without variableness or shadow of turning, James, i. 17. Surely then these immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to falsify his word, are sufficient to afford us the most solid ground of comfort; as it is written, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner hath for us entered; even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," Heb. vi. 17-20.

Having offered you my thoughts on this divine love from the eternal source, I shall now proceed to the south pole, which is before us, namely, to everlasting. This is a natural inference drawn from the length of this love mentioned in my text. In doing this I will hereafter touch on the benefits of this covenant, and their being a free donation, as well as of their eternal duration.

I know the Arminians affirm that we may be children of God to-day and children of the devil to-morrow; but this is rendering God worse than ourselves; for I, who am evil, could not deal so in a natural sense with my children. If what they affirm be true, the length of God's love mentioned in my text, which is said to pass knowledge, is but four-and-twenty hours long at best. But I leave those liars and their lies to the father of lies, and proceed to speak of what God says, for we know that he is true though every man be a liar, Rom. iii. 3. It plainly appears in scripture that the everlasting God chose the elect in his Son Christ Jesus, and that the covenant was sealed by the eternal Spirit in heaven: and it is as plain that

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everlasting love moved them to it; therefore the covenant is called an everlasting covenant, and we shall find all the blessings of it to bear the same date.

I will therefore consider them distinctly, and only take notice of them as I find God hath mentioned them.

First, then, as God remembered us in our low estate, he hath promised not to forget us; but to remember us for good, and to establish us; as it is written, "Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance," Psalm cxii. 6. Therefore there is no fear of being forgotten before the Lord.

And, as all the elect were condemned by the law, the Lord Jesus has brought in an eternal righteousness to justify them; as it is written, "He shall make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24.

But you will say, We are dead in law, and dead in sin. I know that we are all in that state; but in this covenant the elect are pre-ordained to eternal life; as it is written, "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," Acts, xiii. 48. Thus the elect are quickened here, and brought to live by the faith of the Son of God; and their eternal life, which is given us of God, is hid with Christ, as our head, in God; as it is written, "I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands," John, x. 28. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life," John, vi. 47. There we see the blessings of this everlasting covenant bear the same date as the covenant doth. But to proceed.

The Almighty knew how the devil, the god of this world, would blindfold us in order to lead us to the bottomless pit, and that Satan would send many blind guides to lead us on from one dark mountain to another, that we might follow the devil's doctrine, and so be damned at last. I say the Lord knew this, for "known unto God are all things;" therefore in this covenant he has promised to be an

everlasting light to all his people; as it is written, "But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory," Isa. lx. 19.

In this covenant God hath provided a righteousness for the elect, though by nature they were ungodly, Rom. iv. 5. This righteousness was wrought out for the elect by Christ; as it is written, "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. This righteousness God accepted of our surety, he "being made of God unto us righteousness," I Cor. i. 30. This righteousness God also imputes freely without any pre-requisite in us; as it is written, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works," Rom. iv. 6. The Spirit of God brings this righteousness near to us in a preached gospel, and reveals it to the eye of faith; as speaketh God by the prophet Isaiah, "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off," Isa. xlvi. 13. This righteousness is revealed in the gospel for every believer: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith," Rom. i. 17. Faith puts this righteousness upon the poor sinner for his justification before God, as a righteousness procured by God: "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe," Rom. iii. 21, 22.

Remember, this righteousness is given freely, therefore woe be to that man that thinks to merit it, or add something of his own thereto; which Christ calls putting a piece of new cloth upon an old garment, that will make the rent worse. I say it is given of God, and cannot either be bought or sold; as it is written, "They that receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ," Rom. v. 17.

Thus, my dear hearers, Christ wrought out this righteousness for us; God the Father accepts it of Christ, and places it to our account, and imputes it freely. The gospel reveals it, the Holy Ghost applies it to the hand of an appropriating faith, and makes it manifest to the

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sinner's conscience; conscience enjoys it, and finds peace to be the effect of it. Thus we, "are justified freely from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts, xiii. 39.

This righteousness too bears the same ancient date of the covenant; for "seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring, in everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24.

I next proceed to shew that persevering strength is most surely promised to the elect in this covenant; or else Satan would soon throw us down, even were we as strong as Peter supposed himself to be when he promised never to forsake Christ, though all the rest did; as it is written, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," Deut xxxiii. 37. Therefore "trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," Isa. xxvi. 4.

God's elect are not to be left comfortless, though they are so much opposed and hated in the world; for this covenant secures our consolations also, and they bear the same date as the covenant does, as it is written, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work," 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

Our joy and glory are also secured in this covenant; as it is written, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," Isa. xxxv. 10. And there is another eternal blessing beyond all these, and that is an eternal weight of glory in the presence of the Lamb; which is likewise to be enjoyed for ever and ever.

Thus, my dear hearers, you see what everlasting love has done for us. Remember that this love is to endure for ever; as saith the church, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3.

Having thus discoursed of the length of the love of God, and proved the date of it to be from everlasting to everlasting, I come now to my third general head, which is to treat of the breadth of his love.

By breadth we may understand its universal extension to all the elect, whether Jews or Gentiles.

In the antediluvian world the love of God was known but to few families, and they sprung from the loins of Seth; the family of Cain seem to have been kept quite ignorant of it. It was much contracted likewise in the administration of it in the days of Noah; and after the flood it seemed to flow in a very narrow channel, and confined itself chiefly to the descendants of Noah: in short, it ran in one contracted channel till Jacob's family multiplied in Egypt, and then it began to extend itself, and to widen most sweetly at Israel's deliverance from bondage. And here and there a poor Gentile was pulled in by this cord of everlasting love: but the greatest part of them were left to go on in their own ways.

It continued with Israel some hundred years, and the partition wall that encompassed them seemed to stand firm for many ages; as it is written, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." In the days of David it extended itself gloriously among the Jews; and after that again it fell into a narrow channel, and continued so for many years, till the golden days of the Son of Man appeared, and then it widened greatly; but was still seemingly confined to the Jewish nation; as it is written, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matt. x. 5, 6. But, though this

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everlasting love seemed so contracted in its administrations in those ancient days, yet it was broad in the secret purposes of God. That the Gentiles should be saved, was a part of the great mystery of godliness; as it is written, "Preached unto the Gentiles," &c. But at last the dear Redeemer broke down the middle wall of the partition that separated between the Jewish nation and the Gentiles; and sent his servants forth to preach the gospel to every creature. On the glorious day of Pentecost this everlasting flame of divine love was wonderfully kindled in the twelve apostles, who were appointed to be the twelve ministerial foundations of the gospel church and from them it was communicated to the uniting of many lively stones to the chief corner stone Christ Jesus; the only foundation for faith and hope to build their expectations on.

The dimensions of this love in my text were sweetly revealed to Peter in the vision of a great sheet knit at the four corners. Four of the glorious attributes of God knit the corners, and sweetly agree in letting down to the earth this sheet of everlasting love; as it is written, "Mercy and truth are met together." These two attributes hold two opposite corners. "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." And after that mutual kiss they agreed or harmonized together to hold up the other two opposite corners. Thus "mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other," Psalm lxxv. 10. In this sheet were the elect Gentiles chiefly exhibited. It contained "all manner of four-footed beasts" (mark that, all manner of four-footed beasts). Their species was human, but brutal by sin, "Every man is brutish in his knowledge," Jer. x. 18. "I am more brutish (saith Agur) than any man," Prov. xxx. 2. Yea, the whole human race are emphatically called beasts; as it is written, "that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts," Eccl. iii. 18. These were the beasts represented to Peter in this sheet, four-footed beasts. Some sinners are also called dogs, as Christ called the Gentile woman, Matt. xv. 27. Some are called swine, Matt. vii. 6. Some are called wolves, Matt. x. 16. Some lions, Zeph. iii. 3. Some calves, Mal. iv. 2. But "the wolf shall dwell with the Lamb (of God), and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling

together; and a little child (or babe in grace) shall lead them," Isa. xi. 6. That sheet contained all the elect from eternity, and is their rest and divine solace when grace has tamed them, as is represented by their lying down with the Lamb.

There were creeping things also in the sheet, as well as beasts; some sinners are called serpents, some vipers, Matt. iii. 7; and some are called worms, Micah, vii. 17. And there were fowls of the air in the sheet also (mark the elect are called doves, Isa. lx. 8;) eagles, Isa. xl. 31; and speckled birds, Jer. xii. 9. These were the living creatures in Peter's sheet: "And there came a voice to him, saying, Rise, Peter, kill and eat:" take the sword of the Spirit, and kill them to all hope in the law; crucify them to the world, that they may be dead unto sin, Rom. vi. 2: kill them to all confidence in the flesh, that their old man may be crucified with Christ; that they may become dead to the law, and be married to another, Rom. vii. 4. "Arise, Peter, kill and eat."

I told you, at the well of Samaria, that I had meat to eat that ye knew not of, and that my meat was to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work, John, iv. 32, 34. I have made thee, Peter, a minister, and the conversion of these sinners must be the meat and drink of thy ministerial appetite, or thirst for souls.

Mine elect in this world are compared to fish in the great sea, Ezek. xlvii. 9-11. And I told thee, Simon, I had made thee a fisher of men, Mark, i. 17. Suck, therefore, of the abundance of the seas, Peter, for that is the food of the minister, Deut. xxxiii. 19. "For the abundance of the seas shall be converted unto me; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto me," Isa. lx. 5. Mine elect are a treasure hid in the sand, Deut. xxxiii. 19. "Though Israel be as the sand on the sea-shore, yet a remnant shall return," Isa. x. 22. "Arise, Peter, kill and eat;" suck of the abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand, Deut. xxxiii. 19. "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles," Isa. lx. 16. "And in their glory shall you boast yourselves," Isa. lxi. 6.

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"Arise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." Oh wretched construction! Too carnally understood. "And the voice spake unto him the second time, What God hath cleansed, (mark that, it is spoken in the past tense) what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Peter's last comment on the vision proves what I have asserted, when he says, "But God hath shewed me that I should not call any man (mark here, these beasts and creeping things are called men) common or unclean," Acts, x. 21.

Let it be observed that, when this sheet was let down, all these beasts were in it. It was let down from heaven, and the beasts were in it, to shew their election and eternal union with Christ in the bond of everlasting love, represented to Peter by the sheet. And afterwards these beasts were drawn up again in the sheet, to shew their safe arrival in glory in the same sheet or bond of eternal love.

And, though they are compared to beasts, yet they were all in the sheet, and said to be cleansed, though they were not called by grace: for they were not dead to the law, nor were they alive by faith no, they were to hear from Peter the word by which they might live. And the sheet was let down thrice; to shew, first, their eternal union with Christ in the bond of everlasting love; and therefore they are said to be "preserved in Jesus Christ, and called," Jude, i. 1. Secondly, this sheet is let down at conversion, as appears by the Holy Ghost falling on them when Peter spake to them. And, thirdly, it shall be let down again at the general resurrection of their bodies: for their bodies, as well as their souls, were represented by four-footed beasts, if not more so; and, though they snuffed up the wind at their pleasure, like a wild ass in the wilderness, Jer. ii. 24, yet were they let down from heaven in this sheet, and cleansed in Christ, who is their sanctification, and who sanctifieth them; "For he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are both of one," Heb. ii. 11.

Some of these four-footed beasts were knocking at Peter's door at the same time that the vessel was drawn up to heaven again: "Now,

while Peter doubted in himself what this vision should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon, and stopped before the gate, and called, and asked, whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee; arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them," Acts, x. 17-20.

Thus this love extended itself in its administrations far and wide, until it gathered some from the east, some from the west, some from the north, and some from the south; and will bring them at last to "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God," Matt. viii. 11. "God gave the word, and great were the company that published it." Even when the devil raised a persecution against the apostles of God, this was made an instrument, in his wisdom, for promulgating his divine law; as it is said, "They went every where preaching the gospel." Legions of poor souls got hold of these sweet cords of the everlasting love of the Trinity. And some ran one way with it, some another, until they fulfilled this prediction, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited," Isa. liv. 2, 3.

And this eternal love in its breadth shall never leave the earth, till "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ," Rev. xi. 15. And then "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Hab. ii. 14.

I now come to the fourth head proposed, viz, the depth which is mentioned in my text.

The profound depth of the love of Christ may be subdivided into three heads. It was deep in the eternal counsel of God; it was a

mysterious depth in the agonizing sufferings of Christ; and deep in the manifestation of it to poor mortals who were deeply fallen.

First, it is deep as considered in the eternal counsel of God; deep, because it lay hid from everlasting, until it was made known to God's elect by the Spirit. All the wisdom and learning of the world could never have discovered, much less have fathomed it. It lay concealed in the eternal mind, and would have lain there undiscovered to all eternity, if God had not discovered it by the light of his Spirit. Who among all the race of Adam could have imagined an eternal affection in a just God toward self-condemned rebels, upon the grounds of truth and justice, if God had not revealed it by his Spirit? "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love of him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," I Cor. ii. 9-11.

But I next proceed to shew that the depth of divine love was wonderfully displayed in the singular sufferings of Christ Jesus. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John xv. 13. This depth will appear still more conspicuous, if we consider the many enemies with whom the love of Christ had to combat. First, our sins lay as a dreadful burden on him; for, "the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 6. And the Saviour "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Pet. ii. 24. Secondly, the infernal malice and fury of devils: "The prince of this world cometh, but he hath nothing in me." Yea, even the wicked enlisted under his banner: "This is your hour, and the powers of darkness," Luke xxii. 53. Thirdly, the cruel insults of the Jewish rabble, who derided and blindfolded him, smiting him on the face, crowning him with thorns, bowing the knee before him, putting a reed as a mock sceptre into his hand, arraying him in a gorgeous robe, sending him to Herod; and afterward, when under

the greatest anguish, commanding him to come down from the cross, and they would believe him. We may add to this the cup of wrath that was given him to drink; the soul-piercing curse of the law that he was to bear, in order to redeem us from that: the disciples forsook him and fled; and, that vindictive justice might get a full satisfaction, the Father hid his face from him, yea, forsook him. The Saviour bore all the rest with silence; but this extorted so bitter a cry from him, that both heaven and earth answered it; the inanimate rocks opened their mouths; the graves disclosed the dead; the bowels of the earth were moved, and the sun was veiled in sackcloth: these things wrestled hard against eternal love. The infirmities of our flesh made him fear and sweat, and stand sorely amazed: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," said the dear Redeemer. But everlasting love waded through all these rapid floods of opposition. Nor could the floods of temptation, of wrath, of persecution, nor the cold floods of death, in the least quench or impede his permanent, divine, and everlasting affection to his own elect: as it is written, "Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it," "for love is strong as death," Song viii. 7, 6. Surely love must pierce deep in the Saviour's breast, or he never would have veiled his glory, faced the storm, and waded through the pains of hell, to get at the object loved, if love had not been well rooted. Is this the eternal love of Christ to us? So it seems. "Who (then) shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us," Rom. viii. 35, 37.

But let us consider the depth of this love in its administration: in bringing many of its objects up out of the various depths into which the devil and sin has sunk them; some of whom justice has seemed to turn as it were to destruction; but everlasting love has prohibited their entrance there, and led them back to God with the greatest placidity; as it is written, "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men," Psalm xc. 3. Some have been almost deluged in guilt, horror, wrath, and anguish of soul; and, when their souls have been over-whelmed within them, eternal love

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has appeared, and led them to the Rock higher than they, Psalm lxi. 2, put a new song in their mouths, and established their goings, Psalm xl. 2. Others have been exercised on their beds with pain, and the multitude of their bones with strong pain; insomuch that their life abhorred bread, and their souls dainty meat; their flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and their bones that were not seen stick out. Then says Love, "Deliver them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom. Their flesh shall be fresher than a child's; and they shall return to the days of their youth: they shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable unto them; and they shall see his face with joy," Job, xxxiii. 19, &c.

Others have been possessed with legions of devils; some sunk into black despair; others have been bowed together by Satan; and some have been both mad and dumb; some in the shadows of death; others in the horrible pit. But love has still dived beneath them, and brought them up as on eagles' wings. This precious cord of everlasting love angled sweetly after poor Jonah, when fatherly displeasure had raised a storm, and cast him overboard, and at last brought him up from the bowels of hell. In short, there are no depths that the elect of God have fallen into, where love hath not waded after them, and brought them up. It brought Manasseh up from the magic depths of Satan; and David from deep calling unto deep, the very echoes or resoundings of hell itself.

Other poor souls have sinned against light and love, after they had tasted that the Lord was gracious. Some, under such circumstances, have cried out, "My hope is perished from the Lord: (others, that) there is no hope; (some, that) I am cast out of his sight;" and others have cursed the day in which they were born, and the man that brought tidings of their birth. Some dejected souls have declared they were as sure of hell as if they were in it: and others have wished they had been there, that they might know the worst. But not one of these that I allude to could, with their dying breath, charge immutable love with the failure. No; love has appeared to make their bed in their sickness, Psalm xli. 3. And the everlasting arms have been underneath them, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Love

has sweetly rekindled her expiring flame; and conscience has compelled them to set to their seal that God is true to the irrevocable promise that he has given them: "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 height of this love may be subdivided into three heads, Firstly, God's love to Christ, and to the elect in him: this is plain, by his ordaining them to glory by him. Secondly, in God's exalting Christ in human nature as our head. Thirdly, our exaltation with him and in him.

Firstly, then, God's love to Christ; as it is written, "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," John, xvii. 24. And God loved us in Christ, and by the bond of eternal love made us one with him; and the result of this love was giving us eternal glory in Christ Jesus, and ordaining us to it by him; as it is said, "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me," John, xvii. 23. And the glory that God gave us in Christ is transferred to us by him; as it is written, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one," John, xvii. 22.

Secondly, The height of this love may be considered, and clearly seen in the Father's exalting Christ so high in our nature, as the glorious representative of all his seed. God raised up from the dead his son Jesus Christ, without suffering him to see corruption; and then he glorified him, "The God of our fathers hath glorified his son Jesus," Acts, iii. 13. He not only raised him up, and glorified him, but he hath "highly exalted him," Phil. ii. 9. Highly exalted him indeed! For he is ascended above all heavens; yea, far above all heavens; for "he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," Eph. iv. 13. God set him "far above all principality, and power, and might, and

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dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," Eph. i. 21.

Thus, my dear hearers, you see God the Father's love to us in Christ, in setting him up to be our head from everlasting. 2dly, In preparing him a body in time to be taken into union with his Godhead. 3dly, In not suffering that body to see corruption, but raising it from the dead. 4thly, In giving him glory, or glorifying him. 5thly, In raising him up, and exalting him far above all heavens; and putting all things in subjection under his feet.

But you will say, Where are the elect all this time? I answer, When Christ died we were crucified with him, "Knowing that our old man is crucified with him," Rom. vi. 6. "I am crucified with Christ," says Paul. And, when Christ was raised from the dead, the elect were raised also: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise," Isa. xxvi. 19. Yea, and when Christ ascended the elect ascended; and, when Christ took his seat far above all heavens, the elect took their seats in him, and sat down with him; as it is written, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love (mark, his great love, this is the bond of eternal union) wherewith he loved us (mark that, loved us) even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (mark the union, quickened us together with Christ) by grace ye are saved." Now mark the resurrection and ascension; "And hath raised us up together, (mark the union again, raised us up together) and made us sit together, (mark the union again, made us sit together) in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 4-6. This is no new doctrine; for it shone sweetly in the old laws, where God commanded the Israelites to bring the first sheaf of their wheat harvest to him; "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you; and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest," Lev. xxiii. 10. This institution of the gift of the sheaf of the first-fruits was in order that the harvest might be consecrated, and also to secure the promised blessing of God on the field, Deut. xxviii. 3. Let us now see the Holy Ghost's meaning in all this. That sanctuary into which the sheaf was

carried was typical of heaven; as it is written, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present," Heb. ix. 8, 9.

As that sanctuary was a type of heaven, so the first sheaf offered was a type of Christ; and the harvest under God's blessing was a type of all God's elect. First, Christ calls himself a corn of wheat, before his death: "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," John, xii. 23, 24. Mark here, before Christ died he calls himself a corn of wheat that shall bring forth much fruit; after his resurrection, by reason of our union with him, he is called "a handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof (mark that, the elect are called the fruit thereof) shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever" (mark here, the handful of corn is called a person; his name shall endure for ever.) And now mark the fruits also, "His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men (mark, there is the fruit of this handful of corn) shall be blessed in him; and all nations shall call him blessed," Psalm lxxii, 16, 17. We now follow this sheaf, Christ Jesus, up to the heavens, for Jesus is entered into the holiest of all, now to appear in the presence of God for us; and there we find Christ is received as the first fruits; "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits (mark that, become the first-fruits) of them that slept," I Cor. xv. 20. There Christ, the first-fruits, has ascended far above all heavens.

But you will say, Where are the elect all this time? I answer, They ascended in him as in their head; and are personally to follow him in their spiritual form and order; as it is written, "But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming; then cometh the end," 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24.

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Christ, having entered as the first-fruits, has promised to send his angels to reap his harvest, that is, "to gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other," Matt. xxiii. 31. All these elect persons are called sheaves, and, when bound in the bundle of life, shall be gathered into the same sanctum sanctorum as Christ Jesus the first-fruits was; as it is written, "Now also many nations are gathered against thee that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion: but they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel, for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor," Mic. iv. 11, 12. Thus he shall gather his wheat into his garner, but he shall burn up the chaff with fire unquenchable.

I now proceed to the third branch of this general head of discourse, viz. the height of this love in the personal exaltation of the elect at the glorious resurrection.

God promised to Christ the fulness of the Spirit in the eternal counsel; and promised likewise that the same Spirit should never depart from him, nor from his seed. This blessed Spirit is called the promise of the Father to Christ; and Christ sends that Spirit upon all the elect in the appointed time: "Jesus being exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear," Acts ii. 33. The Holy Spirit is to make the elect know their privileges, by leading them into all truth. He searches the deep things of God, and makes them known to the chosen; he washes, sanctifies, and cleanses them; he resides in them as the earnest of their future inheritance; and he seals them up to the day of eternal redemption; he sheds abroad God's love in their hearts, and shall at last quicken and raise up our mortal bodies; as it is written, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," Rom. viii. 11. Let it be observed, brethren, that the Holy Ghost, which is given to us, is the earnest of our future inheritance, and is coupled together with glory, wherever he takes up his residence; as it is written, "If ye be reproached for the name of

Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you," I Peter, iv. 14. Here then you see the Spirit and glory of God rests upon the elect. The same Spirit is to quicken our mortal bodies; yea, our vile bodies are to be changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ. Thus they are to bear the image of the heavenly Adam, and to mount up and meet the Lord in the air, and then to sit down on the judgment-seat with our dearly beloved head, as his mystical body; that all our persecuting enemies, both men and devils, may be judged by the elect of God; as it is written, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? Now much more things that pertain to this life?" I Cor. vi. 2, 3.

Thus the elect are to appear on the judgment-seat with Christ their head, who comes to avenge his and their wrongs; as speaketh the Holy Ghost, "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord," Psalm cxlix. 5-9.

The judgment being finished, and the doom of the wicked for ever fixed, the elect shall see a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth shall pass away in a flame of fire, prefigured by the destruction of Sodom and the adjacent cities; "The elements shall melt with fervent heat," and the wicked be chased away with it; whilst the Judge shall render his vengeance with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire; the heavens being dissolved, and the elements melted; as Peter says, 2 Pet. iii. 12. Then shall the new heaven and the new earth appear; which, according, to his promise, we look for, wherein shall dwell righteousness, 2 Pet. iii. 13, or righteous persons; and these shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years: "But the rest of the dead (that is, the wicked dead) lived not again" till the thousand years were run out. This is the first

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resurrection, in which the blessed and the holy have their part; and at the close of the thousand years will all the dead be judged: "Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And now comes the ultimate end of all our blessedness; every enemy will be destroyed; the Saviour's regal sceptre, which was swayed over the militant church, will be laid by; and the triune Jehovah, or Elohim, will be all in all, I Cor. xv. 28. Then, my brethren, we shall understand something of the height of this love mentioned in my text.

Having endeavoured to wade through the length, breadth, depth, and height of this love, I shall just mention some species of dimensions which weak believers are apt to think contrary to what I have laid down; and which they are ready to imagine will, some time or other, separate them from this love of God; and then pass on to the application.

Paul the apostle seems to defy the king of terrors. I mean death, to cause a separation; and he defies life also, whether prosperous or adverse; and angels, whether good or bad; emperors, kings and princes; judges, magistrates, present troubles, and future judgments: the highest pitch of joy or prosperity, and the deepest abyss of horror, trouble, tribulation, or poverty, to bring about a separation between God and the elect, or break the bond of his love, which is the bond of eternal union; as it is written, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 38, 39.

I come now to the application, for I reckon that your patience is almost worn out: but blessed be God, we do not work by the day.

What know you of this love? Is it shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost? Do you know experimentally the pardon of your sins? Christ said that Mary Magadalen's sins were many, and that

they were forgiven her, and she loved much; and, where little is forgiven, the same will love little. Thus you see that love always attends a pardoned soul. And, if you say "I love the Lord," and feel a most cordial affection for him, for his people, his word, and his worship; remember thy love is nothing but a reflection from his love to thee; as it is written, "We love him because he first loved us." But, perhaps, some of you may say "You are too high; we cannot come up to that experience." Stay where you are, and I will come nearer to you. Do you find a disinterested love to them that savour most of Christ Jesus in the world? - "Why (say you) is the word disinterested put in? What do you mean by that?" I mean that a hypocrite may love a godly man for what he can get from him, and not for Christ's sake; as Pharaoh loved Joseph for unfolding his dreams, and saving his country from perishing; and as the king of Babylon loved Daniel; and as Potiphar's wife loved Joseph, with the carnal and damnable love of a whore. I ask, therefore, If ye love the children of God because their knowledge, their life, and conversation in holiness, appear amiable in your sight? Perhaps you say "No: I love all people alike, whether they fear God or hate him whether they are orthodox or heterodox." If so, your love has not holiness for its object; it bears no other stamp than merely the impression of the old man. Let me shew you the word of the Lord on this point: "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He in whose eyes a vile person is contemned (mark that); but he honoureth them that fear the Lord," Psalm xv. 1, 4. But some will say "I bless God, I can stand the trial of that pure disinterested love which you describe." Very well, so far good: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," I John, iii. 14.

But again, my friends, do you feel sin a plague and a burden to you? Is this your greatest grief; even the unholy motions that are felt from the living corruptions of your heart, because you cannot subdue them, nor keep your thoughts and mind pure, and stayed on the Lord, as you are exhorted to do? Do you answer "Yes, I hate the former, and I love the latter?" What saith the Psalmist? "I hate

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vain thoughts; but thy law do I love," Psalm cxix. 113. And again, "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil," Psa. xcvi. 10.

Again, brethren, Do you feel a hatred to erroneous doctrines, which are so dishonourable to God, and destructive to men? I mean such as Arminianism, Deism, Antinomianism, together with all other doctrines of devils? And are your wills brought into subjection to the will of God, so as to consent to wholesome doctrines, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ? If you say "Yes," and conscience says the same, hear the word of the Lord, "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way," Psalm cxix. 104.

But again, some will say "I bless God, I can say I love him; for I have been as poor as ever Job was, but his providence has blessed the work of my hands, so that I have abundance laid up in store for my use, while I can see many poor souls destitute of both house and home; yea, and even some of God's people too, who have hardly food to eat, or raiment to put on; therefore God's love has appeared discriminating to me." Stop, don't you run away; I will come a little closer to you. Your love seems to be more fixed on the providence of God as to the body, than in the discriminating grace of God in Christ revealed to the soul; and has a little of the tincture of those who followed Christ over the sea of Tiberias for the loaves and fishes, and were sent back with an empty belly and a killing reproof. Suppose God should destroy all your substance, as he did the substance of Job; how then would you stand afflicted to God? But further; if you were to take your wealth, family, friends, neighbours, with every benefactor, and lay them in one end of the balance, and Christ alone in the other, which, thinkest thou, would gain the draught in the balance of thy affections? Nay, do not start back at this question. I say, which would then gain the draught? Upon a proper examination, canst thou say with the Psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee?" Psalm lxxiii. 25. If Christ was to put the question to you as he did to Peter, when he said "Simon, lovest thou

me?" Couldst thou answer in the affirmative, "Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee," John, xxi. 17.

But again, another may say "I cannot say that I love Christ; I wish I could: but this I do find, that all things of this world will not satisfy the boundless desires of my soul; there is a secret anxiety in my mind, which cannot be satisfied by all created and sublunary enjoyments. These are all broken cisterns that can hold no water, Jer. ii. 13; they disappoint rather than satisfy me; and increase my thirst rather than supply my wants; therefore I know that my thoughts are hovering about a more satisfactory substance." Is this thy case? Then "commit thy works unto the Lord (in humble confession and prayer), and thy thoughts shall be established" Prov. xvi. 3. But perhaps you proceed and say, "I have heard so much from the pulpit about the amiableness, the suitableness, the sufficiency, the fulness, and the love of Christ to poor sinners, that if I thought I should have no part or lot in him, I should view myself of all mortals the most miserable." Thou hast got love, but it lies in the ashes, covered over with darkness, doubts, fears, and unbelief: be patient, be diligent, and hope for a saving, manifestation of pardoning love; for truth hath said, thou shalt not be disappointed of thy hope. The disciples going to Emmaus were in thy case; but, when Jesus drew near and walked with them, he blew away their ashes, and rekindled the expiring flame: "Did not our hearts burn within us when he communed with us by the way?" Luke, xxiv. 32.

But again, some will say "My desires are so intense after Jesus, springing from a deep sense of need, and from some glimmerings of his excellent worth, that I cannot rest till I am persuaded of my soul's interest in his eternal love." Yours is love in the smoke; therefore don't fear, it will not go out; for God says he will not break the bruised reed, though its melancholy jarring sound is not so musical as "the voice of doves tabering, upon their breasts," Nahum, ii. 7. I say, God declares that he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till he has brought "forth judgment unto truth," Isa. xlii. 3.

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"But (say you) I long to enjoy a sense of his atonement in my conscience, and to find an heartfelt union with him, and a joyful love to him; to say as the spouse does, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" or, with Peter, "Whom having, not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," 1 Pet. i. 8. This joy that you have mentioned is love in the flame; be thankful for the former, but aim at the latter, "that ye may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," Eph. iii. 19.

Let me shew you one great reason why you are kept in perpetual suspense, and tossed about with unbelief, doubts, and slavish fears. Deal faithfully with your own consciences, and try yourselves by what I am going to advance. - Your troubles spring from wrong conceptions of God, the fountain of all happiness. Don't you view God as arrayed in terrible majesty, with indignation against you as a sinner? Don't you conceive him to be an inexorable judge, comparable to a devouring flame or consuming fire? Are you not afraid, day after day, that he will cut you down as a cumberer of the ground, and bring you to judgment, and at the last day expose you before angels and saints as a polluted sinner, with all your secret and unclean sins disclosed to all the host of heaven? If you say, "Yes, these are my thoughts and my conceptions indeed, you have described my case; and pray how you find all this out?" Leave that to God; and view God as speaking to you by me.

You say that what I have said are your conceptions, and therefore you are filled with a slavish fear of God; and this fear is attended with tormenting cogitations; and the workings of your mind are what Job calls tossings, "I am full of tossings to and fro."

If I have mentioned your conceptions aright, let me tell you that you view God in his fiery law; and he is that judge, that terrible sovereign, and that consuming fire, which I have mentioned, as considered in his violated law, and out of Christ. And while you conceive thus of God you will be tormented; as it is written, "fear

hath torment; he that feareth is not made perfect in love," I John, iv. 18.

If what I have mentioned be agreeable to your experiences, you err in your conceptions; I say, as an awakened and quickened sinner, you err in your conceptions; and that holds you down a captive to slavish fear and unbelief. Let us look a little at the back parts of God, Exod. xxxiii. 23; seeing we cannot see his face and live, Exod. xxxiii. 20. I say, let us view his back parts, as Moses did. And we will suppose ourselves in the rock Christ, as Moses was in the cleft of a rock at Horeb, when God shewed him his back parts; which rock certainly was a type of Christ; and we will endeavour for a while to give credit to what God says in his word; as it is written, "In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish Leviathan, the piercing serpent, even Leviathan, that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Now we will suppose that this prophecy means destroying the works of the devil in the elect by Christ Jesus, which it certainly does, "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine: I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in me," (mark that, fury is not in me,) Isa. xxvii. 1-4. But we will still proceed to view the back parts of God while we are in the cleft of the rock Christ; and let us hear what God says to us in this situation, "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty," Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, without a surety; who is Christ, the end of the law for righteousness. Now what do you think of the back parts of God? "Why (say you), blessed be his holy name, he is better to follow than to meet." Why then "be ye followers of God as dear children," Eph. v. 1; and thou shalt not see Peniel, the face of God, till the corrupted veil of mortality shall be swallowed up, and then thou wilt not want to shun that transporting sight; "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8.

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Again, brethren, if you view God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing your trespasses unto you; but sending his son to bless you, by turning every one of you from your evil ways; and that the flame of God's wrath is quenched in the Saviour's blood; his sword of justice sheathed in the body and soul of a dear Redeemer; and the law disarmed of its dreadful curse; death disarmed of his sting; the devil himself dethroned and cast down; death plagued; the grave destroyed; the gates of hell barred against every believer and the doors of heaven displayed to all that ask, seek, and knock; surely these things are sufficient to support a hoping soul: especially if we consider that our reconciled God is now our most propitious Father; yea, the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort; our husband; also our friend; a present help; our strong hold; our unchangeable lover; our God, guide, and guard; yea, our rich provider, the strength of our heart, our justifier, our Saviour, the shield of our help, and our portion for ever. Well, what dost thou now think of the ever blessed God? "Blessed be his name (say you), he seems altogether sweet and lovely, as those scriptures represent him which you have quoted." The word of God bears me out in all that I have said. And he is that blessed one to thee, if thou viewest him reconciled in the Mediator, and comest to him by Christ. View him as I have represented him from his own word, and thou wilt find him the perfection of beauty, and the best of friends; and this will disarm your souls of that slavish fear and torment; and sweetly soften, dissolve, and attract your affections to love him as the greatest of names, and the fountain of infinite happiness.

But some may say, "What is all this long harangue and strict scrutiny about love for?" Because the apostle says, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity," or love; and this charity, or love, never faileth. Beside, if all thy religion springs entirely from the fear of hell, without any hatred to sin, thirst for holiness, love to God, or desire after his favour all your religion is eye service; it is with you according to the Kentish proverb, "No longer pipe, no longer dance." I mean, you move on in your religion no longer than while conscience spurs you, vengeance

drives you, or carnal gain or human applause allure you. You are an eye servant; you cannot work but while the whip is upon your back. The very moment that your master Moses lays by the lash of scorpions you are gone to the alehouse, card-table, ball-room, rout, play-house, or some idle amusement or other. And, as soon as Moses comes in, then you set off to the sanctuary again, to offer to God a silly dove without a heart, Hos. vii. 11; or else to mock him with a dry form of prayer; and every time you perform that task you offer thirty lies to God; and then you wipe your mouth, like the whore in the Proverbs, and say, "This day have I paid my vows." But, if you live and die in that state, God will requite you with the greater damnation.

Let me now appeal to your conscience in the sight of God. If you hear a preacher who enforces the Spirit's work on the soul; that preaches down human merit, will, and power, and insists on the application of truth, the love of the truth, the experience of truth, the enjoyment of the truth, the practice of the truth, or a walk in the truth; who treats much of the life of faith, the joy of hope, the liberty of the Spirit, the enjoyment of love, a heart-felt union with Christ, peace of conscience, and a tender regard for the honour of God; don't you despise and rail against such preachers and preachings? If Conscience is to be umpire or arbitrator, will she not say, Yes? As the Lord God of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, if you live and die a stranger to all that I have said upon these points, you cannot escape the damnation of hell, Matt. xxii. 33.

But again; I will come with another appeal to conscience. Are you not fond of hearing a thundering law preacher, who deals chiefly in the vengeance of heaven, and fetches all his artillery from the fiery law of God? And don't you find that discourse is most descriptive of your legal feelings that savours most of death, judgment, destruction, damnation, and the very flames of hell? "Yes (say you), while this storm is going over my head, I am all religion; and while it is preaching, I think in my own mind, O, how will I watch, and work, and pray, and perform my task, &c. when I get home again!" Ay; but before you get your feet over the threshold of your own

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door, the sound of the thunder is gone out of your ears, and all your blind zeal that was awakened, and the working frame that was communicated to your spirit, are gone; and you are immediately taken captive by the devil, and led into some besetting sin; and by that secret sin you are held a prisoner all the year round. This you know is truth; let Conscience do her office. "I cannot deny (say you) but that this is the case; and how you find it out I know not." No, nor are you likely to know: but this I tell you, in the church of God there are both servants and sons: "The servant (says the Saviour) shall not abide in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever; and, if the Son make you free, then are you free indeed." If you are a servant, you will stick to the rod of Moses, till your spirit and conscience will be hardened like a blacksmith's anvil: but, if you are a son of God by faith in Christ Jesus, the undeserved love of the Father, and the dying love of the dear Redeemer, when preached, applied, and enjoyed, will make your soul like melting wax before the flame, until your softened spirit will become susceptible of every divine impression, and your tender conscience will feel the least sin heavy indeed: every just reproof will be then an excellent oil; yea, one reproof from the lips of the gracious will enter deeper into your heart, as a wise child, than an hundred stripes into a fool, Prov. xvii. 10.

God own and bless the few hints that I have dropped among you, to his own honour and your eternal comfort. I add no more.

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Chapter Two

THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH
BY THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

THE
DESTRUCTION OF DEATH

BY THE

FOUNTAIN OF LIFE;

OR,

DEATH ABOLISHED BY LIFE, AND IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

"The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." Proverbs 13:14

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To the Right Worshipful and Worshipping Company oft assembled and assembling at Providence Chapel, their old weather beaten Servant sendeth greeting.

Beloved in the Lord,

Grace, Mercy, and peace, be with you through
our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen, and Amen.

I HAVE long had an earnest desire in my soul to write a few scraps upon a subject, which of all others, I find the most difficult to describe.

"There are diversities of operations (saith the Apostle), but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," I Cor. xii. 6, 7. Some of these operations are very perceptible; such as the illuminating influences of the Spirit, which bring us from darkness to light; his enlarging the heart, which brings us from bondage to liberty; strengthening us by the Spirit's might when heart and flesh both fail; his comforting operations, which makes us forget our poverty, and banishes misery from the mind: his revealing the righteousness of Christ and pronouncing the sentence of justification, which puts off our sackcloth, and girds us with gladness, silences all our accusers, and fills us with joy and peace in believing. All these, and many more, the weakest believer can easily perceive; and when under them is sensible enough of their influence, and talks sweetly about them, though he doth not always understand what he says. But the hardest to define is that of God's breathing the breath of life, or quickening, by the Spirit, the soul that is dead in trespasses and sins.

In the whole course of my ministry, which has been now upwards of thirty years, no subject has exercised my mind, or puzzled my judgment so much as this. And indeed it is but lately that I have been led distinctly to observe the different stages of it,

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and these but in a small degree, so as to be able to bring them out, and set them forth to others, with any satisfactory clearness.

Not long since a small pamphlet was put into my hand, published by a woman at Clapham Common; but whether it was her own performance, or transcribed from some author, I know not: the title is "THE LIFE OF GOD IN THE SOUL OF MAN." Never was a title and a performance so badly matched. But no persons make so free with the most mysterious and profound subjects of divinity, as those professors whom the God of this world hath blinded; and who by acting the hypocrite in Zion, have seared their conscience, and made it past feeling.

In this little work of mine now in hand, though I intend to write nothing but what I have experienced, felt, and enjoyed; yet know that I shall give great offence to many professors of our day, as I have done by almost every thing that I have written. My two discourses, which I published upon "THE IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN," made a most terrible shaking among the dry bones, which have no life in them: and, although I was under a most remarkable influence when the matter of those discourses was brought to my mind, and at the delivery of them; yet this gave such an offence, that even a minister of Needingworth, in Huntingdonshire, who knows no more of the Spirit's work than an idiot, and whose conduct has been a scandal both to his profession and his assumed office; even this poor hardened wretch took up his pen against that little performance: and that which gave the offence was, my asserting that the Spirit of God dwelt in Adam; that it was the Holy Ghost that was breathed into his nostrils; and that the Holy Spirit formed the soul of Adam, animated him, gave him life, and clothed him with the image of God. But this image, which he had by the Spirit, was by sin put off, and the old man, with his deceitful lusts, put on; in which old man there is another image, that God despises; Psalm, lxxiii. 20. Adam, feeling the sad effects of his sin, and being naked, clothed himself with a covering, but not of God's Spirit and so added sin to sin; Isaiah, xxx. 1. And all his children have copied

after him ever since. Nor is there any thing more common to this day than a fig-leaved professor, or a wolf in a sheep's skin.

Not a few divines, falsely so called, have spent whole Sabbaths, almost for a year together, labouring to prove that Adam before his fall was nothing else but a natural man: but surely not in the evil and gross sense which those words now convey to us. God is a Spirit; and the image of the invisible God must be spirit, or spiritual, be it wherever it may, whether in Adam before his fall, or in any sanctified soul since; for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." If he was a natural man, it must be in the highest sense, or what Peter calls being partakers of a divine nature; for in nothing else could the image of God consist. And it is plain that the Spirit of God spoke in him. The speech Adam delivered at his reception of Eve is by Christ applied to God: "Have ye not read that he, which made them at the beginning, made them male and female? And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife," Matt. xix. 4, 5. Now, as these words, uttered by Adam, are by Christ applied to God; and as Adam's speech was a prophecy of what should come to pass among married people to the world's end, and is the first exhibition of the mystical union between Christ and his church; and is by the Apostle brought in as representing it, and as the grand mystery signified by it, Eph. v. 31; it is plain that this, as well as all scripture "was given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. iii. 16. And that Adam's "prophecy came not in old time by the will of (a natural) man, but holy men of God (and holy Adam among them) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," 2 Peter, i. 21. And it is plain that by the Spirit Adam spake mysteries, I Cor. xiv. 2. For the Apostle, in his quotation and application of Adam's speech, says, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church," Eph. v. 30-32. No man now living has the light, knowledge, and understanding that Adam had in the works of God's hands. He knew much of God, and of the whole creation; and he had all that by the Spirit of divine revelation. "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the

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Almighty giveth them understanding," Job, xxxii. 8. Adam's mind was not clogged with blindness and ignorance, as ours is since the fall. We know but in part, indeed, and labour under a darkness that may be felt. Not so Adam; nor was he a stranger to the love of God, he loved God, and enjoyed God's love to him; nor was his love opposed by a carnal mind which is enmity against God, as ours is. Paul intimates that the image of God in man stands in righteousness and true holiness. And the same Apostle tells us that love is the fulfilling of the law; and if so, then the righteousness of Adam stood in love. And the same Apostle makes true holiness to stand in the same. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," Eph. i. 4. Adam's righteousness and true holiness stood in love. "The law is spiritual;" and spiritual righteousness he must possess that stands just before it; "but we are carnal, sold under sin," Rom. vii. 14. But who made us carnal, and sold us under sin, but Adam? He who was once spiritual, and endued with true holiness, by his fall he became carnal, and a condemned criminal, and sold all his posterity to work wickedness.

Nor am I the first person that ever asserted that the Holy Ghost was in Adam: four very learned divines have asserted the same; namely, the learned Milton, Doctor Goodwyn, Doctor Owen; and even Doctor Gill, in his Preface to the book of Genesis, allows inspiration to Adam. His words are these: "Yea, the knowledge of divine things, which Adam himself had in a state of innocence, was by inspiration: what knowledge he had of God, of his mind and will, and of the worship of him, and of his own salvation, was by divine revelation. Even the moral law was inspired into his heart, and written upon it, or he would not have had such certain and distinct knowledge of it. And especially he could not have known any thing of the positive law of God, to abstain from the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, without a revelation. And, if man in such a state stood in need of it, then much more man in his fallen state."

Now, though the scriptures quoted sufficiently prove this, and such learned men have advanced the same, yet have I been represented in so odious a point of light, by the sons of darkness, as if I had opened the floodgates of all heresy; but sure I am that they have done worse than I did; for while they were proving Adam in a state of innocency to be only natural, they themselves fail to be spiritual, though they have nothing but Adam's old man of sin, and the earthly Adam's image in them.

And the glorious subject I am now going upon will be full as offensive to such men as the other was. Those, that desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, are sure to be satisfied with a name to live though they are dead, and such are alienated from the life of God, and therefore oppose it.

To an awakened sinner death is the most formidable of all enemies "yea, the king of terrors," Job, xviii. 14; especially when the universality of his reign, and the different branches of his empire, are properly considered, and duly laid to heart. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," Rom. v. 14, &c. Death even reigned over poor little infants, who never committed one actual transgression; and through the fear of death the greatest part of mankind are all their life-time subject to bondage. A king of terrors death is, and the terrors of this tyrant spring from various quarters.

First, from God. Death is God's awful sentence, which entered upon the commission of sin. "The day thou eatest, dying, thou shalt die."

2. From a violated law. The moral law is the ministration of death, 2 Cor. iii. 7.

3. From Satan, the head and ringleader of all the apostasy from God, whether in heaven or earth, among angels or men. Christ came to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. ii. 14.

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4. From temporal death, the just doom of God. "It is appointed unto men once to die," and after death the judgment, Heb. ix. 27.

5. From a consciousness of sin and fear, guilt and shame, "the sting of death is sin," I Cor. xv. 56.

6. From the dreadful curse of the most righteous Judge, which will be the decisive sentence of the grand Assize. "He that believes not shall be damned."

7. From the execution of that sentence, which is an abiding sense of divine indignation, "Depart from me, ye cursed." And this is an eternal banishment from the favour, the glory, and the presence of the living God into endless darkness and misery, torment and woe, where sin and death will ever reign. The terrors of death rise out of all these different branches, and a most fearful army they are, to a poor awakened sinner.

But there is another little secret Sovereign, that reigns over this king and all his terrors, though he is but little known in the world; and that is the hidden man of the heart, the new man of grace. "That, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v. 21. God's love is opposed to Satan's malice, Christ to Satan himself, grace to sin, and eternal life to endless death.

The grace of life which came by Jesus Christ, is intended to root up, and root out, death in all its branches; I say in all its branches; for even temporal death is turned into a sleep in Jesus, where the grace of God hath reigned and ruled. "Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10.

1. Pardoning grace removes the guilt of sin, that the sting of death should not kill. "O death, where is thy sting!"

2. Justifying grace removes the destroying power of sin, so that it shall not be imputed. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity!"

3. Regenerating grace gives us a new birth, and makes us new creatures; so that it shall be no more, but sin that dwelleth in me.

4. Implanted grace counteracts the tyranny of sin, that it shall not have dominion over them that are under grace. "He will subdue our iniquities," Mich. vii. 19.

5. And the spirit of grace will change our vile bodies at the resurrection morning; so that sin in us shall never more have a being. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written," but never till then; "and in that day, there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts," Zech. xiv. 21.

But my hardest task is to discover the beginnings of this divine life, which by the Spirit is breathed into the souls of all God's elect; and that which makes it so difficult is, the many alarms, awakenings, woundings, convictions, illuminations, reformations, external gifts, spiritual abilities, miraculous assurances of faith, fiery zeal, apparent fervour, transient hope, soft passion, transporting joys, surprising strength, and a multitude of words, or the most fluent gifts of utterance. And yet it is often seen that the whole of this surprising crop, at a long run, amounts to just nothing at all. "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath," Matt. xiii. 12. Now that which makes the difference between these two servants, is *life*. Christ came that his sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. He therefore that hath the life of grace in his soul, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance, for the grace of life abounds; but he that hath not the life of grace, but merely an external gift, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. And this God often discovers to his children, both in preachers, and professors, as clear as the sun at noon day.

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Christ takes his children down into the garden of nuts, Song vi. 11. And the way to this garden is hid from the eyes of all living; it is "a path which no fowl knoweth," Job, xxviii. 7.

"Confidence in an unfaithful man, in time of trouble, is as a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint," Prov. xxv. 19. A foot out of joint can never walk in this path; nor can a broken tooth crack one nut that grows in Christ's garden.

One of these nuts is, "He that believeth shall not make haste." The coming sinner, like the blind man that Christ healed, keeps all his faith in himself; nor can he act it, nor does he go forth in the exercise of it, except when Christ visits him, or when the Lord shines upon him, or some promise comes home with power to him, or the Holy Spirit moves him by godly sorrow, humility, meekness, life, or love: his faith always moves in concert with the Spirit's operation, and with the light of the Lord's countenance. But the unquickened professor suddenly springs up: he hears the word, and anon with joy receives it; and so endures for a while, but, having not root, he withers away, Matt. xiii. 6.

2. The sinner that the Holy Spirit quickens is sure to take the lowest room in God's house; his debased mind will not be pressing into the holy of holies, nor into the sanctuary among the priests, nor into the king's gallery with the spouse, nor into the inner court among the real worshippers; but into the outer court of the Gentiles, and even beneath the beasts that perish, putting his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope, Lam. iii. 29. I mean by this, his humble state of mind. Nor can all the world raise his heart out of this debased state till the word of the Lord comes "Friend, go up higher." But into this humility of heart, and self-loathing in the sight of God, which sets the self-condemned sinner at such a distance in his own apprehensions from the Almighty, the aspiring professor cannot descend: he aims at higher things; for, as his faith springs up without root, so his claim upon God is presumptuous, and his approaches to him bold, daring, and arrogant: and he aims at the presence and approbation of God at his first setting off; but God

drives him back, while he draws the other on. Hence it is said that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," James, iv. 6.

3. The soul, that is under the first teaching of God's Spirit, is so sensible of the plague and sore of his own heart, and so ashamed of his own innumerable misdeeds, that he is not desirous of vain glory, but esteems every believer better than himself, Phil. ii. 3. But the hypocrite never comes into this mind, he is a despiser of them that are good; such are heady and high-minded, and lovers of themselves, as may be seen in Paul's Epistles both to the Corinthians and the Galatians; where they abuse and traduce even the great Apostle, in order to exalt themselves. Hence the Apostle's threatening, "But I will come, and I will know not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power; for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." I Cor. iv. 19. So far were these from esteeming every believer better than themselves, that they esteemed themselves better than the great Apostle.

4. The soul that is under divine teaching, is one that is "swift to hear and slow to speak;" he does not want to be a leader, but to be led; he lies down at the foot of the lamb, and a little child may lead him; for he is so swallowed up and watched over by Satan, and pursued with such misgivings of heart, that, if he even speaks without a full persuasion of its being right, or any thing that he has not seen or felt, it is all fitted up, and canvassed over by Satan, insomuch that he is often afraid to open his lips, unless faith or love constrain him. "I believed; therefore have I spoken;" says David. "We believe and therefore speak;" says Paul. Faith in the heart leads the van, and the confession of the mouth brings up the rear. But not so the temporary believer; he is not swift to hear and slow to speak, but swift to speak and slow to hear; for it is not by his silence that he is to be known, but by his noise. "A fool's voice is known by a multitude of words." Eccles. v. 3.

5. The chosen vessel, under the tuition of the Spirit, is brought into such self-abhorrence as no hypocrite can ever counterfeit; for

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the more propitious God appears to him, the more such a soul hates and loathes himself; nor is he ever more sweetened in his spirit than when in such a frame of mind: "Ye shall loath yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities when I am pacified towards you, saith the Lord God," Ezekiel. Not so the hypocrite in Zion, for our Lord opposes him to this self-abased one in the following words; "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Luke, xiv. 11.

6. Another nut which the coming sinner has to crack is, that the Holy Spirit of God stains the pride of all his glory; he baffles and confounds his wisdom, and makes all his knowledge foolishness; all his purposes are broken; all his plots and contrivances are marred; his strength is made perfect weakness; his mind becomes bewildered and confused, so that he appears a mere idiot; he forgets to eat his bread, and his right hand forgets its cunning. "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." I Cor. iii. 18.

7. God teaches us that the heavenly race is not to the swift; which no hypocrite ever believes. He is sure to strive for the mastery; though he is never crowned, because he strives not lawfully, 2 Tim. ii. 5. He has no inward war, no opposition from Satan, no weights nor chains; no doubts, fears, nor despondings; no heart-failings or misgivings; he sees no mountains of difficulty, nor valleys of the shadow of death; no crooked paths, but straight ones; no rough places, but plain; no ground to dispute with Satan; no supplications nor bitter weeping: - and such may well run. The child of God meets with all these, and thinks every hypocrite before him, and himself the last of all. But "the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen." Matt. xx. 16.

8. The next thing that a chosen vessel, taught of God, relinquishes, is his supposed strength. While this last he will vow, promise, and strive; and, though he is continually foiled, and comes short, yet he renews the attack against the world, Satan, the flesh, his besetting sins, and inward lusts; he strives, in order to subdue

them, make his heart clean, and work himself up into a better frame, and into holy dispositions; but all in vain; for he is just like Jonah's mariners: "They rowed hard to bring the ship to land, but they could not, for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them," Jonah, i. 13. So it is with the poor awakened sinner; and this often makes him desist, and give all up for lost, till fresh terrors, fears, and torments, spur him to it again. This fruitless toil at length leads him to self-despair, or to despair of all help in himself, which is what God aims at; so that he is terrified at the very thoughts of vows and promises; he sees that his heart deceives him, and so does his arm: and this is what God leads him to; for "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26; and he is cursed of God that maketh flesh his arm. "Let the weak say, I am strong," Joel, iii. 10. This is a strange riddle, a hard nut to crack; but the Spirit of God will convince the sinner that he hath not power even to think. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. When this working arm fails us, help is at hand; "for Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9. The hypocrite is a stranger to this lesson; his high arm and stout heart are not broken by this soul-distressing and soul-discouraging labour: his spirit is not wounded, bruised, made sore, soft, or contrite; he is inwardly sound and whole; all his religion floats in his mind, his will, and his understanding; not in a change of heart, affections, and conscience: he is vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, in will-worship, or a voluntary humility in his will, with self-pleasing joys from the stirrings of natural affections, and some light in the understanding: nothing of all which makes him weak, broken, or contrite. Hence the prophet calls such youths, and young men; because, as the wise man says, "the glory of young men is their strength," Prov. xx. 29. And their strength is their ruin; "for God giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint," Isa. xl. 29-31.

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9. The ninth hard nut, that the poor coming sinner has to crack, is the mortifying state of insolvency: but it is such, and only such, who stand in need of the surety of the better testament. God's children must be made poor in spirit. No discharge of debts but by the Gospel surety; no bread of life but what the sinner begs; no covering for his nakedness but the gift of righteousness; no refuge nor resting-place but in the Son of God; no true riches but the ransom of a man's life, Prov. xiii. 8; no meetness for heaven but by the gift of the Spirit. Poor and needy, a pauper, a beggar, and a momentary dependant upon the bounty of heaven, he must become, who obtains the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. "A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty; and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both: tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most," Luke, vii. 41, 42. There is a peculiar emphasis laid upon the words, "and when they had nothing to pay;" which shews a deep sense of real poverty, and the wonderful bounty of heaven. Into this poor soul-degrading state the hypocrite comes not: for, like the Laodiceans, though destitute of real faith, the Holy Spirit, and his grace, and of all real righteousness, yet they are rich in themselves, "increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Rev. iii. 17.

10. And here I may bring in another hard nut, which those who are strangers to the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts are unacquainted with; and that is, wherein true greatness in the sight of God consists: - Not in aspiring at the ministry; not in knowledge or understanding; not in splendid gifts, fluent speech, or elocution; but in a continual sight and sense of the remains of inbred corruption, and this in the glass of Christ's sufferings, and in the faith of interest in his death. This gives us a sense of fellowship with him in his sufferings, and makes us conformable unto his death. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 4. The whole-hearted professor comes not into this secret. He is sure to strive for mastery; and it is self-applause and legal pride that puffs him up and spurs him forward. Hence the warning, and advice;

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation; for in many things we offend all," James, iii. 1. But these masters do nothing else but offend. These are some of the nuts which are hard to crack; but there is a real sweetness in them, when we can get them open. I shall now proceed to treat of the gradual rise and spring of eternal life in the soul.

This life, whatever it be, is the gift of God, the fruit and effect of his secret good-will of purpose in Christ, as saith the Apostle "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," Titus, i. 2. To this life are all the elect of God ordained; and this is the sole cause of the gift of faith to them, or of the elect being brought to believe in Christ. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed," and none else. This life is given us in Christ; it is put into his hands, and is secured and sure to all the seed in him; and on this account he is called our life, and the length of our days. "Blessed (says Wisdom) is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting, at the posts of my doors; for whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord," Prov. viii. 34. This life is the choicest blessing, of an everlasting covenant made between the Father and the Son, in which covenant Christ under-takes, by his sacrifice, to remove sin out of the way, which is the cause of death; and death itself also, as the dreadful effect of sin; that this gift of God might flow through him to the souls that are dead in trespasses and sins. Hence this covenant is called "the covenant of life and peace," Mal. ii. 5. And this covenant, which is now ratified, and confirmed by the death of Christ, is turned into what is called the Gospel, which is preached among us; the grand subject and glorious matter of which is, the promise of eternal life, which life and immortality are said to be brought to light by the Gospel.

In this I have often admired the goodness and condescension of my God: that, as death in all its dreadful meaning, and in its endless latitude, is so terrible an adversary to poor alarmed sinners; so God, in his abundant mercy, has scattered his gift of eternal life all over the Bible; and his superabounding grace is to terminate in the

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abundance of life. Hence every spiritual blessing in the book of God is either life itself, or something that leads to it: for upon Mount Zion God hath "commanded the blessing, even life for evermore," Psalm cxxxiii. 9. When God promises to be a God to Abraham, and to his seed, and styles himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, it amounts to the same thing, as our Lord shews in his explication of the words, "As touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living," Mark, xii. 26, 27.

This blessing of life lies in the love of God, in his good-will of purpose and of promise: it is in Christ, in the Holy Spirit of promise; and indeed the gift of eternal life is in every spiritual grace implanted in the believer's heart. Hence Peter calls us "heirs together of the grace of life," I Peter, iii. 7.

But that which brings this life nearest to us is the word of God, or the Gospel preached in the power of it; for eternal life is in the word; "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me," John, v. 39. On this account Peter says that God hath "given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter, i. 4. And by divine nature he means the grace of life, and nothing else. But then Christ, and Christ alone, must speak this word home to the heart, if it brings life to the sinner's soul. Men can only speak to the outward ear; "The excellency of the power is of God, and not of men," 2 Cor. iv. 7. "My word is spirit, and my word is life," says Christ, because the spirit of his mouth always attends the word of his grace, when he speaks to the heart and gives inward testimony to it. Death, and him that hath the power of death, must decamp when the Lord of life and death speaks. "I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live," Ezek. xvi. 6.

But to proceed. This blessing of eternal life is set forth before us by the emblem of wind; which is represented as moving those that are dead, and compared to a skeleton of dry bones; "Son of man, can these bones live? Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, Son of Man, and say unto the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live," Ezek. xxxvii. 3, 9.

It is also set forth before us by the metaphor of water flowing from the sanctuary, and overflowing all its banks; or the partition wall that separated between the Jews and Gentiles, and carrying the blessing of eternal life into the pagan world. "Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live; and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither, for they shall be healed, and every thing shall live, whither the river cometh," Ezek. xlvi. 8, 9. These waters are nothing else but the Holy Spirit and his grace; the sea is this confused and sin-disordered world; the fish are elected sinners, which the Apostles, who were made fishers of men, were sent to catch; and the blessing that attended these healing waters is eternal life; "every thing shall live whither the river cometh."

This same blessing is couched under different ordinances such as circumcision and baptism. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles; whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit," I Cor. xii. 13. And this drinking into one spirit is explained by Christ himself; "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," John, iv. 14. This is the one baptism of which water is an outward sign.

And circumcision in the flesh is no more than a sign likewise: for it is said, that Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of

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the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised," Rom. iv. 11. For true circumcision is performed by God himself; as it is written, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, that thou mayest live," Deut. xxx. 6. Hence baptism and circumcision are both one thing in the spiritual meaning, for both give life: and hence God says, "All these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart, therefore I will punish the circumcised with the uncircumcised," Jer. ix. 25, 26. Yea, more. The New Testament tells us that, "that is not circumcision which is outward in the flesh:" on which account all who are regenerated by the Holy Ghost, are said to be baptized into one spirit: and by the same Apostle they are called "the true circumcision which worship God in the Spirit;" which makes baptism and circumcision to be one and the same thing, in the explanation God gives of them, who is the best judge of his own meaning. And hence it is plain also, that to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, amounts to the same thing as circumcision, for the sweetest and hottest ingredient in that fire is love; and it is well known that "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," Rom. v. 5. His powerful operations as a comforter, sealer, and an earnest in our hearts, and God's love shed abroad therein by him, constitute this fiery baptism; and life eternal is the blessed effect of it. Thus this divine blessing, if it be not in the earthquake, yet is it in the wind, in the water, and in the fire. But now I must come a little nearer home.

Our Lord tells us, that this divine life is not a pool, or standing lake, which is fresh and wholesome for a while, and then becomes stagnated, useless, and loathsome, as we see the ministry and profession of too many to be in our day: but it is something, that keeps springing up, and will spring up to all eternity. And this appears from our Lord's discourse with the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well; where our Lord seems to confirm all that I have said about this blessing of all blessing, and this glorious gift of all gifts, and in which all other gifts are included. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to

thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water " John, iv. 10. And, had I known as much of this mystery when I first came to London as I do now, it would have saved me many a restless hour, many a bitter sigh, many a silent groan, and many dismal expectations. For, when I saw and heard of so many wise, able, learned, and popular ministers, both in the church and in other places of worship, shining and flourishing for a time, and then seeming to wither, decline, die away, lose their audiences and come to nothing, I was fully persuaded that the same would be my lot after awhile; that my gift would get stale, my life and joys wither, a sameness would appear in all my discourses, and the people would be sick of the same tale, so often told. But there is a difference between one talent and two; between a ministerial gift, and a gift attended with the grace of life to feed that gift; and I know that he must be a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, instructed of God, and this his instruction must lead him into the kingdom of heaven, so as to be a subject of it, if he continues useful to the end, and he must have not only the treasure of grace in his heart, but continual supplies of that grace, if he continues to bring "forth out of his treasure things new and old," Matt. xiii. 52; for he can never brings forth things new that lives upon, and trades with nothing else but the old stock.

Where the Spirit of all grace takes possession, there, and only there, will eternal life spring up, as our Lord declares - "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," John, iv. 14. Into a life of endless glory in the highest heavens will this water spring up; nor can the power of sin, the race of Satan, or all the world, prevent this spring from rising; but rather make its springing more strong, and its overflowings more rapid; for "by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of our spirit," Isa. xxxviii. 16. Nor does this spring in us rise alone; the believing soul rises and falls, ebbs and flows; and always moves in concert with it, as it is written, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon

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thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses," Isa. xlv. 3, 4.

But some may object, and say, if this living water is thus to spring up into everlasting life, and those upon whom it is poured are to spring up with it, and under the fructifying influences of it, as among the grass, and as willows by the water courses, how comes it to pass that so many, after a splendid shew of springing up, wither, fade, shake off their unripe fruit, come to nothing, and perish? - As the wayside hearers, who heard the word, and were plundered by Satan, and those who received seed into stony places, and suddenly they sprang up, having no deepness of earth, but in time of temptation fell away; and other parts of the word fell among thorns, where the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, overtopped and choked the word, and they came to nothing. Others begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh; others, like the foolish virgins, abide to the last in company with the wise, and then are shut out: others, like Ananias and Sapphira, though joined to the church, are both ravished by Satan, commit sacrilege, tempt the Spirit in the Apostles, lie to the Holy Ghost, and perish in their falsehood, and all for a little money. Demas forsakes Paul, having loved this present evil world: Ahithophel becomes David's counsellor, guide and companion to the house of God; but, when he becomes rich, aims at David's life, and hangs himself because he could not accomplish it. Others have got rich wives, and some into a large line of business, and accumulated wealth entirely by their profession; and, when such prizes have been obtained, their lamp has gone out in obscure darkness. All this is true, and every day makes it manifest; but no man in his senses will ever say that such professors are the elect of God. It is not without cause that we are bid to plough up the fallow ground of the heart, and not to sow among thorns, Jer. iv. 3.

This spurious crop of cares, covetousness, love of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, pride, self-confidence, self-righteousness, and ending in the flesh, &c. - I say, this spurious crop never had the axe laid at the root, much less were they grubbed up, or rooted out

at first. If the Holy Spirit had done this in them, he would never have suffered lust and corruption, briars and thorns, earthly cares and deceitful riches, to choke, overtop, or root out his work: "Whatsoever God doth it shall be for ever, nothing can be added to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doth it that men should fear before him," Eccl. iii. 14. Besides, where the grace of life is planted, and the Holy Spirit takes possession, that plantation is not deserted, but watched over with the utmost attention. "Sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine; I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day," Isa. xxvii. 2. There is a perpetual flowing of the water of life from the Saviour's fulness by the Spirit to every believing soul. "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all," Jer. xxxi. 12. Wherever inbred corruptions, or worldly cares, the love of money or the love of this world, prevail and overcome, there the Holy Spirit never took up his abode. He goes through these briars and thorns, and burns them altogether, Isa. xxvii. 4. And, as soon as he sets fire to them within, you may see them wither without. This is his first effectual work in the heart, as I shall now proceed to shew.

He finds the sinner dead in sin, or in the sleep of death, and not only dead, but alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, with the strong man armed in full possession, and his goods in peace. The word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, is sent home to the heart and soul with terrible majesty, and with a life-giving power. Sin, wrath, and the fiery law, which lay at the door, now enter in at the breach which the Holy Spirit has made; and this fire within withers and blasts the whole infernal crop before described. "The voice said, Cry, And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand

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for ever," Isa. xl. 6, 7. The Almighty calls the people grass because of their green, verdant, increasing and flourishing, condition, and because of the innumerable multitude of the inhabitants of the world. The goodness thereof is that which men pride themselves upon, boast of, and glory in: this is called "the flower of the field," which adorns it. Some glory in their wisdom, others in their strength, some in riches, and some in their beauty, in their learning parts, and abilities; others in their self-righteousness, holiness, the uprightness of their ways, their almsgiving, their devotion, attendance on ordinances, fastings, long prayer, &c. &c.: and some glory in their shame. But it is plain that the goodness as well as the flesh, the flower of the field as well as the grass, wither and fade under the quickening, convincing, and convicting operations of the Holy Spirit; for "the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth," saith the Prophet.

The Spirit of God works in a sovereign way, as Christ himself says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John, iii. 8. And the Prophet here tells us what is done by this blowing, - "the grass withereth and the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass."

But this work is not done without the word, as appears by the prophet's account. He tells us, first, there is a voice that cries; at this cry the spirit of the Lord bloweth; and under this blowing the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but that the word of our God, which the voice uttered, and which the Spirit applied, shall stand for ever. There are five things which attend this blowing, of the Spirit.

1. Light which discovers sin in all its malignity, and dreadful consequences, for "all things which are reprov'd are made manifest by the light which doth appear; for whatsoever maketh manifest is light," Eph. v. 13.

2. A soul-piercing and soul-condemning, power, attended with cutting convictions, reproofs and rebukes by the word, which is the Spirit's sword: "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. iv. 12. This is the sword by which the Spirit pierces and wounds the soul, and "a wounded spirit who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14.

3. The wrath and curse of a broken law attend this work, and enter the soul by the caul of the heart, rent and laid open by the Spirit of God: at the entrance of the law actual transgressions roll in, and the whole mass of corruptions rise up - a dreadful meeting this is: "Sin revived, and I died," says Paul.

4. The Holy Spirit, at his entrance, quickens the soul, or breathes the breath of life into it; and this gives the sinner a quick feeling, and makes his sensations exceeding keen, so that the piercings and woundings, the reproofs and rebukes become intolerable. All convictions that are not attended with the quickening influences of God's Spirit are sure to die away: it is life by the Spirit that keeps them alive. Nor will any thing short of divine life wither the grass, or fade the flower of the field. The whole crop will live and thrive under all convictions, except where the Spirit quickens. The young man in the Gospel turns his back upon heaven and endless glory, rather than part with the root of all evil: and, though he went away sorrowful, or full of sorrow, knowing that the die with him was cast, yet he risks it, and holds his great possessions. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?" No reproofs, rebukes, or convictions, by the word, will ever make the sinner relinquish his sweet morsels, or his favourite idols, unless eternal life be communicated: and this God declares. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; and from all your idols will I cleanse you," Ezekiel, xxxvi. 25. Many sit and endure reproof till they get miserable, yet remain just as they were, if not more hardened: and "he that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Prov.

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xxix. 1; and others, being unable to bear it, like Cain, go out from the presence of God. - "Woe unto them! For they have fled from me: Destruction unto them! Because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken against me. And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me," Hosea, vii. 13, 14. These fled from God, and kept on in their rebellion, gluttony, and drunkenness, though they howled with vexation of spirit; nor did they cry to God with their heart; Satan and sin still kept possession of that, and so it will be, and must be, unless the Spirit of life from God enter into them: and this is plain from our Lord's own words, where he is treating, of this same work, of quickening dead sinners.

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John, v. 21. Many dead sinners are raised up that are never quickened. It is one thing to alarm, awaken, illumine, and rouse a sinner, dead in sin, by calling an army of fears, terrors, horrors, and torments, about him; and another thing to give him life. God sometimes does this alarming work himself, and yet gives the sinner no life, as it is written, "Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib. For thus saith the Lord, "Behold I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends," Jer. xx. 3, 4.

Natural conscience, when overloaded and bowed down, may make sad work in the awakened sinner. The restraints of Providence being taken off, and Satan suffered to go in (as in the case of Judas), makes him a hell to himself; which is giving the sinner up to a fearful looking for of judgment. Legal convictions, which are in the general dry, barren, floating upon the mind, and are always attended with a deal of pride, self-savour, fleshly pity, self-righteousness, worldly-mindedness, and hardness of heart, may go a great way in appearance: but, whatever may alarm and raise up dead sinners, this I am sure of, that, if God doth not quicken them by the Spirit of life, they will lie down again. But God not only raiseth up the dead, but breathes the breath of life into them. This

withering of the grass, and fading of the flower, is attended with life; which is the reason why that man is pronounced blessed whom God chastens and teacheth him out of his law, Psal. xciv. 12. God's blessing is life for evermore; and is by no means pronounced or applied to sinners, who have nothing in them but sin and death. Now the symptoms of life, which attend these convictions, are as follows - There is a continual crying to God, as may be seen in Saul as soon as the voice of Christ reached him. "Go," says the Lord to Ananias, "and inquire for Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth." And in David, when the Spirit of God blew upon him. "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee: hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily: for my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burnt as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread," Psalm cii. 1-4. But will the hypocrite "delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" Job, xxvii. 10. No, he will not; nor will he ever cry to God with the heart, though he howl upon his bed. It is the elect, and none else, that cry day and night unto God.

2d. Life appears by the keenness of their sensations, the tenderness and soreness of their consciences, being chafed and bruised: hence Solomon says that "a reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool," Prov. xvii. 10. And the reason is, the wise man has life and feeling, but the fool is dead. Life appears also by the brokenness and contrition of their hearts, and by their reverence, awe, fear, and trembling at the word of God: "and God says he will look to and dwell with them that are of a broken and contrite heart, and that tremble at his word," Isai. lxvi. 2. And if the living God dwells with such, they cannot be dead.

3d. Life appears by the keenness of their appetite, and by the choiceness of the provision which they crave. The prodigal cries out for the bread of heaven. This was Christ, the bread of God. "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread," Psalm cxxii. 15. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is

none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them," Isai. xli. 17. These poor souls are seeking the Holy Spirit of promise as a comforter, and his grace. Others hunger and thirst after righteousness, and shall be filled; this is the righteousness of faith. Now, if the Holy Ghost doth not guide all these, it is a wonder to me how they came to set their hearts upon such provision as this: and, if he did not incline their will, it is a mystery to me how they came to choose such fare before husks, seeing, the latter is most natural to them, and is what they have been always accustomed to. Nothing was so disgusting to the Jews as to hear of eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ, in a spiritual sense, by faith. Besides, the appetite of sinners is so vitiated, that they have no relish for spiritual provision: man savours not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. And not only vitiated, but they are "alienated from this life of God through the ignorance that is in them," Eph. iv. 18; estranged from it, have no appetite for it; but in soul, hate it, and are enmity itself against it. Nor have the damned in hell any relish for it. The rich man did not beg for the water of life but for water to cool his tongue. Nor did he desire Lazarus to preach Moses and the prophets, much less Christ and faith in him. When he desired that he might be sent to his brethren, he was only to tell them of his torments, and to warn them, and testify against them. And, when Abraham objected, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them;" he objects also, "Nay, but if one went unto them from the dead they would repent." The distressed souls above differ much from Judas, Cain, Esau, Ahab, Saul, and many others, in their appetite, in the choice of their food, and in their earnest cry to God for it, where alone it can be had without money and without price; in all which they erred not.

But the grand question is, what is there in a soul, alienated from the life of God, that makes choice of and craves such spiritual provision? I answer, Nothing at all. He must be quickened by the Spirit of God that has such an appetite for spiritual food; and have in his soul a principle of life to feed, that can feed upon the bread of God. Hence Christ pronounces that man blessed that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. He does not say that he shall be blessed,

but he pronounces him already blessed: and, as I before observed, God's blessing is life for evermore. There is, and must be, life in that man upon whom the Son of God pronounces his blessing; for he doth not pronounce it upon the dead and damned; nor is that blessing a temporal one which contains food and raiment, health and prosperity; but it is a spiritual blessing, and Christ says that such shall be filled with righteousness.

4th. This life discovers itself by the company that such choose. While the prodigal was dead to God he not only fed upon husks, but went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, a citizen of Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with all her children; a better preacher in presumptuous confidence; one in bondage to sin, and under the curse of the law as well as himself; and here he found union, for the guests of such are not at Mount Zion, but in the depths of hell, Prov. ix. 18. But as soon as God quickened him, or planted a principle of spiritual life in him, then came the famine. In vain he tried his husks; this new principle could not feed upon them, though he fain would have filled his belly with them; and then he left the citizen and tried others, but no man gave the bread of life to him. Then he sets off to God; and the next time we hear of him he is found among the servants of the Lord, one of whom is bringing out the fatted calf, others the robe, the ring, and the shoes: and it is among these that they are sure to be found at a long run, however they may be tossed about for a time; and here they will cleave, as Ruth did to Naomi, and as many others cleaved to Barnabas and Saul. And again, it is said part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles; for to a poor sinner, quickened by the Spirit, a man of God is a precious jewel. Not only is the branch of the Lord (namely Christ) beautiful and glorious, but the fruit of the earth is excellent and comely to those that have escaped of Israel, Isa. iv. 2. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth," Isa. lii. 7.

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They are sensible and miserable sinners that are so fond of the ambassadors of peace, and they are lost sinners in themselves that see such beauty in the feet of those that publish salvation. And sure I am that they are heartily sick of the reign of Satan, sin, and death, who are so charmed with this branch of the tidings, "Thy God reigneth." It is no mean proof of eternal life being in the soul, when the poor sinner cleaves close to the people of God; for they must be taught of God to love, who love one another; and "We know (says John) that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," I John, iii. 14. A sinner, harassed by Satan and natural conscience, may be fed by an Arminian; and a minister of the letter can feed any one under legal convictions whom no food suit so well as the earthquake, the wind and the fire, accompanied with plenty of noise and eloquence, with hell and damnation; this feeds the legal spirit that possesses him, which is a spirit of bondage to fear. And, if an artist at empty oratory can craftily handle the pathetic parts of scripture, so as to stir up his bowels, touch the passions, and move the affections of nature, so as to make his bowels sound like a harp; this passes for conversion, and the operations of the meek and dove-like spirit of Jesus, while the whole work is carried on by Satan. The soul that is quickened by the Holy Spirit puzzles all these: they can neither explain his case, tell him where he is, what he ails, nor feed him. These appear to me to be the first glorious influences and operations of divine life by the Spirit in the souls of men; and this brings them forth from that carnally secure and insensible state that they were before in, when they had no sense nor concern either of God, or their own danger: "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1.

The next discovery of this springing up of the divine life is the "day-dawn and day-star rising in the heart," 2 Pet. i. 19. The first appearance of light, as I before observed, discovered nothing but sin, and God's anger in a broken law; but the day-dawn and day-star, that rises in the heart, is the forerunner of, and leads on to, the rising of the sun of righteousness. "He that believeth in me (says Christ) shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life." This is called the light of life, because it discovers not only the more

sure word of prophecy, but it discovers in the word more and more of the suitableness and preciousness of the Son of God, the freeness and fulness of his salvation, and of his ability to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. And this is an increasing light that affords matter for meditation: it entertains his mind, counteracts despondency, loosens the injurious bar of infidelity, and renders less violent the attacks of Satan. It discovers a firm ground for hope, and rescues, in some measure, the mind from its confusion, and the understanding from the dismal glooms of death's shadow. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined," Isaiah, ix. 2. Now, as the dawn of day is perceptible to us, and the morning opens more and more before it; all which are the distant rays of the sun itself, and forerunners of it, and sure signs of a brighter shining, so the day-dawn and day-star rising in the heart are distant rays of Christ's sweet face, forerunners of a brighter morning, and sure signs of his healing beams: and this the poor sinner is sensible of, for his heart often enlarges as if his Lord was coming, which adds new life to his spirit, fresh fervour to his petitions, spurs to his diligence, and gives his soul at times such evangelical impressions, that infidelity can hardly be heard; and his convictions work more pleasingly, upon a softer soil, and attended with more noble and endearing wounds, being mixed with meekness, humility, and contrition. And this is the day-dawn, the light of life. "I will give him (saith Christ) the morning star," Rev. ii. 88; which leads to endless day.

It is generally the case that, when a sensible sinner is under the convictions of the Holy Spirit, labouring in legal bondage, under the weight of sin and the sting of guilt; filled with slavish fear and cutting remorse; at such times there is a sad sense of God's divine anger reflected on the sinner's heart, which sense furnishes the law and conscience with fresh matter of reproach and accusation; such an one being filled with "the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of his God," Isa. li. 20. Whatever such souls hear under the word is sure to agree with, and confirm, all that they feel within. The Spirit's work on the heart always tallies with the word of God preached to the

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ear; so that the poor soul who is wounded in his spirit is sure to have "a dreadful sound in his ears," Job, xv. 21. The awful, the threatening, reproof, rebuking, correcting, warning, alarming, convicting, condemning, and cursing parts of God's word, are sure to bring heavy tidings to his ears. And indeed it is under the word of God, faithfully preached, that men are brought to God's bar, to take their great trial for eternity and, if the word binds them upon earth, in heaven they are bound; and, if the word of truth makes them free, they shall be free indeed, John, viii. 32. They are loosed upon earth and in heaven they are loosed, Matt. xvi, 19. The sinner that God takes in hand is up to all this; he knows he is under his great trial; and that he shall stand or fall at the great day according as the scriptures of truth decide his fate by the word preached. If he be cast and condemned by the word, he is the same by the Judge himself; for he is sure that he "shall not stand in the judgment" if he cannot stand "in the congregation of the righteous," Psalm i. 5.

But though God seems to deal so terribly with the poor sinner, yet he only aims to humble him, debase him, empty him of self, and meek and soften his stubborn spirit, and not to destroy him; and therefore he says, "I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath; for the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made," Isa. lvii. 16. A continual sense of wrath would drink up the spirits, Job, vi. 4. and perpetual contention would drown the soul in despair; but God says this shall not be the case, for "I will not contend for ever." And no sooner does the Holy Spirit produce a godly sorrow, but the terrible and threatening parts of God's word seem, as it were, to blow over; and the softening, alluring, and encouraging promises seem to operate; yea, the comforting, inviting, soul-cheering, enlivening, and attracting parts of the scriptures flow in with much light and comfort; and the promissory parts of the word of God appear sweet, salutary, and enlarging; which animates and cheers the soul wonderfully: on which account the gospel, and the promises of it, are called by the angel "all the words of this life," Acts, v. 20. As soon as the encouraging and comforting promises enter, wrath subsides; while light and love diffuse their distant rays, working a surprising

change in the soul. "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me," Isa. xii. 1. Now, though these first entrances of truth and comforting power may not root up, nor root out, all doubts and fears, and the ground of them; yet such a change is made, and such enlivening and cheering sensations are enjoyed, that the sinner gets comfort against the fears of death: and in the enlivening frames which he feels, though he be far from deliverance from all his troubles - "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me," Psalm cxiii. 50.

The next springing up of this divine life discovers itself in the rising up of hope. Hope is intended to counteract despondency, to hold the shattered vessel from sinking; it turns the mind from looking back to looking forward, from bitter reflections to future expectations, from meditations of terror, to contemplations of mercy. Hope is employed about things future, things good, things promised, and things much needed; and is always annexed with salvation; "For we are saved by hope," Rom. viii. 24. And this hope is a sweet hand-maid to the poor distressed soul; it attends him in prayer, and is a firm expectation of future prevalency with God. It attends him to the house of God; and, if it meets with discouragement or disappointment, which is called hope deferred, and which is said to make the heart sick, so as for the poor sinner to begin to sink and despond, yet it rises up again, and at times carries a considerable degree of assurance in it. "I will," says Paul, "that every one of you do shew the same diligence, and full assurance of hope, firm to the end." Hope axes stronger and stronger by labouring, under difficulties, and rises up with more vigour after strong oppositions. Moreover, hope makes our troubles lighter; it enables the sinner to submit to the will of God, and is a great promoter of, and much encourages to, the exercise of patience. "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." I always think that the vessel of mercy crosses the line when hope springs up, and that the bitterness of death is then past; for as we sink deeper and deeper in the horrible pit, and matters get worse and worse, and all future prospects look more and more dismal,

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while we appear without God, and have no hope in the world, so when hope springs up we rise higher and higher, and matters look more and more promising. This makes us hug and kiss the rod, and teaches us to submit, and accept the punishment of our iniquities. Nor would such a soul part with the chastisements of his most propitious Father, or be without them for all the world. He knows that things will end well with him, and this keeps him steadfast, and watchful at wisdom's gate. And this hope is not a dead thing, but a most laborious grace; for, as faith works by love, so hope works with patience; it makes us eye the promises, and leads us to expect the accomplishment of them. Nor shalt the hoping soul be disappointed; "For surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off," Prov. xxiii. 18.

The Spirit shining upon the word, and affording the soul some relief and encouragement, that very relief and encouragement discovered in the word, is by the Spirit realized to the heart. And it is an experience of these sweet influences that worketh hope. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," Rom. xv. 4. To this hope does our covenant God and Father beget us; and it is as true that divine life lies in this hope. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," I Peter, i. 3. If it be a lively hope, then life must be in it, as there is but one hope; for "we are all called in one hope of our calling;" then all hopes but this are dead. And, as this hope hath life in it, so eternal life is the expectation of it. A lively hope through grace expects a life in glory, and shall have it. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," Titus, i. 2.

The springing up of this divine life appears further, in the power and energy which often attend the word, the suitableness and seasonableness of the promises in their soul-dissolving, applications, the strength and encouragement that attends their powerful entrance, the nobleness and richness conveyed thereby to

the mind, the wonderful field that appears to open, and the transporting and ravishing views presented to the enlightened understanding thereby. And, though the poor awakened sinner may be but now and then favoured with these banquets, and these may be very short, and succeeded with much bitterness, yet they are highly prized by him; and he finds by these things, though but in a small degree, yet it is going in and out and finding pasture, and Satan is sorely displeased at it. And this appears by the most violent temptations which generally follow upon such kind indulgences, and which Satan, by the instrumentality of carnal reason and unbelief, labours hard to dispute him out of; and the poor creature labours as hard to hold them fast. And it gives him such a relish for the heavenly fire, that he esteems the word of God's mouth more than his necessary food, Job, xxiii. 12. - And this feeds the living principle within, called the hidden man of the heart; for that which is born of God is nourished and fed by the Spirit and word of God; for the principal thing in the new man is life, and it is divine life that feeds and nourishes that principle. It eats the word of life, the bread of life, and drinks the water of life, and every drop of comfort that flows from the Spirit of life, "being, born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever," I Peter, i. 23. Therefore, "as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," I Peter, ii. 2. Observe the Apostle's word, "being born again," - that is regenerated by the Holy Spirit not of corruptible seed, as our first birth was, but of incorruptible seed; by which he means the various graces of the Holy Spirit, to which he gives four names.

1st. The hidden man of the heart.

2d. The grace of life.

3d. A lively hope, to which God begets us by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. And,

4th. The divine nature.

And these through Christ, who ascended to heaven, there to appear for us; and who received of the Father the promise of the

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Spirit, and sent him down to renew us, and to implant this incorruptible seed of his grace in our souls, which is done by the ministry of the word, or by the instrumentality of preaching; for as God, in the great and precious promises of the new covenant, promised to pour his Spirit upon Christ's seed, and his blessing upon his offspring, so by the Word preached he gives testimony of his faithfulness and truth, by sending his Holy Spirit to attend it, and make it effectual by working his divine nature in all them to whom it comes with power, and who yield the obedience of faith. Now this "incorruptible seed," saith he, "liveth and abideth for ever." For as sin by Adam's fall hath reigned unto death, through the infernal hatred of Satan both to God and man, even so shall the love and favour of God reign, through the obedience of the second Adam, to eternal life.

He calls them new-born babes, because very lately begotten to this lively hope, and because they had but newly begun to taste that the Lord is gracious, and to relish the joys of his countenance, the consolations of the Spirit, the sweetness of the promises; and had some small beginnings of the preciousness of Christ, which he calls the sincere milk of the word. For the promises are full of spiritual blessings; and, as these promises are applied by the Spirit, so we suck these cheering blessings out, as we are enabled to mix faith with them.

Now, although the poor coming sinner, who is favoured with this blessed hope in its first stage, and who begins to feel the first encouraging entrances of the word of life, yet, being baffled by Satan, hood-winked with the wretched remains of the old veil, it having but lately begun to rend, and often to close again, he may not be able to discern the safety and goodness of his state, yet I believe that, the very moment the spirit of life enters the heart, and quickens the soul, then, the principle of life being infused, that soul is brought forth from the dismal and insensible sleep of death, which the Apostle calls a being dead in trespasses and sins. "You" saith he, "hath God quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." For such a soul is not only alarmed and awakened, but

quickened; and, if quickened, he comes forth from the sleep of death. "He that is our God is the God of salvation, and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death," Psalm lxxviii. 20. As soon as the soul verges from the sleep of death he is styled an issue, or an offspring; and is begotten from death by the quickening energy of the Spirit, to a lively hope by the powerful application of the word of truth. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," James, i. 18. And in this sense I understand the following passage, - "Before she travailed she brought forth, before her pain came she was delivered of a manchild. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things," Isaiah, lxvi. 7, 8. The Lord may well say, Who hath heard such a thing? No such thing ever appeared in nature, but in grace it doth appear. Before she travailed she brought forth: before her pain came she was delivered of a man-child.

Now take notice of what I advance. A soul dead in sin, and altogether insensible of it, is said, in scripture language, to be in the sleep of death, as I before observed; and God is said to pour out upon the Jews the spirit of a deep sleep; and some sleep a perpetual sleep, and shall not awake, Jer. li. 39. That is, they shall never be awakened nor alarmed, nor open their eyes in this world; but, like the rich man, lift up their eyes in hell.

Against this sleep David prays, "Consider, and hear me, O Lord, my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death," Psalm xliii. 3. Now it cannot mean that before Zion travailed perfect love cast out all fear, which is that glorious work that makes our new birth clear to us; for her fears and torments were not come on. But the sense appears to me to be this. - She brought forth a principle of divine life before she travailed; before her pains came the new man was formed, and her soul delivered from death. And I think my own experience will bear me out even in this; for, when this work was begun in me, something like a flash of lightning, but quicker than that, shone into my soul, and all through me; my understanding or mind perceived something of a pale flame; and I now believe that the Holy Spirit that moment took possession of

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me; and I have always viewed that to be the Spirit's first illuminating and quickening power on my soul, and God is the best judge of the labour and travail that followed upon it.

Divine life, in its springing up, is discovered further by the sensible workings of Faith; for, as the word gets free course into the heart, it brings its own evidence with it; and the more powerful it comes, the more powerful the confidence is that attends it. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom.x.17. Faith is the hand-maid of the word, which accompanies it to the heart, makes room for it, and entertains it; and, if the word comes with great power, and in the Holy Ghost, then it comes also with much assurance, 1 Thess. i. 5. Faith takes its steps as we are enabled to exercise it "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting, life," John, v. 24.

The first entrance of the word, in its convicting operations, being attended with the divine displeasure, and terrible majesty of God, leads the sinner to believe the truth of all divine revelation. Much of the threatening part of the Scriptures being already applied to him, and fulfilled in him, makes him believe the promissory part also, and the safety of those who are interested therein. Even Saul, when God left him, and answered him no more, saw both his own rejection and the choice of David; and told David he knew that he would surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel would be established in his hand; which prophecy is fulfilled in every believer to this day. The whole of divine revelation gains credit in the souls of all that are truly convinced of sin. But, when any encouraging discoveries are made of Christ, and all salvation being alone in him, our scattered thoughts fly like doves to their windows, to consider the record that God has given of his Son. And, when the glorious light of the Gospel begins to shine into our hearts, and the glory of God to spread its enlivening and transporting beams, we find it hard work to believe in the light, that we may be the children of light, John, xii. 36. It appears so glorious, so great, so good, and altogether so clear and so free, that the transported soul exclaims, Surely it never can be true! Now Faith begins in triumph, and to

believe not only the record that God hath given of his Son, but to believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God himself. This makes the injurious bar of unbelief give way; the heart enlarges upon the application of every truth; and expectation and hope rise to the very height of the watch-tower. But, in order to exercise patience, it is often observed that these rays, which are but the utmost skirts of the Lord's glory, appear (as Ezekiel calls it, chap. i. 4) "a fire enfolding, itself," or catching itself in. And these intermixtures of light and darkness, and the heart enlarging and contracting in concert with them, keep their poor soul rejoicing and trembling until Faith lays hold of the atonement, brings it in, purifies the heart, and purges the conscience from dead works by it; upon which peace with God flows in, and friendship with God takes place. Sin being removed, nearness of access to God succeeds. The righteousness of Christ is put on, and the curse of a broken law goes out. Thus the atonement removes the sting of death, and a justifying righteousness removes the ministration of death. "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life," John, v. 24. This is another precious springing up of the life of God in the soul. "Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it," Numb. xxi. 17. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward", Isaiah, lviii. 8.

Now, here I must look about me, and pick out all that I can, for I am quite in my element, and in which my soul delights. First, here is the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, which is called by Peter the grace of life. Furthermore upon this forgiveness there is a spiritual blessing pronounced. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered; Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile," Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. Here is a twofold blessing, and they are both spiritual blessings; and all God's spiritual blessings are life, for "upon Mount Zion God commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Blessed is he whose

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transgression is forgiven, and blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity."

And there is also one blessing more in this glorious cluster; For "blessed is the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." And the reason of this blessing is, because the sentence of death is removed, upon the sentence of justification being passed. "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," Rom. v. 18. And again, "For, if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ," Rom. v. 17. When I began this scribble, reader, I set mine eyes and my heart upon God's blessing of eternal life; and hitherto I have closely pursued it, and hope in my God that I shall never lose sight of it to all eternity, and I firmly believe that I never shall. And in this my pursuit, I have kept that ghastly enemy, death, in view also, endeavouring, to shew that the springing up of this divine life roots out and banishes death. And our great Apostle, in the two last-quoted passages, seems to me to have been pursuing the same chase in his ministry; that is, abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light by the Gospel. And so, in the above description which I have endeavoured to give of this springing well, two branches of death are removed. If we receive the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, and which is the grace of life, then the sting of death is removed, and access to the living God is granted. Upon justification unto life the law and its curse are removed; then the ministration of death is abolished from our hearts, II Cor. iii. 13. "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," I Cor. xv. 55.

But the believer stops not here; there is a further springing up of this living water. Moses in the Psalm that bears his name, fixes his eyes and his heart, and directs his prayer, for the highest attainment of a work of grace. "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy

glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it," Ps. xc. 16, 17. Moses prays that God's work of grace might appear to his ministering servants, and the children which such servants should beget in their bonds, that the glory of God might appear to them: and this he calls the beauty of the Lord; not that which appeared at the giving of the law, for that was terrible Majesty, which bears that great and fearful name that made him fear and quake. He talks about the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush; the angel of the covenant who went before him, and gave him rest; in whom the glorious covenant name, which God proclaimed before him, was to be found. "Obey his voice, for my name," says God, "is in him." This beautiful person Moses calls our life, and the length of our days. It was this blessed one that told Moses he knew him, and that he had found grace in his sight; the rays of whose face shone so sweetly upon the skin of Moses, when he was typifying him as mediator: and this beauty of the Lord our God is, God shining reconciled and well-pleased in the face of his dear Son. Here his eternal goodness, mercy, pity, and compassion, faithfulness and truth, all appear. And sure I am that nothing will establish the work of Faith in us but this. "When the Lord shall build up Zion he shall appear in his glory," Ps. cii. 16. But what builds us up? Not knowledge. "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth," I Cor. viii. 1. It is in love to men that God laid the foundation, which is Christ crucified; and it is love in men that unites and cements the foundation and building together. Charity edifieth - it builds up and raises the edifice of mercy. "When the Lord builds up Zion he shall appear in his glory." And where is this glorious appearance to be made? Why "God, who caused the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," II Cor. iv. 7. The eye of faith and the enlightened understanding discover this, and this is a thorough transforming view. "For we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord,"

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II Cor. iii. 18. And in this act Faith reaches her hand to the highest thing attainable in this life, namely, to the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus. When our dear Lord hung upon the cross he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, then the sting of death took hold of him; and by faith in him our hearts are purified; then, "O death, where is thy sting?" I Cor. xv. 55.

He was condemned, though innocent, and died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, I Peter. iii. 18. He was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13.

The sentence of death and the wrath of God in a broken law took hold of him as our surety. "He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," Rev. xix. 15. And he laid down his life for his sheep.

He suffered temporal death also, which is a separation of the body from the soul. His body went into the tomb; but his soul, as an offering for sins, went into the hand of God. "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," Luke, xxiii. 46. In all these he sweetly exhibited the eternal love of God to poor sinners, "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man," Heb. ii. 9. Wonderful is this divine expression of "tasting death;" for this was all done in his own person, and not in his body mystical, the church: and in this tasting of death he opened a way to God upon earth, and drank a saving health to a multitude of sinners. "That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations," Psalm lxvii. 2. Now, when Christ comes to present his victory over death to poor sinners, he not only tells us that he has tasted death for us in his own person, but even that he swallowed up death for all the family who feel their need of him; for he declares that he will destroy it in them. And "in this mountain destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces," Isaiah xxv. 7, 8.

The plain English of all this is, that, as our surety and representative, he tasted of every kind of death for every one of his family; he laid down his life for all his sheep; and, though in his own person he tasted death for his people, yet in the application of the saving benefits of his cross, when it comes to be applied by his Spirit to the children of Zion, it should be swallowed up in his body mystical. That by faith in him, and in his finished work, not only death in all its formidable branches should be rooted up, but even the fear of it, by a sense of his dying love, be cast out, and even kept out. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love; casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love," I John, iv. 18. And at the resurrection morning, when the dead in Christ shall rise first, temporal death, which is what all the highest favourites of heaven to this day lie under, shall arise; and in their resurrection shall the above passage have its full accomplishment. "He will swallow up death in victory," Isaiah, xxv. 8. "So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory," I Cor. xv. 54. The condemned sinner finds it no difficult thing to believe the spirituality of God's law, because the curse and wrath of God are both applied to him; and he will believe, and tremble too, who is filled with reproof and rebuke: but for a polluted sinner that sees his own vileness, and who is under the deepest impressions of the holiness, justice, and immutability, of God - for such a poor wretch to believe that he is an object of God's everlasting love, is what nothing but Faith from above can credit. This has always appeared to me to be the difficult work of Faith. Tell the poor awakened sinner of this, when he is in the horrible pit and in the miry clay, and I should not wonder if he answered you, as the unbelieving lord answered Elisha, "If God would make windows in heaven might such a thing be:" or like poor Job in his affliction, who declared that, "If I had called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice, for he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause," Job, ix. 16, 17. But so it is; what God applies, that man, believes. When the commandment comes with power the sinner will say, with

David, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments," Ps. cxix. 66. Nor will the sinner ever tremble at God's word until he believes and feels God's word to be levelled at him. He that is convinced of all, and judged of all, and has the thoughts of his heart made manifest, will report that God of a truth is in such speakers: but a sinner in such circumstances dares not report what he does not believe. So, when Christ comes into the heart, and we feel and enjoy the benefits of his death, we believe, as Paul did - "I live by the faith of the Son of God, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But sometimes we have more than we can believe. We may have the grace of Faith when we have not the light of Faith. It is one thing to get wisdom, which is the principal thing; but it is another thing to get understanding or light to see what we have gotten. I believe that Christ was in all his elect disciples in the days of his flesh; but I much question if they all knew it, because the Lord said unto them, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you," John, xiv. 20. So it is also with respect to the love of God in Christ: the sinner may and does believe in it, because it is clearly revealed; but, if he has no discoveries, views, or prospects of it; no feeling sense of it, or hope in it; he cannot believe it with an application to himself, because of the powerful working of unbelief, which Satan stirs up, strengthens, and improves to the uttermost, against him. The same Spirit that works Faith in the heart presents to Faith's view, and applies to the hand of Faith, all things that are to be believed and embraced. "He shall take of the things that are mine," says Christ, "and shall show them unto you." But, until we have some experimental knowledge of the love of God to us, we cannot believe with an application to ourselves. It is true that charity believeth all things: but this charity must come first - "We love him," says John, "because he first loved us:" and John sets knowledge before faith - "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," I John, iv. 16. Paul expresses his faith in the love of God in Christ, the fullest of any in the Bible. "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to

separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 38, 39. But this same Apostle tells us that the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them; so that their faith embraced what the Holy Spirit applied. And this is another wonderful springing up of eternal life in the heart; for this life is found in love. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live," Deut. xxx. 6. There is, as I observed before, eternal life in this sovereign of all graces, called love, which never fails, and which accompanies the soul in its passport out of this world, and passes with it into the next, and ever lives in the world to come. And this blessed spring of divine life abolishes another branch of death, and that is the fear of death. Death is a sad enemy, and to this the awakened sinner is in continual bondage: but love casteth out all fear; the slavish fear of future judgment, the fear of wrath and ruin, the carnal fear of man, the terrifying fear of Satan, and all other fear but that which is peculiar to a child of God; which is not legal, nor slavish, but filial; and which has got the love, mercy, and compassion, of God for its object. "They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," Hosea, iii. 5.

I shall now proceed to treat of another rising up of this divine life, which is found in repentance; but not such sort of repentance as Mr. Hart sings—

Some long repent, and late believe;
 But, when their sin's forgiv'n,
 A clearer passport they receive,
 And walk with joy to heav'n.

I am fully persuaded that there is no repentance without faith. The devils are said to believe and tremble, because the wrath and curse of God is in them. And I doubt not but Judas had the same faith when the curse and wrath of God entered into him: he repented himself, and was terrified, grieved, and sorry for what he had done; but then it was grief and desperate sorrow, Isa. xvii. 11.

His repentance found no place in the mercy of God, nor in the death of Christ, and therefore it was desperate sorrow, and desperate repentance; without hope, and without remedy. Repentance springs not from the application of the law, when God's curse and man's crimes meet together in the court of conscience; which is always attended with another meeting, namely, the just indignation of God and the carnal enmity of man. And where this apparent irreconcilable enmity seems to work within, no place of repentance appears; there is room for desperate sorrow, but not for sorrow after a godly sort. The sinner may wish the evil things that he hath done were undone, which is one branch of repentance: but at the same time he loves sin in his heart, and feels his enmity work against God, and he would fain flee out of his hand if he could. Besides, repentance is not a thing extorted by indignation and wrath. Repentance is not attended with a fleeing from God, but it is repentance toward God; not repentance without faith, but coupled with it. - "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" Acts, xx. 21. We are not driven to it, but led. Terrible majesty is not the object of it, but goodness. "The goodness of God leadeth us to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. The Apostles joined forgiveness of sins with that repentance which they preached; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, Luke, xxiv. 47. Repentance is a grace that is to be found in the fulness of Christ, where all grace is treasured up: and, as the prince of peace, and the only Saviour of men, he bestows it upon all the chosen subjects of his empire. It is a grace of his kingdom, and is often exercised by every loyal subject of his, not only at first, but upon every after transgression, as appears from the following passage, "And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed," 2 Cor. xii. 21. Legal repentance is always attended with self-pity and enmity to God: it works fear of the punishment of sin, but no real hatred to it: it is always mixed with pride and self-righteousness, but no self-abasement, nor true relish for spiritual provision. Evangelical repentance is a free-grace gift in Christ, who is exalted

to give it. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts, v. 32. It is the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, that leads men to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. It is man's misery and God's mercy meeting together in the conscious sinner. It is the loving father and the relenting son meeting together in Christ Jesus. God makes us accepted in the beloved. Here the sin-sick soul and the great physician, the condemned criminal and the Lord our righteousness, the insolvent debtor and the divine surety, the broken heart and the bond of love, soft words and broken bones, the filthy wretch and the cleansing fountain, the starving soul and the bread of God, the killing kiss and the marriage bond, meet together. And this produces such strange effects, that, if even the devils were thus indulged, they would repent in sackcloth and ashes. Real repentance rises from this joyful meeting, and vital union. Such souls are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. "Surely after that I was turned I repented; and after that I was instructed I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth," Jer. xxxi. 19. This sprung not from a spirit of bondage, but from the spirit of adoption; not from a servant, but from a son; as the next words shew - "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him," &c. Evangelical repentance springs from a believing view of a reconciled God and father in the face of Christ, and of our interest in his eternal love. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job, xlii. 5, 6. Repentance rises from humble submission to the will of God, and the obedience of faith. "Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he repented and went, and did the will of his Father," Matt. xxi. 29. And this is both the will and work of God, that we believe in him whom he hath sent. Repentance is attended with self-abasement, and a sense of the pacification of God toward us. "And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never

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open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. This is another sweet stream from the springing well of eternal life; as it is written, "And when they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," Acts, xi. 18. It is called repentance unto life, because it flows out at God's cordial acceptance of us in Christ Jesus, and is a grace that is exercised under a sense of the dying love of Jesus, and in the favour of God in whose favour there is life, and "he that findeth me," says Christ, "findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." It is this work that crucifies the sinner to this world and the world to him. It stirs up all the lees and dregs, dross and tin, filth and scum, from the bottom of the heart, and works it out; and makes the vessel of mercy pure and clean, sound and good at heart; and leaves not so much as a doubt or fear, if or but, misgiving or scruple, in all the regions of mind and conscience; and is a death's wound to legal pride and self-righteousness, worldly cares, and the deceitfulness of riches, which are the briars and thorns that the devil sets to war against the work of God and the law of the mind: but, when God brings forth our judgment unto victory, and takes possession of the heart, he goes through these briars and burns them altogether, Isa. xxvii. 4. And where there is nothing of this repentance unto life, whatever promising prospects or favourable appearances there may be, lusts and corruptions, cares and covetousness, as our Lord says, will spring up and choke the word, for the want of root, deepness of earth, and moisture; and then they are sure to harden and grow callous under all reproof and rebuke, and under the most powerful and spiritual ministry, that ever appeared in the world, as may be seen in Judas under the ministry of Christ, in Ananias under the preaching of Peter, and in Demas under the labours of Paul.

The next pleasing stream of divine life that rises in the soul is that which so powerfully works in the renewed mind - "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace," Rom. viii. 6. The mind is the busiest faculty in the soul of man, and will be busily employed about something, either good or

evil: but this by the spirit of God is purified and renewed. Hence you read in Peter of a pure mind; and by Paul of being renewed in the spirit of the mind, which consists in the Holy Spirit's subduing our sin, and bringing under the carnality and enmity that works in the mind, and those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and writing the law of faith in it, accompanied with that love that is the fulfilling of the law, shedding it abroad in the heart. And now, the book of God being unsealed, the covenant of grace exhibited to the renewed mind, and to the enlightened understanding, it roves in and ploughs up the secret mysteries of the kingdom, the secret decrees of God, his goodwill of purpose and of promise, his counsel and his covenant, the many folds of his wisdom, and the rich displays of his grace, the present earnest and the future lump, the first-fruits of the spirit in hand, and the harvest of glory in hope. These things now become the employ of the mind, and the meditation of the heart: these things the renewed soul loves, in these it delights; and the Holy Spirit still gives us fresh discoveries to explore, and fresh matter of wonder: and here we give up our conversation and contemplations to the higher world: and the spirit of wisdom, which writes these laws of faith and love in the mind and heart, speaks by them to the soul - "When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee," Prov. vi. 22. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." Nor is this divine life an inactive principle which lies dormant, but a working one, as the Apostle intimates when speaking of the infirmities of old age gaining upon him, where he says - "So then death worketh in us, but life in you," 2 Cor. iv. 12. And hence we are said not only to be quickened, but raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and to be planted together in the likeness of his resurrection: not representatively only, but by the soul's ascension to God under the influence of the Holy Spirit, which is expressed by having our hope as an anchor of the soul within the veil, and by setting our affections on things above, at the right hand of God where Christ sitteth, and by having our conversation in heaven. Moreover, this powerful springing up of divine life is discovered to us by the most delightful refreshings and entertainments which the Holy Spirit sets forth in

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the soul - "And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses: one shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord; and surname himself by the name of Israel," Isai. xlv. 4, 5. Here is first their springing up as among the grass, leaving the grass (the children of this world) behind. This growth is set forth by the willow, and the Spirit and his grace by the water-courses. And you may see what works in the heart, by the confessions of their mouths; "I am the Lord's;" he has loved, chosen, redeemed, called, justified, and sanctified me. This is a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ. The next calls himself by the name of Jacob: and rightly so called says the believer, for I have got both the birthright and the blessing; I am born again and am a partaker of the blessing of heaven, even life for evermore. The third subscribes with the hand of faith to the Lord; he lays his hand of faith upon the promises, and sets to his seal that God is true to his word; a God-hearing and answering prayer; and styles himself a prevailer with God, an Israelite indeed, though not an Israelite after the flesh.

Moreover, there is a continual flowing of the Spirit of grace from the Mediator's fulness, by the word, to all believers; and, as the waters of life flow into us, so grace springs up in us - "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not," Isa. lvii. 11. "For, as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations," Isa. lxi. 11. This springing up in us is the exercising of the different graces of the Spirit upon God through a Mediator, and the heart discharging its spiritual contents in confessions, in prayers, praises, blessing, joyful acclamations and songs, with grace in the heart, making melody to God.

And it is this grace of life by the Spirit that feeds the gifts of all the real ministers of Christ, who are ministers of the Spirit, and stewards of the mysteries and of the manifold grace of God: and,

without this grace of life, the most splendid abilities and the most shining parts; zeal, apparent fervour, understanding, and fluency of speech, all will wither, fade, and come to nothing at last; for, as the Spirit never blowed so as to wither the grass and fade the flowers at their entering into a profession, these flowers are sure to spring up and choke their profession sooner or later. And whenever a consciousness of hypocrisy, presumption, and deception, stares them in the face, and Satan, who has emboldened them and supported them, comes to turn the tables upon them, as he always does when our heavenly Father takes the fruitless branch from the vine, as he did Judas; then they find Paul's saying true – "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. x. 31. Thus have I endeavoured, as well as I am able, to set forth the beginning and springing up of eternal life in the souls of God's elect, and also how it roots out death as it rises, as

1st. When God by his Holy Spirit quickens us, then are we brought forth from the sleep of death, Psal. xiii. 3.

2d. That the light of life rescues the mind and understanding from the dark regions of the shadow of death, Isa. ix. 2.

3d. That God, begetting us to a lively hope, counteracts despair, which leads to death. "We are saved by hope."

4th. That faith, apprehending the atonement and purifying the heart by it, brings the life promised to faith, and purges sin, which is the sting of death, I Cor. xv. 56.

5th. That faith, putting on an imputed righteousness for the justification of our persons, we are then said to pass from death to life, so as never more to come into condemnation: this is called justification unto life, Rom. v. 18. This delivers our souls from the sentence of death, and from the ministration of it; for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1.

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6th. That the kingdom of God set up in the heart, which stands in divine power, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, this delivers us from him that had the power of death, that is the devil; for this translates us out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son - "That, as sin had reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v. 21.

7th. That the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is called God's circumcising our heart, to love him that we may live, and that this life of love casts out even the fear of death, when we are made perfect in love.

8th. That God's writing, the law of faith in the mind, and putting the law of love into the heart, makes the mind heavenly; and "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This delivers us from the reigning carnality of the mind which carries death in it, for "to be carnally minded is death."

9th. And, as for death temporal, that is turned into a sleep for "he that believes shall never die." And thus this change of heart turns the king of terrors into the gift of heaven. "All things are yours, whether life or death," I Cor. iii. 22. And this is what I understand by abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light through the Gospel. But I must think of dropping the subject, having spent six whole days, early and late, at this work. Indeed, I do believe that God sent this cold and hoarseness upon me that I might have time to publish my thoughts upon this pleasure and important subject. It is to the last degree incumbent upon every sincere seeker of Christ to attend to this very thing above every thing else; namely, whether they have life; for comfort may be fetched from this matter, in the worst afflictions. "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me," Psalm cxix. 50. "I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death," Psalm cxviii. 17, 18. Where this divine principle is, there the leaf of profession must and shall be green; they shall not,

cannot wither, nor shall they ever cease from yielding fruit, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. But wherever there is a profession, or even a ministry, without divine life in the heart, the leaf of that profession shall wither, their unripe fruit shall be shaken off, all external appearances, reformation, gifts, and abilities, shall be taken away, and they shall be taken away from Christ, from the communion of saints, and be cast out of the prayers and affections of God's children, and out of all their profession too; and, if they continue until death, even then their hope shall perish, it being not a lively hope, but the hope of the hypocrite; "and the hope of unjust men perisheth," Prov. xi. 7. The faithfulness and truth of God himself stand bound to strip the lifeless professor, and minister of the letter, from all their empty and barren profession, and from all their presumptuous claims upon God, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away;" and they are burned, for there can be no fruit where there is no life: and how few are there that find this strait gate, and narrow way, that leads to life!

This life appears wonderfully in times of trouble, when temptation and persecution come on because of the word; at which times the lifeless professor takes offence, withers, and falls away. It is often seen that the quickened soul waxes more bold, takes courage, increases in spiritual might, and knowing his God, becomes strong, and doth exploits, Dan. xi. 32. As his days, so shall his strength be, for God is a very present help in time of trouble; and they that know his covenant name will put their trust in him. He is never more earnest, never more devout, never more fervent, never more above himself, never more instant in prayer or prevalent with God, than when he is opposed, oppressed, or in the furnace of affliction. He then musters up all his evidences, and hugs even them which he thought but little of before. When God has planted his heavenly crop of divine grace, by his Spirit in the soul, it is his intention that the believer shall make use of them; and, in order to this, he puts him into the furnace, and brings him into such straits, that he shall either engage and prevail, or turn his back, in the day of battle. He shall either pray, or relinquish all claim upon God, believe or flee, hope or despond, dispute his ground or give

up all for lost as may be seen in Moses at the Red Sea, in Sampson in the house of Dagon, Jonah in the whale's belly, and Hezekiah in his affliction, who found his life where he expected nothing but death. "Oh Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit. So wilt thou recover me, and make me to live," Isai. xxxviii. 16.

It is in these straits that the believer is obliged to exercise all his arms and armour, and at such times it is that the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Here, it is that the king is held in the galleries. The spouse holds him and will not let him go. In such like straits Jacob obtained his victory. He must wrestle, and prevail too, or else see the death of his whole house, according to all human appearance. So it appears also in the Lord's answer to him. "As a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed." He prevailed over Esau and his banditti as well as over the angel. "I will," says God, "bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried. They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them, and I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. And what is this third part which is to be brought through the fire? Why, the elect of God, and no other. "And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein," Zech. xiii. 8. And this third part are to be acknowledged for the Lord's people, and they are to claim him for their God.

Divine life will stand the furnace. Neither the world, the flesh, the devil, sin, nor heretics, shall ever be able to wither or kill those trees of righteousness which God waters every moment, and which he keeps night and day. Nor doth God communicate his grace by any minister of the letter; such ministers may alarm the natural consciences of men; and Satan, having possession of their hearts, may work with their natural convictions, and toss them about with wild, violent, and strange horrors and terrors; and, by the assistance of the devil transformed, He may beget them to a bold, daring, presumptuous confidence, which may at times be attended with

natural meekness, fleshly pity, and even transient joys may spring up; but, as sure as the God of heaven liveth, so sure will all this crop wither, either in the furnace or in death. I have long watched this, and have never been disappointed yet; nor do I believe I ever shall be. God communicates his Spirit by the ministers of the Spirit. Grace is communicated by the instrumentality of the good stewards of the manifold grace of God, and by no other. The righteousness of Christ goes from faith to faith, not from hypocrites to infidels. God gives testimony to the word of his grace, not to the letter. Ministers of the letter can minister nothing but death. "The letter killeth," and that is all it can do. It is the Spirit that giveth life. And he must have salt in himself that seasons others, or that ministers grace to the hearers. "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain," Prov. xxv. 14; that is, without the water of life. But the gift of life in Christ "is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth it prospereth," Prov. xvii. 8. He must come to Christ and drink, out of whose belly flows rivers of living water; and this water is communicable. "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook" Prov. xviii. 4. The brightest, and most deceived and deceivable, pupils of a letter minister, are always telling you of a multitude of scriptures which have come to their mind at different times; this they all harp upon: but the kingdom of God is not in word. They that received seed by the way-side, and that were robbed and plundered by the devil, are said to hear or receive the word of the kingdom, Matt. xiii. 19; but not the kingdom itself. And such will talk much of their distresses, and of being in bondage; but there are more than ten bitter ingredients that compose a spirit of bondage, which they cannot describe: all their talk is in general terms. The sight of sin, sin being set in order before them, with all secret sins standing in the light of God's countenance; the intolerable sense and burden of sin, too heavy to be borne when brought in and charged home upon conscience; the cutting rebukes, with flames of fire, which attend the sword of the Spirit; for "by fire and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh;" bitter reflections, and the lashes of conscience upon every reflection; the application of the broken law; the revival of sin upon it, and the cutting

sentence of death that attends the entrance of it; the terrible majesty of God, his dreadful wrath, and the enmity of the carnal heart, that rises up against him; the blasphemous suggestions and fiery darts of Satan; the working of despondency, if not despair; the meditations of terror, the snares of death, the pains of hell, smoking jealousy, and those most dreadful passages of scripture, sent home or brought in by Satan, which set forth the dreadful state of apostates, hypocrites, or those given up of God to Satan, and to a fearful looking for of judgment. These are the things which cut the wild olive branch from the old stock, which none of the disciples of letter-men know any thing of. These things are peculiar to those, and only those, who in our day are called Antinomians. Legal convictions in appearance, in reformation of manners, in gifts, light, understanding, and speech, may make a great shew, and go a great way, when at the same time the heart, affections, and conscience, remain unpurged and unrenewed, and of course the strong man armed is still in full possession of the palace. Many a church, chapel, meeting, alms-house, college, school, and hospital, have sprung from legal convictions; even by them that could never endure the light of life, the force of truth, the power of the Spirit, or the company of those who have received a comforter that shall abide with them for ever. The believer gets his food and his strength for working, from a quarter that no man knows any thing of but himself. The springing well of grace in his heart, kept in motion by the Holy Ghost, is the moving cause of all his peace and happiness, hopes and expectations, from which springs all his good words and good works "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," I Cor. xv. 10. And not only works, but words, spring from the same source. "The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips," Prov. xvi. 23. It is under the influence and operations of God's spirit that the intercourse between God and the soul is kept open, and communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son is kept up through him. "We both have an access by one spirit unto the Father." And this is what I understand by that wonderful speech of Christ to Nathaniel. "And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of

God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man," John i. 51. I have observed that, whenever our Lord promised any great thing that should follow upon his resurrection, if we look, we are sure to find it, as when he said, "Verily, I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power," Mark, ix. 1. Now, as the kingdom of God stands in power, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, many on the day of Pentecost saw the Spirit like a cloven tongue of fire; and they saw the power, glory, and majesty, that appeared on the Apostles. So, when Christ is speaking of the desolation of Jerusalem, and declaring that that generation should not pass away till all these things be fulfilled, the apostle John, Josephus, and many more, outlived the desolations of Jerusalem. But where do we read of Nathaniel, or any other, since Christ spoke those words, seeing the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, or any thing like it? Some writers tell us that, through the mediation of Christ, there would be such an intercourse open between heaven and earth, that it would seem as if angels were continually going to and fro with messages: but the words "seem as if" will by no means come up to the words "Verily, verily, I say unto you" that you shall see it. For my part, I do not believe that angels by nature are meant, but angels by office; namely, the children of God; who, having received the gift, minister the same one to another, and are often called angels, especially in the book of the Revelation; and Christ says, "The children of the resurrection are as the angels of God." Besides, angels need not a mediator, nor have they any; the Mediator is appointed for men. Christ is our ladder; but why angels should ascend and descend upon him I know not.

The heavens opening and shutting is what the weakest believer is often led to experience. The awakened soul, that feels the hardness of his heart and the anger of God, knows the meaning of Moses, and often complains of it. "And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under shall be iron," Deut. xxviii. 23. Nor are they strangers to the heavens opening in the sense the prophet Isaiah means. "O that thou wouldest rend the heavens that thou

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wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence," Isaiah, xiv. 1. And again – "Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. I the Lord have created it," Isa. xlv. 8.

This ascending and descending upon the Son of Man respects the exercises of faith, hope, and love; and means no more than access to God through a Mediator. "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture," John, x. 9. Ascending, and descending is the same as going in and out; which Christ says Nathaniel should see; and it may be seen, both by the happy and by the dejected frames of the children of God; yea, even enemies have seen it, much more friends. For, after the witnesses and churches had long suffered in sackcloth, they are represented as slain, or silenced, and lay unburied in the street of the great city: but after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and set them upon their feet, and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them, Rev. xi. 12. This ascension, under the power of the spirit of life, is no more than rising up out of trouble into a glorious and powerful state of heavenly mindedness. And, if their enemies could behold this, much more their friends; especially such as Nathaniel, who was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.

The religion contained in this small piece, Reader, is but little known in our day, for the general work carried on is drawing people into a profession, and setting them down short of Christ, short of the Holy Spirit, and of the grace of God, and of course short of the promised rest. The work of too many is that of making hypocrites, not enforcing the Spirit's work, nor insisting upon a new creation in Christ, a new nature by regeneration, service in newness of the Spirit, and a walk in newness of life. It consists in a few dry notions of truth, a little decent deportment, attendance upon the ministry of the letter, and to be armed with malice against every appearance of the power of godliness, and a hatred to all that enforce it, and to all that are in possession of it; it stands in

varnishing the old man of sin; in dressing, adorning, and swaddling, fallen nature. All of which will leave the sinner worse than it found him. Stirring up the natural passions of sorrow, of grief, and of love, which some too much admire, will stand for nothing in God's account. There are natural affections (2 Tim. iii. 3); inordinate affections (Col. iii. 5); and vile affections (Rom. i. 26.) The best of these belong to corrupt nature. Nothing short of life by the quickening power of the Spirit of God can give you hope, and nothing short of the love of God shed abroad in the heart, can ever cast out that fear and torment which have death and judgment, wrath and ruin, for the objects of it. The errand of the Son of God into this world, was to give his poor lost sheep eternal life, and his Gospel is still continued to this end; and every preacher that is destitute of this divine life, is no more than a minister of the letter. And all such preachers will aim to set convinced sinners down destitute of this divine life; and surely such are the friends of Satan, and the enemies of Christ. If my Reader follows after this thing which good is, he must expect to be loaded with calumny and reproach. Spiritual minded men, and a spiritual ministry, have ever been treated with contempt. You have it both in the Old Testament and in the New – "The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred," Hosea, ix. 7. Iniquity had blinded their eyes, and the carnal enmity of their minds broke forth into opprobrious language, charging inspiration with folly and madness. And they acted the same part with Christ himself; for, when they saw his miracles, and heard the mysteries that he preached, "they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself;" and others said, "He hath Beelzebub," Mark, iii. 21, 22. So they said of Paul, that much learning, made him mad: but in Christ Jesus is life, "and the life is the light of men," John, i. 4. This life is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God," which is given us "in the face of Jesus Christ," II Cor. iv 6. This life, which is the light of men, is that salvation to men which is a lamp that burneth, Isa. ixii. 1. and that never goes out. He is the light of joy to men. "The light of the righteous rejoiceth when the lamp of the wicked is put out," Prov. xiii. 9. This life in Christ is the light of love, which teaches the children of God to love one another; and "he that

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loveth his brother abideth in this light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him," I John, ii. 10. This life in Christ is the light of our every deliverance, which brings us forth to the light, in which his righteousness to our justification appears, Micah, vii. 9. And if this life in him is the light of men, then to be without it is to be in the darkness of death, in the darkness of ignorance, and in the darkness of carnal enmity; without the lamp of salvation, without the oil of joy, without the light of God's countenance, without the light of saving knowledge, and without the light of love, which casteth out fear and torment. So I write, and so my Reader shall confess some time or other.

W. H., S. S.

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Chapter Three

THE ETERNAL SETTING OF THE SUN

THE ETERNAL SETTING
OF THE SUN

IN HIS MERIDIAN,

AND THE

TOTAL AND ENDLESS
ECLIPSE OF THE EARTH;

IN THE CLEAR DAY

A SERMON

PREACHED AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, ON SUNDAY, JULY 26, 1807.

“Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness”. . . I Thessalonians 5:5

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day”

Amos 8:9

WHATEVER this dark and ambiguous text may mean, it appears to me that it never had, or will have, its accomplishment in a literal sense. The sun stood still in the days of Joshua: but standing still is not going down. "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day," Joshua, x. 12, 13. In this passage we have an account of the sun and moon standing; and of the sun standing still in the midst of heaven, hasting not to go down about a whole day. But the sun standing still a whole day, and then going down, cannot agree with my text, which is expressed not of his standing still in the midst of heaven, but of his going down, so as to rise no more.

We have an account of the sun going back in the days of Hezekiah, to prop up his faith in the promise of God. "And the sun went back ten degrees; so the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down," Isaiah, xxxviii. 8. But the sun returning ten degrees backward, differs widely from the full expressions and meaning of my text, which is, that "the sun shall go down at noon, and the earth shall be darkened in the clear day."

Moreover, we read of darkness overshadowing the land until the ninth hour, at our Lord's crucifixion; but then, after the ninth hour matters returned again as they were before; for, although this darkness spread itself at twelve o'clock at noon, and continued three hours, which was a preternatural eclipse, the moon being at the same time at the full, as it always was at the passover feasts, yet this cannot be the meaning of my text; for, although the sun hid his face, and did not shine for three hours, yet he did not go down, but broke out again at three o'clock in the afternoon, and shone forth as before.

Nor can the darkening of the earth in the clear day be understood in a literal sense, seeing God hath said that, "while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and

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winter, and day and night, shall not cease," Genesis, viii. 22. And it is plain that this covenant of day and night stands as firm as the covenant of royalty with David, or the covenant of grace with God's elect; for so it is written, "Thus saith the Lord, If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites my ministers " Jeremiah, xxxiii. 20, 21. Phineas obtained the covenant of an endless priesthood, and David obtained the promise and covenant of an endless reign; both of which are now obtained by Christ, and sure to all his seed, we being made kings and priests unto God, and having the promise that we shall reign as such for ever and ever. But I will come to the words of my text; and shall consider,

- 1st. What we are to understand by the *sun*.
 - 2d. What by the sun's *going down*.
 - 3d. The time of his *setting*, namely, at *noon*.
 - 4th. What is meant by the *earth*.
 - 5th. What by *darkening the earth*.
 - 6th. What by this darkness coming or *in the clear day*.
- And, lastly, treat of that day when all this is to be done.

1st. What we are to understand by the sun. It appears to me that the Lord God Almighty himself is meant by the sun; for he is the fountain of light, life, love and heat, to all his own people. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," Psalm lxxxiv. ii. This sun, and this only, was the glory of the Jewish nation. They had the glorious shechinah upon the mercy-seat, which was the throne of God. "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary" Jer. xvii. 12. Again, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it," Jer. iii. 17.

2dly. By the sun, in my text, we may understand our Lord Jesus Christ, who is sweetly held forth as the sun, and promised as such

to them that fear the name of the Lord. "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall," Mal. iv. 2. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and, when God puts this fear into men's hearts, it brings them to stand in awe of him, and stops them in their evil course; and the good spirit of God, breathing the breath of life into them, makes their souls tender, so that their old way becomes hedged up with thorns; and, if they persist in it, it often pierces them through with many sorrows. This fear, being a fruit of the Spirit, is filial, though slavish fear be not as yet cast out, because the sun is not yet risen; and it is said to have the name of the Lord for its object; that is, God's covenant name, the name which he proclaimed before Moses. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sins," &c. Exod. xxxiii. 6,7. And we are further informed, that this name is in the messenger of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ: "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him," Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. This is the sun of righteousness, which is to rise and shine upon those that fear this name. He shines into the soul with everlasting light, and his beams convey healing to every power of the soul. Pardoning love heals the wounded conscience of its sting of death, and the troubled mind of her enmity and terrible meditations; sets the broken judgment to rights; cures the will of its stubbornness and inflexibility; purges the affections of all their false gods, and conveys an unctuous light to the understanding. Moreover, the lost image of God in man is restored, or reinstamped upon us, by the healing rays of this sun. "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Then, says God, you "shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." They shall go forth from this world, and from the society of it, from the chains of sin and of legal bondage from the prison-house, the strong holds of Sin and Satan, and from the dark and dismal regions of the shadow of death. And they shall grow up

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to be men in understanding, they shall grow in faith, and in spiritual strength; they shall be edified and built up in love and in truth; they shall grow out of self and out of conceit of self, and into Christ Jesus, so as to be rooted and built up in him. Sucking calves, that are kept in stalls, are very thriving creatures; and so are young saints with the breasts of consolation in their mouths; they are earnest after the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.

Furthermore, the fructification of the earth, its choice fruits and all their delicious flavour, are chiefly owing to the beams of the sun. In Christ Jesus is all our fruit found; all grace is from his fulness, and they are his enlivening rays that give it all its activity: he draws it forth, and upon him it exercises itself; he gives it all its sweetness; and upon these sweet and pleasant fruits he delights to feed. Add to this, the sun-beams have an attracting virtue in them, exhaling the moisture of the earth. And many vegetables, lay them, by a pressure of the earth, which way you will, the sun will draw them to bend towards him. So the sun of righteousness draws the soul to confide in him for all sorts of righteousness. His obedience to the law, as our surety, is our righteousness by imputation. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness; which righteousness is love, and this is from him. A good conscience, which is righteousness and peace at the bar of equity, is of Christ, and so is a loving heart and a liberal hand; both of which are the fulfilling of the law, which law is the rule of righteousness. Again, this sun shining upon us, healing us, and reflecting God's lost image upon us, puts a stop to that stinking savour, which is continually emitted from graceless hearts; I mean seeking the praise, the applause, and the honour of men. "How can you believe who receive honour one of another, and not the honour that cometh from God only?"

If this sun shines into us, it consumes and withers that corruption which cleaves to our affections, and inflames them, raising them to God, and to his right hand where Christ sitteth. "So let thine enemies perish, O Lord (says Deborah); but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might," Judges, v. 31. And

such as love will not rob him; they are fully satisfied with his salvation, and far enough from rivalling God of the honour of it. The unction that Christ conveys never breeds flies, nor sends forth a stinking, savour, but raises up a whole revenue of glory to God alone. "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory," Isaiah, lx. 19. All ranks of human beings have something to boast of and glory in. The glory of children are their fathers: the glory of young men is their strength; and the glory of old men is the grey head. The glory of the rich is their wealth, and the glory of the wise is their wisdom. But the glory of the saints is their God.

Christ Jesus is to us the fountain of light, the morning star, which in our hearts is the first ray of eternal glory in heaven. He is the day-dawn and day-spring from on high, that guides our feet into the way of peace; and he is also the rising sun, that shone with such splendour in the apostles, in all ministers of the spirit, and in all the children of light ever since. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race," Psal. xix. 4, 5. Compare Romans, x. 18. Christ Jesus is the brightness of his father's glory, and the express image of his person; and we are to have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his face. And this sun rising and shining upon us, is nothing else but the Lord lifting up the light of his countenance upon us. "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength," Rev. i. 16. This is the sun that heals the soul of all its wounds, and the fallen countenance of all its wrinkles. "The Lord is the health of my countenance, and my God," Psalm xlii. 11. But will this sun, where it thus rises and shines, ever go down over the children of light? No, it never will. The ministers of the spirit, and the church of Christ, are nobly secured from the setting of this sun. The ministers of the gospel are a tabernacle for this sun, out of whom Christ shines upon poor elect sinners; and God's tabernacles shall not be taken down, nor shall the cords or stakes be loosed. All true believers put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in him: and such members compose the true church of Christ, which is "a

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woman clothed with the sun," Rev. xxi. 1. And over such this sun will never go down. "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory: thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended," Isaiah, lx. 19, 20. Again, "For, as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain," Isaiah, lxvi. 22. But what would the new heaven and the new earth be without a sun to shine in them?

I come now to treat of the setting, or going down of this sun. The whole body of God's elect are called Zion. God hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it; and out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." Here he shone from the mercy-seat upon the prophets of the Old Testament; and in the face of Zion's king he shines upon all his servants under the New Testament. And many false prophets of old, and false apostles in the apostolic age, and false teachers since, have got their first beams of light from this quarter. We read of false prophets stealing the word of their neighbours; and of many among the Jews rejoicing in John's light for a season; and of others hearing the Saviour's word with joy, and joy is called light; and of false brethren coming in among the primitive saints to spy out their liberty, that they might abuse and pervert it. But this light shines only into the head, not into the heart; it gives them some light: hence they are said to be enlightened; and, having their natural passions stirred and ravished with glee, they are said to taste of "the heavenly gift," Heb. vi. 4. And such soon spring up, because the plague of the heart is undiscovered, and there is nothing to keep them down. Light, knowledge, gifts, fluency, a reformation, and fiery zeal, make a great blaze and noise in the world for a while; and, as our Lord says, upon sight they believe; but then their faith is but temporary. "Those on the rock are they who when they hear receive the word with joy; these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away," Luke, viii. 13. Now these are called the rocky, or stony ground

hearers, because the word never reaches their heart and conscience, the old veil remains upon the heart, and the strong man still keeps possession of the palace. And this I know, that if every faculty of the soul be instructed, reformed, and set to work, yet, if the conscience remain unpurged, and the affections not set upon God, all such faith is vain, and those who possess it are "yet in their sins," I Cor. xv. 17. Men may have much understanding, and the will may be touched as well as the understanding. We read of willing, and of will worship; but "salvation is not of him that willeth." We also read of a fleshly mind being puffed up. But God's covenant regards the conscience and the affections: the first he cleanses from all its filthiness, and the latter from all its idols. This is called circumcising the heart to love him, that we may live; and it removes the stony heart: whereas our Lord himself calls those before described rocky and stony ground hearers, notwithstanding all their faith and joy. Over all such prophets, such apostles, or such teachers, the sun is sure to go down; and daily observation confirms the same: and so it is written, nor can it be otherwise, for they are strangers to pardon, to peace, and to love. "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall cover their lips, for there is no answer of God. But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin," Micah, iii. 5-8. Here we have an account of the sun setting, or going down, over all false prophets and letter ministers. These prophets are charged with causing God's people to err, as all must do who are destitute of the faith of God's elect; for the sin of unbelief is a perpetual erring in the heart; and such, our Lord says, only believe for a while and then fall away. They either fall into damnable heresies, into open profanity, into apostacy, or else into the flesh. Their setting out with a ray of light is called "beginning in the spirit;" and sinking into self is "ending in the flesh." Their zeal is

to be seen by their biting with their teeth, and snarling at the servants of God. Their cry is Peace, which is the message of the ambassadors of the Lord of Hosts. But, as these prophets are destitute of genuine faith, in an unpardoned state, and without an imputed righteousness, what have they to do with peace? Nothing at all. Their aim is to obscure the vileness of our nature, to stifle all convictions, to kill every quickening influence upon the mind, to set us down in carnal ease and insensibility, and to keep the devil in quiet and undisturbed possession of the heart. "And he that putteth not into their mouths they even prepare war against him," Micah, iii. 5. Ahab's servants desired Micaiah to speak the same good things to the king as the prophets of the grove did; and Zedekiah waged war with him, and smote him on the cheek, because he would not lie as well as himself, I Kings, xxii. 24. God says, "Night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine," Micah, iii. 6. For, when once the devil, who deceives them, begins to stir with his temptations, and conscience to be disquieted; when the lamp goes out for want of oil, and an angry God in a broken law reflects his displeasure; how are they ashamed, when all their former sins, and the hypocrisy of their profession and preaching begin to stare them in the face, and when their temporary faith fails them? They are then confused and confounded. And, when once their lamp goes out, their sun is set; and conscience is informed, and the mind assured, that it will rise upon them no more for ever. Such shall cover their lips, says the prophet, for there is no answer of God. As was the case with Saul, who thus complains - "I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams," I Sam. xxviii. 15. Thus we have seen how the sun goes down over the prophets; and the same sun shall set upon all the assemblies that are collected, united, daubed, and built up by such workmen. So it fared with the Jewish church of old, and so it shall fare with all congregations of hypocrites to the end of time; for false prophets were threatened to the Jews, and false teachers to us. And, as the sun went down over the false prophets, so it went down also over the false-hearted church of the Jews. "She that hath borne seven

languisheth, she hath given up the ghost, her sun is gone down while it was yet day," Jer. xv. 9. She that has borne seven; that has borne so many eminent prophets, righteous kings and choice saints (and even the Messiah himself was both in their loins and in their promises), even she languished, and fainteth away for the want of true faith, which always trusts on the Lord's arm for strength; and by his power through faith is every saint kept unto salvation. For the want of this she languished, having confided in the false prophets, hoping they would confirm their predictions; whereas, instead thereof, "They had seen vanity, and lying divinations, saying, The Lord saith, and the Lord had not sent them: and they made others to hope that they would confirm the word," Ezek. xiii. 6. But the cry of "Peace, peace," fell to the ground, when the sword, pestilence, and famine, came pouring in like a flood; and for the want of faith she languished, and her hope in a lie gave up the ghost.

I come now to the third head, which is to consider the time of this sun setting. My text says it is at noon. "I will (says God) cause the sun to go down at noon." And this was the case with the Jewish church. "Prepare ye war against her: arise, and let us go up at noon: woe unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out. Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces," Jer. vi. 4, 5. We read of her languishing and giving up the ghost before; but this "Woe unto us, for the day goeth away," was her last dying speech.

And it is true that her sun went down at noon. It shone in his meridian, in the prophet Jeremiah, both in his soul and in his life; but, above all, it shone out in his heavenly doctrine. How many wonderful and precious prophecies did he deliver out concerning Christ! "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man," Jer. xxxi. 22. And again, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell

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safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness," Jer, xxiii. 5, 6. Again, "Thus saith the Lord, If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night; that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne. As the hosts of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me," Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, 22. Here was the sun shining at noon day. And so it was also with those precious ones who believed in Jeremiah's message, and were separated from the vile-the wheat that was severed from the chaff: upon these God declared that he would set his eyes and his heart for good. "And although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be unto them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come", Ezek. xi. 16. Here God promises to be a sanctuary to them; and it is well known that God's throne, and the shekina, shone in the sanctuary. Thus it was high noon with the prophet Jeremiah, with Baruch, Ezekiel, and others, when the sun set upon the false prophets. And it was no less so with the children of faith, when the sun went down over the false church among the Jews; when the deceivers and the deceived both fell together, being false sons of a false mother. "Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother," Hosea, iv. 5.

Noon is the time when the sun is at his height, a time of the greatest light and heat. Hence the prayer of the spouse, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon," Song. i. 7. Here is resting in light and heat, in life and love, called noon. And so they promise Job, that if he put away evil from him, he should lift up his face without spot. "Thine age shall be clearer than the noon day, thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning," Job xi. 17. But, when it was high noon with the prophets of God, it was sun-set upon the false prophets. And so when the sun was in his meridian upon the apostles it was midnight with the Scribes and Pharisees. "For judgment I am come into this

world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind," John, ix. 39. And so it is to this day: when the path of the just shines more and more, letter-men and hypocrites get darker and darker. And what aggravates their misery and their condemnation is, that this darkness comes upon them at noon day: but no wonder, for they hate the light, they rebel against it, and blaspheme it; therefore God gives them up to grope in darkness, when the sun shines in his full strength. Hence the prophet personating them in his complaint, says, "Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no our eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men," Isaiah, lix. 9, 10.6. Here is groping for the wall, and stumbling at noon day; that is, when it is high noon with the saints it is dark night with blind guides and hypocrites in Zion; which is more fully confirmed in the latter part of my text, "I will darken the earth in the clear day."

I now proceed to shew that by the earth we are to understand carnal, earthly-minded men, such as are destitute of the spirit and grace of God, whose souls are drudges to the works of the flesh, and who are buried in fleshly lusts, which corrupt nature relishes, desires, craves, and lusts after. "The first man is of the earth, earthy. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy," I Cor. xv. 47, 48. Again, "He that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all," John, iii. 31. Again, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," Isaiah, xi. 4. In all these places it is apparent that by the earth, in my text, letter-ministers, false prophets, and carnal professors, are meant, for such "are of the world," says John, "therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error," I John, iv. 5, 6. So it was in the days of old, so it is now, and so it shall be. God will darken the earth in the clear day. And this you have from God's own mouth: "Arise, shine; for

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thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee," Isaiah, lx. 1, 2. Here we have the shining of God upon his own elect: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of God is risen upon thee;" and again, "but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." With such souls it must be clear day. But at the same time the earth is darkened, and shall be dark; wherefore a "Behold" is affixed to it "Behold darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." And thus God darkens the earth, and spreads gross darkness upon carnal professors, when the heirs of heaven shine in the clear day. More over, there is such a precious crop of fruits brought forth by the sun, Deut. xxxiii. 14, when he shines, as must be ripened and upon these fruits the sun shall never go down, nor shall the grossest darkness ever overtop or overspread them.

God's salvation is a lamp that burneth, Isaiah, lxii. 1, and an everlasting salvation; and this is put forth at the rising of this sun. Nor shall this lamp ever be extinguished, go out, or cease to burn. The imputed righteousness of Christ goes forth to the soul as brightness, Isaiah, lxii. 1; and this is Zion's beautiful garment, and her wedding robe, in which she is a branch or tree of righteousness, the right hand planting of God, that he may be glorified. And, although it is true that every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up, yet he will never pluck up the trees of righteousness, which he plants in his dear Son. The oil of joy, with which the elect of God are anointed, is the anointing of an everlasting priesthood, and such shall return to the holy of holies with everlasting joy upon their head, and there engage in the last branch of their priestly office; which is singing the praises of God and the Lamb for ever and ever. In short, their blessing in Christ is everlasting life; their adoption is an everlasting name that shall not be cut off; they are redeemed with eternal redemption, and sanctified by the eternal spirit; their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and the grace of God in them shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life: and the Lord is their everlasting

light, their God and their glory; and their sun shall no more go down. And all this appears in my text, which mentions noon, as well as the going down of the sun; so that it must be noon with some, while the sun sets over others. And the last branch of my text expresses the same thing; for the earth is to be darkened in the clear day; so that it must be clear day with the children of light, even when God darkens the earth; and both these families take their names from the day and night, which are expressed in my text, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness," 1 Thess. v. 5.

When God created man he created him in his own image, and the leading feature in that image was love; love to God, and to all mankind. Charity, or love, ever was, and ever will be, the "more excellent way," I Cor. xii. 31, or that way that excels all others. But, when the devil had infused his enmity into the mind of man, he corrupted him with his own malice and enmity from this way. Hence God's complaint, wherein he calls men *earth*, because his spirit and his image were gone: "The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," Gen. vi. 11, 12. This corruption of nature has three branches in it; the first is called filthiness; the second is called idols, or idolatry; and the third is called dross. Filthiness is all the uncleanness, pollution, and impurity of defiled nature, including all concupiscence, lasciviousness, or lusting after evil things. "From all their filthiness (says God), will I cleanse them." This is called purifying the flesh. Idols, or idolatry, are things loved, adored, and enshrined in our affections as rivals to God; such as loving honour, pleasure, money, self, the world, images; nay, sin and the devil himself, more than God: "From all your idols will I cleanse you." By dross I understand the light of nature or reason, thoughts and conscience accusing or excusing, natural and acquired abilities, human wisdom and knowledge, self-righteousness and outward decent deportment, common honesty in business, with natural affections and liberality, some reverence of the name of God, blind zeal for human traditions and human ceremonies, with constant

bodily exercise in the duties of natural religion. And these things gain esteem and applause, (for our Lord says, that all this is done "to be seen of men;") and this applause becomes a spur to them: and by diligence, education, habit or custom, men improve in these things: but, whatever use all this may be of among men, sure I am that it is far enough from "the mystery of faith in a pure conscience." And true it is that the work of the ministry in the present day, which is what Paul calls the ministry of the letter, is calculated to polish and set off this dross and tin; for, if such characters get enlightened by the word, and receive it with joy and a temporary faith, this inflames the mind with zeal, and is often attended with gifts and a great stir in religion; and, to set all off, feigned humility, warm natural affections, and a pleasing glee, are put on: but, after all, this is but the sheep's clothing, a specious, an outward and gaudy show at best. God purges his children from all their dross, and from all their tin too, for he has no vessels of dross and tin. "God made man upright," and an upright man is a man justified by faith, and one that loves his God, Hab. ii. 4; Song i. 4. Charity is the more excellent way. God set man out on this way at first but he has sought out many inventions, and his inventions have corrupted this way; and it is the determination of the Almighty to bring his creature, man, into this way again. Hence the gospel of Jesus Christ, "according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," Rom. xvi. 26. And the aim of God in all this we have in a few words, "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," I Tim. i. 5. All preachers, all professors, and all men that are destitute of this, are but earth and earthy; and, let them shine as bright as they may, all their lustre shall end in obscurity: "The light of the righteous rejoiceth when the lamp of the wicked shall be put out." God darkens the earth in the clear day. The love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, in a heart purged from idols, is charity out of a pure heart, or out of purified affections: a conscience purged from sin by the blood of Christ, and furnished with the testimony of God's spirit witnessing to our adoption, is a good conscience: and faith unfeigned is a faith that works by love, that prevails with God in prayer, and that

overcomes the world. These are the old paths, this is the good way, and they that walk therein find rest for their souls, Jer. vi. 16. But what rest, what peace, what comfort, what satisfaction or establishment, can men find in a profession, while in full possession of all their sin, guilt, and filth? None at all; for "even in laughter the heart" of such "is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness," Prov. xiv. 13. Forgiveness of sins is to be published to all the world, for "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," Luke, xxiv. 46, 47. And the knowledge of God, as our God in covenant, is to be obtained by the remission of sins. "For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. xxxi. 34. The unpardoned sinner knows not God in a saving manner, only notionally, and our pardon is to be known—

1st. By believing. "To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins," Acts, x. 43.

2dly. It is God's usual way, when he searches the sinner and tries him, to call his sins to remembrance, and to set them in order before him. "My sin," says the Psalmist, "is ever before me." But, when pardon comes, it is called blotting them out. David calls it a removal of our transgressions from us. But Isaiah calls it a blotting out. "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee," Isaiah, xliv. 22.

3dly. When God discovers men's sins, and charges the sinner's crimes home to his mind and conscience, by an application of the law, sin becomes exceeding sinful and exceeding heavy. "My sins are gone over my head, a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me," Psalm xxxviii. 4. Christ calls such persons to him, and describes them as labouring and heavy laden, and promises to give them rest, both from their labour and from their burden. Pardon therefore is

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giving rest to the soul: and there is no rest without it, for "the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," Isaiah, vii. 20.

4thly. A guilty, conscious sinner, who is convinced and convicted, and quickened to feel his convictions, can lay no claim upon God, nor does he dare to look up to him: as our Lord says of the publican, who, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner," Luke, xviii.13. Pardon is called a lifting up of the head. "But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head," Psalm iii. 3.

5thly. A real sight and sense of sin is a dreadful mountain before the sinner's eyes, and Mount Sinai is another; so that he sees no way of escape, "and often despairs of surmounting these. And being in the horrible pit; and in the dark valley of the shadow of death, these sink him still lower" but these valleys shall be exalted, and these mountains and hills shall be made low, that sinners may see the salvation of God. And, when God visits the soul with pardoning mercy, these mountains all flow down at his presence, Isaiah, lxiv. 1.

6thly. Forgiveness of sins is called curing of us, and restoring us to health. "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth," Jer. xxx iii. 6. And where this is the case the cure is wrought, and such inhabitants of Zion "shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity," Isaiah, xxxiii. 24. Without this health and cure, we may go to church all the year round, and tell God "We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us:" but what do we gain by this?

7thly. We are informed, by the scriptures of truth, that it is sin, and nothing else, that has cut off all communion and intercourse

between us and God; and those who know the plague of their own heart, know this to be true by sad experience. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear," Isaiah, lix.2. Pardon removes this bar of separation, and makes us nigh again. "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God," Heb, vii. 19. That is, the law and its sacrifices could not make the worshippers clean touching the conscience; but the better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God. "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ," Eph. ii. 13.

8thly. The unpardoned transgressor is a lover of himself, 2 Tim. iii. 2, and an enemy to God, Rom. viii. 7. He has much pity and compassion for sinful self, but the hardest thoughts and most rebellious heart-risings against the Almighty. But pardoning mercy turns things upside down; it fills man with indignation against himself, while he bemoans his suffering Saviour, and his long-suffering God and Father. "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good; and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities," Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Again, "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi. 63.

9thly. It is impossible that a professor, who is dead in trespasses and sins, should have any real peace, either with God or with conscience. "Destruction and misery are in all their ways, and there is no peace, saith my God to the wicked," Isaiah, lvii. 21. But pardoning mercy brings in the abundance of peace "And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace," Luke, viii. 48.

10thly. The unpardoned sinner never had any real love to God, nor ever will have, but must remain an enemy to him, and a hater of him, if he remains and dies in his sin. "Wherefore I say unto thee,

her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little," Luke, vii. 47. This is the ground work of the ministry. Isaiah, Joshua, and all the apostles, were pronounced pardoned and clean before they were sent to preach to others. And, however the conscience of letter-men may be borne down by false zeal, or seared by a long practice of mocking God, sin is sure to rise up, and to find the sinner out, sooner or later; and, when sin and wrath meet, a horrible darkness is sure to follow. God gives them up to the god of this world, who blinds their eyes; and, conscience being unbridled and let loose, he drives them out of all their pretensions to a claim upon Christ, or a part and lot in his grace. A sense of God's wrath, working with the guilt of hypocrisy, undermines their presumptuous confidence, and then they fly for refuge to a broken law, and to universal redemption; and here the old veil gathers thick upon them, till, being baffled, confused, and confounded, they turn aside to vain jangling, knowing neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm: and this, as the prophet says, brings them into darkness, and their feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and, while they look for light, God turns it into the shadow of death, and makes it gross darkness, Jer. xiii. 16.

There are two strange provocations, which contribute not a little to this darkening of the earth. "Thus saith the Lord God, If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it shall be their possession by inheritance," Ezek. xlvi. 16. This prince is Christ; the character of the receiver is that of a son, and the gift is life eternal, which is his portion. "But, if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince," Ezek. xlvi. 17. All gifts like that of the one talent, or that part of the ministry which fell to Judas, are of no use to the saints, only while they are in bondage, darkness, and ignorance but, when once the Comforter comes, and by his love enlarges the heart and sets the soul at liberty, the son can then see, hear, speak, and understand, better than the servant; he then casts off such tutors and governors. At this time of the son's liberty the servant's gift returns, and he rages not a little at the

music and dancing which takes place at the prodigal's embracement.

The next thing is, that the sun should set at noon, and that darkness should come upon the earth in the clear day. But we know that a heart not made honest cannot endure the light and glory of God. It was the good hand and presence of God with David that drove Saul into desperation, and into all his works of darkness. The growing, and spreading fame of our blessed Saviour drove the Scribes and Pharisees into all their unpardonable crimes. The joy, light, and love of Sarah, at the sight of her favourite Isaac, drove Hagar and Ishmael into all their scorning and deriding. God's acceptance of Abel set Cain upon his dark designs. The triumph of Hannah drove Peninnah from her false confidence and boasting. It is the sun at noon that discovers the hypocrisy and harrows up the enmity of the unrenewed heart; and the works of darkness are made manifest by the clear day. So it ever has been, so it is now, and so it will be at the end of the world. For, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the glory of their Father's kingdom for ever and ever, even then the wicked "shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble, and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness," Isaiah, viii. 22. When it is perfect day with the saints it will be utter darkness with the wicked, and the wicked shall see this. For so says the Saviour, "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out," Luke, xiii. 28.

Reader, if thou art in good earnest about thy salvation, look well to the ground-work, which is sanctification and justification. "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate," Heb. xiii. 12. By this his death he is made of God sanctification to us. But there must be an application of this, even to all the elect of God whom he hath sanctified, or set apart, in his own purpose, and for whom sanctification is provided. "He hath by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. This is the ground-work. And the next branch of sanctification is our meekness for the inheritance above, by the indwelling of the Holy

Ghost. "That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 16.

The next branch is, our justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. "That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life," Titus, iii. 7. And of this be assured, that the most holy Spirit of God applies all these things to the elect. Hence you read of clean water being sprinkled upon us to cleanse us, of the washing of regeneration by the Spirit, and of being "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God," I Cor. vi. 11.

There are, reader, two seeds in the world; yea, and in the church too; the seed of the woman, which is Christ, and all the elect in him; and the seed of the serpent; and these are distinguished by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and in no other way. Christ, the first-born among many brethren, was discriminated by this to John, at the river Jordan; and all Christ's seed are distinguished the same way. "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," Isaiah, xlv. 2. This spirit never enters the hearts of any but the elect of God. The serpent is the god of this world, and all his seed are of the world, and into the heart of these the Holy Ghost never comes. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John, xiv. 16, 17. Observe, reader, that the world, which is the serpent's seed, cannot receive this comforter; and the reason is, because there is enmity put between this seed and the elect, that cannot be removed: nor did Christ come to send peace here, but a sword and a fire. Our Lord further declares that "the world seeth him not, neither knoweth him;" therefore whatever they say about him, should have no weight with us, seeing they cannot receive him, they cannot see him, they cannot know him; which is a threefold assertion. And we have a threefold assertion also in our favour, which is as strong as the other; "but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

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1st. We know him as a spirit of revelation and understanding; he is the unction and the eye salve, which anoints our eyes that we may see, Rev. iii. 18.

2dly. He is the spirit of life from God, which enters into our dead souls, and animates them, and removes the vitiated appetite, giving us hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life, and a spiritual palate to taste, relish, and savour, heavenly provision. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," John, vi. 63.

3dly. By these illuminating and quickening, operations of the Holy Spirit, the sinner is convinced, convicted, judged, searched, and tried. The spirit in the apostles was the candle of the Lord, that was set upon the candlestick, which is the church: and by these was Jerusalem searched, and by these were the twelve tribes of Israel judged. "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees," Zeph. i. 12.

4thly. The Spirit is known by the grace that he plants in the soul: he puts the law of faith in the mind, the law of love in the heart and affections, and the blessing of peace in the conscience; and raises the soul up by the comforts of a lively hope. Hence he is called "the spirit of grace," Zech. xii. 10.

5thly. He is known by the power, fervour, and energy, with which he furnisheth the soul at the throne of grace. He gives us a sense of our wants: he shews us the things which are freely given us of God; he dictates to the heart proper thoughts and conceptions, and puts our thoughts into words, teaching the lips and the mouth how to pronounce them. Hence he is called "the spirit of supplication," Zech. xii. 10. And he is said to create the fruit of the lips, Isaiah, lvii. 19. Which fruits are called, "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," I Cor. ii. 13. And they are spoken or expressed by the saints as the spirit gives them utterance, Acts ii. 4.

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6thly. The Holy Spirit is known by his application of the word and promises of God. To the way-side hearer the word came only to the ear, and Satan stole it away: to the thorny ground it came and moved the natural passions, and was received with joy; the novelty of it pleased the recipient for a while: to the stony ground it came with a temporary faith, and these for a while believed. To some it comes as the word of man; to others in word only. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," I Thess. i. 5.

7thly. The Spirit is known by his communications of divine love; which Paul calls "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," Rom. v. 5. And by this soul-dissolving influence is the heart enlarged, and all its native hardness melted and dissolved; slavish fear and torment are cast out, and glorious liberty succeeds. "Now the Lord is that spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17.

8thly. This Comforter is known by the manifestation of our preadoption to sonship; they are sure to be Christ's seed and offspring upon whom this spirit comes; for he comes upon no other as the spirit of adoption. "And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6.

9thly. The Spirit is known by the inward witness that he bears both to our faith and to our conscience. To our faith, that it is genuine and justifying, by silencing all our accusers, and condemners, and casting out every accusation, and all condemnation. And he bears witness in and with our own conscience also. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16.

10thly. The Spirit is known by the divine image with which he reimpresseth the soul, which image stands in knowledge, in life, light, righteousness, and true holiness. "We all, with open face

beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory; even as by the spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

11thly. The Spirit's grace is the first-fruits of the future harvest, the beginning of the kingdom of glory. "Grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life," Rom. v. 21. There is no knowledge, joy, rest, peace, pleasure, light, love, comfort, holiness, or happiness, in heaven, the first fruits of which are not known and enjoyed by the church of God upon earth. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit," I Cor. ii. 9, 10. And these revealed things are called "the first-fruits of the spirit," Rom. viii. 23.

12thly. The Holy Spirit is the pledge and the earnest of heaven. It is he that cleanses us by an application of the atonement, and by the washing of regeneration, and by renewing the faculties of our souls; and, as he quickens the soul in this life, so he shall quicken the body in the great day: the first is the pledge of the second. "Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth; thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side," Psalm lxxi. 21, 20. "But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you," Romans, viii. 11.

13thly. The Holy Spirit is our seal, by which we are known of God with a knowledge of love, of choice, and of approbation and delight; and by which we shall be owned and honoured another day. The impression of this seal is the image of Christ; the effect of the sealing is our assurance of heaven, both in the assurance of faith, the assurance of hope, and the assurance of understanding. "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. iv. 30. In these rays of divine light is the Holy Spirit seen; by his operations in planting these fruits is the Holy

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Spirit known and, as he renews these works, and refreshes the soul with fresh life and love, communicated to these his graces, so do we know that he dwells in us because these fruits are kept alive: the cry of Abba, Father, continues, and his witness to our sonship still abides. Adoption is "an everlasting name that shall not be cut off," Isaiah, lvi. 5. Upon such souls the candle of God and the lamp of salvation both burn and shine; the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them. Upon such trees of righteousness the sun of righteousness ever shines, not only to heal them at first, but to keep them whole for ever. "Thy sun shall no more go down," Isaiah, lx. 20. Upon such objects of love, and upon the in-being of love in the heart, God the Father, from the glorious face of Jesus, shines with everlasting light, as our God and our glory, Isaiah, lx. 17. This, reader, is our sunshine, this is our eternal day.

But this sun never so shines, this day never so appears, nor will appear, to the serpents seed; for so it was long foretold, namely, that the greatest darkness should be upon some when the glorious day of the Lord should appear. "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord; to what end is it for you: the day of the Lord is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it," Amos, v. 18, 19, 20.

In this gross darkness no divine person in God can be known; neither Father, Son, nor Spirit: the serpent's seed are to be left in their enmity, and all the righteous are to be hated of all this seed. And God cannot be known but by pardon and by love, both of which always come together. "He that loveth is born of God, and knows God; but he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love," 1 John, iv. 8. So also is the Son of God hid from all living, till God is pleased to make him known. "It pleased God" who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me," Gal i. 15, 16. And, as the Father reveals the Son, so the Son also reveals the Father. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal

him," Matt. xi. 27. Thus, reader, are these things hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes. Hence it is no matter to us what these children of darkness and of the night say about these things; for they are all hid from the wise men of this world. The church is "buildd together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. And again, "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them" 2 Cor. vi. 16. This is God's testimony, which is believed, known, felt, and enjoyed, by all God's children: for our establishment, our anointing in Christ, and our sealing, are of God, 2 Cor. i. 21.

But the sons of worldly wisdom ask us how the Spirit, if he be a divine person, can dwell in us? Let them tell us how the devil dwells in them. They are men of learning, men of wisdom, and wise above what is written; for they can tell us in the Hebrew tongue the difference between perfection and uprightness; or between an upright man that loves God, Song i. 4, and a man made perfect in love, I John, iv. 18; though in heaven it is one and the same thing, Isaiah, lvii. 2; Heb. xii. 23. They can tell us the difference between decrees and laws; between statutes and judgments; and between precepts and testimonies; but we poor illiterate creatures cannot. They tell us that all expectation, whether in heaven or earth, is hope; and so make the sinner long, look, wait, and hope for the damnation of hell; for "the expectation of the wicked is wrath," Prov. xi. 23.

Paul says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man," I Cor. ii. 15. Our Lord and his spiritual servants, who have informed us of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in the saints, have also informed us of the indwelling of Satan in all his seed; which none of Satan's family have been honest enough to describe.

1st, We are informed that Satan, by his indwelling in men, is called the strong man armed, who keepeth his palace and his goods in peace, Luke, xi. 21. Here is the king of darkness in his own palace, the heart and affections of the sinner; his armour is enmity and hatred at God, at Christ, at the Spirit, at the scriptures, and at all the saints of God; and keeping his goods in peace is no more than a

seared conscience and a hardened mind. The devil's goods are the body and soul of the sinner, as may be seen in Judas; for as soon as he received the sop Satan entered into him, and took possession of him as his own property. Nay, we read of seven devils in Mary Magdalen, Luke, viii. 2. And in the Gadarene we read of a "legion, because many devils were entered into him," Luke, viii. 30.

If our opponents would describe the inhabitation of all this herd of devils in this man, the mystery would be almost as great as that of the Lord dwelling in Zion. Yea, we read of eight devils taking possession of one man at once, for good and all. "Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first," Matt. xii. 45.

2dly, The indwelling of the devil may be known by the sinner's hating the light and refusing to come to it; by his rebellion against every appearance of it; by his being "willingly ignorant," 2 Pet. iii. 5; and by his loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. All this is the devil's work. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 3.

3dly, The devil's possession of the sinner is seen by his actuating of him to all evil, and that continually; and by his captivating him at pleasure by every lie, error, snare, trap, and human invention, that is contrived for him. To-day he is an Arian, tomorrow a Sabellian, next day a Socinian, then a Deist, then an Atheist, and always an Arminian in heart. "That they may," says Paul, "recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26.

4thly, The children of darkness may be known by their constant engagements in their father's works, which has ever been that of murdering the souls and bodies of mankind. Hence we see that every impostor and deceiver that Satan sent among the Jews, was received by the scribes, pharisees, and rulers; as Judas of Galilee,

Theudas, Bercocab, all of whom had their followers. "I am come, in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," John, v. 43. And the false prophets were spoken well of. These deceivers and destroyers of souls always met with reception, applause, and encouragement; but every prophet of God was sure to be persecuted, if not murdered; and even the Lord himself, from the manger to the cross, was pursued by murderers. These are the serpent's seed, the devil's own children; and they do his works, and his only. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning," John, viii. 44.

5thly, And why should these wise men think it enthusiasm for the Spirit of the Lord to influence the mind and speak by the mouth of an holy prophet, when the devil himself influences the mind and speaks by the mouth of all their brethren the false prophets? "Now therefore behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee," 1 Kings, xxii. 23.

6thly, The subjects of Satan's kingdom are as manifest in the world as the subjects of the kingdom of Christ. And he is as much obeyed by his servants as Christ is by his, however hard the service; which may be seen in many instances. When the murder of David, conceived in the heart of Ahithophel, was restrained by the overruling providence of God, Ahithophel is ordered by the devil to go home and hang himself, which he immediately does. Balaam is sent for to curse Israel, and he comes. An evil spirit from God is upon Saul, and he is sent to the witch of Endor, and then to the point of his sword. Judas is ordered to hang himself; and Shimei to curse David, that God might curse him, which is immediately done. All Satan's works are in a straight line; that is to drive men to destruction as his captives, his trophies, and the spoils taken in his unholy war and so it must be: for, "if Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" Luke, xi. 18.

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7thly, The hardness of heart; the stubbornness of man's will, the alienation of the carnal mind from the life of God, and the enmity and rebellion of it against the Almighty; the desperate rage, envy and indignation against Christ and his worship; and against all that fear, love, obey, and worship him-are such as is contrary to human nature, abstractedly considered; and in all which men are no more than mere tools, instruments, or machines; as may be seen in our Saviour's own words-"But this is your hour, and the power of darkness," Luke, xxii. 53. The time, or hour, was their's and that was all. The murder conceived in their hearts, the fortitude of their hardened minds, and the rage and vengeance with which they were hurried on, were from another quarter; the power was all of the prince of darkness - "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2.

8thly, Nor need these wise men be so much offended at God's children talking of their having communion and fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ;- for all idolators and false prophets, all that preach lies, and all that believe them and profess them, have union and fellowship with Satan. The Gentiles sacrificed "to devils, and not to God," 1 Cor. x. 20. And all false prophets come forth under the same influence. "Their coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. Against this bond of iniquity Paul cautions the Corinthians: "I would not that ye should have fellowship with devil" I Cor.x. 20.

9thly, If we speak about the most holy Spirit of God converting, renewing, furnishing, and equipping men for the work of the Lord; making them apostles and prophets, enduing them with gifts, and sending them forth; they are greatly disgusted. But I never heard them rage at Satan for attempting to counterfeit all this. Satan sends "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ: and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works," 2 Cor. xi. 13, 15. The office and

office characters of these men, their furniture and their labour, are all of Satan; and their end is to be accordingly. They are to be heirs and joint heirs with the devil, when their work is done; as our Lord hath foretold: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt xxv. 41.

10thly, Nor need it seem so offensive, our asserting the mystical union that subsists between Christ and his church; and of being joined to the Lord, and made one spirit with him; as bride and bridegroom are one in mutual love: which bond, with Christ and the church, is the bond of charity. And there is something like this among the children of the night. I read of some who sacrificed to, and went a whoring after, devils, Leviticus, xvii. 7. Ananias and Sapphira are said to conceive by the devil; and that Satan filled their hearts when they lied to the Holy Ghost, Acts, v. 4.5. Now, if Paul's assertion be true, "that he which is joined to an harlot is one body," I Cor. vi. 16, so surely those souls that whore with Satan, who conceive by the devil, and whose hearts the devil fills, must be one with him in the bond of iniquity, as Christ and his church are one in the bond of charity.

11thly, The grand scheme of heaven, in bringing Christ and his chosen family together, is by a covenant between God the Father and God the Son; which covenant was ratified and confirmed by the death of Christ; and into the bond of this covenant are all the elect brought, and are bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord our God. But then there are other agreements and covenants beside these; for I read of some who said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement," Isaiah, xxviii. 15. To be in covenant with death, is to love sin and hate the Saviour; for so saith the Lord, "All they that hate me love death," Prov. viii. 36. And to be at agreement with hell is to be in union with the king of that place, which Paul calls "fellowship with devils."

12thly, By the love of God shed abroad in the heart saints come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made

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perfect; all of whom are in heaven, or of heavenly extraction, Heb. xii. And so sure do they that hate Christ and his saints, all false churches, false worshippers, and false-hearted professors; come into unity with Satan and all his subjects. A spiritual whore has no union but with the dead, no guests but in the depths of hell, Prov. ix. 18.

13thly, Some shall stumble and take offence at the foundation of Zion; while others put their mouth in the dust to obtain a hope in it. And all that take offence at Christ will ever hate and persecute his spiritual followers; which is a token upon all the serpent's seed. And to be hated, reproached, and persecuted, by such men for Christ's sake, is a sure token upon us also. "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition-but to you (an evident token) of salvation of God," Philip. i. 28.

Thus, reader, I have shewn you the children of light, and the everlasting sun upon them; and the setting sun over the unbelieving; the clear day with the righteous, when the earth is darkened; the fountain of light, and the source of darkness, with the end of both.

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Chapter Four

THE SAINT'S SEED-TIME AND HARVEST

THE SAINT'S SEED-TIME
AND HARVEST

OR

SOWING AND REAPING
CONSIDERED

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX; AND THE REV. W. J.
BROOKE, BRIGHTON.

*"He that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."
Galatians 6:8*

BELOVED brethren in the household of faith, and fellow-labourers in the Lord's vineyard, the above text has often presented itself to my mind as pregnant with the most sublime mysteries; and, if considered in different points of light, as it should be, it takes in the minister of the Spirit; the whole work of the ministry; the willing, subjection of the penitent sinner to Christ; the daily exercise of every saint; the hospitality of the children of God to each other; and the liberality of the church in supporting the cause of God.

No minister that I have heard on the subject, nor any commentator that I have as yet read, has fully satisfied me with the definitions that they have given of it. It has remained obscure to me, and I was much in the dark about it till very lately.

Former experience has convinced me, and later experience has confirmed it, that there is no getting at these things but by fervent prayer to God. By this I do not mean prayer in a general way, as asking for more light and knowledge of the whole word of God; but I mean to take any one passage, which appears dark and mysterious, and lay it before the Lord, and plead his promise of the holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, and others of the like import; and in this way we need not doubt of success.

Whilst the light and life of the gospel continue with us, whilst the door of hope and the gate of life stand displayed, whilst a throne of grace is accessible, it is our seed-time and harvest; and when this season is over and gone we may lament, as others have done, and say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," Jer. viii. 20. But I shall now come to the subject in hand, and consider,

First, Sowing to the Holy Spirit, as he was in God's prophets, in the apostles of Christ, and as he still is in every minister of the New Testament; for such are ministers of the Spirit, and not of the letter, 2 Cor. iii. 6. All prophecy in old time came by divine inspiration; holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Nor was it the apostles that spake, but the Spirit of God spake in them;

they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. And all in succeeding ages, who have ever been instrumental in bringing souls to Christ, or any glory to God, have spoken by the same spirit; the promise of life and the spirit of life are both secured to Christ and to his seed for ever; for this is God's covenant both with the head and with the members, Isaiah, lix. 21. It is vain for men to talk about preaching the gospel, and delivering their testimony, while destitute of divine inspiration; the gospel, Paul says, is the ministry of the Spirit; and we are informed by an angel from heaven, that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," Rev. xix. 10. So that there is no gospel, no testimony of Jesus, where the Spirit of God is not. If we consider the Spirit of God speaking in all God's messengers, such messengers must be a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death; of life unto life to the obedient in faith, and of death unto death to the rebellious infidel. "He that believeth is not condemned [but justified], but he that believeth not is condemned already." And, as it is with the husbandman, he must sow before he can expect to reap; so it is with the godly, they must sow to the Spirit before they can reap the harvest of glory.

Sowing to the Spirit, as he is considered in God's messengers, is, from conviction, giving a hearty assent to the truth, Isa xiii. 9; submitting to it, hearing it, and following it, which is the first work of faith. The gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; and Christ prays for all that shall believe on him through the word of the apostles. Sowing is obeying; Sowing to the Spirit is obeying the voice of the Spirit. And this appears in God's complaint to the disobedient Jews; "But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of Hosts hath sent by his Spirit in the former prophets," Zech. vii. 11, 12. These words the Lord of Hosts sent by his Spirit in the former prophets, namely, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. To this message some were obedient, and are called by God himself wheat, good figs, and precious; when the disobedient are called chaff, naughty figs, and vile. And all that obeyed had their life for a prey; they lived under

God's protection in Babylon, and found God a little sanctuary to them there; and many of them returned to their own land, under a fresh supply of the Holy Spirit, which the prophet Ezekiel sets forth as a resurrection.

The gospel, preached by the Spirit is the judgment of this world; it brings men under their trial for eternity; it is for life or death, for salvation or damnation; and as the gospel leaves them so judgment finds them, either freed by the truth or bound by falsehood; justified by faith or condemned in unbelief.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Righteousness at the bar of equity is a good conscience, purged with blood, and renewed by the Spirit. Righteousness at the bar of the law is love to God, springing from God's love to us: righteousness in the spiritual court of the gospel is the obedience of Christ imputed to faith. And all these come to us by the holy Spirit of promise. Noah did not labour altogether in vain; there were some that sowed to the Spirit. We read of the Lord God of Shem, and of God's enlarging Japhet; yea, more, that God blessed Noah and his sons, Gen. ix. 1. And we have reason to conclude that the women which were in the ark with Noah, were the fruits of his ministry, there being nothing said against them, as there is against Ham and Canaan. These few, we hope, sowed to the Spirit, believed in the Lord, and in the warning given to Noah: they assisted in preparing the ark, and were ordered into it, and shut in and preserved in it when the flood came upon the world of the ungodly.

We are informed by Paul that all who came out of Egypt by Moses did not provoke. Joshua, Caleb, and others, obtained a good report through faith. To some the word comes in word only; it reaches the outward ear and goes no further; but to the elect it comes with power, sooner or later: and when an alarming and convincing power reaches the conscience the sinner stands in awe at the alarm; he trembles at the word, he bows his will to the divine power, he yields his whole soul to the majesty that appears in the voice, he confesses God to be in the speaker, and, from a deep

conviction by the power, believes the report. Such sow to the Spirit, and such also begin to reap; for he that believes hath everlasting life: it is already begun; for, as faith without works is dead, so faith that has works is alive.

But there are other sorts of seedsmen besides these that sow to the Spirit; for some sow to the flesh, and of the flesh shall reap corruption. Too, too many are satisfied with the religion of nature, Godliness in a dry form, and bodily exercise in the form prescribed, which is after the doctrines and ordinances of men: these despise the power; and such, as well as the openly profane, sow to the flesh, and not to the Spirit, and therefore must reap corruption and death: hence the apostolic caution, "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophecyings" I Thess. v. 19, 20. Despisers of the word are those that quench the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is often set forth by the well-known emblem of fire: hence we read of the "spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning;" and of men being "baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The first of these signifies the illuminating operations of the Spirit; the fire is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; and men thus furnished for the work of the ministry are called, as John was, burning and shining lights, John, v. 35; taking their title from their fiery baptism. "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire," Heb. i. 7. And I believe the seraphim, in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, to be nothing else but hieroglyphical of gospel ministers; for the name signifies "fiery, burning," or rather "inflaming." There is, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, such a burning love as no water can quench, nor flood drown, accompanied with a fiery zeal for God and his cause. And in the light of the Spirit there are such views of Christ's person, loveliness, and fulness, and such beauties in God, his word, and ways, as give heat and fervour to all our devotions; while the promises which flow into the heart, come as live coals from the altar, and increase the ardour; and the joy that springs from love is, at times, the visible flames which on the altar ascend to God from the hallowed fire within, which is pent up in the heart till the flames of joy give it vent. Under this influence there is a thirst for the salvation of sinners, a watching for their souls, a longing after their

welfare, hard labour in studying and preaching to them, many earnest prayers and tears to God for success in the work, an earnest desire after them as fellow sinners and fellow-creatures; all which are heightened by a true sight of their undone estate, a knowledge of the terrors of the Lord, and the certainty of their endless destruction out of Christ. And such labourers, having felt both the pains of hell and joys of heaven, they alarm and warn them to flee from the wrath to come, and labour to allure and win them to embrace the refuge and the hope that is set before them. What hard labour and soul travail, what earnest prayers and bitter cries, what holy longings and fervent hopes of success in this holy calling, I mean that of being fishers of men, do fall to the lot of those who are called of God to labour in the word and doctrine!

But it falls out with the servants as it did with the Master; "they hated him without a cause," Psalm xxxv. 19; and so it is to be with the rulers of his household; they are hated of all men for his name sake; but he that despiseth whomsoever the Lord sends despiseth him, and he that despiseth him despiseth the Father that sent him, and even the Holy Ghost whom Christ sends, and the word of God itself, which is spoken by the Holy Spirit in the Lord's servants. And this despising of God, his dear Son, the Holy Spirit, and the word of God's grace, fixes the eternal destruction of the despiser. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!" Acts, xiii. 41. And again, "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 13. These render evil for good, and hatred for love; you preach, and they despise; you warn, and they sneer, you weep, and they laugh; you are in earnest, and they in jest; you charm, and they stop their ears; you invite, and they depart; you intreat, and they mock; you labour to instruct, and they harden their heart against it. Dead formalists and graceless professors rest-one in the form, and the other in the letter; and all that is got of such is the character of a deceiver, a false prophet, a mercenary, an enthusiastic, a fanatic, or a madman; and this despising of prophecyings is to themselves a quenching of the spirit.

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At this treatment the apostles shook their raiment, and even the dust of their cities from their feet; they owned their damnation to be just, left their blood upon their own head, turned to the Gentiles, and declared that the wrath of God was come upon them to the uttermost. Christ also had foretold them that it should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon, yea, for Nineveh, than for the Jews of that generation. This cruel hatred, spite, and malice, that such exhibit the despite they do to the spirit of grace, their scorn and derision, their desperation and impenitence, quench the ardour of the spirit; all love to their souls chills and waxes cold; zeal for their welfare abates: all fervour towards them, in the ministry, damps; all joy, in hope of their conversion, withers; and the Spirit himself rises in judgment against them. They are rooted out of all godly affections, from all care and concern for their welfare, from all soul travail and earnestness for their salvation, and from any part or lot in the faith, hope, love, and prayers of the ambassadors of peace; and more than sure I am, that the fraternity of Cain shall see, and enter into, the kingdom of God as soon as such men, or such despisers of God, or empty professors as these. They forsake the living vine, and the first branches in the vine, and the assembly of the just; and such, being cast forth, soon wither: your natural affections to them die; the joy that arose in your breast, from a hope of them, withers away; their enmity to the just brings fresh guilt of a gospel kind upon them; envy slays these silly ones, and is sure to take up its eternal abode, and for ever to rest, in the bosom of such fools. And this is the characteristic of the serpent's seed, and the infallible token of perdition. For, after the Spirit is once quenched, there is no more care or concern for them, nor desire after them, or prayer for them; but rather a wish that the foundation of Zion may become a snare, a trap, and a stumbling block to them; there is a watching over them for evil, a satisfaction at their calamity, and such a zeal for God, for the honour of divine justice and long-abused mercy, as to give them up to vengeance, that the day of judgment and the inquisition of heaven may effect what the labour of love and the lips of truth could not. And both heaven and earth unite and agree in approving and applauding the judgment, for "when the wicked perish there is shouting" among the

just; and God himself allows of the triumph, for he laughs at their calamity, and mocks when their fear cometh. Noah shared deeply in this scorning, derision, and sport, till God himself complains of it, and resolves to put a stop to it; "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh," Gen. vi. 3. He remains still in his sin and sinful course, in the flesh, and in carnal ease; no submission to my will, no awe of my word or warnings, no reformation of manners, no seeking after God, no calling upon my name, no obedience sowed, no spiritual advantage reaped: he is still in the flesh, and my Spirit shall not always strive with him. The deluge put a final stop to this strife; the waters pursued them to the tops of the mountains, houses, and trees; and thus wrath convinced them, when preaching of righteousness and preparing the ark had no effect. However, Noah lost not his labour; he was a sweet savour unto God, as well as his sacrifice, both in them that were saved and in them that perished; "for he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith," Heb. xi. 7. And those whom Noah condemned God drowned with a flood, and then imprisoned in hell, as Peter asserts; "Christ hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust (that he might bring us to God), being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit. By which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing," 1 Pet. iii. 18-20. By these imprisoned spirits I understand the souls of the antediluvians; by the prison I understand hell, Isai. xxiv. 22; and by the preacher I understand Christ preaching by his spirit in the ministry of Noah. The time of this preaching was while the long-suffering of God waited in Noah's days, while the ark was building.

Israel of old are noted for quenching the Spirit in the ministry of Moses, of whose inspiration we read in the prophet's lamentation; "Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his holy spirit within him; that led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm dividing the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name," Isai. lxiii. 11, 12. But this inspiration of God, and display of miraculous power,

met with no suitable returns; "for they rebelled and vexed his holy spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them," Isa. Ixiii. 10. Their molten calf in Horeb; their mutineering on the banks of Jordan; the conspiracy of Korah, Abiram, and Dathan: their invading the office of mediator, and attempting to seize the priesthood; their murmuring at every turn, instead of praying; their tempting God, and their unparalleled infidelity, are notorious enough. It was these things that vexed his holy Spirit; "they envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord: they angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes; because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips."

Nor did the Holy Spirit fare any better in the ministry of "the apostle and high priest of our profession;" they vexed him, and blasphemed him in the ministry of Christ and his apostles, as appears by the piercing charge of Stephen, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom we have been now the betrayers and murderers," Acts, vii. 51, 52. Having offered a few thoughts upon sowing to the Spirit, as he speaks by God's servants in the ministry of the word; and also upon quenching the Holy Spirit, by despising both prophets and prophecyings,

I shall now endeavour to show that there is such a thing as sowing to the Spirit, as he dwells in ourselves. "Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, and reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness among you," Hosea, x. 12. The persons here spoken of are such as seek the Lord and expect that he will come, and that a shower of righteousness will attend his coming: and they are to sow to themselves in righteousness until this heavenly shower descends, and then they are to reap the benefit of it; but not on the footing of worth, or for their own deservings,

but as the fruits of God's sovereign mercy. A sincere seeker of the Lord, such I mean as are enlightened by the Spirit to see the depravity of their own nature, and the evil of their own way, and who come constantly to the light of the word shining in the ministry of the gospel, do sow to the Spirit in themselves: they come to the light, that their deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God; that the influence they are under, and the fruits springing from that influence, are by God's Spirit, and not of themselves. Such also as are convinced and convicted by the Spirit, and by a view of the spirituality of the law; and who comply with their convictions, acknowledge their offences, and confess their sins; who commend the justice of God, and own their just deserts; who submit to God's will, and implore his mercy; such sow to the Spirit. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," Micah, vi. 9. God's rod is reproof and rebuke by the Spirit. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips slay the wicked." Moreover, it is the Spirit's work to search and try the heart. God searches Jerusalem as with candles, Zeph. i. 12. Now, when this searching work is going on, and the sinner's conscience is made honest, and honest conscience goes hand in hand with the Holy Spirit, and is willing to know the worst, and to be made sound at heart and sound in faith; crying out, "Search me and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting;" such in heart join themselves to the Lord, submit to his will, and coincide with the Spirit's work, which is sowing to the Spirit.

When cutting reproofs are given and applied by the Spirit, the Lord says, "Turn ye at my reproof;" as Paul did when the Spirit carried the reproving voice of Christ to his heart, who answered, "Who art thou, Lord?" and again, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do? Go into the street called Straight, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." Christ spake, the Spirit applied the voice, and Paul sowed obedience to it; he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

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When the Holy Spirit comes upon a sinner, it is to discriminate him from the world, that he may be no more of the world: for between light and darkness, Christ and Belial, a believer and an infidel, there can be no concord, no agreement. "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God," I Cor. ii. 12. The Spirit's voice to such is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." And he that obeys and comes out sows to the Spirit. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house," said the Holy Spirit to Abraham: and he obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went.

Again, it is the Spirit's work to convince a man of his blindness and ignorance; for a person that is not convinced of this will never say, "Who will shew us any good?" And indeed to persons thus convinced is the promise made; I mean that of giving pastors after God's own heart, to feed them with knowledge and understanding. And sure I am that the soul which is convinced of this, and yields to the Spirit's will, "if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God," Prov. ii. 4, 5. Such sow to the Spirit; for they are actuated by his influence, and acquiesce in his mind and will.

Once more, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of grace and of supplication. He is the life, the power, and the dictator, of all prayer, and our intercessor in prayer, for he makes intercession for us according to the will of God. He it is that quickens the sinner to feel his wants, puts a cry in his heart for relief, and by his earnest cries and bitter groans makes intercession. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?" Such breathe their spiritual sensations out to God; and, if they speak, it is as the Spirit gives them utterance: he creates the fruit of the lip, and what he dictates and teaches them to utter they speak. And this is sowing obedience to the Spirit's impulses, operations, and orders.

And I might further add, – that the Spirit often speaks to the heart, or suggests to the mind, his commands to the man in whom he dwells, respecting going here and there, as may be seen in his orders to Peter, when Cornelius had sent unto him, and Peter had received a previous vision upon it. "And behold three men were already come to the house, where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting," Acts, xi. 12. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the regions of Galatia, and were forbidden" of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, &c. many footsteps and loadings of Providence, many subsequent workings in the mind, many lookings out and expectations of fresh orders, many doors are opened, many pressing invitations are given as preludes to excite the man of God to prepare his stuff for moving, which the prepossessed mind expects, and which none but God and his own conscience know any thing of. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isa, xxx. 21.

Once more, a man sows to the Spirit when his pursuits, desires, prayers, and the whole bent of his soul, are after a fresh supply of grace, and for strengthening the things that are weak; for fresh life or light, fortitude or power; for usefulness or fruitfulness; for an increase of knowledge and understanding, &c. for it is the Spirit that makes us know our wants, our weak parts, our insufficiency and short comings, and the things which are the most excellent; and he that covets what he feels he wants, and prays against his most besetting evils, and labours to strengthen what is weak, and earnestly craves the best gifts, most assuredly moves in concert with the Holy Spirit, works hand in hand with him, and sows his obedience to the Spirit's dictates and motions, and labours hard to fill the vacancies which the Spirit discovers to him.

We are to sow to ourselves in righteousness, not to shun the light, nor to be willingly ignorant, 2 Pet. iii. 5; not to require smooth things, nor prophecies of deceit; but with honesty and sincerity, with fervour and earnestness, with faith and affection; and to reap

in mercy, the sure mercies of David, which are now with Christ, and are promised to us in him; these sure mercies are displayed in us by regeneration, as Paul says, "Of his mercy he saved us, with the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus, iii. 5. In regeneration and renewing there is a heavenly crop sowed in the soul, which goes by different names in the scriptures: it is called "being born again of incorruptible seed," 1 Pet. i. 23; called also the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. It goes by the name of grace; different graces, as faith, hope, love, &c. These fruits of the Spirit are also called mercies, which have God for their father: hence you read of "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort," 2 Cor. i. 3. And these fruits are to be received as the free gifts of God in Christ Jesus; "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, and reap in mercy." And the believer who gets cold, indifferent, and sluggish; slothful, negligent, careless, and inattentive; worldly and earthly minded; sadly neglects this seed-time and harvest to his own cost and loss, and is often pierced with many sorrows on the account of it: with him I shall leave the apostolic caution, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Ephes. iv. 30.

Having shewn that there is such a thing as sowing to the Spirit as he is in the ministers of the word; and, secondly, what it is for a believer to sow to the Spirit as he is in himself; so I shall now,

In the third place shew that there is such a thing as ministers of the gospel sowing to the Spirit as he is in the souls of the just; and this will appear from the following passage. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart," Psalm xcvi. 11. From these words we may observe, first, the sower: he must be a child of light, for this is the seed that he sows. Secondly, the soil is described, which shews it to be a part of God's husbandry: they are called, first, righteous; secondly, upright in heart. David himself describes the sower: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him," Psalm cxxvi. 6. By the sower going forth I understand his going forth from the society of the world, from the

prison of sin, from bondage under the law, from confidence in the flesh, with the tidings of peace, and with authority and commission from Christ. All going forth short of this is no better than the setting out of the foolish virgins, who would have been just as well off if they had staid at home. The sower's weeping as he goes sets forth the toil and labour attending his work, a deep sense of his insufficiency for the arduous task, the opposition from the world, sin, and Satan, that he meets with, the little success he has in it, and his manifold sufferings both from the power of enemies and weakness of friends; nevertheless he goes forth and sows, though it is with weeping, which shews him to be a real ambassador, for "the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly," Isa. xxxiii. 7. However, he is not without encouragement, he shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and his work is with his God, whether Israel be gathered or not. Yea, he is a sweet savour unto God in them that are saved, and in them that perish. The heart knows its own bitterness, and the Lord's labourers feel the burden and heat of the day: but these are counterpoised with a joy that the stranger intermeddled not with; which arises from the pardon of sin, the testimony of conscience, from an imputed righteousness, from believing views of interest in Christ, from a good hope, from the love of God, from the witness of adoption, and from a full persuasion of future glory: and while he sows to others he often reaps these afresh to encourage him in his work; "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," Ps. cxxvi. 5. There is another branch of joy, which is peculiar to such seedsmen. There is a family in the world, whom God puts into our hearts to live and die with; and in the consciences of such he makes his sowers manifest: and there is also, and will be, a fourfold presentation of the saints to Christ. Those who are owned and blessed in espousing souls to the Lord, do, in faith and prayer, present them "as a chaste virgin to Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 2. But I believe that text has a further and future meaning, being spoken in the future tense. The apostle had espoused the Corinthians to one husband, the presentation is something yet to take place: "that I may present you," &c. Such are to be our joy and the crown of our rejoicing in that day, as appears from what follows; "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ

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at his coming?" I Thess. ii. 19. The apostle here mentions some souls which are given for our hire; and tells us that they shall be our hope, our joy, and the crown of our rejoicing; and all this in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming; which looks as if there would be something like ministers presenting of souls, espoused by their ministry to the Lord, in that day; perhaps at the day of judgment, and in the thousand years' reign on the new earth. At which time Christ will receive them at their hands, and "present them to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle," neither a spot of sin, or wrinkle of old age, Eph. v. 27. Something like this the Psalmist had in view when he said, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." He is to return with joy, and he is to bring his sheaves with him, there is not a doubt of this. And the apostle tells us that such are to be our hope, our joy, and the crown of our rejoicing, in the presence of Christ at his coming, which must be either at the day of judgment, or in the thousand years' reign. Wisdom's handmaids, Prov. ix. 2, present the bride to the bridegroom; and he receives her at their hands, and presents her to himself; with joy and rejoicing shall they be brought to the king's palace; and in ultimate glory she will be presented to his father with a "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me," Hebrews, ii. 13.

I come now to describe the seed of this sower: the name given to it is that of precious; he goes forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed.

1. Describe his seed
2. The name of it, which is light;
3. The persons in whose hearts it is sowed: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."

There are four things included in the word "seed." First, Christ himself; he is called the woman's seed which bruised the serpent's head. And in his human nature he is called the seed of David, 2 Tim. ii. 8. He is the precious seed in the highest sense, for to them

"that believe he is precious," 1 Peter, ii. 7. "God (says Paul) revealed his Son in me, that I should preach him among the heathen," Gal. i. 16. And, indeed, if Christ be not in us, as a fountain opened, cleansing from sin; as a physician, healing the wounded spirit; as the life, quickening us; as the true light, shining in us; as our righteousness, maintaining our standing in our justification; as our prince, causing peace to rule in our hearts; and as our present help, aiding us, refreshing, renewing, furnishing, equipping, and fortifying us by his Spirit, his presence, and his grace; without these, and all these, sure I am that the devil will soon compel us to send an ambassage, and desire conditions of peace with the world. Such soldiers must fight till they die, or die for not fighting.

2. By this precious seed I understand the word of God in general; as appears by the parable of the sower and his seed; "The sower is the son of man, the seed is the word of God." But the doctrines of Christ, and the promises of God in Christ, seem chiefly to be intended, because the seed is called precious. And Peter applies the same phrase to the promises; "Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises," 2 Pet. i. 4; exceeding great, because Christ, his Spirit, his grace, and his great salvation, together with life, light, and glory, are couched in these promises. But a minister of God is not only a minister of the covenant of promise,

But he is a "steward of the mysteries of God," 1 Cor. iv. 1. The mystery of the most holy Trinity, in the experience of it, and in the enjoyment of that experience, seems to be the first and grand mystery; I mean such as Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, and we enjoying in our own conscience the voice of his atonement, "speaking better things than that of Abel," Heb. xi. 24. Which voice is that of righteousness, mighty to save; the voice of pardon, and of access to God by it; the voice of peace, friendship, and reconciliation with God: and the voice of God in Christ to us is, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" and therefore with loving kindness he draws us to Christ, and accepts us in him, where we enjoy his love; for "he that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him."

3. The voice of the Spirit also is in us, crying, "Abba, Father," and bearing his witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God; and, if sons, then heirs.

The mysteries of the kingdom of God are, those of purging sin by the blood of Christ, of dethroning sin by the grace of Christ, of counteracting its power by the laws of Christ; I mean the law of faith and the law of love; and of justification from its condemning and destroying power by the righteousness of Christ, and of its final destruction at the resurrection, when our vile bodies shall be changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, when grace will terminate in a reign of glory. Then will the works of the devil be completely destroyed out of all the saints, and the devil himself, the prime leader of all the apostasy, left to sink under the weight of all his crimes, and under the guilt and cry of every perishing sinner's blood, in full possession of all his power, and yet chained by Omnipotence; filled with wrath, rage, and revenge, and under the curse and vengeance of the Almighty: and this will be the final and everlasting destruction of "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. ii. 14.

The fourth and great mystery of Godliness is the incarnation of Christ; "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh," &c. 1 Tim. iii. 16. The apostle here asserts the true and real divinity of Christ; that "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. The children being partakers of flesh and blood, "he also himself likewise took part of the same," Heb. ii. 14. The apostle then tells us that it was from the royal line of David that our nature was taken; "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel," 2 Tim. ii. 8. Mary the mother of our Lord was of the house and lineage of David; hence he calls himself "the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star," Rev. xxii. 16. As God, he was David's root, who gave being to David and to all mankind; when as man he is David's offspring, a branch out of the root of Jesse. Paul says he was made of a woman, and was the seed of the woman; made of the substance of Mary's body; for

woman is a substance, and so is her seed a substance also, as is well expressed in the common prayer book. Here is our elder brother, made like unto his brethren in all things, excepting sin. When we see our own nature thus holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sin and sinners, and made higher than the heavens with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost upon him, and all the fulness of grace in him; every promise yea and amen in his heart, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him; and this our nature shining in endless glory, with all the fulness of the godhead, every attribute or perfection peculiar to deity dwelling in him bodily, and we blessed with every spiritual blessing in him; this is our glory, to know Jesus Christ and him crucified; this is "the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew," I Cor. ii. 7. And this is confirmed by what follows; "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness but to them that are saved it is Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God," I Cor. i. 18. This is the wisdom that God ordained for our glory. And this is the mystery of godliness, "God manifested in the flesh, who was seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory," 1 Tim. iii. 16. And upon this mystery another depends, which is, our union with this mystery of godliness: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones: this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church," Eph. iv. 30, 32. And from his fulness the Holy Spirit descends upon us, enters into us as a comforter, and abides with us for ever; he is the power, producer, and promoter of all the real godliness that is in the world. His influence and operations are productive of all good fruits, faith, hope, and love; life, joy, rest, and peace, which are the principles of godliness; and of all real devotion: and without this all religion is but bodily exercise, a drawing near to God without the heart. A seedsman, that goes forth weeping and bearing precious seed, carries the seed of God's word, the precious promises of the covenant; he has the seed of David, the Saviour, formed in his heart; he is a steward of the mysteries of God, and of his manifold grace, which grace is the incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Such an one, as God enables him, sows to the Spirit, as he dwells in

the household of faith. "Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart."

The righteous often lose the light of God's countenance; love waxes colder under sharp and long afflictions; and the corruptions of the heart seem to be more predominant than the oil of joy. These things obscure the believer's evidences, eclipse the healing beams of the sun, and bring on the gloomy days of adversity: but these days must not abide for ever, nor shall they ever blot out the saints' title, which is, children of light, and children of the day. The Sun of Righteousness may be eclipsed to our view, but never goes down: when we sit in darkness the Lord is a light unto us, he brings us forth to the light again, and we behold his righteousness. Every son of consolation, every one that is a fellow-helper of our joy, sows light for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart; and those who are so happy as to reap light, joy, or gladness, are sure to proclaim it.

But there is such a thing as sowing to the Spirit in temporal things. God created all the materials of the church at first, and in Christ Jesus we are all created anew; every lively stone in this temple is God's workmanship, and the whole building is of God's founding and framing; and it is "built for an habitation of God through the Spirit." The church is not her own, she is bought with a price, and is the Lord's own property, by purchase, by consecration, by dedication, and by inhabitation; hence every thing done to the church is done to the Lord.

The Jewish church at Jerusalem sent forth her ministers to us Gentiles; the law went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and the church of Jerusalem bore their expenses whom she sent: "They went forth, taking, nothing of the Gentiles," 3 John, 7. But many of these saints among the Hebrews were excommunicated, and some of them spoiled of their goods, Heb. x. 34; while others of them, the poorer sort, were set to reaping the harvest of the rich, and being despised and outlawed for Christ's sake, they were allowed no wages for their work. "Do not rich men

oppress you? "Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth," James. v. 4. These things brought the mother church to poverty, but the Gentiles sent her relief by the hand of Paul. "I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them, verily, and their debtors they are. For, if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in carnal things," Rom. xv. 25-27. We have a further account of this collecting for the saints' relief at Jerusalem in Paul's epistle to the church at Corinth. "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, but not as of covetousness. But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 5. 6. This sowing or distributing was to the poor saints, that is to those who were sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And the seedsmen were to be persons of the same cast; such, and only such, as had been partakers of the Jews' spiritual things. These spiritual Gentiles ministered to the Lord's people, which is the Lord's household, and they are his own property, and therefore he takes it as done to himself; "I was an hungry and ye gave me meat, thirsty and ye gave me drink, a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me." And he adds, "Forasmuch as ye have done it to these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And, as the Holy Spirit of Christ dwells in the church, the Spirit styles it his own temple; as the apostle says, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost? as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." Therefore this ministering to the saints is called sowing to the Spirit; and it answereth many good purposes: first, God takes notice and approves of it; hence the caution, "not grudgingly, or of necessity," as there is no compulsion, "for God loveth a cheerful giver."

2. They that sow bountifully shall reap bountifully. "God is able to make all Grace abound toward you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work; as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever." The apostle sets forth the power of God, as engaged to make all grace abound; and his providence also in giving them a sufficiency in all things; and, being blessed with the abundance, of grace in the heart, and with the bounties of providence in their hand, that they might abound to every good work. And he calls this ministering, this dispersing abroad and giving to the poor, a righteousness which remaineth for ever, for love is the fulfilling of the law; and both love, and the labour of love; love in its root, and love in its fruit, will remain for evermore. Hence the apostle charges them that are rich "not to be high-minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," I Tim. vi. 17,18. This is bread cast upon the waters, which is to be found after many days, Eccles. xi. 1.

But our apostle goes on, wishing his blessing upon this sowing, and reaping. "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness," 2 Cor. ix. 10. The apostle styles these liberal Gentiles sowers. He gives them to understand that it is God who ministers seed to the sower: the incorruptible seed of grace, and the blessing, of providence, all come from him. He prays God to minister bread for their food, both the bread of heaven and the staff of life; that they may have a plenty for themselves and others. Another part of his prayer is, that God would put his blessing upon their liberality, which is multiplying their seed sown; and that by the blessing of God upon them, and attending their liberality, the fruits of their righteousness might be increased.

The apostle proceeds to shew us that God himself reaps a harvest from this seed sown, "for it causes through us thanks-giving to God." And not only the apostles thanked God for this, but the Jewish church, which experienced the bounty of the Gentiles, joined in the same service; "for the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings to God," 2 Cor. ix. 12. And they not only sacrificed thanksgivings, "but they glorify God; for the Gentiles professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, and for their liberal distribution unto them, and to all men," 2 Cor. ix. 13. And then the apostle concludes by shewing us that the Spirit operates in such poor saints, in setting them to pray for their liberal brethren, and to long after the welfare of these their liberal benefactors: "And by their prayer for you, which long after you, for the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift," 2 Cor. ix. 14, 15. But there is no praying for others, nor longing after their souls, nor admiring the grace of God in them, unless they spring from the Holy Spirit and his grace. This is sowing to the Spirit, and such sowers are spiritual seedsmen: they reap spiritual things first, and under the Spirit's influence sow these their carnal things; for it is he that teaches the saints to love one another, and to love not in word, but in deed and in truth: and such, and only such, are objects of God's love, and come up to the character of cheerful givers. Others may sow to imitate the saints, but it is sparingly, having reaped no spiritual things, as may be seen in Ananias and Sapphira, who tried to imitate Barnabas; they sold their land, and brought a part, saying it was the whole price; by which they tempted the Spirit, and then lied unto him, for which he struck them both dead.

The fifth branch of this sowing to the Spirit is supporting the public ministry, endeavouring to spread the gospel, and to maintain them that preach it. The gospel is the ministry of the Spirit, and none but spiritual men can preach it, because it is the power of God unto salvation. Such labourers are worthy of their hire, and such as rule well are to "be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Tim.v.17. And this will be the case when God gives testimony to the word of his grace,

and sets the broad seal of heaven upon the message, and upon the soul that receives it, and raises up such an one to be a living witness that the seal of God is upon the messenger. "And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them," Isa. lxi. 5-7. The Almighty himself fixes our honourable title; "You shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of our God." And he himself appoints our maintenance, "You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles;" and the glorious salvation of their souls is to be our boast. And, although much shame and confusion may attend the ministry, through the malice of enemies, yet superabounding grace is to counteract this; and joy in God as our portion is promised as a cordial, to embolden and bear us up under this shame and confusion, all of which is to terminate in eternal joy; "everlasting joy shall be unto them."

Nor is the glorious salvation of the soul all the benefits which attend the ministers of God. When such are received into a man's house, to preach the word of God to the family, not only the man and his family are under the curse of God, but the curse is upon all the work of his hands, whether he be rich or poor, and upon all that he hath; the very ground is cursed, Gen. iii. 17. Yea even the Jewish priests, who lived on the tithes and offerings of Israel, though they called these offerings blessings, and they were blessed with a ceremonial blessing, yet the law made nothing perfect; it sanctified neither the man nor his property. God tells the Jewish priests that he had cursed their blessings because they laid not their sins to heart, Mal. ii. 2; and Paul declares that "unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled," Titus, i. 15. Adam by his sin forfeited all, and brought a curse upon his posterity, and upon all the world. The second Adam is now heir of all things: and all things are now put

into the covenant of promise; we have the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," I Tim. iv. 8. But these blessings are to the heirs of promise; and this heirship is made manifest upon our believing: "For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 26, 29. Whosoever, therefore, receiveth them whom the Lord sends, receiveth Christ in them, Matt. x. 40. And those that thus receive the Lord in faith and love become heirs of God, heirs of promise, and heirs of the grace of life; and such are called to inherit God's blessing, I Pet. iii. 9. And this blessing brings a consecration upon the man, upon his house, and upon all that he hath; "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horns iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth," Micah, iv. 13. Christ's ministers are here called the daughters of Zion, as they are elsewhere called Wisdom's maidens; "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table, she hath sent forth her maidens," Prov. ix. 1-3. Their horn sets forth the power of their anointing; their hoofs shew their firm standing, in the Lord by faith; their horns being iron, is to shew the destruction of their enemies, being a savour of death unto death to them; and trampling them with the hoof sets forth their victory over them, They are bid to arise and thresh, which is beating off the chaff from the wheat, or separating the elect from the reprobate. Beating them to pieces is breaking the hearts and spirits of poor sinners; for God dwells with them that are of a broken spirit; while others are dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel, Rev. ii. 27; so that they are sure to be broken one way or other. Such as are broken and made contrite by the word are made temples of the living God; and the Holy Ghost says that he will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth, Micah. iv. 13. Thus God's servants bring God's blessing to these converts, and this blessing rests upon them, and upon their gain and substance, and is the only consecration that rests upon it and it is to be consecrated to the Lord God of the whole earth, which is Christ; "The God of the

whole earth shall he be called," Isai. liv. 5. Now what is given to the Lord's servants as such is given to him, as may be seen in Paul's words to the Philippians; "But I have all, and abound; I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God," Phil. iv. 18. And Christ himself will proclaim this at the general judgment; "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink." This gain had been consecrated; and no other property but that of believers has any divine consecration upon it; for God himself gives an awful description of the sinner's substance before his blessing and consecration comes upon it. "And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up: for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing," Isaiah, xxiii. 17, 18. Tyre was a noted city for idolatry; and her being famous, or rather infamous, for this brought much trade and wealth to her merchants. Her merchandise and hire is the hire of an harlot; the wages of her fornication, the grains of idolatry, is the hire of a whore; and the stipend of an idolatrous priest is the price of a dog, Deut. xxiii. 18; both of which the ceremonial law forbids. But the merchandise and hire of the Tyrians is to be "holiness to the Lord." It is to be consecrated, and then to be called holiness to the Lord; it is not to be treasured nor laid up. "Her merchandise and her hire shall be for them that dwell before the Lord;" such as stand fast in Christ, who appears in the presence of God for us, and who stand before Christ, and minister in his name to his people. It is to supply them with food and raiment, and so it follows; for "her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing," There is a prophecy that went before upon this head, concerning the conversion of Tyre, and her coming to Zion; "And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour," Psalm xiv. 12. Nor do I believe that there is one minister of the Spirit in a thousand that reaps, even in this sense,

one tenth of what he sows; I mean even in carnal things. The ark was a lively type of Christ; "And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertained unto him, because of the ark of God," 2 Sam. vi. 12. But we have no account that he sent any thing away with it. Laban had but little when Jacob went to him; but God blessed him from the time of his first coming, and increased his cattle till it became a multitude; and, had not the God of Isaac been with Jacob, Jacob after all would have been sent empty away. Joseph's master in Egypt experienced the same blessing under the servitude of Joseph: and all that he got for his service was false imprisonment. It is true Pharaoh promoted Joseph, and made him ride in the second chariot; but then it should be considered that Joseph at last bought up all the land of Egypt for the crown, except the land of the priests, and saved the whole country from perishing by famine. Many were enriched both in spirituals and temporals by Paul, when he suffered hunger, cold, and nakedness himself; and he owns both, even his own poverty and their wealth; "as poor, yet making many rich," 2 Cor. vi. 10. And there are several families in the world that I myself know, who were so blessed under the smiles of providence after they had received the gospel, that they themselves saw it, wondered at it, owned it, and confessed it; and in this God fulfils his promise; "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the souls of men," Micah, v. 7. God makes his servants both a dew and a shower; and many blessings are distilled upon the people that receive them. "I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of blessings," Ezek. xxxiv. 26. And I believe that if all God's real children, who are led to confide in his providence, would carefully examine matters, they would set their seal to the truth of Christ's promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," Matt vi. 33; I mean that such souls would confess, that their seeking the kingdom of God went before, and that most of their temporal blessings came upon them afterwards. But I believe none of the Lord's seedsmen reap so bountifully as they sow. Paul

complains of this; "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen, or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written; that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?" 1 Cor. ix. 7-11.

All professing people must and shall be seedsmen; they shall sow either to the Spirit or to the flesh; "and whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Riches and honour come of God; he maketh poor, and maketh rich; and, if they have no heart to further his cause, he will so entangle them, that they shall support his enemies. Paul observes some to whom Providence had been most bountiful, who thereupon grew proud, haughty, and covetous: "Charge them that are rich in this world not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches," I Timothy, vi. 17.

Others were so charmed with Providence, that divine grace grew quite out of favour; they set their whole heart upon their wealth, and supposed that gain was godliness. But in this they erred; "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," I Timothy, vi. 10.

Others used their wealth in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; these fell "into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition," I Timothy, vi. 9. Paul tells the church at Corinth that they had many instructors, but not many fathers, for he had begotten them: yet they seem to have been illiberal to Paul, but not so to the false apostles. Hence he asks them, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your

carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather?" I Cor. ix. 11, 12. Those that used this power over them were the ministers of Satan, who set themselves up to examine Paul: "My answer to them that examine me is this" - read I Corinthians, ix. 3. The apostle takes notice of this, and enforces the ordinance of God in the support of the ministry: "Even so hath God ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel." But Paul, being a single man, and having learned a trade, would not be beholden to them, but made his hands minister to his necessities, as others have done who are engaged in the same work. And it is observable that many, who have appeared the most illiberal in the cause of God, have been so entangled in Satan's snares as to "consume it upon their lusts," James, iv. 3.

Others have been entangled with errors; and, in opposition to the truth, have been at great expense in supporting the same. And others, like the Corinthians, have been so zealously affected by wolves, that they have brought themselves low in circumstances by supporting the vilest impostors. But God ever has, and ever will raise up, some who shall be real and hearty friends to his servants, and to his own cause. Paul had his Onesiphorus, who often refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain, and in many things ministered to him at Ephesus, 2 Tim. 1. 16. The Philippians were so remarkably generous to him, that from the very beginning of the gospel among them they were careful of him; and this their care flourished again and again. "And even in Thessalonica they sent once and again unto his necessities, till he was full and abounded," as appears in the fourth chapter of his epistle to that church. Christ will have some that shall receive and abide by his servants. Some shall sow to the Spirit, and some shall sow to the flesh: but, let the seed be whatever it may, the crop and harvest shall be answerable. "Even as I have seen", says Job, "they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same," chap. iv. 8. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting," Gal. vi. 8.

THE SAINT'S SEED-TIME AND HARVEST

Eternal life lies in the purpose of God: we are ordained to it, it is given to us in Christ, and is hid with Christ in God. It is treasured up in the promise of the gospel, and secured in the covenant of grace. It is manifested in us by the operations of the Spirit quickening us. It is enjoyed by a sense of pardon and justification, which is unto life. The incorruptible seed of life is in faith, in hope, and in love; and all are passed from death to life who love the brethren. But the general harvest is to be reaped at the resurrection; for a life of grace is reaped in this world. It is a life of glory that Paul speaks of when he says. "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not," Gal. vi. 9.

Laying dead bodies in the ground is called sowing; "It is sown in corruption, it is sown in dishonour, it is sown in weakness, It is sown a natural body." And some of these will rise in corruption, in dishonour, and to shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. xii. 2. This our Lord calls "the resurrection unto damnation," John, v. 29.

But there are others that shall be raised "in incorruption, in glory, in power, and with a spiritual body." The Holy Ghost, to whom the saints have sowed, shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto Christ's glorious body. In this the saints shall appear before their Judge; when he will own, acknowledge, and approve, all that received him in his members, and all that fed him, clothed him, and visited him, whether sick or in prison.

Christ is "ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," Ephes. iv. 10; and by these things are chiefly meant his children, which, in allusion to the vessels of the temple, are called vessels, cups, bowls, and flagons, Isaiah, xxii. 24; Zech. ix. 15. The sanctuary and vessels of the ministry were purged by the blood of beasts; "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these," Heb. ix. 23. These heavenly things, which are purified by the blood of Christ, and in whom the atonement and the treasure of divine grace are hid, are to be filled. Every grace, though perfect in its kind, is, with respect to

degrees, imperfect; something is still wanting, "and that which is wanting cannot be numbered," Eccles. i. 15. But a fulness is promised; "I will cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures," Prov. viii. 21.

Our light is but the day-dawn or morning star at most, and is no more than a prelude to perfect day. Our knowledge is very shallow, and far from perfection, mixed with much darkness and confusion; but above it will be perfected. Our rest is often disturbed, and peace sadly interrupted, by the things which disquiet the mind. Love often waxes cold when the divine Lover stands aloof, and when love visits are not paid. Joy is not full; it is often counter balanced by bitterness and by days of adversity. In the best saint there is hungering and thirsting, desiring and longing, hoping, watching, and waiting. And this spiritual poverty must remain till the kingdom of heaven takes place; then mourning shall give way to comfort, weeping, shall give place to laughter, meekness shall yield to the thousand years' reign in the new earth; and all patience in waiting for the inheritance shall remain at the foot of the mount, when we ascend into the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place.

The Holy Spirit is not only the spirit of grace, but he is the spirit of glory also, I Peter, iv. 14. When Christ was crucified, God laid the foundations "of the earth," and at the resurrection of the just he will "plant the heavens," Isaiah, li. 16. The sure mercies of David are, the Holy Spirit and his grace; "Of his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus, iii. 5. By this regenerating and renewing a spiritual family is raised up for God; and when this family is settled in glory "mercy will be built up for ever, and the faithfulness of God will be established in the very heavens," Psalm lxxxix. 2.

The ever blessed and ever adorable Spirit is the implanter of all grace; every fruit of his is produced in the soul under his influence and operations; and they are his cheering breezes which animate them, give them all their motion and exercise, and from his power

THE SAINT'S SEED-TIME AND HARVEST

they emit all their fragrance. The Saviour's sacrifice is of no use to us unless the Holy Spirit realizes the atonement to our conscience, and gives us by faith a participation of his saving benefits. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," John, vi. 56, 63. Hence the Holy Spirit in the church is called "a springing well, living water springing up," which makes the church a "fountain sealed," Cant. iv. 12. And every grace that appears in exercise, whether faith, hope, or love, joy, meekness, or humility, every confession or petition, all thanks, praises, or rejoicings, all sympathy with Christ in his sufferings, all pious concern for his honour, all fellowship with him, whether in his death or resurrection, all gratitude to him, zeal for him, or godly valour in his cause, are so many springs rising from this fountain, and playing the enlivening streams through the Mediator into the Father of mercies and God of all comfort. God seeketh such to worship him as shall worship him in spirit and in truth. It is the Holy Spirit that draws the image of God upon the soul; and it is this image that is "the beauty of the Lord our God upon us," Ps. xc. 17. And every soul renewed, and thus formed for God's praise, "worships the Lord in the beauty of holiness," 1 Chron xvi. 29, and none else.

Thus my dear friends, have I endeavoured to set before you and all others what little I understand of sowing to the Spirit, and of reaping eternal life from the same. I have also two more branches of the same heavenly mysteries, which I shall be glad to send you when God permits. One is upon "the emblems of the Spirit," and the other is upon the subject of "his divine anointing;" till then, farewell. I hear much of your great success; it confirms what I long since have written. God make you both the father and the nurse of thousands of millions, and let your seed possess the gate of those which hate them. Amen.

Ever yours in the best of bonds,

W. HUNTINGTON, S. S.

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Chapter Five

AN INNOCENT GAME FOR
BABES IN GRACE

AN INNOCENT GAME
FOR
BABES IN GRACE;
OR
DIVERSION FOR INFANTS
AT THE HOLE OF THE
ASP.

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Luke 10:19

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF CHRIST AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, AND AT RICHMOND IN SURREY, WITH THEIR DEACONS.

Dear Brethren in the Household of Faith, and Fellow-Subjects in the Kingdom and Patience of Christ,

SOME of you very earnestly solicited me to publish this discourse after the delivery of it; which solicitation I could not then comply with, as I had so many things on my hands, and so little time to attend to them; but, having now published to the world the greatest part of the dealings of God with me, I am willing to comply with your former request.

I choose to dedicate this discourse to you in humble acknowledgment of the manifold favours which you have shewed me in the erection of the chapel, from your assiduous care in managing the outward matters thereof for me, without burdening me in the study, and from your liberality in supporting the cause of God with honour.

I know the title of this discourse will give an offence, as most people imagine all religion to be something gloomy and melancholy, and that, as soon as persons become serious in the ways of God, they immediately become miserable, and therefore are fit for nothing but an hermitage or a madhouse. However, if there be no happiness in the favour of God, I am sure there is none in his wrath; because a guilty conscience, which is the harbinger of wrath, always pursues the sinner.

Nor are real Christians without their various diversions; but then they are all of a spiritual nature, fit for spiritual gamesters; and hence it is that entangling the minds and affections of sinners, and alluring them to Christ with gospel promises, is called fishing, Mark, i. 17. Struggling with God under the Spirit's influence for blessings is called wrestling, Gen. xxxii. 24. Keeping up a close union with God in gospel diligence is called running the race that is set before us, Heb. xii. 1. And grasping the highest attainments in

AN INNOCENT GAME FOR BABES IN GRACE

grace is called attaining the mark that secures the prize of our high calling, Phil. iii. 14. In short, he is allowed to be a good gamester, and to play the best of games, that wins Christ, though he lose every thing else. "But what things were gain to me, those I accounted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for when I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ," Phil. iii. 7, 8. The Lord keep you all in the simplicity of the gospel, and then you will play with safety, though it be at the hole of the asp. The breast of consolation, in the mouth of crying and praying faith, affords such nourishment to Babes in Grace, and causes them to cleave so close to the Father of all mercies and God, of all comfort, that there is little room to suspect the danger of being envenomed at the hole of the asp. That you may play a warrantable game, and come off with the garland is the desire and prayer of

Him that loves you in the bowels of Christ,
And is willing to serve you for his sake,

W. HUNTINGTON

AN
INNOCENT GAME,
ETC.

"And the child shall play on the hole of the asp,"—Isaiah, xi. 8.

IT is allowed by the choicest divines, that, of all the prophets, Isaiah is the most evangelical, as his sermons savour most of the dear Redeemer. And indeed Isaiah's views of his birth, his temptations, his travels, his ministry, his death, his ascension, his receiving and giving the Spirit, his seeing the travail of his soul in the conversion of the Gentiles; the universal spread of the gospel, his predictions of these our isles waiting for his law; the real experience of Christians, the glorious exaltation of Christ, his universal government, and eternal reign; are so exactly pointed out, that, if he had sat in the eternal council of the Trinity, he could not have preached the doctrines of eternal election and absolute predestination more clearly than he does. The deity of Christ; his glorious offices, as king, priest, and prophet; his government as a king, his sacrifice as a priest, and his doctrines as a prophet; are so sublimely and profoundly handled, that it is as if he had spent his days on a mount of transfiguration; on which he traces the manifold wisdom of God from the ancient settlements of the Trinity down to the end of time, and to all eternity. Indeed he was one that lived, moved, and had his being in the glorious visions of God. He treats so sweetly of the soul-travail of awakened and quickened sinners; of the Lord's tender care over them; their cordial reception into covenant favour; their justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; the saints' holding on their way without fainting, and the certainty of their possessing at last what God has promised in Christ Jesus, called by this prophet, things which the eye hath not seen, ear heard, or heart of man conceived, and which are said to be laid up for all that wait upon and wait for God.

This prophet appears to be one of the royal house of David; and I believe he preached fifty or three-score years; and at last was sawn asunder, Hebrews, xi. 37; and as some of the Jews allow, under the reign of Manasseh, who they say was his grandson.

The prophet, in the beginning of this chapter, foretells of the coming of Jesus Christ, as the omnipotent and eternal Ruler, whom he terms, "a rod growing out of David, called the stem of Jesse;" and a blessed sprig of righteousness coming forth "out of his roots, as a tender plant out of a dry ground."

He means the conception of Christ; that, under the divine agency of the Holy Ghost, there shall come forth a holy and blessed seed, that, while righteousness is looking down from heaven for satisfaction, truth shall spring out of the earth and give it.

"A branch shall grow out of his roots," ver. 1. The prophet here prophesies of the glorious fulness of the Spirit that should rest upon him. Christ, as a king, was to have "dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth;" and, to qualify him for the government of his kingdom, and to subdue his enemies, "the Spirit of wisdom shall rest upon him."

As a prophet of his church and people, he shall reveal the mysteries of heaven, and make plain the path of life; and he is qualified for this with the "spirit of understanding."

And, for the office of an advocate for his people, he is furnished with the "spirit of counsel."

As the foundation of his church, "the spirit of might" shall rest upon him.

As he is ordained to be the judge of quick and dead, the "spirit of knowledge" shall rest upon him; and, as a servant in covenant character, the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall be upon him. "If I am a master," says God, "where is my fear?" The answer is, Christ,

as a servant, shall fear him all his days: "the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall rest upon him," ver. 2. Thus the humanity of Christ was anointed with all the fulness of the Holy Ghost; grace was poured into his lips indeed, and he was full of grace and truth; his own proper deity inhabited that body, and a sevenfold unction abode upon it.

He next treats of his omniscience. "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears;" ver. 3. But, as the searcher of all hearts, he shall judge and reprove according to their thoughts; as was verily fulfilled in his ministry, when there came a company to him saying, "Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the persons of men. Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" Matt. xxii. 16, 17. There was not a word amiss in all this. They told the Saviour that they knew he was true, and that he taught the ways of God truly; that he was not afraid of the faces of men; and they asked him if it was lawful to pay tribute to the Roman emperor, who was no better than a usurper over them. Where was the harm in all this? I answer, there was none; but the omniscient Saviour knew their drift was to drag something out of his mouth that would amount to treason; and, if they could have caught that, then they would have been the first to have accused him to Herod of treachery, and delivered him up to his authority, and so have exposed him to all the severity of the secular power. "But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" Here the dear Redeemer did not judge after the hearing of his ears; if he had, in all probability he would have judged charitably, for there was nothing amiss in their words. But, to confute them by their own acts and deeds, he said, "Shew me the tribute money;" and, when they brought it, he said, "Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him Caesar's." Is it Caesar's? Did not God at first reign over you? and did he not, in the wilderness, levy many tributes on you, to shew you that your obedience and loyalty was due to him only? "But whose image and superscription is this? They say unto him, Caesar's." How came you

under the sceptre of an heathen monarch? Is this his image? Why then, if his image and superscription go current among you, you allow of his government; and it is a proof that you have cast off the sceptre of God; "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

Thus it appears that Jesus did not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears; but, as the omniscient Jehovah, he judged according to the base hypocrisy of their hearts.

"But with righteousness shall he judge the poor," ver. 4. By the *poor* understand the "poor in spirit;" such as are stripped of their own supposed merit, brought in debtors by the law of God and conscience, chased from all confidence in the flesh, brought to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and humbled to beg the bread of heaven at mercy's door.

"And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth," ver. 4. By the rod of his mouth understand the power of his preached word. The Lord says, "I have smitten Ephraim, and he is gone on frowardly in the way of his heart: for the iniquity of his covetousness was I wrath, and smote him. I hid me, and was wroth," Isa. lvii. 17. That is, God smote him with the words of his mouth, and hewed him by the prophets, Hos. vi. 5. And, after God had thus wounded him, he brought him back, and bound up his broken heart. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners." Thus he smites some, and then heals them again; as it is written, "Despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for he maketh sore, and he bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole," Job, v. 17, 18. By "the breath of his lips" understand the spirit that attends the word of the Lord, and that slays the old man of sin; and, on the other hand, that makes the word of God a savour of death unto death to all that maintain an impious rebellion against the light.

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins," verse 5. This represents the Saviour as a just God; that he will appear strictly just

both as a Saviour and as a judge: as a Saviour he will answer every demand to justice by paying a perfect obedience to every precept of the law, and then submitting himself to death, as the just sentence of God, denounced against man for sin. Death is the sentence of God, man is the subject of this sentence, and sin is the cause. "By sin came death." The Saviour submitted himself to death spiritual by taking our sins, and by being made a curse to death eternal by the departure of God from him. "Why hast thou forsaken me?" To death temporal when his soul was separated from his body. "He made his soul an offering for sin." Having thus satisfied justice, he is strictly just when he justifies his own elect; and, as the judge of quick and dead, he will be strictly just in executing the sentence which the law denounces against the wicked.

By *girdle* understand his close adherence to the administration of mercy to the elect, and of justice to the reprobate.

"And faithfulness the girdle of his reins" ver. 5. By *reigns* or *kidneys*, we may understand the deep councils and secret purposes of the Saviour; that his immutable mind and will, and the secret thoughts of his heart toward his own people, are braced or girded about with all the faithfulness and veracity of Deity.

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb." By *wolf* understand persecutors that devour the sheep of Christ; such as Paul was, who appeared to fulfil his father's character—"Benjamin shall raven as a wolf," Gen. xlix. 27. Paul was one of that tribe, and did destroy some of the Lord's sheep; and would have destroyed more, if sovereign grace had not arrested him on the road; but afterwards he lay down at the feet of the Lamb of God, and became as meek and gentle as any lamb of his fold.

"And the leopard shall lie down with the kid." By the leopard we may understand a pharisee who is cleansing himself, Jer. xiii. 23, and yet rebelling fiercely against the fountain that God has appointed to cleanse. However, some of this stamp have been humbled, and brought to submit to and find rest in the dear

Redeemer, and to lie down with the Saviour's kids in the shepherds' tents, Cant. i. 8.

"And the calf and the lion," &c. By *calf* we may understand young growing Christians thriving in grace. "They shall grow up as calves of the stall," Mal. iv. 2. And by *lions*, fierce opposers by nature, but brave gospel champions when fortified and panoplied by grace; in short, they shall all herd together; "and a little child," or a babe in grace, "shall lead them" into the knowledge of the truth, under the Spirit's influence. Such were the apostles, who are called little children and babes. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," Matt. xi. 25.

"The cow and the bear shall feed," &c. ver. 7. By the *cow* we may understand, in a figurative sense, a gospel nurse, 1 Thess. ii. 7, or a minister of consolation; such as Paul was, who fed the Lord's infants like a wet nurse; as it is written, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for ye were not able to bear it," 1 Cor. iii. 2.

Young Christians, being called "growing calves," are said to desire the sincere milk of God's word, that they may grow thereby, I Peter, ii. 2. Hence a tender minister, holding forth the sweet nourishment of the gospel, may be compared to a good cow.

Ministers, because of their hard labour in the gospel yoke, are sometimes compared to *oxen*; and, in their character of nurses who feed with milk, why not to *cows* also? Read Isa. vii. 21.

The bear sometimes in scripture signifies "a wicked ruler over the poor people," Prov. xxviii. 15. However, some such have been called by grace. Kings have been made nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers, Isa. xlix. 23. And their nurseries have been brought to lie down becalmed and composed in gospel rest and quietude.

"And the lion shall eat straw like the bullock," ver. 7. I am inclined to think this *lion* represents a sinner whom the gospel has

left in his unregenerate state, unhumbled, because he is set forth as feeding, not lying down; and his feed is straw, not the green pastures of Christ's sheep, Psal. xxiii. 2. Feeding on straw is no better than the prodigal's husks, which I take to be the doctrines of men.

2dly, It may denote a false teacher, who feeds on the apostacy of hypocrites, who are the refuse of the Lord's floor, straw and stubble being the fuel of an harvest; so hypocrites are the straw and stubble which God's threshing instruments beat off, Isa xli. 15; and which the fan generally scatters, Mat. iii. 11; and which the day of wrath will consume as straw or stubble, Mal. iv. 1. However, the *lion* and his *straw*, the *serpent* and his *dust*, are all coupled together in the word of God. "The lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat," Isa. lxv. 25.

Having briefly paraphrased down to my text, I will arrange my thoughts under the following heads:

First, Describe the gamester—a *child*.

2dly, His breast—he being a *sucking* child.

3dly, The subject of the game—an *asp*.

4thly, The play-ground—the *hole* of the asp.

5thly, and lastly, The *rules* of the game.

First, Whose child is this, that dares to put its hand on the hole of the asp? I answer, It is God's child: no child can play with safety at this hole but a child of God.

The next inquiry will be, How do we become children of God? I answer, first, by "eternal election;" and therefore we are called "a chosen generation," 1 Pet. ii. 9.

2dly, By pre-adoption. "And, because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6.

3dly, By *regeneration*. God, who from everlasting willed our adoption in Christ, begets us by his word, under the prolific operations of his Spirit operating and working with it. "God of his own will begat us with the word of truth," James, i. 18.

The word comes to the elect, "not as the word of man," 1 Thes. ii. 15; "not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," 1 Thess. i. 5. When this is the case, the word, under the operation of the Spirit, becomes a spiritual embryo; or, as Peter terms it, an incorruptible seed; "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, that lives and abides for ever," 1 Peter, i. 23.

Under the quickening influences of the word and Spirit the sinner is brought to a spiritual sense of his state; he feels the severity of the law, the terrors of God, and the fears of death. These generally entangle the quickened sinner more or less. The ever-blessed and glorious Trinity are jointly concerned in this work of quickening the sinner. God gave us life in Christ Jesus; Christ is the resurrection and the life; and the Holy Ghost appears the Spirit of life, and quickens us to feel our need of "the bread of God that came down from heaven;" as you see in the parable of the prodigal son, who cried out, "I perish with hunger," and yet was convinced there was enough of the bread of life in his father's house. Thus God gave us life in Christ Jesus, and the Spirit quickens us to feel the need of it, and in time leads us to feed on it.

The word of God does not quicken unless the Spirit attend it. Some "hold the truth in unrighteousness," and the gospel comes to some in word only; but when Jesus speaks to the sinner's heart, the Spirit of God applies the word, and life and power are felt. "The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and they are life."

It is true the Psalmist says, "This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickened me;" yet he owns the Spirit of God as the life of that word, as appears by his prayer, "Take not thy holy Spirit from me."

Under this powerful sensation the will is humbled, and sweetly inclined to choose the better part. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of my power." The soul longs for reconciliation with his offended God; and the word of God at times gives a little encouragement to faith and hope; but fresh discoveries of sin, attended with Satan's temptations, encourage doubts, fears, and unbelief. Thus the soul labours between feeble faith and unbelief, languid hope and slavish fear. This is the travail of the soul that is quickened, and drawing near his delivery; as it is written, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but, as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man child is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice," John, xvi. 21, 22.

Under this spiritual travail the soul is kept in spiritual activity: every power is in motion after God, though it has such a burden of imaginary and real evils to wade through. "I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search," Psal. lxxvii. 6.

The world, with its trifles, is detested, and the one thing needful will be uppermost. The trouble of his mind crucifies him to popularity, and secret retirement best suits the frame of his heart: this keeps him from his old companions; the word of God becomes his hourly study and meditation; and a saving knowledge of God is the ultimate desire of his soul. "Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom," Prov. xviii. 1.

At times a light sweetly shines on the word, and then hope perceptibly rises in the mind; but when these rays are withdrawn, fear sinks the soul again. Thus light and darkness, hope and fear, faith and unbelief, struggle together as with a woman in hard labour; as it is written, "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them. Like a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in

pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord," Isa. xxvi. 16, 17.

At times this labour abates, and an insensible frame takes place; benumbing ease stupifies the soul, and renders it careless; until some fresh contracted guilt rouses the mind; then trouble springs up again, all the bearing pangs come on afresh, and the struggling is stronger than ever. Indeed the awakened sinner is afraid of carnal ease; he is afraid of stopping short, and so failing "of the grace of God," Heb. xii. 15. He would sooner struggle through the worst of difficulties than be left to go back to his former course of wickedness; for he knows the reality of God's wrath against sin by what he feels, and dreads the thoughts of falling as a polluted sinner into the hands of the living God. This is the labour, more or less, of those that are born again, or born of the Spirit; and labour they do until perfect love, Zion's best midwife, appears, and draws the soul through the inflexible straits of binding fear and stubborn unbelief. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love, for perfect love casteth out fear," 1 John, iv. 18. When love has done this the birth is clear. "For love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," 1 John, iv. 7. Thus the word of God occasions the conception; the Spirit of God quickens the soul; faith and hope bring to the birth; and love revealed gives strength to bring forth. The new-born soul is like one just awaked from a dream, or fancies himself just sprung from the womb into a new world; as it is written, "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth," Job, xxxiii. 25.

"Old things are" now "passed away" with such a happy soul, and "all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17.

He finds his impenitent heart sweetly dissolved, and softened to receive the law of faith written by the Spirit; his hardness is removed, and an heart of flesh is given, agreeable to the promise, "A new heart also will I give you," Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

The *spirit of love* inflames him, the *spirit of truth* instructs him, the *spirit of faith* persuades him, and the *spirit of supplication* helps him in every approach to God. "And a new spirit will I put within you," Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

The mind of the new-born soul is likewise employed in sweet meditation; his views are enlarged as he meditates, his soul is enriched with the promises, and established by faith in the immutability of the covenant: this fills his soul with an holy triumph, and his tongue is employed in expressing his rapturous thoughts. "They spake with new tongues," Mark, xvi. 17.

This new heart is the Saviour's new bottle, and the new spirit is the new wine. "New wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved," Matt. ix. 17. And indeed sometimes the Christian finds it as Elihu expresses it, "Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles." Job, xxxii. 19. When this is the case of the happy soul he spends his rich income in holy conversation, or in singing the praises of his sweet Redeemer. "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God," Psalm, xl. 3. In short, the new-born soul sees with new eyes, walks in a new way, and associates with a new community.

Having treated of the birth of this child, I come now to speak of the child-like disposition of this little gamester.

First, He is of a teachable temper. "They sit down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words," Deut. xxxiii. 3.

Secondly, He is tractable; the most despicable instrument (in the eyes of man), if his conversation and counsel be evangelical, may lead him. Thus Cornelius drops on his knees to receive a divine message from the mouth of poor Peter the fisherman; which appears little better than idolatry. But, as an angel from heaven had ordered him to send for Peter, we have reason to believe he viewed him as God's oracle; for salvation to Cornelius and his house was to be delivered from Peter's mouth. Peter takes him up; declares

himself no more than a man; and directs the bended knee to God, whom Peter personated, and whose ambassador he really was.

Thirdly, He is meek and quiet, which divine ornaments bedeck the soul, and are in the sight of God of great price. "The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way," Psal. xxv. 9.

Fourthly, He is simple in his devotion and in his deportment; he pays no respect to religious pomp and parade; external shows of godliness are lightly esteemed by him. He makes the good will of God in Christ Jesus his rule, the Son of God his plea, and the promise of God the warrant of his faith and foundation of his hope. "Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope," Psal. cxix. 49.

He is simple in his deportment. He is so demeaned, that he esteems all others better than himself. He longs to represent the grace of God in all its lustre, and is grieved when any heavy cross prohibits his being divinely cheerful; he is perpetually guarded by filial fear, and is afraid of opening the mouth of fools, or exposing the cause of God to contempt; dreads the thoughts of being a stumbling-block to the coming soul, or of being a pattern to the presumptuous.

Fifthly, He has no trust in himself. He goes forth in the Lord's strength, engages his spiritual adversaries in the Lord's name, and simply leans on his revealed arm, as a child on the arm of its nurse. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe," Psal. cxix. 117.

I come now to treat of the breast of this little gamester. We must be born again, and nourished with divine consolation, before we presume to invade the frontiers of an asp, much less to play a game on his hole.

It is the "sucking child" that shall play on the hole of the asp, and the "weaned child" that shall put his hand on the cockatrice den.

The child must be weaned from the pleasures of the world, from the love of sin, from confidence in the flesh, and from the society of wicked company, before he dare put his hand on this hole.

The new-born soul finds a strong affection going out after God, which flows from a sense of God's love to him. Hence the word of God becomes his soul's delight, prayer is his highest privilege, and communion with God the quintessence of his fidelity. The Bible is read as his heavenly Father's will. By faith he proves his sonship; and his sonship gives him a gospel right and title to the divine legacy; for he is an heir of promise, and consequently an heir to every blessing promised, which all centre in this, namely, that he is an heir of God, as his only portion, and a joint heir with Christ, to all intents and purposes, Rom. viii. 17.

Milk is the essence of herbage, and God's word is compared to green pastures; and the blessings contained in the word are called the sincere milk of it, when they are preached and applied with gospel sincerity. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," 1 Peter, ii. 2.

Every promise that is applied by the Holy Ghost discharges its divine refreshings to nourish hope, strengthen faith, and to encourage an holy familiarity with a reconciled God in Christ Jesus.

Promises are Zion's breasts, with which all her infant progeny are nourished; and every established soul in Zion is willing to lend the bearing arm, and to hold forth the full-fraught breast to the simple soul that is born again of God. And the babe in grace will draw in the comforts and instructions as fast as the tender nurse can bring them forth; as it is written, "That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory," Isa. lxvi. 11. Let it be observed that

None but justified persons can feed a babe in grace with wholesome food. Prating lips and barren hearts afford no

nourishment to the child of God. Zion must be justified by faith, and enjoy gospel peace herself, before she can draw out the gospel breast to her offspring. As it is written, "For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. Then shall ye suck; ye shall be borne upon her sides, and dandled upon her knees," Isaiah, lxvi. 12.

These divine comforts are an unction to the understanding, a rapture to the affections, and a fortification to the whole soul; as the prophet speaks, "And when ye see this your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish as an herb," Isa. lxvi. 14.

I come now to describe the object of the sport.

The object to be sported with is an asp. "The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp."

The asp, or aspic, is a most dangerous reptile, very numerous in the great deserts of Arabia, and in Ethiopia, and well known in the Holy Land.

They are a kind of serpent, or adder, very small, curiously marked on the back, are very wise and subtle, apt to bite; and so venomous, that it is almost impossible to cure their bite. The venom which it conveys with its teeth spreads its contagion so fast, that unless a remedy be speedily procured, it is almost impossible to stop the infection. The venom of this creature is dreadful in its operations; it has a benumbing, stupifying, and intoxicating nature; it exhausts the animal spirits, withers the frame, and speedily draws the sufferer into a state of insensibility; insomuch that it lulls him into the final sleep of death, by a kind of lethargy. It causes a swelling as it runs, and has as bad an effect on the intellects as it has on the blood. There is no venomous creature so fatal in its bite, unless it be the scorpion.

So much for the *history*; I come now to the *mystery* of the asp.

This asp, in the mystery, is the devil, who is often called a serpent, Isa. xxvii, 1; and an adder, Psalm, xci. 13; because of his wisdom, Matt. x. 6; his subtlety, Gen. iii. 2; his crooked turns, Job. xxvi. 13; his dreadful bite, Eccl. x. 11; and the hellish contagion of sin that spreads its dreadful infection throughout both body and soul. It benumbs the conscience, hardens the heart, stupifies the mind, and lulls the sinner fast asleep in his sin; and, if grace prevent not, sends him out of the world in an awful lethargy, till in hell, when "he lifts up his eyes, being in torment".

When the old serpent the devil seduced Eve, he chose the most subtle creature in the brute creation to disguise himself in; and he pursues the same scheme now; for he pitches upon the subtlest and wisest men to support his interest in the world. Men in ecclesiastical or civil power, of great learning, great parts, quick turns, and nervous reasonings, are generally the devil's tools to spread his nets, and ensnare the souls of men. Hence it is that God has poured so much contempt on the wisdom of this world, as to make their understanding foolishness. And the Saviour thanked his Father for hiding the gospel from the wise and prudent, and for revealing it unto babes.

In times of darkness Satan works men up to practise all manner of debauchery, oppression, and cruelty, and to deal destruction round them in a thousand forms; but, when the light of the gospel appears, then he stirs men up to persecute, and to spread his errors: by the former he labours to stop the progress of the gospel, and by the latter to mingle lies with it; and generally conveys his venom by those who are falsely called gospel ministers. Such are the Arminians, who discover the serpent's wisdom by producing much scripture, as the devil did when he deceived Eve, and yet perverting the plainest truths; they discover the crooked workings of the serpent by their serpentine wriggling, first out of truth into error, then out of error into truth. Sometimes, by their words, you would think they were in Christ, and soon after you will perceive them to savour of nothing but flesh and blood; hold up and confess one doctrine at one time, then turn about again, and tear it all down.

This is the crooked serpent "They have made them crooked paths, whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace," Isa. lix. 8. At times they hold for the blood of Christ as shed for all the human race, and then by and by tell you that those washed in it may be damned. This is the spirit of error that intoxicates. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; at the last it biteth as a serpent, and it stingeth like an adder," Prov. xxiii. 31, 32. They discover the deafness of the serpent by being hardened against all reproof, rushing on in the face of every faithful witness, and spitting their venom at the brightest testimonies. "They are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely," Psalm lviii. 4.

They discover the subtlety of the serpent, by concealing their inward principles until they have insinuated themselves into your affections; and they will bring them forth a little at a time, as you can swallow them down; and, lest you should suspect the devil to be in them, they contend vehemently for good works and holiness of life. Under this mask they convey the bane of Satan to your heart. This is the subtlety of the devil, beguiling souls by false teachers, as Paul says, "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 3, 4. So much for the asp. I come now to treat of his *hole*, on which the child is to play.

In the verse out of which the text is taken you read of a *cockatrice den*, and that the weaned child shall put its hand on that. The cockatrice and the asp are both serpents: and there is but very little difference between them. The *cockatrice den* is a false preacher's *heart*, and the *hole* of the asp is a false preacher's *mouth*.

The Saviour called the Jewish tribe of false teachers serpents and vipers. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii. 33. He called them serpents because the old serpent, the devil, was in them. Satan keeps his court in the heart, which is his palace, Luke, xi. 21. "The devil worketh in the

hearts of the disobedient," Eph. ii. 2. And the unrenewed heart is the serpent's den. There it is that lie works up all his destructive compounds, and sends them forth in the open blaze of gospel light; that, while some precious souls simply receive the new wine of the kingdom of God, and rejoice in it, these instruments of Satan secretly hold all their venom; as Moses speaks of some of the Israelites, who brought away the Egyptian gods with them, and secretly carried on an infernal familiarity with devils, practising magic art. "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps."

It is called the vine of Sodom, as springing up from Satan, the root of wickedness; bitter clusters, because they embitter the heart, and fill it with enmity against God and his sovereign will; wine, because it intoxicates the soul, stupifies the conscience, blinds the understanding, confuses the judgment, and employs the tongue in nothing but inconsistencies, contradictions, and mere nonsense.

As wine sets people to staggering, boasting, prating, wrangling, and whoring, so errors set people a staggering at the truths of God, boasting of human merit, prating against those that are orthodox, wrangling with simple souls, and to committing spiritual fornication against the Lord. Errors lead the heart of the deceived to an infernal conjunction with the devil himself. Hence it is called wine of fornication.

Popery I call the mother of whoredoms, and the Arminian body her younger sister; and such I believe in my conscience they will appear in the great day; for I can see no more difference between Popish principles and the principles of Arminianism, than I can between my two eyes. The church of Rome is said to make people drunk with the wine of her fornication; that is, the spirit of error; as it is written, "I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication," Rev. xvii. 1, 2.

Thus the spirit of error is said to make men drunk, as Milton represents the intoxication of Adam and Eve. After they had taken their fill of forbidden fruit, they thought "they felt new divinity springing up within them," until their false drop conveyed the bane of guilt into their conscience, and then they saw their nakedness, and began, as he represents, "their vain contest, that found no end." So Zophar represents the false joys and airy flights of the deceived hypocrite. "The triumph of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment. Though his excellency (mark that !) mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him," Job, xx. 5, 6, 12, 14. And, as he loves such nourishment, God says he shall have no breast to suck but that; and, as he fed on the viper's bane, he shall be destroyed by the viper's tongue. "He shall suck the poison of asps; the viper's tongue shall slay him," Job, xx. 16.

Hence it appears that the false preacher's mouth is the hole of the asp; and the tongue of such a deceiver conveys the very venom of the devil, with his doctrine, which lies concealed under his tongue; as it is written, "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips," Psalm cxi. 3.

And to this agrees the apostle Paul—"With their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips," Rom. iii. 13. It is called wine of fornication, because it seduces men from the covenant of grace, which is a covenant of wedlock, and alienates the affections from God, instead of attracting them to him, and in the end leads souls into an affinity with the devil himself; as it is written, "Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel," Jer. iii. 20. And pray how was this done?—by perverting their way, and forgetting their God. Jer. iii. 21; until God was "broken with their whorish heart which departed from him, and with their eyes that went a whoring after their idols," Ezek. vi. 9. False prophets lead to false doctrines, false doctrines lead to false gods; and their

false gods lead them to false devils, and devils lead them to hell. And so it is now; for, if you obscure, or cast a false light upon any essential truth, you obscure an attribute of God that shines in that truth; for all his perfections shine in his word; and hence it is that he has "magnified his word above all his name," Psalm cxxxviii. 2. And, by obscuring God's truths, or setting them forth in a false light, they have obscured the tremendous and illustrious attributes of the MOST HIGH AND ETERNAL GOD.

I can prove, from the Arminian writings, that they have beclouded three parts out of four of the revealed perfections of the ALMIGHTY. None have gone farther in this work than they, except the Atheists, who, by denying the being of a God, have, in fact, denied themselves all sense, reason, and motion, and laboured to prove themselves in a state of annihilation; for God's existence and man's existence stand or fall together, according to scripture," For in him we live, move, and have our being," Acts, xvii. 28.

If the truths of God are obscured, the perfections of God are obscured, and God is represented in a false light; and consequently I am led to entertain false ideas of God, and to set up a false god in my own imagination, which will float and vary just as I do. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you," Psalm l. 21, 22.

Having treated of the *child*, of his *breast*, of the *asp*, and of his *hole*, I come now to treat of the *sport* that may warrantably be made of this *asp*, and of the rules of the game, which I take to be five-fold:

First, We may whip him with the scourge of the tongue.

2dly, We may treat him with irony.

3dly, We may lay our hands on the hole, and defy his power.

4thly, We may stop up the hole, if we can.

5thly, We may set fire to the hole, and run away safely by the light of it.

First, We may whip this asp with the scourge of the tongue, as the prophet Isaiah did. He calls them "foolish pastors and shepherds, that cannot understand." He pays no regard to their hoary heads, their venerable appearance, nor to the honour they assume. He passes over both their age and their honour without any respect to them, because the word of the Lord was against them. "Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel both head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed," Isa. ix. 14–16.

John, in his Revelation, honours one of Satan's prelates with the title of key-keeper, or porter of hell. "And unto him was given the key of the bottomless pit;" Rev. ix. 1. In the second verse he tells us that the business of this prelate was to let out the steam of the infernal regions, in order to darken the sun and air. By the *sun* understand the glorious rays of Christ in his gospel, and by the *air* the sweet breezes of the Holy Ghost. When this smoke had blinded the eyes of them that believed not (2 Cor. iv. 4), there sprung up a troop of locusts, empowered to use the sting and venom of the scorpion. Here John compares false teachers to locusts, a despicable insect; and their power to that of a scorpion, one of the most odious, dangerous, and venomous creatures in the whole world. "And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power," Rev. ix. 3.

Their intention was to destroy or root out the word of God, and to destroy by their errors every plant of righteousness that the Lord's right hand had planted, Isa. lxi. 3. But their power was limited, for they were commanded not to hurt the grass, nor the trees; "but only those men which have not the seal of God's Spirit upon them," Rev. ix. 4.

The dreadful flashes of conscience those received that imbibed their principles are represented by the scorpion's sting; but, when their consciences were hardened, these gradually wore off "They

shall be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man," ver. 5. The shapes of these locusts were compared unto horses prepared unto battle, because of their undaunted courage, being hardened against God "through the deceitfulness of sin," Heb. iii. 13; and rushing upon their own destruction, as the thoughtless horse does into the battle, Jer. viii. 6.

They are represented as having crowns of gold; perhaps to shew that they were authorized and protected by government; or it may denote that they were all princes who reigned in their various principalities, under the infernal sceptre of Satan; as it is written, "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon (or one that deals destruction); but in the Greek tongue he hath his name Apollyon," one that tries to root out and destroy all that is good, ver. 11.

John farther represents them as having only the faces of men; that is, all that they are allowed to have of manhood about them; all the rest is effeminate, brutal, and devilish; as it is written, "And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were the teeth of lions" (ver. 8), to shew their business was to devour souls under the lion of the bottomless pit, who is said to be going about "seeking whom he may devour," 1 Peter, v. 8. Their main armour, it seems, is an hardened conscience, which John calls a breastplate. "And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron" (ver. 9), which Paul calls a "conscience seared with a hot iron," 1 Tim. iv. 2. In short, the asp, by the false prophet, deals in three things: he scatters the sparks of spiritual wickedness, spreads his darkness to blind men's understandings, and so leads them on in sin to his own destructive residence; as it is written, "And out of their mouths issued fire, smoke, and brimstone," Rev. ix. 17.

I am now to treat of the second branch of this head, namely, that we may treat a false prophet with irony.

This was the manner in which grave Elijah treated the four hundred false prophets of Baal. He wanted them to prove the existence of their god, and the power of their faith, by an answer to their prayers; as it is written, "And it came to pass about noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud." The prophets wanted more fervour in their devotion, and a little more lip labour. "Cry aloud," saith he, "for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked," 1 Kings, xviii. 27.

In like manner did the Saviour treat the Jewish blind guides in his days, who were always cavilling at him, and opposing his ministry. He sent them to seek friendship and shelter in Mammon, the god of wealth; figuratively the devil, the god of this world. For they despised and rejected the Saviour, who came to reconcile God and man, and so to bring about a glorious friendship by his death. And, as they refused reconciliation by him, he sends them to seek it elsewhere. "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations," Luke, xvi. 9.

3dly, We may lay our hands on the hole of this asp, and defy his power.

Putting our hand on the cockatrice den, signifies, that we should bear a faithful witness against the deceitful heart of a false prophet; for all false doctrines spring out of the heart. "They prophesy unto you a false vision," Jer. xvi. 14. "They speak a vision of their own heart," Jer. xxiii. 10.

The heart of a Christian is the palace of the Holy Ghost; but the heart of a false prophet is the den of the cockatrice. The real Christian has the law of truth and the law of kindness on his tongue; but the false prophet hath the poison of asps under his lips; therefore we must put our hands on the den, that is, we must bear witness against them; as it is written, "If there be found among you, within any of your gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man

or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, and behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which hath committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or woman. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him, and afterwards the hands of all the people," Deut. xvii. 1-7.

Thus we are to lay our hands, and to bear witness, against any setter-up of new gods, and against any who try to eclipse the glory of the "Ancient of days;" as it is written, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thy own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers, thou shalt not consent unto him; nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him; neither shalt thou spare him; neither shalt thou conceal him: thy hand shall be first upon him, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage," Deut. xiii. 6, 8, 10. In short, we are to lay our hands, and to bear our testimony, against this asp, wherever he appears, whether it be in a *prelate* or in a *curate*; and that is as much as we are able to do.

It is not in our power to destroy this asp, or his works; that is the work of our great Lord and Master. Nor are we to venture at the hole of the asp in our own strength, or in our own name. Satan, that waged war in heaven, defies all human power. If we remember that awful battle, we shall not dare to engage without the grace of God; and, though we know that he will torment and deceive mankind when we have done our best, yet we are to lay our hands on him, and bear a faithful witness against him, and that is all; as it is written, "Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more," Job, xli. 8.

I come now to the fourth branch of this head of discourse, which is, that we may stop up the hole of the asp if we can.

The hole of the asp I have proved to be a false teacher's mouth; and it is from this hole that Satan has sent all the errors that are now in the world; all the poor sinners that have gone down to the grave with a tie in their hands, Isa. xlv. 20, have been destroyed from this hole of the asp; therefore we may warrantably stop the hole up if we can. When we hear men say they are perfect and clean from all indwelling sin, and that there is such a state of perfection to be attained in this life, we may tell them that they speak lies, Isa. lix. 3; "for, if we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar," 1 John, i. 10; "and, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John, i. 8. When we hear men open their mouths at this rate we must bring scripture proof, and stop up the hole. "But the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped," Psalm lxiii. 11.

When we hear preachers speaking against the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, and contending for their own legal obedience as a sufficient righteousness to justify them before God, we must not allow it, but exclaim against such impious boasting of their wretched merit; because the Saviour will not allow even his apostles, upon whom his grace was so abundant, to boast; no, not even of the fruits of their faith. "When ye have done all these things, say ye, we are unprofitable servants," Luke. xvii. 10. From hence we may conclude that all men, who boast of their merit, are under the law; and we must bring forth the law in its spiritual meaning, and shew its spiritual demands; as it is written, "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may' be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God," Rom. iii. 19.

Whenever, or wherever, this asp opens a hole, we must labour to stop it up; we must not be idle when the asp is busy; we shall often find "men of corrupt minds, creeping into houses, leading captive silly women;" telling them that religion lies in a plain cap, or in a long narrow bonnet, and delivering lectures against a snuff-box,

and nursing their pride by setting them up as class-leaders; instead of preaching up the sovereign grace and Spirit of God. Christ calls such preachers fly-catchers; "they strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." Many silly women are led away by these errors; "ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Tim. iii. 7.

The main drift of false teachers is to overthrow the faith of young beginners, setting them to despise orthodox preachers, and the glorious doctrine of election and predestination; and, when they are hardened in errors, they despise and ridicule these revealed truths of God. Therefore we are commanded "to hold fast the faithful word as we have been taught, that we may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers: for there are many unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision (that is, workmongers), whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not," Titus, i. 9–11.

It is true, the faithful servants of God may sometimes see their flocks scattered and corrupted by false teachers, and they may seem to thrive in their deceivings, inasmuch as the true prophets may be broken-hearted under and amazed at it, as you read in Jeremiah, chap. xxviii. Notwithstanding this, their devised fables shall not stand: nor shall they destroy the elect of God in the end, though they may deceive the reprobate and themselves; and this is often made manifest when their errors entangle them in the revealed wrath of God, until they break out into open rebellion against the light, and then they are left to stagger on in darkness, and grope like the blind for the wall, even while the Sun of Righteousness shines in his full strength. We may be sure of this, that God will save the poor in spirit from being destroyed by their mouth; as it is written, "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from

the hand of the mighty, so that the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth," Job, v. 12–16.

I come now, as was proposed, to speak to the last branch of this general head of discourse, namely, that we may set fire to the hole, and run safely away by the light of it.

The Spirit of God operates as a spirit of judgment, and as the spirit of burning, in the souls of the elect. He kindles the flame of love in the affections, and a holy zeal according to knowledge in the mind, and shines like a sun-beam in the understanding, by his burning and shining rays. It is the Holy Ghost that makes a minister a flame of fire. Heb. i, 7. Nor is this the blessed privilege of ministers only, but of the whole household of faith; for the Spirit of God is promised to all the chosen seed, Isa. lix. 22; a measure to each to profit withal We may hold forth God's flaming truth at the hole of the asp; we are not to spare the asp, let him appear where he may; if he suggest evil to Peter, we may say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." I know that an erroneous preacher and a hearer of errors are the hardest of any to work upon, especially when the cockatrice has kept possession of the impenitent heart so long, and bent their tongue like a bow to shoot lies, instead of being valiant for the truth, Jer. ix. 3. Yet some such as these have been brought to understand and to acknowledge the truth as it is in Jesus. "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine," Isa. xxix. 24.

When God's word comes with power to the sinner's heart, it soon demolishes that cockatrice den; and, if the spirit of burning operates, the asp is soon burnt out of his hole. God's word is sufficient to break the heart, and to burn out the asp. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. xxiii. 29. I have been an eye and an ear witness to several souls who formerly allowed the asp to carry on his business in their mouths, who have been brought, after all, to confess the real truth, and exult in it, under the sweet influences of sovereign grace. Oh, it is sweet to see the asp burnt out of his hole

by the glorious flame of electing and everlasting love. God has often condescended to own and bless the labours of his faithful servants even to do this. I have known several very stiff advocates for free-will and other popish trumpery, who have cavilled against election and imputed righteousness vehemently, that have been brought off from free-will by a storm from Sinai, and to embrace sovereign grace, and be thankful for it. And, when I have seen them shine in the truth, and burn in the love of it, I have ran joyfully away by the light of it.

The elect of God may, at their first setting off, and while under legal convictions, be tossed about with various errors; and the Arminian scheme is as well adapted (perfection excepted) to please those that are working for life as any scheme that ever the devil invented. But of this we may be assured, that the elect of God will never be finally deceived, nor shall the smoke of Satan ever extinguish the fire of truth. The word of God shall destroy all the doctrines of men, the maintainers of them, and the adherents to them, if grace prevent not; as it is written, "For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the Lord. They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us. And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them; thus shall it be done unto them. Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them," Jer. v. 11–14. We are commanded to contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints; and, if we do this, we must contend for the glory of the ever-blessed Trinity; for the glory of all the revealed perfections of the godhead, that their glory may not be eclipsed; we must contend for every essential truth of the bible, and for the Spirit's work on the souls of God's elect. This is the duty of every Christian: and, if any of our opposers be of the chosen seed of Israel, God will in his own time bring them out; but if they are of the house of Esau, the gospel will be a savour of death unto death to them, and in the end consume them; as it is written, "And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house

of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it," Obad. 18.

There are many deluded souls, that fight desperately against the truth, who have got the fire of God's wrath within them; and conscience fights as much against them as they fight against the truths of God. It is the duty of every Christian to contend for the truth; and we shall be sure to set fire to the hole one way or other; for, if the fire of eternal love never purifies them, the flames of wrath will surely torment them. The Saviour is both a *refiner's* fire, and a *consuming fire*—a propitious Saviour, and a dreadful Judge.

"The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp." When we find that there are no signs of reclaiming these enemies of truth, they being hardened against all reproof, we may turn the tables against them. "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Prov. xxix. 1. By turning the tables against them I mean, that, while they are raging against the decrees of God, we may prove to their faces that they are at the same time fulfilling them; yea, while such are kicking against election and predestination, they are all the while fulfilling the pre-appointments of God; as it is written, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builder disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation," 1 Pet. ii. 4-9.

But to whom is Christ a *stumbling-stone*? I answer, to *merit-mongers*. They want to climb to heaven without being brought in

debtors to grace. Jesus Christ resisteth them, agreeable to his word: "The Lord resisteth the proud," 1 Pet. v. 5.

Jesus Christ will allow a preacher to be a worker together with himself, in dispensing the word of his grace, because the feet of the preacher carry the message, and the preacher's tongue delivers it. "We then are workers together with him," 2 Cor. vi. 1. But the Arminian wants to be a co-partner with him in the work of justification. God says, No. Jesus shall magnify the law, and make it honourable, Isa. xlii. 21. "And by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," Isa. liii. 11. The Arminian wants to be a co-worker with the Holy Ghost in the work of sanctification. The Lord of Hosts says, No. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," Zech. iv. 6. The Arminian wants some ground to boast on, and to have the honour of coping the building with sinless perfection. The Lord God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ says, No. "He shall bring forth the head-stone with shoutings;" and sinners shall cry, "Grace, grace (not works), unto it," Zech. iv. 7. In short, they will not "enter by the door," and he will not let them "climb up any other way." They want to help him out in his work, that they may share in his glory; and he deems them "thieves and robbers;" and says, "He will not give his glory to another." This is the dreadful dispute that is going on between the Lord and them.

Thus Christ is an impediment in their way; they cannot submit to him, and he will not bow to them. His sovereignty is an impediment in the way of free-will; *particular* redemption lies in the way of natural affections; his imputed righteousness is an impediment in the way of human merit; and free grace is an impediment in the way of pride, because it cuts off boasting. Thus the Saviour becomes a stumbling-stone instead of a foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 11; and a rock of offence instead of a stone of help, 1 Sam. vii. 12. He is called a rock of offence because of his stability, it being impossible for those offended at him ever to move him. Thus Christ is a rock in the way of self-righteous ones; cavilling at him, as an impediment in their way, is called stumbling; and being offended at him is like seeking revenge on a rock that has thrown us down, by kicking at it; at

which labour we are sure to wound ourselves, but never to move or hurt the rock. But you will say, Is it not strange that people should oppose the glorious truths of God, that shine like a sun throughout the sacred scriptures? Not at all: they fight against sovereign love, because they know it never was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost; therefore they preach up a universal love; that, as they have no assurance of an interest in the former, they may include themselves in the latter, being a doctrine of their own. So, if imputed righteousness had ever been applied to them, they would have boasted of it, as all poor saved sinners have done who were found in it; but, as they are strangers to the enjoyment of this robe, they hold fast their own web: so, if the atonement of Christ had ever been applied to their consciences, they would contend for the redemption of Christ's sheep only, as all the faithful ministers of Christ have done; but, as conscience tells them this never was their happy case, they preach up universal redemption, or else they would exclude themselves. Hence it is that they strengthen one another's hands with their lies, and so keep matters together as well as they can: for, if they give up their untempered mortar, and conscience stands to it that they never have mixed real faith with the truth, Heb. iv. 2, they would throw down their own wall. However, God has promised to throw it down for them. "Thus will I accomplish my wrath upon the wall, and upon them that have daubed it with untempered mortar: and will say unto you, The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it," Ezek. xiii. 15.

Let them turn which way they will, they fulfil those very decrees they fight against. Are some offended at the sovereignty of Christ, and at his elect? and do they teach others to be offended at them? They fulfil the decree—"It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh," Matt. xviii. 7. Do they stumble and fall? They fulfil the decree—"And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken," Isaiah, viii. 14, 15. Do they make sport of the truth, and wanton with the grace of God to their own condemnation? They fulfil the decree—"For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation," Jude, ver. 4. Do they rage and

storm as soon as they hear a preacher advance the truth? They fulfil the decree—"From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass over; by day and by night; and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report," Isa. xxviii. 19. Do they plunge farther and farther into errors, notwithstanding all that is said to reclaim them? They fulfil the decree—"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," 2 Tim. iii. 13. And, when they cry out, "I will never believe such doctrines," they fulfil the decree—"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you," Acts, xiii. 41.

In short, God's word shall be fulfilled even by the wicked as well as by the just. Israel must abide in Egypt till the iniquity of the Amorites was full, Gen. xv. 16. Christ sent apostles and wise men to be persecuted by the wicked, that they might fill up the measure of their fathers, Matt. xxiii. 32–35. And, if men receive not the truth in the love of it, God has promised to send strong delusions, that they shall believe a lie, 2 Thess. ii. 11. If men turn to wicked ways, "the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity," Psalm cxxv. 5. And, if a man fall by his lies a victim to wrath, "it is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God," Job, xx. 19. And, if hell is the eternal habitation of the deceiver, it was anciently built for him; for "Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared," as well as for the subject, Isa. xxx. 33.

Men may contradict the decrees of God, and fight against them: but they shall never overthrow them nor run from them.

The destiny of the sinner as well as the saint is fixed; Tophet is ordained of old, as well as mount Zion. God made all things for his own glory, and God's end will be answered whether men are saved or lost. "He made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," Prov. xvi. 4. There is therefore a decreed vengeance for the wicked, as well as a decreed glory for the righteous; and I

AN INNOCENT GAME FOR BABES IN GRACE

believe God's fixed gulfs and firm decrees will never be moved, neither by men nor devils. "He worketh all things by the counsel of his own will;" and therefore his *wills* and *shalls* must abide for ever.

I add no more.

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Chapter Six

THE BROKEN CISTERN
& THE SPRINGING WELL

THE BROKEN CISTERN
&
THE SPRINGING WELL

OR,

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
HEAD NOTIONS, AND
HEART RELIGION; VAIN
JANGLING, AND
SOUND DOCTRINE.

ADDRESSED TO THE
REV. JOHN RYLAND, SEN. AT
ENFIELD.

"...Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" John 9:35

PREFACE
TO THE REV. JOHN RYLAND, SEN.

REVEREND SIR,

THE reason of my addressing this to you is that, some time ago, you said, (as I was informed) in a barber's shop, "That you had prepared a Pill for William Huntington; and, if that did not do, you would give him a Bolus." Soon after which, your little Body of Divinity appeared, which I took to be the Pill; and, after that, Antinomianism Unmasked fell into my hands, which I took to be the threatened Bolus. However, I could not help smiling when I saw your Maid's name affixed to it—I thought that that was done in order to try my sagacity, or the strength of my eye-sight. I perceived that there was a woman's name affixed to it, and a man's voice speaking in it. I said, Come near to me, and let me handle thee, and see whose very child thou art: thou art called the handy works of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. However, the Maid affirms that, by a miraculous conception, she compassed this production without the help of man; whereas, if family likenesses express or mean any thing, the first nine or ten pages will speak for themselves. Many of the features of this child are Mr. Ryland's own: he is known whether he appears in a Magazine or in this piece. I think I may warrantably say of these pages, as we commonly say of a long of feather-edge boards, that it is the work of two; or of a pair of sawyers, one on the top, and the other in the pit. The Maid, by name, is the top woman; but Mr. Ryland worked under ground. There was a conjunction of heads in the production of this pamphlet. This discovers itself in the seventh page, where the pronoun plural appears—We have taken a short but comprehensive view of it, but who hath believed the report? It might have been rendered, our report. Now, though I am no grammarian, yet I know that two are more than one, and that We

implies a plurality. But it seems that Mr. Ryland refuses to father this little one, lest it should be overlaid, or found dead: but the Maid lays claim to the whole of it, having no doubt that it is a living child. But I say, Divide it, seeing the girl has confessed to Mr. K—g, that it contains Mr. Ryland's sentiments. You should be a little more private, reverend Sir, in your matters, and not let your secret things, get abroad, as they do. Your threatening me in the barber's shop; the former convention and council against me, when the c—'s head fell in the ashes; the good works that appeared in your servant, and another, when the Seventeenth S—b of Candour went off in a fortnight at Islington; your refusing to see any body but your Maid when this chick was hatching from the egg; the printer's boy bringing a proof to you at a friend's house, where you did not expect him; your acknowledging to Mrs. Terry, that you had a hand in the first squib that your Maid discharged me, besides your own mode of writing appearing in it—serve to confirm me in my opinion of it's having been a joint work.

The above hints I have dropped [a hint to the wise is enough] only so my friends know that I was privy to many of their secret councils—Wist ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

I suppose your servant thinks me not so competent a judge of physiognomy as herself, because the answer to the daughter's defence was addressed to the father; but she seems to wonder that the answer to the Maid's Mask should be addressed to the Master. However, this is agreeable to the only rule of life—We are to do as we would be done by, for this is the law and the prophets—,and this method I have adopted, and am determined to pursue it, until Mr. Ryland's servant can find some other post, or pillar, (besides me) for the purpose of beating her mats and her duster.

My doctrine, in this piece, is jumbled in as a principal ingredient of a most dreadful composition; and, like the poor man that fell among thieves, I am ranked with a desperate gang. The c—'s h—d that Maria tumbled into the ashes, did not cut a worse figure before Mr. Ryland than I do in this black company. However, I will pick

my own precious doctrine from this Bolus; and, as the good Samaritan has set me on his own beast, I hope to ride away from this gang. As to James Rely, I know nothing of him; I never read any thing of his. I got not my doctrine from man; it is not after man. Nor will I defend any Antinomian tenets but those that are found in the everlasting Gospel; nor vindicate any sort of Antinomians but those, and those only, who know the plague of their own heart, and the healing balm of Christ's blood; who are born again of the Spirit of God, united to Jesus, and who live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and serve God in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. This sort of Antinomians I dearly love; and God loves them, because they love Jesus; and it is in and by such that God ever was, and ever will be, glorified.

I do believe in my heart, friend Ryland, that my most gracious God has given the Coalheaver a name and a place among these blessed ones; therefore do not rank me among the chimney-sweepers; for I am no friend to hypocrites, nor patron of the workers of darkness. As the doctrine that I preach is my own, what God himself revealed to my heart at first, and which I have learnt since out of no book but the Bible; I should like to dispute this point with Mr. Ryland himself, and that by the scriptures of truth, and let the children of God at large judge of our doctrine. I consider your age; and will, God enabling me, make use of all the Candour that I am master of, so as not to obscure the rays, nor blunt the force, of truth. I think I can do this with a good conscience, as it is in defence of my own testimony, and being commanded, contend earnestly for the faith, and to preach the Gospel; while your contention is for the Law.

In my answer to this, I shall make my remarks chiefly on those passages that are levelled at me, and which contradict the doctrine that I have learnt; and submit them to your judgment, and expect your reply. But, if you set your Maid to work, you must expect, and shall have, the answer addressed to yourself. God says, The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets, but not to maid servants.

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My business is, and shall be, with the Master, not with the Maid.—If Mr. Lovegrove has nothing to do with his money but to employ it in this way, he had better distribute it to the poor. A hint is enough. I shall add no more by way of preface, but conclude,

Reverend Sir,
Your ready and willing Antagonist,
In Zion's Controversy,

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON.

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AND THE
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QUOTATION.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?—MATT. xxii. 42.

Of all the questions which it is possible to propose to mankind, this is one of the most important: upon the right knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ depends the happiness and salvation of men. This is life eternal, to Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent, John xvii. 3. If our acquaintance with polite literature and the sciences is deficient, our loss will be trivial. If we are mistaken, or even deceived, in such matters, the mistake or deception will not be attended with much danger or damage; but a deficiency, a mistake, a deception, in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, cannot but be accompanied by the most fatal consequences. Eternity hangs upon it.

Ans. Dost thou believe on the Son of God?—is a greater question than that. For whatever thoughts, knowledge, or notions, men may get in their heads, respecting the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; daily experience shews that such knowledge is no defence against sin, nor helmet against errors—it is nothing but a broken Cistern. While the strong man, armed, keeps possession of the palace, he cares not for head notions, however pure: for, as soon as he can push such a sinner into open profession, and into a pulpit, and establish him in the esteem of simple souls, and in the hearts of hypocrites; he will be sure to drive him to make shipwreck of all his sentiments, or teach him to improve them to the advancement of his own infernal interest. I suppose we have not a reviser nor propagator of heresy, nor one preacher of lies, in the whole nation, but who first began his profession and ministry with such a dry, empty stock of speculative knowledge, as this book contains.

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Was every unregenerate person in the nation to read this pamphlet till he acquired all the knowledge that it treats of, he would still be without God, and having no hope in the world. An experimental, spiritual, and heart-felt knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, must be had, before eternal life can be known, felt or enjoyed. Head-knowledge is attended with pride, and exposes a man to the condemnation of the devil; while heart-felt knowledge is attended with life eternal. You begin your treatise of Knowledge at the wrong end. The sinner does not learn his first lesson of religion in the Gospel, but in the Law. He does not begin with Jesus Christ, but with the Father: Every one that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. The sinner will never hunger nor thirst after righteousness till the sentence of death gives him an appetite.

God, who is a consuming fire, comes near to the elect sinner to judgment, and appears in his fiery law. Then he calls upon God in trouble, and is delivered; but he is sure to get his answer in the secret place of thunder, Psa. lxxi. 7. Here the poor sinner gets his first impressions of the tremendous attributes of God, which sink too deep for time or eternity ever to deface. In the glass of the Law the holiness of God appears; and in this astonishing vision the dreadful leprosy is discovered from head to foot, both within and without. This view stirs up his guilt and filth from the bottom of the heart, while the raging infection appears a loathsome disease. All external varnish, dead works, dry formality, good name, false confidences, lying refuges, and legal hopes, all find their funeral together, or fly away like chaff from the threshing-floor, or as smoke of the chimney; so that no place is found for them. It was this view, and the seraphic cry of "Holy! Holy! Holy!" that made the prophet Isaiah cover his lips, and cry, "Unclean! unclean!"

At the sight of Divine holiness in the Law, sin revives, and Justice applies the sentence, nor has the sinner one plea to urge why it should not be speedily executed: his mouth is stopped, and he is become guilty before God. Such a sinner sees and feels that God is strictly just: here all his former notions, of a God all mercy, forsake him and flee.

The truth of God is no less terrible to the sinner than his justice. He sees that God has spoken and revealed his wrath against sin, and pronounced his curse upon every transgressor; and has declared that he will not clear the guilty. And true to his own honour, and to the word that is gone out of his lips, he must be. Hence the poor sinner sees no way of escape: he makes confession; he cries for mercy; he makes use of every argument he is master of; he turns his feet to the testimony, and makes haste, and delays not, to keep the commandment; he makes the Law his only rule of life, walk, and conduct; and, in good earnest, sets about the performance of every duty that appears right to him, in hope of inclining his Maker to be propitious. But here the immutability of God appears: he finds that God is of one mind, and none can turn him; and what his soul desireth, that he doth. This destroys his former notion of God's being mutable, and altogether such an one as himself. He is obliged to acknowledge that with God is terrible majesty; and, as touching the Almighty, and his ways, he cannot find him out.

A sinner thus arraigned, and impressed with the holiness, justice, truth and immutability of God; is at his wit's end. He is like a wild bull in a net, full of the fury and the rebukes of Maker. Every wound slightly healed is laid open: every avenue, or false retreat, cuts off righteousness and holiness, by the Law, are altogether despaired of; and the way to heaven by works, whether in whole or in part, for ever closed.

Thus far the sinner learns, in the Law, to know the only true God; and this lesson, prepares him for the new, living, and consecrate Way, through the Vail. And thus to the Law, is using it lawfully: for it is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners: For we know, says Paul, that whatsoever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God. Pointing sinners to a Physician, who never-felt their sickness, and espousing them to Christ before their first husband be dead, is leading them into adultery. A sinner who

thus learns of the Father cometh unto Christ to whom none can come except the Father draw them.

The sinner's face is no sooner turned Zionward, than the storm appears at his back; which is sweetly abated by a still voice behind him, which intimates that he is now in the way. Dying Love, by the Spirit, echoes from the cross to his conscience; which is answered again by the voice of Faith, but so unintelligibly that the sinner can hardly understand it, though the soul feel the effects of it. At this the heart begins to lose its native hardness, and gradually opens and enlarges; while every faculty of the soul is upon the watch, and every thought of the heart intent upon the strange emotion; until the blessed Spirit of God conveys a divine unction to the understanding, and proposes a crucified Saviour to the sinner, as the only object of hope, and testifies of him as such. With a longing eye the poor sinner looks, and with a trembling heart, and a wavering faith, longs, and begs of God to bring him near, and reveal his Christ in him. As the eye of a man upon the hand of his master, and as the eye of a maid on the hand of her mistress, so the sinner's eye waits upon God until he hath mercy upon him.

His face being Zion-ward, Zion-ward he looks; for out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines: and into the sinner's heart he shines to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And in this glorious ray the Saviour descends to the sinner's heart, and God reveals his Son in him. When the voice of atoning Blood at once drowns all the thundering sentences of Sinai, and silences every accusation, in that tremendous court of judgment, the sinner feels himself with God at the Mercy-seat, where the righteous [in Christ] may dispute with him, and so be delivered for ever from their Judge, (Job xxiii. 6, 7) unless he permits the bond children to bring him again into bondage.

The sinner found the Righteousness and Truth of God in the Law, which opened his ear to discipline; and now, in Christ, he finds Mercy and Peace in harmony with Truth and Righteousness; where Mercy and Truth met, there God reconciled, and the true penitent

meet; and where righteousness and Peace kissed each other, there the Father kisses the Prodigal, and the Prodigal kisses the King of Peace.

This is the man that hath escaped the mount that might not be touched, and that burneth with fire; and is gone from blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and from the sound of a trumpet, and from the voice of words; and is come to Mount Zion, where the Saviour reigns—and unto the city of the living God, which he has chosen, founded, and built, and where he dwells; even to the heavenly Jerusalem; the married wife, the free woman, and the mother of every free-born son—and to an innumerable company of angels, who were elected by the Father confirmed in their standing by the Saviour, and who are the retinue of the Lord, ministering spirits to the heirs of promise, and the fellow-servants of the saints—and to the general assembly, both of Jews and Gentiles and to the church of the first-born, which the Elder Brother bought with his blood, arrays in his righteousness, and sanctifies by his blood and Spirit; and which consists of first-born sons, heirs of promise, and of the grace of life whose names are written in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life, being ordained to eternal life, or predestinated both to grace and glory—and to God, the Judge of all, as reconciled in Christ, and who is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus—and to the spirits of just men made perfect, under the influence of the same Spirit of promise, and in union with the same Covenant Head—and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, who purges the sins of his people, who hath made peace by the blood of his cross, and who proclaims it, and maintains it in all his realm—whose kingdom is not of this world—and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks pardon, peace, reconciliation, friendship with God, and access to him.—This, this, is the man, that spiritually, unctuously, and experimentally, knows the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, whom to know is eternal life. And such an one has life hid with Christ in God; he has life in his Covenant head; he has laid hold on eternal life by faith; he has life in the promise, and life and immortality are brought to light in his soul; he is alive, and lives by

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the faith of the Son of God; and has a lively hope, sure and stedfast, and which anchors within the vail.

A collection of notions in the head is like a broken cistern that can hold no water; but such a savoury knowledge of Christ, by the Spirit in the heart, as this, is a springing well; and such an one shall grow in grace, and in knowledge too. This spring works up, and carries off the unsavoury lees of the old cask, and the lurking leaven of self righteousness, legal pride, and hypocrisy; together with the loathsome sediment of self-confidence and self-seeking; and as it purifies the heart, so it purifies the speech. God turns to his people a pure language, that they may call upon his name and serve him with one consent. Thus counsel in the heart, not in the head, is as deep waters, and the words of wisdom, as a flowing brook. This blessed spring rising up within purifies and renews the spirit of the mind, and carries it up to heavenly things, where it enjoys both life and peace, and is entertained with fresh discoveries of covenant love, and solaced with refreshings from the presence of the Lord. This is a knowledge, Sir, which no hypocrite could ever attain, and which false apostates never knew.

Head notions are like a standing pool in the midst of summer, neither sweet nor clear; and therefore, require a good deal of learning, flowery rhetoric, empty oratory, pompous speech, swelling words, and cunning craftiness, in order to decorate, garnish, and set them off: but these things do not feed the poor hungry soul. This book having treated of the knowledge of Christ, but not described any part of it, it then proceeds to mention the doctrine of the Trinity, and the characters, &c, of the Lord Jesus, by collecting a number of Scripture texts, which are better read in the Bible than in this book, for here is nothing described nor explained in it.

All the head notions of the glorious Trinity that men can attain to will never keep Satan out of the heart, nor hold the soul in a storm. The real Christian has got the work of a Trinity of Persons on his own soul. He that loves, dwells in God, and God in him: such an

one hath fellowship with the Father; and he that enjoys pardon, rest, and solid peace, in his Saviour, by virtue of heart-felt union with him, has fellowship with the Son, and has fellowship with the Spirit; who communicates knowledge, comfort, and joy, to him; who maintains his standing in faith, his soul in hope, and his hope in expectation of future glory; who helps his infirmities in prayer, strengthens him with might in his weakness, bears testimony to his adoption, seals him with a comfortable assurance, and operates upon him as an earnest of the future inheritance. He is a witness and proof of his eternal election, and a pledge of eternal glory: he reveals the secret of heaven to him, and leads him into a state of friendship and familiarity with God; he makes known to his soul the good-will of God in Christ Jesus, and makes him obedient thereto by faith; enables him to stand fast therein, and that with a holy boldness, in unfeigned faith, in unpresuming confidence and in undissembled love; which no Arian, no Bond-child, no Socinian, no Sabellian, no Antinomian, no Arminian, nor any other species of hypocrites, ever experienced, felt, or enjoyed.

This doctrine, Sir, confounds the wise, and puzzles the prudent: it makes devils roar, and impostors rage; it drives the Pharisee from his sandy foundation, the hypocrite from his false hope, and the vessel of wrath from his anchorage; it discovers the rottenness of hypocrites in Zion, and makes diviners mad; it makes a novice in the pulpit look like an actor on the stage, and the writings of graceless souls like old Mother Shipton's Prophecy.

Under this divine teaching, the productions of carnal men are all thrown to the bats: a dry system in the brain appears a broken wheel at the cistern, a noisy and empty profession, a rattle for prating fools; and all the pleasures, honours, and riches, of this world, like the drop of a bucket, or the dust of a balance.

Quot. The Scriptures testify of the Lord Jesus that he is a Redeemer.

Ans. Notions of Redemption in the head will not do, reverend Sir; we must enforce the experience of it. The elect sinner is led to the

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Fountain open; his conscience is purged from guilt and dead works by an application of the blood of sprinkling; he is redeemed from the bondage of the law, from a vain conversation, and from among men. No man can sing of redemption without an application: no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from among men. If's and But's, and We trust, and I think, will not answer the purpose here: head notions will not do to join in this chorus; faith in the heart is required. He hath redeemed us out of every nation, tongue, and people; and made us kings and priests unto God; and we shall reign on the earth.

Quot. The Scriptures also speak of the Lord Jesus under the dignified character of a King, &c.

Ans. When the Saviour comes to manifest himself to the hearts of his own elect, he comes in his all-conquering chariot: he appears with his sword upon his thigh, and no less than the Most Mighty in his own glory and majesty. This the sinner is soon convinced of, when the point of his sword reaches the caul of his heart, and the arrows of his quiver stick fast in his conscience, whereby the people fall under him, and put their mouths in the dust, to obtain a hope in his mercy. A sinner, thus subdued by Omnipotence, stumbles not at the Saviour's Godhead; nor does he want any man to teach him that Jesus is a King. The King of Zion makes a triumphant entrance into the heart, binds the strong man, disarms the devil of his infernal panoply, and casts him both from his fort-royal and palace. The Spirit of faith operates and gives the Saviour a dwelling within, while the manifestations of dying love raise him to supremacy in the affections. When every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, his righteous sceptre swayed in the soul, and peace is proclaimed the principality of conscience; when the New Covenant, or the laws of faith, truth, and the perfect law of liberty, are by God the Holy Ghost written on the fleshly tables of the heart, this is the man that is a loyal subject of Zion's King: the kingdom of God is within him, he is under the reign of grace, and is well acquainted with his rightful Sovereign. All short of this is nothing

but word: this stands in power. The other is head notions: this is heart religion, and can never be rooted up or destroyed.

Quot. Procuring redemption and remission of sins through the effusion of his blood, offering himself up a sacrifice to God, to make reconciliation, and purchase an atonement.

Ans. I believe the elect were redeemed by the blood of Christ; that an atonement was made by his sacrifice alone; that peace was made by the blood of his cross; that we are pardoned, reconciled, and made nigh, by the same; and that the church was bought with that price: but as to a purchased atonement, the Bible knows nothing about.

Who this stinking Antinomian is—who needs no inward holiness; nor Christ in his heart, the hope of glory; nor fruits of the Spirit; and whose faith takes in all the world, and who denies that there is any elect at all;—I know not. These wretches are no relations of mine I will scrape no acquaintance, I will claim no kindred, with sinners and hypocrites in Zion; nor with them that hold the truth in unrighteousness, nor with them who contend for the law as the only rule of life (which requires love to God and the neighbour) and they pretend to a great measure of both, and appear in friendship; give you the right-hand of fellowship, bless your labours, declare publicly their great love and high opinion of you, as a lover of the Lord Jesus; and, at the same time, are working under ground with all manner of guile, deceit, hypocrisy, and deceivableness of righteousness, on purpose to blow up both your reputation and usefulness. Friend Conscience, make thy application! This is no part of my religion: I am no friend to bush-fighting, shooting in secret; I love plain dealing. God dealt plainly with me; and in my office he makes me deal plainly with others. Open rebuke is better than secret love: then how much better than secret guile, which is so contemptible that a person accused of it is rendered an unfit member of a society of pick-pockets, and condemned as a traitor by a gang of thieves! How wrong soever the Antinomian may be, this book is not likely to set him right.

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Quot. He denies vital experimental, personal union, wrought in the soul by faith.

Ans. This any man may do, and be found in the truth too. If faith can work a vital, experimental, personal union, in the soul, one would think that faith itself must be a divine person, because it is the efficient or working agent of vital union, which is what none but God can work. The bond of union is God's everlasting love to us in Christ Jesus; and it is the Giver of Christ, and of faith too, and only Him, that can work this union in us. As it is written—And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live, Deut. xxx. 6. At the time of this circumcision, love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. This is bringing the sinner sensibly into the bond of the Covenant; which bond is the bond of eternal union with the Covenant Head: for it is under the influence of Divine Love that the believer is joined to the Lord, and made one Spirit with him. The bond of all perfectness is not our faith in God, but God's eternal love to us, The former is not the efficient of the latter, but the former is the effect of the latter, Love and faith are both fruits of the Spirit; but, as charity is greater than either faith or hope, it is not likely the lesser should work the greater. Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for; but full possession wants no evidence, and things seen and enjoyed need no hope. The bond of union will be the sweetest, and in full perfection, when these cease: for faith works by love, and the exercise of it works or produces patience; but it never works union. Mr. Ryland must know better than this.

Quot. The Lord Jesus Christ is made of God sanctification to his people, as he is their great Head of Influence; who imparts to every member of his mystical body, by virtue of his kingly office, his holy Spirit, to sanctify and make them holy in their own proper persons.

Ans. Jesus Christ is made sanctification to his people in his priestly office. He assumed our nature, he bore our names; and, by his offering, made an atonement for us as a Priest. He bore our sins, he removed our sins, he blotted out our sins, he purged our sins, and that in his priestly office, to which the making atonement belonged. Christ is made sanctification to us, by executing his Father's will in the offering up of himself as a sacrifice: By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Wherefore Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. If all this be true, then Christ is, in his priestly office, by virtue of his one offering, the sanctification of his people, and that by the will of God: and if he hath, by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified; it must follow that, in his priestly office, he is the perfect sanctification of his people; and they were made nigh by the blood of Christ, before they were brought nigh by effectual calling. This work was finished upon the cross; and the believer is complete in Him that finished it, and without fault before the Throne: on which account, he is said to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, I Cor. i. 2.

Hence it appears that, if not by imputation he is made sanctification, by the will and purpose of God he is; who, in the bond of an everlasting Covenant, united us together and made us one, as surety and debtor are one. Christ was made a curse; but we were blessed in him; he was held by the hand of justice, but we were let go free; the chastisement fell on him, and peace fell to us; he was striped, and we were healed; our old man was crucified with him, and we were viewed new creatures in him; he died, but we lived; he was the sacrifice, and the atonement was ours. Thus, by the will and purpose of God, he was made sanctification; and, by his one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. But, as to eternal sanctification, it is the work of the Third Person in the Trinity: as it is written, That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, Rom. xv. 16.

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Quot. By his justifying righteousness he saves them from the guilt and condemnation of sin—which are the two first propositions I laid down—and this relates to his priestly office, and is that which gives them a title to heaven.

Ans. Why is the justifying robe of righteousness, which the Saviour wrought out, confined to his priestly office? A Priest under the Law was not bound by his office to clothe the tribes of Israel, nor to pay their debts: it was wrought out by Christ in his office as Surety, who undertook to pay the debt of perfect obedience to the Law; and the imputation of it to the debtor is the sovereign work of the Great Creditor, who took the Surety from prison and from judgment, when the total sum to precept and penalty was paid. And to us it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. By which sovereign act of Divine clemency, displayed by imputation, the debtor is not only discharged; but, by virtue of this righteousness on him, and the Spirit of Promise given to him, the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in him, while he walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Quot. She shall not only be clear as the sun in her justification, but she shall also be fair as the moon in her sanctification.

Ans. The Church has been brought from under the moon-light dispensation ever since the Sun of Righteousness rose from the dead, and began to shine out of Zion, the Perfection of Beauty. The Gospel Church is represented as having the Moon under her feet, which is a very improper place for her sanctification; for, surely, her inward glory is not to be trampled upon.

Quot. This faith unites the soul to the Lord Jesus Christ; and, the moment the believer is made partaker of it, he becomes one Spirit with the Lord.

Ans. In a late Quotation, faith was said to work a vital union but, in this place, faith has produced itself to be the uniting bond and a

very weak one at best, and will last no longer than death. The saints die in faith; but we hear nothing of this worker of union, nor of this uniting bond, nor of any ties, or feats of faith, beyond the grave.

Quot. This faith makes Christ precious; it purifies his heart, and constrains him to hate sin, because of its deformity; because it is Christ's enemy, and crucified him; and because Christ abhors it, and a Triune God abhors it. It constrains him to love holiness for its own beauty and excellence.

Ans. For my part, I believe that, and that only, which constrains man to hate sin, is the love of the Almighty to him; which, and only which, can produce a godly sorrow for sin, and a hatred to it.— When I was on the brink of black despair under the Law, I had a clear view and a strong faith in the holiness, justice, and beauty of God. The excellence of these, however, did not attract my love, but drove me to desperation and madness. I pitied myself, loved sin in my heart, and wished that there were no God at all. But, when pardoning Love operated upon my grief and sorrow, and produced repentance never to be repented of, then I loved the Lord with all my heart and soul; not because he was holy and beautiful, but because of his goodness, loving-kindness, tender mercy, pity, and compassion, to such a cursed wretch as I was. The Apostles loved God because he first loved them; Mary loved much because she had much forgiven; and the Psalmist loved the Lord because he had heard the voice of his weeping, and had forgiven the iniquity of his sin. If persons were to publish a thousand volumes of such head notions as these, heart religion would ever contradict them all. It is not enough for authors to know the scriptures, they must know the power of God also.

Quot. Faith gives the soul victory over sin, and Satan, and the world.

Ans. If Faith can do this, I should have no objection to fall down and worship it. But I believe that Christ overcame the world, and bids me be of good cheer on that account; and the same Conqueror must give me power to tread on serpents, scorpions, and all the

power of the enemy, or else they would soon be too much for me. If ever I am made more than a conqueror, it must be through him that hath loved me. My faith is so far from giving me this victory, that I am obliged to employ faith in every time of trouble; to go with messages, with petition after petition, till the Lord's strength, in answer to Faith's prayer, be made perfect in my weakness. Instead of Faith's giving this victory, the believer is obliged to lay hold of Christ's strength, in order to keep his faith from sinking. I know the Apostle says, that this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith; and that faith is a prevailing Grace. But the Object of faith, and the system of faith, are chiefly intended in that passage, the Object of faith, because he has already obtained the victory, and led captivity captive— the system of faith, because eternal victory is promised and given in that system. They that overcome, do it by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony. By the former, it is obtained for us; in the latter, it is promised to us.

Quot. In this way the Lord Jesus Christ sanctifies his people, and actually saves them from the love and power of sin.

Ans. I am glad to hear that there are professors in the Church who have pressed forward, and are got so nigh to perfection; and I believe it is true with respect to the inner man. But, for my own part, I will openly confess that although I can find in myself a principle that opposes, resists, and at times, strongly and sensibly detests and hates all sin, and I loathe myself on the account even of the workings of it; yet I find that, with my flesh I not only love, but in many things serve the law of sin; which the contrary principle neither roots up, destroys, nor perfectly keeps under. I believe that sin shall never be my ruin; and that the sovereign sway, or reigning power of sin, is destroyed in my soul; and that the seed of God, or the new creature produced by a spiritual birth in me, will never love sin: yet the life and power that I feel in the perpetual strugglings of sin are sufficient to lay all my honour in the dust; and to send me, with humble confession, confusion of face, and contrition of heart, to God, in secret prayer, from year's end to year's end. And there are many sins in the world which, in an unguarded hour, and in an

insensible frame, are presented to my foolish heart a sweet morsel—and, perhaps, if all was known, the compilers of this book can describe no more experience of the protecting power of God, no more trophies of abstaining from sin, or victory over it, nor any more ocular demonstrations of an aversion to it, than William Huntington.

Quot. Holiness of heart and life is indispensably necessary to enable the believer to maintain communion and fellowship, with God.

Ans. But the great question is, Where this holiness of heart and life is to be had, in order to maintain this fellowship? For my part, I find no other way of obtaining holiness, either in heart or life, but by enjoying union and communion with Christ. So that holiness is the effect of union, according to my feelings; and which I find no other way of keeping up but by fervent prayer in private, humble confession, reading, meditating, and diligence in the use of means. Pointing to holiness in heart and life, in order to maintain communion and fellowship, is always the method of those who deal in the letter; but those who are acquainted with Jesus by the Spirit, and who know the Spirit's work, have not so learned Christ—they tell the believer to hold fast the Head, and that he can do nothing without him—and to abide in the Vine is the only way: to bring forth much fruit.

This book treats largely about the words Sanctification and Holiness—but it is all forced: there is no one part of it that flows from a savoury, unctuous experience in the heart; nor yet from the power, influence, or enjoyment, of the Spirit upon the soul. The whole of it is extorted, pressed, and squeezed, from the letter of Scripture; moulded together by the dint of human wisdom; and unnaturally decorated with a little fulsome, flowery rhetoric, reflected from the natural ingenuity of others. I am not alone in my judgment; Conscience, when this book was written, bore the same honest testimony. Counsel in the heart is as deep waters, and the words of Wisdom a flowing brook—but this Treatise came not from the Spring, but from the press.

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Quot. Sanctification, then, it appears from the word of God, is a personal thing, wrought upon the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Ans. That which made Canaan the Holy Land, Jerusalem the Holy City, the Temple the Holy Place, and Tabor the Holy Mount, was the presence and appearance of the Holy One there; and that which makes a man an holy man is the indwelling and perpetual abiding of the Holy Ghost in him. He is the Spirit of Power in the will; the Spirit of Love in the affections; the Spirit of Revelation in the mind; the Spirit of Illumination in the understanding; the Spirit of Faith in the heart; the Spirit of Judgment to them that sit in judgment, and of Strength to them that turn the battle to the gate; and is an infallible witness in the conscience. He creates the fruit of the lip, is a watch before the mouth, and gives motion to the tongue. He produces a filial fear in the heart, and sets the Object of fear before the eyes. He bars both heart and ears against the pretensions of deceivers, and attends the sound with joy to the heart when a child of Wisdom bears his testimony. He gives both inclination and motion to the whole man; actuates the hands to honest labour, and shakes them from dishonest gain. He teaches the eye to watch the goodness of God that passes before the saint, and sweetly constrains him to pursue the leadings of Providence, and the footsteps of Faith. He is a free Spirit among the free-born sons of Zion, a Spirit of unity to all that are within the bonds of the Covenant, and makes the heart of a believer leap for joy at the rapturous salutation of a heaven-born soul. The elect, as considered in Christ, were sanctified from eternity in the purpose of God; and their sanctification was held forth in the promise of God; and in their Covenant Head they were sanctified, when he offered up himself; and by the word of truth, when applied to the heart, for they are clean through the word spoken to them; and they are sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, as above described. But, as to Sanctification which is called a personal thing, wrought upon the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, I know nothing of, nor this Book neither—yet I declare, before God, that notwithstanding all the calumny, reproach, hard names, and bad spirit, with which I am loaded and charged, I would not exchange what Christ has done for my soul,

and by the Spirit wrought in me, and done by me, for all the sanctification of this book; nor for all the personal holiness, fruitfulness, and good works, of five hundred such Authors, put them all together.

Quot. From these two jarring principles, so opposite to each other, proceeds a continual warfare. Sometimes Divine Grace treads Indwelling sin under its feet, and then the Christian is holy, humble, and happy in his God. At other times, Sin rouses up all its powers, attempts to shake off the yoke, and even prevails so far as to take the new man captive; and then the Christian groans, being burdened. Page 31.

Ans. If this be true, the Christian may well groan. And how can the believer himself be really delivered from the love and dominion of all sin (according to a former quotation), if the seed of God, the production of the Holy Ghost, the new man of grace, falls under the prevailing power of sin, and is taken captive? Sin is Satan's ally, but the new man is in close alliance with the Spirit of God. The strong man armed must, therefore, overcome Him that is stronger than he, and regain his lost possession, before this new man, this principle of grace, which is to reign through righteousness, can be conquered, by the prevailing power of sin, so as to be taken captive. The distinction here between the believer, and the seed of God in him, is this: the believer is delivered from the power of sin, but grace is taken captive by sin. To speak without irony, and without lightness, I do believe in my conscience, that persons who learn notion and a wild cant, from the letter of the Scriptures, and from the people of God; and who darken and confound everything they learn, being ignorant, and destitute of the power of God; and who get into a profession of religion, and publish such strange gibberish as this, and blend the sacred names of Sanctification and the Holy Ghost with their own subtle inventions—are guilty of spiritual wickedness; and their sin, in the great day, will be found to be more dreadful than that of the openly profane cursers and swearers, who never once troubled themselves or interfered with religion. And sure I am that the aims and ends of such people can be nothing but seeking honour from the blind and ignorant, and a livelihood in

idleness; to perplex and puzzle seeking sinners, and to oppose and blacken those whom God has sent to lead them.

Quot. The next thing I mean to consider is that grand Antinomian tenet, that the Moral Law has ceased to be the rule of a believer's conduct, as much as it has ceased to be a covenant of works.

Ans. My reader will observe here that the only rule of life is now termed the rule of conduct. Pray, does the Author, or do the Authors of this book, make the Moral Law the rule of their conduct? Do they labour six days, and do all they have to do? Do they keep holy every Saturday: not doing their own works, nor finding their own pleasure, nor speaking their own words, on that day? Do they teach them diligently? Do they talk about this law when they sit in their house, when they walk by the way, when they sit down, and when they rise up? Do they bind them for a sign upon their hands, and wear them as frontlets between their eyes? Do they write them upon the posts of their house, and upon their gates? Deut. vi. Do you love God whom you have not seen, when you knowingly endeavour to injure his children (in his own work) whom you have seen? Or, is loving in word, instead of deed, the love that the Law requires? Do you not take the name of God in vain, when you pretend to the operations of the Holy Ghost, and tell us that a partaker of grace is delivered from the power of sin, but that the grace of God is prevailed over and taken captive by sin? Do you not kill, when you bear enmity against the just without cause, and begin and practise hypocrisy against those that never meddled with you; and shoot in secret at those whom God has called, commissioned, owned, and blessed; and whose life and conduct exceed that of your own, Conscience and yourself being judges? And if yourselves are so holy, so filled with overcoming faith, so infallible in judgment, and so sanctified, in life; how is it that you do no good in your day and generation? What fruits, or effects, appear by ocular demonstration, either in yourselves or your pupils? Do you ever return in the power of the Spirit? or, is the fame of you ever spread abroad in any other way but by the sound of your own trumpet? Do you not commit adultery, while you pretend to an union with the

Bridegroom of the Church, when you can give no account of the death of your first husband? Do you not steal away the name of a minister of the Spirit, in whom the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled, and palm him with the name of Antinomian, because he does not say what the word of God never declared to be any one part of the confession of his faith? Do you not bear a false witness, when you artfully represent those as ministers of sin whom God has made ministers of righteousness? Do you stand clear in any of these things—Do you love your neighbour as yourself, when you speak fair to his face wish him success; express your love to him, and readiness to assist him; and, at the same time, are working under ground, to blow up all his usefulness.

Quot. That, to the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Moral Law has ceased to exist as a covenant of works, is a grand and glorious truth; and is granted on both sides of the question.

Ans. Has the Law ceased to exist as a covenant of works? Pray, when did it expire? When was it, with respect to its binding and killing power, repealed, or divested of its divine sanction? If it has lost its commanding power to do for life, and its power to condemn to death in case of disobedience, it has lost all the power it has; for this is all the power that it ever had. And if the Saviour came to deprive the Law of this power, he came to destroy it; for what is a law without commanding and condemning power? This is making void the Law through faith; for divesting the Law of its authority can never be called establishing it. The Galatians found it no less than a yoke of bondage, when they turned their back on the grace of God, in order to make the Law the perfecting end of Christ for sanctification—which is all that this book aims at. And, for my own part, I still find that, if I lose sight of Jesus, and begin to live and conduct myself by that letter, instead of walking by faith, it soon becomes a yoke of bondage to me. And although (as some say) the Law is in the hand of Christ; yet, as many as are of the works of it are still under the curse of it; and as many as will be found under it, even in the great day, will be judged by it; and receive the dreadful sentence of it, even from the mouth of Him who magnified it, and

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made it honourable. It will be a fiery law in the hand of Jesus, as well as in the hand of Moses; and the fire of wrath that is kindled in it will burn to the lowest hell!

Quot. Because the Lord Jesus is become the end of the Law, both Moral and Ceremonial, for righteousness, to every one that believeth.

Ans. If Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness, he is not the destroying end, but the fulfilling end. The Law is still a yoke for the servant, and a trap for the hypocrite: that which should have been for his welfare, by driving him to Christ, becomes a trap, by his trusting in it; and the way that seems so right to a man, is, in the end, the way of death, because life is sought by the ministration of death.

Quot. I shall not, therefore, take up any time, or employ any pains, to prove that here, because we are already agreed upon that subject. But, that the Moral Law ought still to be considered as the rule of a believer's conduct is as great a truth. It is the eternal rule of righteousness, and is incapable of any variations.

Ans. I believe the Law to be the only rule of righteousness, and life too, to every one that is under it. And as such Christ always used it—What shall I do to inherit eternal life?—What is written in the Law? how readest thou?—This do, and thou shalt live,—If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. The Law is your rule of life—do that, and thou shalt live. But the soul that hungered and thirsted after righteousness, He always called to himself, and told him to abide in Him, and then he should bring forth much fruit; but, if he did not abide in him, he would be cast forth as a withered branch, and be fit for nothing but the fire. If the law be incapable of any variations, pray, when was it that it varied from its usual existence as a covenant of works?—for we are not agreed upon that palpable contradiction.

Quot. Amongst men, the idea of a king and people supposes also a Law subsisting between the parties; agreeable to which, the king is to govern, and the people to frame their actions.

Ans. But this law is not the Moral Law; for, if Christ rules his subjects by that, according to the actions that they frame, he must destroy them all together as rebels, for they all offend. But he receives gracious gifts for the rebellious (not killing precepts), that the Lord God may dwell among them. It is the Law of Faith that goes forth out of Zion, and the Word of Life that goes from Jerusalem. The Lord shall send the Rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies, Psalm cx. 2. But the Moral Law is not the Rod of his strength; that is weak through the flesh. Bind the testimony, seal the law among my disciples, Isa. viii. 16. The testimony of the Gospel is received in the bond of love, and the Law of Faith is attended with the seal of the Spirit: the day you believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise. But God does not set this seal to the preaching of the Moral Law: He, therefore, that ministereth the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the Law? (Gal. iii. 5.) No, he doth not. Ministers of the letter are not sealed themselves. Nor does God attend their ministry with his seal: for they are servants of corruption; they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm; and therefore can confirm nothing but their own ignorance, and the bondage of their audience. And this is evident: for some who contend for the Law are obliged to write and read their sermons; which prove that they serve in the oldness of the letter, and not in the newness of the Spirit. Take them, reader, to the Law, and to the testimony—that is, to the law of Faith, and to the testimony of the Gospel; and, if they speak not according to this Word of life, it is because there is no light in them. Life and immortality are not brought to light in their souls by the Gospel; they are under the yoke of the Moral Law; and the old vail is still upon their heart in reading the Old Testament, which vail is done away in Christ, and an easier yoke given. The Law of Faith is so complete that whatsoever is not done in obedience thereto, and from faith therein,

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is no better than rebellion and wickedness: whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Stand fast, reader, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. The Law has lately obtained a great many new names, which it never bore before, and which the bond-children in the present age have given it.

One divine calls it the evangelized Law; which implies that the covenant of Works is now turned into the covenant of Grace; that the minister of the Letter, by this turn, is now the minister of the Spirit; and that he who works, his work is reckoned to be of grace; and he that worketh not, but believeth, he is an Antinomian, and the reward is reckoned to him of debt. This is turning things upside down which is to be esteemed as potter's clay. Isa. xxix. 16.

Another divine differs from the last; and says, The Moral Law is the legal Covenant of Grace. Which, by the bye, is a contradiction in terms: and is, in effect, to say that the ministry of death is now the grace of life; the ministration of condemnation is now the ministration of righteousness; the law, that worked wrath, now works love; the enmity is now reconciliation; the yoke of bondage is now the evangelical yoke of Gospel obedience; and that which was engraven on tables of stone is now written on, the fleshly tables of the heart; and the killing letter is now the quickening Spirit.

Others differ from the latter, and tell us that Christ came to bring us to the Law, and to enable us to keep it. Hence the Law is not a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, but Christ is the schoolmaster to bring us to the Law: that to fly from wrath is to fly from Jesus; and to fly for refuge, is to go to the Law for holiness. According to which sense, Moses, the servant, has more honour than the Master; and the house has more honour than him that built it.

Others differ from these; and tell us, that the Law is the only rule of a believer's life; by which he is to walk, and not by faith; by which

he is to live, and not by faith; by which he is to work, and not by faith. These make void the promise of God, and make faith of none effect.

Others tell us that Christ came to enable believers to keep the Law; which entirely contradicts the complaint of Zion, who declares that all her righteousnesses are as filthy rags. And which shews that the old man, in our days, is dead; that there is no law in the members that war against the law of the mind now no flesh in the believer that loves the law of sin: and though the Apostles in many things all of them offended, yet believers, in this period, never offend at all; which makes their obedience perfect, and the Saviour's of less worth.

But the Authors of this book differ from all the above. For we are informed, (page 42:) that the Moral Law has ceased to exist as a covenant of works. And, in the same page, the Law is declared to be The Eternal Rule of Righteousness, and is incapable of any Variations. If it has ceased to exist what it once was, it must have varied some way or other. And we are likewise informed that the believer is delivered from the power of sin; but that the new man of Grace is overcome, and held captive, by sin. This is turning things upside down. However, all these various changes, alterations, fluxes and refluxes, which men have made in the eternal Rule of Righteousness, and unalterable Law of Works, not a jot or tittle of which shall ever fail or pass away, even though heaven and earth do pass away—only serve to shew us the truth of the Holy Ghost's assertion, that those who turn aside to vain jangling, and who desire to be teachers of the Law, know not what they say, or whereof they affirm.

Our sworn enemy to the Antinomian now goes on to describe the bands and cords that hold the King of Zion and his loyal subjects together.

Quot. As to his subjects, they are under a threefold obligation to pay the most ready, cheerful, and prompt obedience, to whatever commands he is

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pleased to give them. In the first place, a natural obligation; as they are not only his subjects, but the creatures which his hands formed out of the dust.

Ans. And he gives them grace for obedience to the faith; and works in them, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure: and this obedience is acceptable to him; but all that is extorted by the Law, or that springs from any other principle but that of his own implanted grace, is rejected, as service in the oldness of the letter, or as the eye-service of a hypocrite, or the drudgery of a slave. Christ will not be served in the chains of a galley, but with the wings of a dove.

Quot. *What can be more evident than that every creature is under a natural obligation to obey the commands of its Creator?*

Ans. But it should be considered that Nature has lost the use of her limbs, is wholly corrupt; and, the more she stirs, the more mischief she does. Hence a Divine Nature is given to keep her in subjection: self must be denied, flesh and blood are not to be conferred with, and natural reason is often opposite to faith.

Quot. *Secondly, A moral obligation; as they are not only creatures, but creatures possessed with rationality, grand, reasoning, thinking faculties.*

Ans. But the carnal mind is enmity, and the Law worketh wrath: so that no business can go on to purpose while these two are contending; until Sovereign Grace subdues the latter, and delivers us from the former, in order that we may serve God in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter; and worship God in the beauty of holiness, and not with a hypocritical worship, enforced by legal threatening, or extorted by servile fear. As for depraved Rationality, she very often loses herself in divine mysteries. She must look before she leaps, and comprehend the end before she begins the work. A divine warrant is not sufficient for her. I have read, in Dr. Priestly's works, of his propagating a Rational Christianity; but it is visible that incomprehensible mysteries, which are the heights of heaven, and deeper than hell

(Col. ii. 2, Job. xi. 8.), have quite drowned the doctor and all his rationality together. Strong reasons are often brought forth against the King of Jacob, Isa. xli. 21. Faith must reason, if any good be done by reasoning. Faith, like a good servant, goes when she is bid, and comes when she is called. By Faith, Abraham obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went—which to depraved rationality is a wild-goose chase, and to carnal reason foolishness. All our thoughts, must be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, or else we shall never think soberly, as we ought to think. Rationality, with her grand reasonings and thinkings, must be kept within bounds, like a restive horse; and that not by a moral precept, but by restraining grace, if ever the sinner is admitted to fellowship with Christ. The Gospel is calculated and published to stain the pride of all glory, to take the wise in their own craftiness, to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth, and to puzzle the wise and prudent; and, though it is the wisdom of God in a mystery, yet it is to them that perish foolishness. This wisdom is to display the riches of divine grace, to the glory of God, and the humiliation of the sinner; and not to aggrandize Rationality, with her train of vain reasonings and free thinking; but to put her at the footstool, as altogether incapable of the chair in these matters: If any man will be wise, let him become a fool, that he may be wise—which to the carnal reasoner and free-thinker is a contradiction in terms, and an irrational speech. My reader must take these treble obligations together, and then he will see what the Wise Man's threefold cord, which is not quickly broken, means; which in this book is called the bands and cords of Zion's King, which the Pharisees broke asunder, and cast from them, Psal. ii. 2, 3. But surely, if it had been the threefold cord of the Wise Man, they would not have broken it so easily. Fallen Nature, however, furnishes out the main band; the broken Law the next; and, as for Grace, that only brings up the rear. Fallen Nature, in her low estate, contributes her cord towards the support of this kingdom, which is not of this world. The Law, which is weak through the flesh, affords great assistance to the kingdom of Grace, which is not of works, either in whole or in part; nor in word, much less in a killing letter. And, though the spiritual obligation is brought in last, yet the dominion of Grace is not of this world, nor is

the first obligation from men. Nor is the Moral Law any band of it, for the kingdom is spiritual, not legal: it is not in word, but in power; in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; neither of which are from flesh and blood, nor from Sinai, but from sovereign grace in Christ.

Quot. And, thirdly, a spiritual obligation.

Ans. The first, the grand, and the most noble tie of the kingdom of grace, is here represented to be a Natural Obligation—our being creatures formed out of the dust. This is the law of Heathens; who are a law to themselves, and who sin without the Moral Law, and shall perish without law: and those Heathens who cleaved to this law were the greatest enemies to the Gospel. The second is the Law of Moses, which the bond woman and her children are under, and who sin in the Law, and shall be judged by the Law. The Pharisees, who cleaved to this obligation, were the people that imagined a vain thing, who broke Zion's bands asunder, and cast her cords from them. The third is a spiritual Obligation. This is of Grace and Truth, which came by Jesus Christ. And I believe that the bond of the covenant of grace, and perfect liberty by the law of truth, will produce more good fruits, in one saint, to the glory of God, than ten thousand volumes of such doctrines as these will ever produce. The covenant of grace makes a minister fruitful in good works, and fruitful in spiritual converts; as is declared by the testimony of God: My covenant of life and peace was with Levi; and I gave them to him, for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity, Mal. ii. 5, 6. Hence it appears, that the Covenant of Life and Peace, and the Law of truth, did not lead him to licentiousness, but made him a good and useful man. Neither the Law of Heathens, nor the Law of Moses, is the rod of Christ's strength, which was sent out of Zion, and by which he rules in the midst of Jerusalem. Neither of these obligations make his subjects a willing people (Psal. cx. 2, 3.), but the power of Grace displayed.

Quot. As for me, says Paul, I am determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. But he also adds—I am not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.

Ans. But what Law was that which Paul had to God? Was it the Law of Works? saith Paul; we are delivered from the Law we are not under the Law, but under Grace. As saith the Apostle's quotation—I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Heb. x. 16, 17. And what Laws are these? Are they the Law of Moses or the Law of Heathens? Nay, saith Paul neither of them. For God, finding fault with them, saith— Behold, the days come, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. Here is a new covenant and in that he saith; a New Covenant, he hath made the first old, Heb. ix. 8, 9, 10, 13. The Law and the Prophets were until John (saith Christ): since that time, the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it, Luke, xvi. 16. And it is those, and only those, who feel the terrors of the Moral Law, and the accusations of the Law of Nature, that press into this kingdom.

Quot. I am under the Law to Christ, saith Paul.

Ans. But what Law was that, in Christ, that Paul was under? He is of age; he shall speak for himself: For the Law of the Spirit of Life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. Here Paul tells us, that the Holy Spirit hath a Law, as the Gospel is called the Ministry of the Spirit; and that this Law of the Spirit is in Christ Jesus; and that the operation of it on Paul's heart made him free from the destroying power of the Law of Sin, and from the binding and damning power of the Law of Death, engraven on tables of stone: or, in other words, this Law of the

Spirit made Paul free from what you call Natural and Moral Obligations; which are the ministration of death.

Quot. For I delight in the Law after the inner man.

Ans. Paul was renewed in the spirit of his mind. The New Covenant (not the Old) was put in Paul's heart, and in his mind had the Lord wrote it: and with his renewed mind he served this Law of God; for Paul served in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the Letter. Being made free from the Ministration of Death engraven on stone, (Rom. viii. 2) which, he saith, worketh wrath, (Rom. iv. 15) he was enabled to perform spiritual service. And as the Law of the Spirit, in Christ, revealed to Paul an imputed righteousness adequate to the Law, and produced true holiness in Paul, which the Law requires; and the love of God shed abroad in his heart, which the Law calls for; Paul knew by these things that the righteousness of the Law was fulfilled in him, though not by him—therefore he could do no less than love this Law of the Spirit after the inner man.

Quot. What Law? The Moral Law. Some say, the Law of Love. And I grant it; for the Moral Law and the Law of Love are synonymous terms, and mean one and the self-same thing.

Ans. If the Moral Law, engraven on tables of stone, is the Law of Love, then no great thanks can be due to Him who redeemed them that were under this Law; nor are we much indebted to Free Grace, which delivered us from it. For what yoke can be so easy as this Law of Love? Not the Saviour's yoke, for that is attended with a daily cross, and many sips of the bitter cup which this Moral Law of Love doth not enjoin. I never knew till now that the Moral Law was ever called the Law of Love. God calls it a fiery Law—that the fire of it was kindled in his anger—that it worketh wrath, and is the ministration of death and condemnation—that those who are of the works of it are under the curse of it; for to him that worketh the reward is reckoned of debt, which he never can pay; and which Law is the strength of sin, and will imprison every such debtor till the

utmost mite is paid: for heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of the Law shall fail; fail of its power, of its unlimited demands, or of the execution of its dreadful curses. Vain jangling, indeed! The love of God, in Christ Jesus; the bond of the everlasting Covenant; the first fruit of the Holy Ghost; the constraining power of the Law of the Spirit, is here palmed upon Moses's Law. Grace and Truth, the effects of sovereign love, came by Moses; but Antinomianism and Licentiousness, according to this book, came by Jesus Christ. Such publications as these may serve to ease the minds of authors who envy the happiness and success of God's servants. They may serve to blacken their characters, to harden carnal professors against the grace of Christ, to stagger the minds of the simple, and to keep up the popularity of those whose emptiness God is pleased to discover to his own children—but, I believe, such writers will find the latter end to be bitterness.

If a man, who had transgressed the laws of his country, and who was tried and condemned to death by the same, and who should receive a free pardon from the sovereign clemency of his king at the place of execution—should such an one ascribe his pardon to the love of the law, instead of the undeserved love of his king; and attribute his salvation from death to the law that dealt the sentence of death to him; he would not only shew the greatest ingratitude to the grace of his sovereign, but give sufficient proof, that he was touched with insanity. The case is the same here. The Law was added because of transgression, that sin, by it, might appear sin; that the offence might abound; yea, that sin might become exceeding sinful; that every mouth might be stopped by it, and the whole world become guilty before God; and that judgment might come upon all men unto condemnation. Here they all lay under the sentence of death; and are children of wrath when Grace finds them. And they are pardoned; but pardon is of the New Covenant, not of the old. And they are justified; but not through the Law, but through the righteousness of Faith. And they are sanctified; but not through nor by the Law, for God doth not minister the Spirit by the works of the Law, but by the preaching of Faith. And they are saved; but salvation is not of works, for by Grace are we saved,

through Faith, and that not of ourselves. And we are glorified; but if they that are of the Law be heirs of glory, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Salvation and Glorification are of sovereign love. And, according to this book, the grand source of all is to be found in the Law, for that is the Law of Love; consequently, those which be of the Law must be heirs: the Law must have the praise, and man's boasting must be established.

Quot. Neither Paul nor James had any idea that the Moral Law was abolished and done away.

Ans. Nor did any real saint ever dream of the Moral Law being abolished, until this book appeared; which tells us that the Moral Law has ceased to exist as a covenant of works—which is abolishing its commanding and condemning power; and is, in effect, making it void, and doing it away. I say, that we are redeemed from the condemning power of the Law by the blood of Christ; and delivered from its commanding power (which is, Do, and live) by the grace of God, and the gift of righteousness. The blood of the Covenant gives a satisfactory answer to the sense of the Law, by declaring me redeemed from death; and imputed Righteousness gives an answer to the Precept of the Law, by declaring, the just shall live by faith. And he that denies this denies the satisfaction of Christ, either by his active or passive obedience. Nor does preaching this faith make void the Law, but it establishes it. Redeeming my soul from death, and justifying of me by faith, doth not abolish the Law from its seat, but delivers my soul from its yoke, that I may serve God in truth, not with eye-service; from a principle of love to him, not from fear of damnation from him; in the newness of the Spirit, not in the oldness of the letter; from a sense of pardon, not from fear of punishment; in the ties of gratitude, not in the shackles of torment; as a dutiful son, not as a partial hireling. Is the Law against the promises of God? God forbid!

Our present sovereign pardons many condemned criminals, but he doth not abolish his laws by the acts of his grace; but those who despise the acts of his clemency, and cleave to the law that

condemned them, must die, for the law can shew them no favour. So those that turn their back upon the Law of Faith, and go to the Law of Works, fall from grace, and Christ shall profit them nothing. If the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in the man that walks in the Spirit, how can the ministry of the Spirit make void the Law? If a woman capable of a numerous progeny marries, and lives ten years with a man, and all that time continues barren; she contributes nothing, during all that period, towards populating the nation to which she belongs; and Wisdom says, In the want of people is the destruction of the prince. But, if such a woman's husband dies, and she marries again, and, by the second husband, bears ten or twenty children, that are useful in the army, navy, or to society; does she any injury, either to the government or laws of her country, by her fruitfulness? Is such an one entitled to the name of an Outlaw, or an Antinomian, for this? I suppose not. The parallel holds good—For, when we were in the flesh the motions of sin, which were by the Law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death (Rom. vii. 5). Here is fruit brought forth unto death, but no fruit to the living God. The first husband, by his killing operations, and by his gendering to bondage, which contracts the womb of the soul, instead of enlarging it, becomes a killing letter; and the barren soul becomes dead to that deadly ministration, or to that husband, and may be married to another. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the Law by the body of Christ; that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. vii. 4). Some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold (Matt. xiii. 8).

The bond woman (with respect to God) is said to be barren, because she brings not forth the fruits of the Spirit; nor does she bring forth spiritual children to God, because she is not married unto him. With respect to a divine husband, she is desolate; and, with respect to God, she is barren. Yet she brings forth fruit unto death, in a twofold sense. First, Dead works. Secondly, Dead children.

More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. But then, these children are in bondage to the ministration of death, under the sentence of death, and bound down to the fear of death. And a minister of the letter is a dead man, and the letter that he is the minister of killeth; and his proselytes are (as Christ says) the children of hell, bastards, base-born, children of the flesh: These are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed—for in Adam all die. The decree of Heaven has not brought such a minister forth (Zeph. ii. 2). The secret of election is not with him. Hence the Divine prohibition—He that hath his stones broken, shall not be a priest (Levit. xxi. 20, 21). They that are broken off through unbelief, and are destitute of the secret mystery of Faith, are dead men, ministers of the killing letter; and though they and their proselytes may have a name to live, yet the Saviour says they are dead.

Quot. Some say, the Law cannot be a perfect rule of conduct, because it says nothing upon some subjects which are noted in the precepts of the New Testament.

Ans. The Moral Law mentions nothing of repentance toward God, nor does it accept it. The Law is not of Faith, nor is Faith of the Law: it neither describes it, promises it, nor gives any information concerning it. But the good-will of God, in Christ Jesus, does all this, and gives a man grace to perform what God requires. And it is a pity that a dispensation that brings glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men, should have no better name than Antinomianism. I believe the Law to be more than a rule of conduct to them that are under it: for Paul says, that whatsoever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law. It is to the bond-children a rule of work: What is written in the Law?—This do—Keep the commandments. It is the rule of conversation: thou shalt talk of this Law as thou liest down, and risest up; as thou goest out and comest in. It is the rule of life: This do, and thou shalt live. It is the rule of righteousness: This shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments (Deut. vi. 25). It is their perfect rule of conduct: If a man keep the whole Law, and offend in

one point, he is guilty of all: yea, cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law, to do them. It is a rule for the servant from first to last, and a rule to be continued in; and by this rule shall all the bond children be judged at the great day. He that sinneth in the Law shall be judged by the Law.

But the mystery of Faith, the Law of the Spirit, or the good-will of God in Christ Jesus, (which is the one and the same thing) is the son's rule of life. It is the will of the Father that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life. The just shall live by Faith; and by Faith he is to abide in Christ, that he may be fruitful; and by Faith to receive from Christ's fulness, grace and strength to perform every good work. It is the son's rule of walk: I will lead them in a straight path, wherein they shall not stumble.— We walk by faith, not by sight. It is the son's rule of work: I will direct their work in truth; which are the works of faith, labours of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. i. 3). The Law is the rule of the servant's life, walk, and conduct; and, if the believer is under it as such a rule, the servant and the son are both on a level, for the Law is no more than a rule of life to the servant. Nor is this vain jangling, or forcing the Law as the believer's only rule of life, intended to promote holiness and good works; nor do the maintainers of this doctrine exceed, or even come near, the stature of those they oppose, in good works. It is ignorance, or rather envy at the liberty and the happiness of the experimental Christian, and at the ministers of the Spirit, that provokes them to it; or as Paul says, they creep in to spy out our liberty that we have in Christ, that they may bring us into bondage. If the believer takes Moses Law upon him, will it change or renew his soul? Nay, says Paul: while we look to Jesus, as through a glass darkly, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.—But, when Moses is read, the veil is still upon the heart. Will taking the Law on the believer serve to mortify the deeds of the body? No: If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Will taking this yoke increase the spirit of holiness in the believer? No: He that ministereth the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the

Law? Nay, but by the preaching of faith. Will this yoke keep the believer from, or assist the believer against, fulfilling the lusts of the flesh? No: Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Will this yoke of the Law subdue sin? No: Sin shall not have dominion over you. Why not? Because you are not under the Law, but under Grace. Will this yoke of the Law make the believer's service more acceptable to God? No: We are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Will this yoke of the Law produce love and gratitude to God? No: The Law worketh wrath—For where there is no Law, there is no transgression—It is the love of Christ that constrains us. Will this yoke of the Law furnish the believer with love to his neighbour? or will it promote brotherly love? it will rather lead them to seek pre-eminence. It does not exclude boasting. We are taught of God to love one another—and it is the love of God in Christ, shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit, that is the bond of all perfectness among brethren. But does this love come from the Law? or does it come by the Law? Neither of them. God's love to us is the bond of the Covenant of Grace; and, when shed abroad in our heart, it is our bond of union to the Lord. This love is the first fruit of the Spirit; and is the main branch of the Law of the Spirit which is in Christ Jesus, which makes us free from the Law of sin and death. Will the believer's taking this yoke upon him increase his good works? No: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. But, will this yoke strengthen the believer's union with the Lord? No: They that begin in the Spirit, and then go to the Law, to be made perfect by the flesh, fall from grace; Christ shall profit them nothing. But, will the Law help the believer, if we consider the Law as a joint worker with Christ? No: Abide in me, and I in you; for, without me, you can do nothing. Will this Law enlarge the believer's heart? No: it genders to bondage; begets servile fear, accompanied with a train of torments, which nothing but Covenant Love can cast out. Fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love: perfect love casteth out fear. Will this yoke make the believer abound in good works? No: I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet, not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Will

this yoke produce self-aborrence? No: when God makes, or rather reveals, the New Covenant to the sinner; pardons him: gives him a new heart, and a new spirit; and, by grace, appears pacified toward him; then he remembers his own evil way, which was not good; and loathes himself in his own sight for his iniquities. The Law will never reconcile a man to the justice of God, but pardoning mercy does. The terrors of the Law stir up enmity, but grace stays it. The motions of sin, which are by the Law, work in the members to bring forth fruit unto death. But faith purifies the heart. The Law fixes the veil upon the sinner's mind; but the Gospel brings life and immortality to light. The Law does not exclude boasting; grace produces humility. The Law stirs up enmity against God; grace fills a man with enmity against sin. The terrors of the Law will make Cain cry out against his punishment; but grace makes a man cry out against himself and his wickedness, Legal convictions by the Law often work self-pity; but grace works pity and compassion to the Saviour. Under the terrors of the Law a man will justify himself, and censure his Maker; but by grace, through Christ, a man is led to condemn himself, and justify God: God appears just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. They that die under the Law will plead their own merit at the bar of God: When saw we thee an hungred, and did not give thee meat? or thirsty, and did not give thee drink? But the saints disclaim the fruits of their faith, even though the Judge proclaims and approves them. I know that the Law calls for righteousness, holiness, and love; but it is out of the fulness of Christ all these must be received; and he that is united to Christ, and walks in union with him, walks in all these; for the Moral Law is swallowed up in the Everlasting Gospel. The merits of our Covenant Head answer every demand of the Law for us; while the testimony of faith, and the fruits of the Spirit, give an answer to every demand of the Law in us. The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. If this doctrine here advanced be Antinomianism, then let our opponents shew us what is Gospel. And, if this doctrine make void the Law, let them shew us what doctrine that is that establishes it. And, if leading the believer from union with the Saviour to the yoke of the Law, and making that his only rule of life, walk, and conduct,

establishes the Law; let them shew us in what sense it does it. The saint's fruits of faith, and labours of love, are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ: but, so far are they from being a perfect righteousness, according to the tenor of the old covenant, that even the righteousness of Zion is but filthy rags, and the righteousness of the apostle Paul but dung and dross; and this righteousness will never establish the Law. We establish the Law in the hand of Justice against every infidel; and as magnified in the heart of Christ to every believer, and by imputed righteousness, and the love of the Spirit, in every child of God; and with all its acquirements, and in full force, against every sinner out of Christ; and in the souls of all the damned in hell. And, if these are not its proper bases, let our opponents shew us any other. But as for making the Law the believer's only rule of life, establishes it no where, nor in any sense. Love is called the fulfilling of the Law, and by imputed righteousness and the spirit of love it is fulfilled in the saint. But, if walking in the Spirit will not answer the demands of the Law, it can hardly be thought that bringing our necks under the yoke of the letter can answer the requirements of the Gospel, which calls for a service in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. God has made ample provision, in the Covenant of Grace, both for holiness, happiness, and good works; and furnishes us with the former, to make us fruitful in the latter. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast: for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained [prepared] that we should walk in them (Eph. ii. 8-10). For my own part, I have watched many who traduce the grace of God, as tending to licentiousness, and the preachers of it as Antinomians; and who extol themselves, and their own righteousness and good works, very highly, and who make great pretensions to the Law; whose lives are no example to good men—far from it. Nor do they always conceal their inward enmity even against the sovereignty of God himself, but often arraign it, and his justice too, at the bar of Reason. They think the Almighty just such an one as themselves; they hate his decrees; are envious at the objects of his choice; and spy out, in order to ridicule and bring into

contempt, their liberty which they have in Christ Jesus: and by which they plainly shew that they have no real love to God, nor to the real children of God; and therefore their works are little worth, neither springing from a good root, nor directed to a good end.

There is nothing but natural, corrupt, or vile affections, in bond-children. They are strangers to the spirituality of the Law, strangers to the yoke of it, and to the bondage that it genders; and are haters of the powers of godliness—who misrepresent others as erroneous who preach the truth, while themselves publish nothing but self-contradictions and lies. That the Moral Law has ceased to exist as a Covenant of works is a damnable falsehood. No hint of it is given in all the Bible. This is the worst branch of Antinomianism that ever was published. Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness. Not only the fulfilling end, but the grand end of the Law, is answered in and by him. And the same end is answered and fulfilled by a work of grace in us. We are redeemed from under the Law, are delivered from the Law, and are under grace, and not under the Law. But the Law is still what it ever was—an everlasting, unalterable, unrepealable Law: and a Covenant of Works in every sense; and to him that works under it, the reward is still reckoned of debt. But these base Antinomians, who have bereaved the Law of all its power, and so have destroyed it, cry out—The believer is under the Law to Christ. Then I ask, wherein the child of God differs from the bastard? Is not every Pharisee in the nation under the Law to Christ? Is not the Saviour the King of Nations, and God of the whole earth. Has he not power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him? Is not all judgment committed to him? Is he not the judge of quick and dead? Are not all men accountable to Him? Is he not the Master of the servant, as well as Father of the children? Do not kings reign, and princes decree justice by Him? He is the master of Judas, as well as Lord of the household. He will open the book of the Law, the book of conscience, and the book of life. He is a just God and a Saviour; and will bless the children of the free woman, and curse the bond woman and her children. One is under the blessing of Zion, and the other is under the curse of Sinai. These are Ebal and Gerizzim,

which bear the blessing and curse; and by the book of the law will one be judged, and by the book of life will the other be judged. Thus all the non elect are under the law to Christ. But the believer is under grace to Christ: it is the law of the spirit of life in Christ that makes the believer free from the law of Death engraven on tables of stone. There is a law of life in Christ's heart to the believer; and the law of Moses is in the Saviour's hand to the infidel. And it is a covenant of works still—it works bondage in the believer who looks to it, and it works wrath and death in the sinner that is under it. And of this working power it never was divested; of this power it never shall be divested. The rod of Christ's strength, by which he rules his saints, or his powerful rod, is the Gospel. You may call it the good-will of God in Christ Jesus, which is the saint's rule. Or you may call it the Law of the Spirit in Christ, under which (Paul says) the believer is. Or you may call it the New Covenant, written in the mind, and put in the heart, of the saint, which is (as Paul says) the believer's law to God: which law, or covenant, is said to be new, and not according to the old; and is the covenant of grace, not works; and under grace the believer is, and not under the law. Or you may call it the law of faith, which excludes boasting. Or you may call it the perfect law of liberty; and he that looks and continues therein, shall be blessed in his deed. This law brings glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men. This is sound doctrine, this is pure gospel, this is doing the work of an Evangelist. But as for this treatise of vain jangling, what does it confute? what does it establish?—Nothing but the ignorance and foolishness of the authors.

First, they tell us that Christ is made sanctification to his people, in his kingly office, by the gift of the Spirit. Which is sanctification by the Holy Ghost, instead of sanctification by the blood of Christ. Here they set aside perfect sanctification by his grand sacrifice as a Priest.

Secondly, they tell us, that personal union is wrought in the soul by faith. Which is putting that upon a grace of the Spirit which is done by God the Father only.

Thirdly, we are told, that the righteousness of Christ comes from his priestly office. Which righteousness was wrought out, or was performed, in his life, by his active obedience as a servant and surety; and which work the Saviour said was finished before he offered himself as a Priest, John xvii. 4. [Editor's comment: Here we would differ somewhat from Mr. Huntington, believing scripture to teach that justifying righteousness was wrought by the faith of Jesus Christ through death as he gave his life for the elect (the 'one righteousness' or one righteous act of Romans 5:18) and not by the works of the law (See also Romans 3:21-22, Hebrews 12:2). Huntington's understanding would appear to have come mainly from the writings of John Owen. It would be difficult to show that the reformer, Martin Luther, however, ever wrote of justifying righteousness being wrought by anything other than the death of Christ. Owen's difference of understanding with some of his predecessors was acknowledged by him in his own work on Justification.]

Fourthly, we are told, that the believer is delivered from the love and power of all sin—but that the new man is taken captive by sin.

Fifthly, that the law has ceased to exist as a Covenant of works. This is called.—a grand truth. Which, by the bye, is an abominable lie.

Sixthly, this grand truth of the law ceasing to exist as a covenant of works, is denied, by asserting, that the law is without any variation.

Seventhly, that the Moral Law, and the Law of Love, are synonymous terms, and mean one and the same thing. That is, that the bond of the covenant of grace, which came by Jesus Christ, is the main branch of the Law of Death engraven on tables of stone, which was given by Moses. This is robbing the master, to enrich the servant; lessening grace, to the honour of works. No wonder the Psalmist called the law a trap; which must needs be true with a witness, when hypocrites bait it with the first blessing of the everlasting Gospel, on purpose to entangle the saint in the yoke of bondage.

THE BROKEN CISTERN & THE SPRINGING WELL

Thou hast a full view here, reader, of real orthodox doctrines, by which the Antinomians are unmasked. This is the vain jangling that confutes error, undeceives the deceived, and establishes the law; They tell you that the law is the believer's only rule of life, walk, and conduct; but only with the allowance of this grand and glorious truth, namely, that it has ceased to exist as a covenant of works; and, therefore, has no power to command works to be done, nor any power to condemn the slothful, who does nothing. The law has ceased to exist with respect to works, that it may be substituted as the bond of the covenant of grace. This is destroying the law for ever, and establishing the Gospel upon the destruction of it. Now our authors are going on to palm the commands of Christ, or laws of Zion, upon the law of Moses, and the Mount Sinai, without any regard to the terms of the new covenant, new ordinances, or new services. So that you may take circumcision, instead of baptism; and the passover, instead of Lord's supper; and service in the oldness of the letter, instead of the newness of the spirit; and the works of the law, instead of the work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope!

Quot. The church owns Christ for her King, as well as her Priest; her Master, as well as her Saviour. She takes this yoke upon her; and feels herself under the strictest obligation of duty, love, and gratitude, to yield the most filial, evangelical obedience, to his commands, as well as to believe and rejoice in his gracious promises.

Ans. All this is true; though the authors, by experience, know neither what they say, nor what they mean. The church owns Christ as a King, because the dominion of grace is set up in her heart; and she is not under the law, but under grace. She can do no less than own him as her Priest, because he has redeemed her from under the law, and from the curse of it; so that she is neither under its commanding power nor dreadful sentence. She owns him for her Lord, because he has delivered her from the lordly power of the law; the accusations of Moses, Satan, and Sin; saying O Lord our God, other lords, besides thee, have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name, Isa. xxvi. 13. She loves

him as a husband, because she is not under Moses, who allowed of putting away, but under a covenant of eternal wedlock, by which she is betrothed in righteousness, loving kindness, faithfulness, tender mercies, and for ever. She loves him as a brother, because she is in the brotherly covenant: that he is her brother, who has sucked the breasts of her mother, which is Zion—not Hagar, nor yet Jerusalem in bondage— where he was born as well as she. She loves him as a friend, because she is reconciled, and the mysteries of the kingdom are revealed to her—but, as to bond-servants under the law, they know not what their Lord doth. She loves him as her Master, because she is partaker of the fruits of the Spirit before she labours; and serves him in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. She takes his yoke upon her indeed, which she finds to be light; and stands in her liberty, unless false brethren bewitch her, as they did the Galatians, who were entangled by them, and brought again into bondage: her adherence to which is both her folly and her loss. If she feels herself under the strictest obligations of, duty, love, and gratitude, to yield the most filial, evangelical, obedience to his commands, how can she be justly charged with Antinomianism, or licentiousness, for this her obedience to the faith; this service in the newness of the Spirit; or for these works of faith, labours of love, and patience of hope?

Quot. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Ans. This proves that there is a manifest distinction between the commandments of a killing letter and the commandment which is eternal life. The one is the Father's commandment which was given by Moses: the other is the life-giving command, which is of grace: and which came by Jesus Christ. The one is a command given to us to work for life; the other is a command given to Christ, to give us that life, which man could never earn, and which the law could never give. Upon Mount Zion hath God commanded the blessing, even life for evermore (Psalm cxxxiii. 3). Here is a blessing commanded to be given to Zion, the elect of God; and this blessing is life for evermore. But then, to whom was this command given? I

answer, to Jesus, the great King, whom God set upon his holy hill. This blessing, and this life for evermore, were given to him. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to bless us, by turning us from our evil way. Yea, saith Christ, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that his commandment is life everlasting, or, as the Psalmist says, life for evermore. But then, why is it called a commandment? because the Saviour, in obedience to his Father's will, by his own powerful voice, speaks life to the dead sinner's soul; at which voice the sting of death, and sentence of death, both depart, and life and immortality are brought to light through the Gospel. Such souls hear the voice of the Son of God, and live; yea, they pass from death to life, and shall never come into condemnation. Lazarus, come forth! says the Saviour. Here is a life-giving command, and a resurrection immediately ensues. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, Live! Yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live! (Ezek. xvi. 6.) It is one thing for Christ to say to a dead soul, Live! and it is another thing for the Father to say, This do and thou shalt live! Besides, the law never held forth eternal life: for, had there been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have come by the law. Life in Eden was all that was intimated to Adam before the fall; with the loss of which he was threatened, in case of disobedience. Length of days, in the land of Canaan, was all that the Moral Law held forth to Israel. Life eternal was to come by that prophet which Moses foretold; and nothing less than destruction was threatened to them who should refuse to obey the voice of that Prophet.

Before people sit down to unmask what they call Antinomianism, it is necessary that they should have some insight into the Scriptures of truth; and not destroy the law as a covenant of works; and then build the law of love, and the life-giving commandment of the Gospel, upon its destruction. The commandment of Zion, and the commandment of Sinai, are two distinct things. The Scriptures reveal two distinct mothers, and their children compose two distinct families. God is a Father to the one, and a Master to the other. He has commanded the blessing of life for evermore upon Mount Zion.

And to the children of Zion Wisdom speaks thus: My son, keep thy Father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy Mother. Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and, when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee (Prov. vi. 20-22). This proverb speaks to us, as to children: it speaks to the children of God, not to the bondchildren, for Christ palmed them upon another father, and we are exhorted to keep our Father's commandment—commandment, in the singular number; which commandment is not the Moral Law, for then it would have been in the plural, for they are ten. This commandment of the Father is called the Law of our Mother; but neither Hagar, Sinai, nor Jerusalem in bondage, is our mother. We must look to neither of them. We must look unto Abraham, our father; and to Sarah, that bare us—for God called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. And it is clear that the blessing of eternal life was given, by God our Father, to Abraham and Sarah, who are the father and mother of us all. This law of our mother Sarah was not graven on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of her heart. This Law (wisdom says) is to be bound upon the heart. It is a girdle of truth, that keeps the mind and heart from departing from God. It is to be tied about the neck. It keeps the soul in union with the Covenant Head: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John xv. 17). When thou goest, it shall lead thee. The Moral Law, in the hand of Justice, is a driver; but the law of the Spirit of life, or the law of faith in the hand of the Spirit of promise, is a leader. The Spirit leads us into all truth; and truth leads us into liberty, and, to free access to God. When thou sleepest, it shall keep thee. The law of faith, in the hand of the Spirit, is a keeper. Truth is the saint's shield and buckler. Protection is promised in this law; and we are kept by the power of God, through it: through faith are we kept to salvation. And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. This life-giving commandment has a voice of power, and differs much from a voice of Words. The Spirit speaks in this law, to the heart. The word dwells richly in the believer; insomuch that his heart teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips. In short, it is the word of reconciliation, by

which we are brought to have fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, Christ Jesus: while those who are under the Law find a barrier upon their heart, which keeps them at their proper distance; and a boundary placed round the mount, that they may not attempt to gaze, lest the Lord break through upon them.

Quot. Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected.

Ans. If this quotation be true, my doctrine must be right. The Saviour's commandments, or sayings, are here called his word; and he that keepeth it, the love of God is verily perfected in him; or as Christ says, He that hath my word, and keepeth it; he it is that loveth me, and he shall be loved by my Father. Then, according to this quotation, the penitent sinner, who receives the word in the light of it, in the faith of it, and in the love of it; and stands fast in it, abides by it, and holds it fast; is the man in whom the love of God is verily perfected. This is the life and soul of my doctrine, and it is true. But then, these commandments, which are here called the word, are not the Moral Law, not a voice of words, nor the killing letter, but the word of life. For the Law is so far from perfecting the love of God in a man, that it works wrath in him; or as Milton says,

"It stirs up sin, against law to fight;"

and therefore, perfects nothing. The law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did [do it], by the which we draw nigh unto God. I do not say, that the law is not the only rule of life to the Authors of this book; for, by their opposition to the Gospel, I think it is. But then, they ought not to set this rule of the servant before the children of God: for, if they are to serve God in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, one would think that the new Covenant must furnish the new-born soul with a new rule of this new service. And it is clear that we are delivered from the old yoke, that we might take the Saviour's yoke upon us;

yea, we are delivered from the works of the law, that we might receive grace for obedience to the faith (Rom. i. 5), according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known among all nations for the obedience of faith (Rom. xvi. 26). And, if obedience to the faith is required, faith must be the rule of obedience. And, if men are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God, and from the glory of his power, for not obeying the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, it must be a rule rejected by such vain janglers, otherwise it would not be just in God to punish so severely for disobeying a law that is no rule of obedience. Every child of God who has felt the force of the law, and his own weakness and vileness, and who has received the grace of God in truth, will see through the deception of these Antinomian correctors: for God permits most of his children, some time or other, to suffer by hypocrites smiting them, and bringing them into bondage; and, after a little suffering in this way, their own testimony will repel and shut out of the heart all such vain jangling as this: for it is a doctrine that, as Milton says—

*'Forces the Spirit of grace himself,
'And binds his consort, Liberty.'*

And he adds—

*'What will they, but unbuild
'His living Temples, built by faith to stand?
'Their own faith, not another's.'*

Quot. For who against faith and conscience can be heard? [as infallible unmaskers of Antinomianism:] Yet many will presume.

Ans. The true disciple of Jesus will shew his faith by his works, but not by the works of the law, for they are excluded. But he will shew his faith by the works of faith, and his love by the labours of love; and he will give you a reason of his hope, by his experience, that worketh hope; and he will shew you his good hope through grace, by the patience of Hope. I believe such productions as those

which I am opposing, are useful in one sense; that is, to discover those professors who are the contrary part; and to harden such against the grace of God who are conscious to themselves that they have no oil in their vessels. Those believers, as they are called, who were all zealous of the law of Moses, were the persons that attempted the life of Paul, and set Jerusalem all in an uproar. And those of the same stamp are the greatest enemies to the power of godliness in our days. I can mention an instance or two.

A professor in this metropolis, who stood in a profession for a number of years; and who wrote a cruel letter to me fourteen years ago, when I was in the midst of many troubles, became a most bitter enemy to me, without any just cause, except on account of my doctrine; and made it his business to ridicule me, and prejudice the minds of people against me. When Maria took up her broom and mop against me, he had a feast indeed: he was as much comforted as Esau at the thought of slaying his brother Jacob, because God had willed him the blessing. He went to Mr. Brayne, potter, at Lambeth, and to his wife, wonderfully enraptured. Maria had fully established him, that faith is no rule of obedience, and that the law is the only rule of life. This is a doctrine that must suit those who are destitute of the faith of God's elect. In this he was built up and established; and said I had met with my match, and what would I do now? He expected that my mouth would soon have been stopped, and all my doctrines, fall to the ground. However, as the Wise Man saith, the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment—for soon after this, God sent the law home to his conscience; and made his countenance proclaim that he was in all the blackness, darkness, and tempests, of Sinai. He sunk into desperation he fled to the salt water, which could by no means extinguish the divine flame, nor afford strength to support his body under it; for soon after, he hanged himself, as Judas did. I shall not mention names: this thing was not done in a corner. However, so ended a many years, profession, during which he had deceived thousands; but his end served to undeceive those who believe the Bible, which saith, Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, (I John iii. 15). So true is the proverb, that the light of the righteous rejoiceth

when the lamp of the wicked is put out: they end in the darkness of Sinai, while the Sun of righteousness affords everlasting day to the upright in heart.

Another man, at Hertford, of the same profession as the former, received great establishment by the doctrines of the law and his zeal was so fired by the same, that he traduced me and my publications in a most dreadful manner, as if I lived in, and was an encourager of all manner of vice and wickedness: and not one that God had made my writings useful to, but what suffered under the scourge of this man's tongue. And God permitted him to go on for a considerable time. But a few weeks ago, he discovered him, in a more despicable, and more ignominious way, than the former. It is hard work, reader, to kick, to be offended, and to stumble at Christ. In this way these doctrines of the Law are made useful; but their authors will reap no comfort from them in a dying hour, nor yet at the bar of God.—Now we go on again.

Quot. As though the Apostle had said, I lay down no new rule, for you, as believers, to form your life and conversation by. I refer you to the old Commandment, the same that was given you at the beginning.

Ans. It is strange then, that we are made new creatures; are to serve in the newness of the Spirit; and yet no new rule to be obedient to, or to work by faith; And yet we are to be obedient to the faith, to walk by faith, and to work by faith; and by abiding faithful unto death, we are to receive the crown of life! This doctrine makes faith void, and the promise of God of none effect respecting life and conversation; though, by the rule of faith, God works in us both to will and to do. But, what is this old Commandment that was given at the beginning? And what beginning was that, when this old Commandment was given? Was it the law given to Adam at the beginning of the world, or at the creation? If so, the life-giving commandment was given long before that, and is a much older commandment, for it is from everlasting. By your rule, Adam was prohibited touching the tree of life; but, by the rule that I contend for, we are commanded to eat and drink abundantly; that is, if we

are friends to Christ, and are delivered from the law that worketh wrath. Or, was this old commandment that you speak of given at the beginning of Christ's ministry? I trow not. When he opened his commission, he told the Jews that he was anointed, and sent to proclaim liberty to those that were bound and bruised by the Law and Sin. Or, does John tell those he wrote to that this old commandment is the Moral Law? Could he, with any propriety, tell them, of that generation, that they heard the law from the beginning? Were any of them at Sinai when the law was given? If so, they must have been far above fifty years old, for they must have seen Moses. How do these novices plunder the sacred Scriptures, and make the inspired penmen speak nonsense! Let John give us his own explanation: Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the Word which ye have heard from the beginning (John ii. 7). This Word is the word of life, which the Apostles held forth, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. This is the word which God commanded to a thousand generations. God the Saviour gave the Word, and great was the company that published it; and John was one of that company. John was a minister of the Spirit, not of the letter; a minister of the word of life, not of the killing letter; an Evangelist, not a legalist; a good steward of grace, not a frustrator of the grace of God. He stood and preached in the kingdom and patience of Christ: not telling the believers to be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses; subverting their souls, and bringing the old yoke on the disciples' neck, which neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear. [Read Acts, chap. 15.] If John had told the believers to whom he wrote that the law of Moses was the only rule of their life and conversation, he must have written a new commandment unto them, instead of an old one, and a commandment purely his own; for those who preached, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, had no such commandment given to them, neither by Christ, by the Spirit, nor by the whole assembly of Apostles, (Acts xv. 1, 28, 29) but were declared to be subverters of the saints. In this last quotation, the word of life, which God sent, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; the old commandment, which Christ received in eternity, by which God

commanded the blessing of life upon Zion for evermore; is here established at Sinai. So that they which be of the law are under the blessing. The substance of the New Covenant, which the spirit writes on the fleshly tables of the heart, is afresh engraven upon tables of stone. And, in order to make this glaring deception go down, they will, in the next place, offer violence to the Law: for thus it follows—

Quot. I refer you to the old commandment, the same that was given you at the beginning. It is done away, indeed, as a covenant works.

Ans. I read, that the old veil of ignorance is done away in Christ; but I never read that the Law was ever done away. Christ came to fulfil it; the Apostles preached to establish it. Christ is a just God and a Saviour; and all Adam's race, saints and sinners, must and shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. And he will appear as a just God with the book of the Law, and pronounce the curse thence upon the bond-servant, for it is a covenant of works to him. And he will appear with the book of grace, as a Saviour, and pronounce the blessing of life from that, as a covenant of grace. Thus the Pharisee and the believer will both be judged according to their works. He that is of the works of the law will be tried by the book of the law; and he that is of the works of faith, will be tried by the law of faith and be proclaimed a good and faithful servant. But as for the hypocrite in Zion, who has sinned against the ministration of death, and likewise made the ministry of the Spirit a savour of death unto death, the word that Christ hath spoken shall judge him. And, though he says the law of faith is no rule, yet by that rule shall he be judged; and by that rule shall he be condemned, as a hypocrite, and an unbeliever; and be cast into outer darkness, being found a hypocrite by the law of truth, and an unbeliever by the law of faith. The Law is not done away, as a covenant of works; it will entangle a foolish Galatian still: and the weak believer, when deceived by these vain janglers, finds to his sorrow that the Law is a covenant of works still; and genders to bondage still, for it binds him hand and foot, as sure as ever he goes to work by that rule, unless he perform a perfect task, which he never can; for while he

seeks to the Law, to be made perfect by the flesh, Christ profits him nothing; and without Christ he can do nothing. In this quotation, the Law is indeed done away, as a covenant of works. The next quotation brings, it back, and sets it in full force again. So true are St. Paul's words, that the teachers of the Law know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. For thus it follows—

Quot. If the law is so done away as that the believer, do what he will, cannot sin, because there is no law to forbid, and, by forbidding, render the action criminal; why did the Holy Spirit dictate, under the Gospel dispensation, this Scripture—Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law?

Ans. I never heard that the law was done away, till I read this iniquitous publication; in which the Apostle John is made to say, the law is indeed done away, as a covenant of works. Which John never meant, and which I absolutely deny. This vile book is intended to debase the Gospel, as no law of right and wrong. But, if faith be no law, then unbelief can be no transgression. The unpardonable sin, doing despite to the Spirit of grace, trampling under foot the Son of God, can be no transgression; for where there is no law, there is no transgression. But by the law of faith shall all these be found guilty, and shall be judged, and damned, without the moral law. I never heard, till I read this vile book, that the believer, do what he will, cannot sin; nor did I ever hear, till this abominable piece appeared, that the Gospel was no rule of obedience, and that it was no rule or standard to try a hypocrite or an infidel by. It is a perfect rule for the saint to work and live by; a rule to try and judge a hypocrite by; and it has got the heaviest sentence annexed to it that ever dropped from the mouth of God. But if, as this book asserts, the law has ceased to exist as a covenant of works, its commanding and condemning power is gone: and it can make no action criminal; for, where there is no law, there is no transgression. This is your own doctrine; and you have tacked about, and destroyed it, and so made yourselves transgressors. I never heard, in all my life, that believers could not sin: I believe, in many things, they offend all. And, when they do, God proceeds against them by the laws of Zion, and

corrects them in a fatherly way. And he that is under the law transgresseth the law, and is proceeded against in a judicial way. And the hypocrite, by the law of faith, is dealt worse than the Pharisee. The reprobate, that despised Moses's Law, died without mercy. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God! When God makes inquisition for blood, he will not forget the hypocrite. The drift of this book is to render the law of faith as no rule. Hence it is noted that it is insufficient to discover and insufficient to punish sin, without the law—whereas the law of faith has got its sentence, as well as the law of works. He that continues not in all things written in the book of the law is cursed by that; and the hypocrite in Zion, who believes not, shall be damned for his infidelity. Which sentence comes not from the moral law, for that is not of faith, but of works. Nor does it condemn for not believing, but for not doing. Paul says, the latter is worthy of the sorer punishment. Hence it pears that the hypocrite transgresseth some law, by the judgment of which a sorer punishment shall be inflicted. Yea, it had been better (saith Peter) if such had never known the right way; better they had continued under the old veil, than, after they have known, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them; for such shall be beaten with many stripes. But, as to making the Apostle say that the moral law is the old commandment, which he calls the word which was preached from the beginning; and that the Apostle laid down no other rule but the law for the believer to live and converse by; is I say, a palpable lie, and a contradiction to every chapter in the New Testament, let our opponents pick out what chapter they please. John tells us that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The word of life, and the killing letter, are two things. If there be no rule but the moral law, the hypocrite will fare very well; for that condemns no man for disbelieving, but for not doing. However, he will find damnation by another rule, and from another law: Christ's word, and not Moses's writings, shall condemn him.

Was I to extract one half of this piece, and put the other half against it, there is not one assertion but what itself contradicts. Who

would ever have thought that a man of sense, a scholar, a divine, a tutor, a master or mistress of arts, could ever publish such inconsistencies, such lies, such nonsense, as this—and then call it a confutation of errors, to deceive the simple, harden the base, and injure them that dearly love the Lord Jesus!

Quot. Whosoever—What can be a stronger expression? It takes in both the believer and unbeliever—committeth sin—it is in the present tense—transgresseth also the Law. Consequently, the Law still exists, or else the Apostle wrote nonsense; which none but an Antinomian can suppose.

Ans. In two former quotations it is asserted that the law has ceased to exist as a covenant of works; and, as a covenant of works, it is indeed done away. But, in this last quotation, the Law still exists, or else the Apostle wrote nonsense; and then the Antinomian is represented as supposing what these blind Authors have asserted. If Paul had not given a description of a vain jangler, one never could have imagined that any persons, sober, and in their rationality, could ever have published such self-contradictions.

John, in this last quotation, is made to speak what he never meant. In I John chap. ii. the Evangelist is writing about two sorts of people. Some were Antichrists, and went out of the church, and from the Apostles, because they were not of them, ver. 18, 19. Others had an unction that abode in them, and they needed not these false teachers to instruct them, v. 27.

In chap. iii. ver. 1-3, he writes to believers as sons of God; and says, Every one that hath this hope of sonship and heirship in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Then, in ver. 4 he breaks off to the other class—Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is a transgression of the law. And by the word also, he makes such hypocrites transgressors of some other law, as well as the law moral. Whoso sinneth hath not seen Christ, neither known him. He that committeth sin is of the devil, ver. 6, 8. John makes the hypocrite a transgressor in a twofold sense: Whoso transgresseth [by apostacy] and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not

God. Such an one is a transgressor against the Gospel of Christ, and he transgresseth also the law. The law is the ministration of death to him, and the Gospel is a savour of death unto death to him: he is cursed by the former and damned by the latter. He that is under the law, and does it not, is cursed; and he that hears the Gospel, and believes not, shall be damned.

Quot. This was written to believers; and it a strong attestation that the law is not abrogated, but still remains in full force, as the rule of righteousness.

Ans. If the law has ceased to exist and is done away, as a covenant of works, as you assert, you have abrogated it—for to command to do for life, and to condemn for not doing, is all the power it ever had: and, if it hath ceased to exist as a covenant of works, it hath no power to command to work, nor to condemn for not working, according to your doctrine. This is vile and damnable Antinomianism; and is making void the Law in every sense, and establishes it in no sense whatever. The word of God declares that the law is not made for a righteous man. It is not made to rule, govern, or condemn, a man justified by faith; for he is ruled and governed by the grace of Christ. He is not under the law, but under grace. The law is made for the lawless and disobedient; and we know that whatsoever the law saith it saith to them that are under the law. Here are the persons described for whom this law is made; and they are not the righteous, but the lawless and disobedient: and the whole contents of the law are directed to them that are under it; but the righteous are not under the law, but under grace. But, if the moral law be the only rule of the saint's work, he must serve in the oldness of the letter. The works of the law, and not the works of faith, are what the believer must perform: and by the law must he stand or fall, and by it must his weakness be tried, and punished; and then woe to him, for Zion's own righteousness is but as filthy rags, which can never stand the test of the Law. Nor can the Law put up with one imperfect action, nor shew mercy to any that are in the least imperfect. Faith and repentance pass for nothing here. Perfection it will have, as itself is perfect can shew no mercy; it

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knows of none. It held Christ himself, as a bond servant, all his days: I say, as a bond servant. (Read and compare Exod. xxi. 32. Psal. xxii. 20, 21. Zech. ix. 12.) The precept held him fast till he came to his trial, and the sentence held him fast till he gave up the ghost. When he rose from the dead, he cried, All hail! And he that, by faith, finds rest in his infinite satisfaction, ceases from his works, as God did from his: he ceases from the works of the law as God did from the works of Creation.

Quot. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin.

Ans. This is a contradiction of what you asserted before. You say, the believer is delivered from sin, but the new man is taken captive by sin. If the saint is free from sin, and the new man is a captive to sin, this seed can be of no use to the believer, but rather the believer should help this captive. I would to God that such ignorant, unenlightened persons, would never meddle with such sublime matters, and handle them in so vile a way. Talk about the seed of God; and then about the new creature, created in righteousness and true holiness, falling a captive to the devil! O, what judicial blindness, confusion, and hardness of heart, is this! What enmity against the Gospel, and the preachers of it, must rage in the breasts of such persons, to drive them over all bounds, into such a desperate frenzy as to plunder, pervert, misconstrue, and prostitute, the Divine Oracles of God to such base purposes as to deceive the simple, and injure (in the Lord's work) the faithful labourers of the vineyard! However, as you have got a bridle in your jaws, causing, you to err, go on, and, by God's help, I will follow you, as long as I can hold a pen. You are got into worse than Egyptian darkness now, and the veil will gather faster and faster on your heels. But I find the path of the just shines more and more, unto the perfect day. Let me contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and do you contend for the law; and our readers will soon see which is the burning and the shining light; for, by your darkness passing before, the true light will shine after it.

Quot. In Zacharias and Elizabeth, the father and mother of John the Baptist, we have a beautiful example of what the Christian is, or, at least, ought to be. It is said of them, They were both righteous before God; walking in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless. Luke i. 6.

Ans. The authors of this book can charge William Huntington with no more ungodliness, or sinful walking, since his conversion, than they can charge the above-mentioned persons; and yet their whole drift is to represent me a Magus in doctrine, and a devil in life: however, they can never overthrow the doctrines that I hold. This last quotation justifies my doctrine: for, if they were both righteous, they were justified by an imputed righteousness. And it is clear that the grace of God did not lead them into licentiousness: for, as they walked in the Spirit, they did not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for they walked in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord, blameless; so that the righteousness of the law was fulfilled in them, and grace taught them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. And this is what I assert. But, after all, this passage of Scripture serves my purpose much better than the purpose of my opponents. For, though the law of works had no charge against Zacharias, because he was under grace; yet the law of faith had. Which shews that faith is a rule of obedience; and his transgressing that rule brought a sore and a public judgment upon him: Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed; because thou believest "not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season." Luke i. 20. Is it not strange, that a good man, a saint of God, should be rebuked by an angel from heaven; struck dumb for nine months, for his unbelief, or for transgressing the law of faith; and yet the law of faith (as this book suggests) is no rule of obedience; is no law to discover and forbid sin; no law to arraign the transgressor of it; nor yet a law furnished with a sentence to punish the disobedient thereto! However, though the law of works brought nothing against Zacharias's walk, the law of faith brought a heavy charge against his unbelieving heart. If this word, spoken by an angel, was stedfast, and Zacharias's transgression and disobedience thereto received a just recompense of reward; how will those escape who obscure and traduce the law

of faith (which at first began to be spoken by the Lord) as no rule of right and wrong; and so make the kingdom of God, which stands not in word, nor in letter, but in power, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, a mere fancy! Let these enemies to Antinomianism look to it; lest, after all their contention for the letter, they are found doing despite to the Spirit of grace. For, although they think the law of faith, in the hand of the Spirit, is no rule; yet sinning against it is the Great Transgression, (Psal xix. 13.), yea, it is the unpardonable sin. Which shews that the Spirit's law, or law of the Spirit, is the grandest rule, and the greatest of all laws; for all other sins are pardonable but this—this is the sin unto death.

If my reader thinks that I bear too hard upon them, in saying they think the law of faith to be no rule of Obedience; consequently, no law to punish the transgressor of it—let him well weigh the next quotation, where the moral law is brought in, as the only rule of right and wrong; for nothing but transgressing those precepts is sin, and, without that, no process against a stoner can be drawn; and it is only by that rule that a punishment can be inflicted: so that the hypocrite in Zion, the infidel in profession, and the unpardonable sinner, have nothing to fear; for the Decalogue says nothing about them; but, by Christ's word shall those be judged, and the twelve Apostles, in their testimony, shall be witnesses against them.

Quot. If there is no Law, and consequently, no sin, to a believer, why was David's conduct with respect to Bathsheba, and Uriah the Hittite, so peculiarly marked, so strictly stigmatized, so severely punished? His conduct in this affair, in the very nature of things, must be either right or wrong; and none will dare to say it was right, because it was followed by the most evident and unequivocal proofs of Divine displeasure: but, if it was wrong, what was it constituted it so? It must be a deviation from the rule of right; and what can be that rule but the moral law, which says—Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery?

Ans. The law of faith goes closer than—Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery: for it declares that hatred to a brother (such as these authors bear to me) is murder; and that a lascivious

eye is adultery; and that such as Maria, who will not work, shall not eat; yea, that such as take no care for themselves, and their own house, have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels.—But now to the quotation. It is well known that David lived under the old dispensation. The day had not broken, the shadows did not flee away, in his days. He was obliged to attend the mountains of myrrh and hills of frankincense. The children under that dispensation were like children in non-age. They differed little from servants, though lords of all; but were under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But, when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son—no more a servant under the ruling power of the law, but a son, by the Spirit of adoption, and under the reign of adopting grace, Gal. iv. 1-4, &c. David did not live to see these jubilee days; he lived under the old dispensation. The Law and the Prophets were until John; but David was dead before John came. Nevertheless, we will consider David's crimes, and God's proceeding against him; whether it was by the rule of works, or by the rule of faith; whether in the court of judicature, or in the court of chancery; whether at the bar of the law, or at the Mercy-seat. For, if God dealt with him according to the rule of the moral law, as an adulterer, he must be stoned; and, as a murderer, he must be killed. He that does violence to the blood of any person, let him flee to the pit; let no man stay him; Shimei cursed David, and stoned him, which is going by your rule; for this, he knew, he deserved by the law; and he expected that God, in just judgment, was going to measure the same to him as he had measured to others; "The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom. And, behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man!" The unalterable and eternal law was point blank against David, both for adultery and murder; and stoning to death

was the unrepealable sentence annexed to that law. And, surely God will be true to his precept, and to his threatening: for he is not man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent. He is without variableness, or shadow of turning. And, according to this vile book—that I am opposing, the moral law was David's only rule of life, and God's only rule of judgment. And yet Absalom dies; and not one stone hits David, nor a drop of his blood is shed: repentance is granted him; he is restored to the favour of God, to the joys of his salvation, to his throne and dignity, and excellent majesty is added to him. Now, let our opponents tell us, by the Ten Commandments, how God could appear just in all this, by that only rule which they contend for; and whether they do not, by that only rule of God and man, represent the Most High in an awful point of light, in his proceedings with David? But, if they say that Jesus, David's Surety, took his crimes upon himself, and was stoned, and died, in David's room; then my answer is, that God must proceed against David by some other rule, if he appears just in the-matter, and yet justifies fallen David from all his ungodliness. David knew the Moral rule, and trembled at it as much as ever I did, and knew he could never stand by that rule of judgment. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for, in thy sight, shall no man living be justified. He knew God could never justify him, but must condemn him, or appear unjust by that rule. Hence his pitiful plea, be surety for thy servant for good. But the Ten Commandments say nothing of surety-ship; they will have good hearts, and good works: no evil deeds can be done away by that rule; no evil works can ever stand by that rule. To the Surety of the better Testament David fled; in a covenant relation to God he stood; and of the covenant of grace he reminded his Maker—Have respect to the Covenant. He considered himself as a new Creature, and begs God to respect the work of his own hands. To the Mercy-seat he fled for refuge; and pleaded the worthiness of the Man of God's right hand; the Son of Man, made strong for himself; who was to bear those heavy crimes of David, which, he says, was a sore burden, too heavy for him to bear. The ceremonial Law was David's Gospel, and through that he looked to Jesus—Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow: under the Saviour's wings, at

the Mercy-seat, David found his refuge from the wrath of the Law, till all his calamities were overpassed; and the application that Nathan made to David, Thou shalt not die, for God hath put away thy sin—never came from your rule; for, by that, the soul that sins shall die, God will not, cannot, clear the guilty by that rule. This I insist upon, that, if the Moral Law was David's only rule of life, (and, if ever it was, it was in David's days, for Christ, the end of it, was not then come) and if the Moral Law was the only rule by which God proceeded against David, all the world could have never saved the life, nor the soul, of the sweet Psalmist of Israel from that dreadful curse. Nor did Nathan preach the parable of the Ewe-Lamb from the Law; but fixed David's crime upon his conscience, by enforcing the goodness of God to him, and his ungrateful returns. "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel; and I delivered thee out of the hands of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives, into thy bosom; and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah: and, if that had been too little, I would, moreover, have given thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?" David sinned against both Law and Gospel: he did not keep that commandment which Paul gave to Timothy, without spot. He sinned not only against the Moral Law, but he sinned against the commandment of life evermore; which, he says, is the blessing which God commanded on Mount Zion; and which commandment, David knew, was given Christ touching him—Thou hast given a commandment to save me. And he knew that it was a life-giving word—This is my comfort in my affliction, thy word hath quickened me. And in this word he believed, or he had perished for ever—I had fainted, unless I had believed: but I believed, and therefore have I spoken.

Quot. We find, in David, a most striking example of evangelical repentance, and godly sorrow, upon the account of sin. He was a sinner, but he was no Antinomian.

Ans. I will not say that the Authors of this book are Antinomians; but this I will say, that the book contains the worst Antinomianism

that I ever read; and is a vile and damnable harangue, both against the Law, the Gospel, and the grace of God. Against the Law, because it declares the Law has ceased to exist, and is done away, as a Covenant of works. Against the Gospel, because it is no rule of right and wrong. And against the grace of God, by declaring that the new man is taken captive by sin. And, as for their mentioning evangelical repentance and godly sorrow, they never experienced any thing of it; nor does this book give any better description of it than old Mother Shipton would have done. Besides, what signifies talking of David's repentance, godly sorrow, and pardon of sin? Ministers of the Law should leave these things to the ministers of the Spirit. Your rule, engraven on tables of stone, accepts no repentance, nor godly sorrow: nor will it ever shew mercy, nor pardon iniquity; it neither mentions it, accepts it, nor gives any information about it. Any simple person, who should read this Treatise, who has not eyes to see through this mask of hypocrisy, and who should be informed that this pill, or bolus, was prepared for me; must conclude that, of all the wretched beings out of hell, William Huntington must be the vilest sinner, the worst liver, and the most dangerous preacher. What simple soul could imagine that such a spurious harangue could be levelled at the Everlasting Gospel; and to blacken the character of a monument of mercy, and a subject of special-grace, whose life and walk are consistent with the measure of grace received; and whose ministry is attended with the power of God to hundreds, if not to thousands? And must not the same simple soul think, by the same rule, that the Authors of such a book must exceed all the world in purity of heart, and holiness of life? None could ever think that such a testimony as they have borne against me could ever be false. Yet, as the Lord liveth, I am willing to be weighed in an even balance with any of them, with respect to heart-holiness or good works. And, as to envying them their happiness, I would not exchange my state for theirs; no, not for a million worlds, though I am nick-named an Antinomian!

Quot. Faith is the grand bond of union between Christ and the souls of his people; and, therefore, we are said to be justified by Faith, and sanctified by Faith.

Ans. This is false. Faith is not the grand bond of union: nor is it ever so called; for it is God's everlasting love to his elect that is the bond of the covenant, and the bond of union; and this union took place not only in the purpose of God, but in Christ Jesus, before ever faith was found upon earth. I have loved thee with an everlasting love. And this love made us one with Christ from eternity; it was the self-moving cause in God to give us life in him before the world began, and we were preserved in him; and, at last, by the same love, drawn sensibly to him, and by the same love spiritually and sensibly united to him. It is the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, that is the threefold cord that cannot be broken. Faith is the effect of this bond, but this bond is not Faith. Faith in us, that purifies the heart, is one thing; but God's eternal and immutable love to us is another. I wish this foolish girl would take in a little needle-work to do; and not meddle with, and muddle, the mysteries of religion, for the sake of a morsel of bread.

Quot. Because Faith, as a hand, receives Christ as the justifying righteousness of the soul; and actually receives, out of his infinite fulness, all those communications of divine grace, &c.

Ans. Suppose Faith, as a hand, does this, the bond of God's covenant, and Maria's hand, widely differ. God's love runs through the whole family of heaven, and earth; and holds all the stakes to the main standard of the tabernacle. But, what do Maria's hands hold? Neither the spindle, nor the distaff, Prov. xxxi. 19.

Quot. So that those who live and die without being made partakers of vital faith, it is evident, never were united to Christ any other way.

Ans. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing. So that persons never were united to Christ this way; for men may have faith, and yet not enjoy charity, or feel the bond of union.

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Quot. For all those whom he has taken into union with himself, in a federal relation and union, by an act of divine sovereignty, in the fulness of time he unites to himself, by implanting in their hearts vital faith, as a divine, abiding, holy principle, by which they are cut off from their old stock, and are ingrafted into the new, the living Vine.

Ans. Maria abounds in mysteries: she speaks wisdom to them that are perfect. We were informed, before, that vital faith was the bond of union; this was proved by its being a hand to receive, righteousness to justify, and grace to sanctify: but now Maria goes back again, and turns this bond, and this receiving hand, into a sword. For it is by vital faith, by this divine, this holy principle, that believers are cut off from the old stock, and ingrafted into the Vine. Maria is no gardener, nor botanist. We read of grafting olive-trees in Scripture, but the Holy Ghost never mentions grafting vines.

Quot. And on this grand union with the Lord Christ does all sanctification, and communion, and walking with God, depend.

Ans. All sanctification, which is God's setting his elect apart in eternity; and Christ's offering up himself upon the Cross, by which offering he for ever perfected them that are sanctified—all depends upon Maria's bond, hand and sword, if we can but believe. For my part, I know it is a damnable lie. But we must go on.

Quot. It is God the Holy Ghost, who alone can create this faith in the soul of a sinner.

Ans. Maria's bond, hand, and sword, is at last turned into a creature. None but the Spirit can create this faith; so that it is not the sinner that is created anew, but faith is created in him; and then it turns to a sword, and then to a hand, and, at last to a bond. Reader, have a little patience with me, while I pursue these orthodox divines, and discover their folly, lest thou be misled by them. Wisdom tells thee that some sort of women have ways that are moveable, so that thou canst not know them: I am sure I don't, but yet I know that this woman is not right.

Quot. For, as it is impossible for a dead man to give himself natural life; so it is equally impossible for a dead sinner, that is a man dead in sin, to give himself spiritual life; that is, divine faith.

Ans. Maria's bond, hand, sword, and creature, is now termed spiritual life, for spiritual life is divine faith; so that this created faith is Divinity itself. We do not live by faith on Christ, who is our life; nor does Christ live in us according to this, but created faith is spiritual life in us. Now, reader, we shall differ from all that we have said before.

Quot. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word.

Ans. In the above quotation, faith was created in us, but now it is created out of us, and comes into us by hearing the word. Now, reader, we must take another turn; and where you may find us next, I know not; but you may depend upon it that we shall be somewhere stumbling upon the dark mountains.

Quot. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit; and when the Holy Ghost takes this noble sword into his mighty hand, he makes it quick and powerful, cutting down all opposition, and fully efficacious to the conviction, conversion, sanctification, and consolation, of his people.

Ans. Now we see that Maria's bond, hand, creature, and spiritual life, has nothing to do with cutting the sinner off from his old stock for it is all done by the word of God, and not by faith created in us by the Spirit. In this quotation, Maria's hand has nothing to do, for thus run the words: The Spirit makes this sword quick and powerful, cutting down all opposition, and fully efficacious. That is, the sword is fully efficacious to the conviction, conversion, sanctification, and consolation of his people. The sword that wounds, heals: convictions, sanctifications, and consolations, all come from the same sword. The Holy Spirit handles the sword, but holiness and consolation come by the sword. Faith makes no application in this business.

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Quot. The sword of Scanderbeg the Great did wonders; but it was only when it was cited by the mighty arm of Scanderbeg.

Ans. The sword that this book talks about, does greater works than that of Scanderbeg; his sword was used to kill, but this sword brings sanctification and consolation. How does the Almighty blind, confound, confuse, and discover these empty novices, by letting them expose their confusion to the Church and world; and yet hold them in such blindness as to permit them to call their self-contradictions, and palpable lies, A confutation of error, and unmasking of Antinomianism!

As for me, I don't know that any body can justly charge me with preaching to encourage sin, or say I have lived as an example of licentiousness, or being in any sense behind-hand in promoting, and in shewing a pattern of, good works; if I have, let them testify against me.

Quot. They that are overwhelmed with distress, and sometimes conclude that they have no right to rejoice in the liberty of the Gospel, that they are not the Lord's freemen, but still slaves to sin and Satan, still under the reigning power of sin; and, consequently, not partakers of Christ's salvation. Now, lest any of these, whose hearts the Lord would not have made sad, &c.

Ans. If they are overwhelmed with distress, and slaves to sin and Satan, and under the reigning power of sin, they have no more right to rejoice in the liberty of the Gospel than Satan has, who is reserved in chains of darkness. The sinner here described is overcome by Satan; and of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage; if he is, and binds himself to be a slave to sin and Satan, he is free from righteousness. His members are not yielded as instruments of righteousness, nor is he, nor can he be, a servant of righteousness; he is holden with the cords of his sin, and Satan has the mastery over him. In this quotation, a slave to sin and Satan is allowed to have a right to rejoice in the liberty of the Gospel; a

sinner overwhelmed with distress, and under the dominion of sin, yet the Lord would not have his heart made sad. This is, I think, rank Antinomianism; for it is encouraging rash presumption, encouraging a slave to the devil to rejoice in the liberty of the Gospel.

Ans. Now, lest any of these should be made sad, by any thing contained in this treatise.

Ans. There is no fear of any real sadness of heart ensuing upon the perusal of this treatise; for there is no more force, power, or edge, to this sword, than there is to an eider-down quilt; it is calculated for nothing else but to bolster up and to harden hypocrites in their hypocrisy. As to God's people, no soul that ever was enlightened and quickened by the Lord would ever give it a second reading, nor even house-room, unless it be admitted into the water-closet.

Quot. I would wish to observe that where ever sin is hated, not only in its consequences and punishment, but in its nature and practice; where it is struggled with, fought against, prayed against, watched against, and groaned under, it hath no dominion.

Ans. Is a sinner's hating, struggling, fighting, watching, and groaning, of any avail in subduing the power of sin? Do the Scriptures ever muster such a band of pismires as these, to destroy the works of the devil? Here is no blood of atonement, no shield of faith, no sin-subduing, and super-abounding, grace. Sin has no dominion, saith this book, because it is fought against, watched against, prayed against, and groaned under: if groaned under, it must lie heavy upon the sinner; and will, till God's strength be made perfect in his weakness, and all-sufficient grace be communicated to him. Satan reaps no small advantage from such books as these; he that esteems iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood, who drove the mad Gadarene from his chains, will never refuse the challenge of this fighting sinner, nor start at his groans. If my reader will now observe, we shall find that this precious soul,

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whom the Lord would not have made sad, who has a right to rejoice in the liberty of the Gospel, is in want of but one thing, and that is, power.

Quot. These things are quite incompatible with the reigning love and power of sin. It may fight hard; it may rage desperately; it may, for a time, play the tyrant; but, during this time, the soul, though a captive, is not a slave. The tyrant is detested: and the soul wants nothing but power to throw off the iron yoke.

Ans.. If this fancied saint has no power, he has no faith; if destitute of power, the kingdom of God is not set up in his heart, for that stands not in word, but in power; and if he is a captive to Satan, he can have no right to rejoice in the liberty of the Gospel. Captivity is as opposite to liberty as slavery; nor will any child of God be brought to believe that Satan shews such lenity to his captives as to let them stand all the day idle. He that is a captive the devil is a slave; he that is under the jurisdiction of that father will do the lusts of that father. This fancied saint is next set down with Paul and Job; and the promise of the Gospel is applied to him, though God has not made bare his arm.

Quot. It is evident such an one has been taught by Christ, the great Prophet, a good degree of self knowledge: the understanding is enlightened to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the spirituality of the law of God; and therefore the man cries out, with Paul—I am carnal, sold under sin. And with Job, I am vile! It is also evident, his will is renewed, and his affections in part sanctified, for the evil he does, he allows not, I bid. Nay, he hates it.

Ans. Here is a man renewed in his will, and his affections in part sanctified; and he is also taught of Christ, whose word to the heart is always attended with power, to make the dead live, and the prisoner go free. And yet this man has no power, for he cannot throw off the iron yoke.

Quot. And could he be delivered from the very being of sin, and from the possibility of sinning, it would be the triumph of his heart, and the joy of his soul.

Ans. Thousands in despair, and on the verge of hell, would be glad of this, who never knew the grace of God, and who never will be saved. For if a man be delivered from the being of sin he can have no inducement, or motion to it; and if from the possibility of it, he is in no danger, consequently in no fear. The saint's obedience is the reverse of all this; he obeys God against the inclinations of self and the enticements of sin.

Quot. If this is the habitual frame of thy mind, Gentle Reader, thou art one of those happy ones to whom the promise declares, Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under grace.

Ans. There is one great difficulty, which must devolve upon these authors; and that is, to make this Gentle Reader, who is a captive to sin and Satan, though not a slave; who, though renewed and sanctified, is yet destitute of power to throw off the iron yoke—I say, it is a difficulty to make such a prisoner believe that he is one of those happy ones, (upon a level with Paul and Job) to whom the promise declares, that sin shall not have dominion over him, because he is not under the Law, but under grace—I say, to make a man believe that has a right to rejoice in Gospel liberty, when holden in the cords of his sins; and that sin has no dominion over him while a captive to it; and that he is not under the Law, though he has no power to throw off the iron yoke; and that he is under grace, though no salvation from has ever been applied to him: this, I say, must be difficult work by faith. Maria told Mr. George King, that this book does contain Ryland's sentiments; and if so, I will be bold to affirm that such a faith never was hatched any where, either in heaven or earth, but at Enfield.

Quot. Thou art not under the Law, for Christ hath redeemed thee from it: it is dead to thee as a covenant of works; and thou art dead to it, that thou mayest be married to another husband.

Ans. The Antinomianism which this book has all along reprobated; yea, the very doctrine that I hold, and for the preaching of which I am represented in this book as black as Satan himself; yea, the whole of it, is advanced in this last quotation, only we differ with respect to application. Maria applies it to them only to whom salvation from sin has never been given; who are destitute of power, under the iron yoke, and in a state of captivity to sin. Whereas, I apply it to none but those who are born again of the Spirit; who are purged from guilt and dead works, delivered from the reign of sin, and made free by the Spirit; who are no more servants, but sons; and not sons of the bond woman, but of the free. Thus we agree in doctrine, and only differ in application. This captive, in his iron yoke, is farther comforted by many applications.

Quot. *And he is the God of grace: he giveth grace and glory. The Father hath blessed thee with all spiritual blessings in Christ.*

Ans. This is another difficult branch of Faith; that is, for this gentle reader to believe that he is blessed with all spiritual blessings, while he is cursed with the iron yoke of bondage, in captivity to sin, and destitute of the power of divine grace. For my part, I should not wonder if God should give such authors up to the buffetings of Satan; to be stripped, even of their rationality, for such ignorant meddling, base handling, and falsely applying, the Gospel, and the promises of it.

Quot. *Nothing is so great an enemy to heart-holiness as Unbelief.*

Ans. The greatest enemy to holiness throughout this book has all along been the Antinomian, for not bringing the believer under the Law, as his only rule of life. He that holds not this point is, according to this book, the vilest sinner, and even a child of the devil. And this Antinomian, after all, is unbelief. He is the adversary, and the greatest enemy of heart-holiness; and I think, as our opponents have caught unbelief, they ought to let Huntington

go his way. If they charge unbelief with all the crimes, then are the children free.

Quot. Nothing is so great an enemy to heart-holiness as unbelief: Satan hates it, but he cannot rob us of it; but unbelief robs us of it, or rather, prevents our receiving it. Faith works it in the soul.

Ans. The heart-holiness of a saint consists in his soul being the seat, and his body the temple, of the Holy Ghost; as God hath said— I will dwell in them, and walk in them. Unbelief, we are informed, can rob us of this; unbelief can prevent our receiving this: but faith works it in the soul. Unbelief, therefore, must be more than almighty; and faith, instead of being a work, a fruit, or a grace, of the Spirit, he is the worker of the Spirit in us, for he works holiness in the soul. Blessed be Almighty God, who hath opened my blind eyes to see, and breathed eternal life into my senseless soul, to feel the operations of his Spirit, and the dominion of his grace; and to see through the dark and iniquitous designs of such Authors, and such arch deceptions, as these. To speak without lightness, and without prejudice, I have read this book till my hair has moved upon my head, and my flesh upon my bones—to see persons, so destitute of the common ideas of a work of grace, make such havoc with sacred matters, and publish such confusion to the Church and the world!

Quot. This is the will of God, even your sanctification. Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.

Ans. But how can a man be holy who is captive to sin, and destitute of power? And how can he be fruitful who never was made partaker of the fruits? All the applications this 64th page are made to the gentle reader, who is under the iron yoke of bondage, and has no power to throw it off.

Quot. Should these pages fall into the hands of a professor of religion, who can hear of Christ, and talk much about Christ, and the riches of his grace, and the wonders of his salvation; and yet is careless and indifferent

whether he, as an individual, is made partaker of the riches of that grace, and the wonders of that salvation, by the power of the Spirit of God, &c.

Ans. If these pages should fall into the hands of such a professor, he will not condemn this book, nor will this book condemn him; for there is no more rich grace, and wondrous salvation, in this book, nor described, by the Authors of it, than such a professor has got in him. The one is a drum, the other a tinkling cymbal, and nothing but emptiness in either. Besides, where is the difference between the graceless professor last described, and the gentle reader to whom the blessings were applied? The former is a captive to sin, the latter destitute of grace; the former, no power to cast off the iron yoke; the latter, without the wonders of salvation. Here is no more difference between the former saint, and the latter hypocrite, than between my two eyes: they are both under the power of the devil; only one is sinking like Judas, and the other comforting himself like Esau.

Quot. Who can live loosely, and allow himself in sinful dispositions, and sinful practices, under the idea that there is no Law, and consequently, no sin, to a believer?

Ans. It were well if all Authors had dispositions and practices agreeable to their best words. How well Maria lives up to this, I shall leave to God and her own conscience, who know what she is in works, from what she seems by words; nor shall I ever wish to copy after her—for then, indeed, I should be an Antinomian both in heart and practice. But this I insist on, that if the Law is the believer's rule of life, by which he is to live and conduct himself; and that he is under the precept of it, to obey it; and that all that is amiss in him, or done amiss by him, is to be laid to that rule, as the only rule of right and wrong, or the only rule to shew what is sin; and by that rule he is to be punished for sin, sin being the transgression of no other Law but that, according to this book—then I say that Christ profits nothing; that the active and passive obedience of the Saviour is a mere phantom; the former not delivering the saint from the yoke of the precept, nor the latter from the sentence.

And that the believer differs nothing from a sinner who is dead in sin: for the Law is no more than such a rule to him; it has no more than a precept, and a sentence, for him; it is no more than a rule of life, or a rule of conduct, (which you please) to him.

But, if our opponents reply—the believer is under the Law to Christ; I answer—so are all sinners; all in the flesh are under the Law. But if you say—not under the Law to Christ; I answer, They are all under the Law, and all are accountable to Christ. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. I know of no other judge: the blessing and the curse will be pronounced by Christ, as the only judge of quick and dead.

And, if the Law be all this, let our opponents shew us how the Law has ceased to exist as a covenant of works, in any sense; or, whether it ever can differ from a covenant of works, seeing God doth not, will not, minister the Spirit by it, or by the works of it.

For, if it is not a covenant of works, how can the reward be reckoned of debt to him that works?

And, if it be not a covenant of works, but a Law of Love to the believer; then I ask, how a saint can go from the enjoyment of his liberty, from the profits of Christ, and be entangled with it as a yoke of bondage, only by seeking perfection by it?

And, if the Law has ceased to exist as covenant of works, how it can be called a Law, and whence its authority to govern, convince and punish the believer, can be derived? For, if it has ceased to exist, who stood by at its exit, and saved the life of its authority?

And, if the system of faith be not a rule of right and wrong, according to this book, how it can be called a Law? And how a believer can be said to receive grace for obedience thereto? And how a man that hears it can be damned for his infidelity, or disobedience to the Gospel?

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And, if it be no rule to convince, and to inflict chastisements on a believer; how God, as a gracious Father, not as an angry Judge, in covenant love, not in the wrath of the Law, can visit the sins of his children with a rod, and their iniquities with scourges, for transgressing this life-giving commandment; and yet not take the promised life of this commandment nor loving-kindness, the bond of this covenant, from them?

Or, if he proceeds against them according to your rule, and the believer be under that rule; which way God can appear just, the Law be the only invariable rule, and they escape eternal fire? The Decalogue says nothing about salvation by grace.

And, if heart-holiness, in reality, is the thing you enforce and contend for how you come to be so ignorant of its nature and operation, as not to be able to give a description of one branch of it, consistent either with Scripture or experience?

Do not you say, Faith is created in us; and then assert that this creature works heart-holiness in us, which is the Holy Ghost?

Does the Spirit create faith? If so, is not faith a creature? And does this creature, then, work the Spirit of holiness in the sinner's heart?

Can any wise or sober man ever think that any thing like holiness had ever operated on a person; that gives such a scandalous description of it?

And, if you are for good works in deed and in truth, how come you to traduce those who are fruitful, and walk in them? when yourselves, by ocular demonstration, are altogether barren in this respect!

And, if you can justly charge the Antinomian you traduce with as many evils in ten years as your own conscience can lay to your charge in ten weeks, why do you not publish his evil deeds to the world?

And, if there be any one doctrine advanced in all this piece, that is not plainly contradicted in another part; let the Authors shew me what that doctrine is, and where it stands, and I will (if God permit) prove that it is so.

And, if this is not vain jangling, let them send me word that the Apostle means by those words.

Quot. Verily, verily, says the Son of God himself, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, (that is, habitually continues in the love and practice of it) is the servant of sin.

Ans. But Christ makes his elect free from that service, and such are free indeed. But, if the Authors of this book have no more experience than their gentle reader, who is a captive to Sin; no more power than their blessed Disciple, who cannot throw off the iron yoke; no more holiness than what their created faith has worked in them; no other bond of union, no other sword to cut them off from the old stock, than this new-made faith; they are on the old stock, and under a terrible master, to this day for these are not the things that accompany salvation, nor any thing like them. These are nothing but chimeras of a disordered brain; there is nothing of this to be found in the Bible, nor in the experience of God's children.

Reader, when our opponents have given me another job of this kind, I will, if time permit, delineate this Treatise a little more; and set their self-contradictions against each other, page against page, that thou mayest have a short and concise view of the productions of vain-janglers, and of the judgment that appears in their goings. And of this, reader, be assured, that if any good treasure ever flows into thee, or from thee; if any real good works are ever performed by thee; if ever thou art at a certainty with thy state, and at a point in thy doctrine: thou must have a stronger bond of union than these Authors hold forth; a better faith than they teach; a better hope than they exhibit; more grace in heart than they in shew; better holiness than they can feign; be more mighty in deeds than they in words; have a better spirit than they can counterfeit; and be a better saint

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than they can describe—or thou wilt be empty in heart, and barren in life, to the day of thy death! So I conclude, and so thou mayest affirm.

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Appendices

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Appendix A

*The Ministry of William
Huntington S.S.*

(1745-1813)

An Appreciation and Vindication of Huntington

By Dr. George M. Ella

(Editor: William Huntington has come in for some quite unfair and unwarranted criticism in recent years from certain quarters including the Banner of Truth Magazine e.g. in the June 1988 issue. In this appendix Dr. Ella both defends Huntington and provides welcome background to both the man and his ministry.)

EVANGELICALS often think of a Minister of the Gospel as a man of acute learning, well versed in the original languages of the Bible and able to convey the Gospel in a dignified and well-spoken manner. God, however, seemingly delights in exceptions and He often chooses the lesser-endowed of this world to confound the wise and learned. This was the case in the 17th century with John Bunyan who was greatly admired by the learned John Owen. The 18th Century Awakening produced quite a number of "self-taught" ministers of the Gospel such as the ex slave-trader, John Newton and the ex-cobbler, William Carey. It would be difficult, however, to find another 18th century pastor who had such a humble background as William Huntington (1745-1813) who can only be styled as "ex-odd-jobman" or, as he preferred to call himself "the coal heaver". It must also be added that Huntington was greatly despised by many contemporary Christian ministers who had forgotten Christ's attitude of mercy to the poor.

In spite of Huntington's home-spun learning and rustic manners, the saint was able to serve the Lord in the pulpit for many years and became known in the Capital and far beyond as one of the most able ministers of his day. Not only was Huntington renowned as a faithful preacher of the Gospel but also his written works and letters found high praise and a wide readership¹. When one reads these hundred or so books and essays it becomes obvious at times that the writer has not taken courses in Systematic Theology. What Huntington writes, however, is hardly the poorer for that. He always stated his beliefs in either his own peculiar, though expressive, Bible-orientated language, or by quoting appropriate verses of Scripture. His doctrines can best be culled from his letters addressed to particular people at particular times dealing with particular problems. When discussing any formal declaration of his faith these special situations must be taken into account. This must be stated clearly as Huntington has been heavily criticised in recent times for being so weak in systematic theology that his utterances can be considered heresy. If Huntington had, however, read the list of heresies attributed to him in recent articles, he would, very likely, have been put off by their scholastic, pseudo-learned language and their dismal lack of experimental Christianity. Moreover, after grasping their significance, he would have certainly - and rightly - denied that they reflected his beliefs. He would also have been shocked and filled with remorse that a later generation had so wrongly misunderstood him.

What are then these modern criticisms against William Huntington, former Pastor of Providence Chapel, Grays Inn Road? They are of two kinds dealing first with Huntington's theology and second with his person. Modern critics have taken up the complaint raised against Huntington by 18th century Arminians and a few who held to a different Church Order that the preacher was an Antinomian. He has also been recently criticised for having a faulty view of Christ's imputed righteousness and for even believing that Christ's righteousness was **actual** in him (*Editor: that is, in the believer apart from Christ*) rather than **judicial** (*Editor: that is, that the believer is become the righteousness of God in Christ – see 2 Corinthians 5:21*). It

is also stressed by some that Huntington could not accept that God was ever angry with believers because of their sins. Lastly and most damaging of all is the criticism that God, according to Huntington, does not require holiness and obedience of the believer.

Looking at Huntington's character rather than his theology, critics say that he was a conceited, stand-offish tyrant; that he felt he was unable to err; that he spiritualised away God's commands concerning personal conduct; that he could not accept Dissenters and especially Arminians as Christians; and that he regarded himself as a prophet².

All these criticisms raised against Huntington have one main argument as their pivot. Huntington, it is maintained, felt himself above the Law of God. We use the term "Antinomian" to express such an attitude. Augustus Toplady, author of "Rock of Ages" and a contemporary of Huntington's, also knew what it meant to be accused of Antinomianism. He defines the term as the teaching *"That believers are released from all obligations to observe the moral law as a rule of external obedience: That in consequence of Christ's having wrought out a justifying righteousness for us, we have nothing to do but to sit down, eat, drink and be merry: that the Messiah's merits supersede the necessity of personal inherent sanctification; and that all our holiness is in him, not in ourselves; that the aboundings of divine grace give sanction to the commission of sin; and in a word that the whole preceptive law of God is not established, but repealed and set aside from the time we believe in Christ."*³ Toplady adds that if a man acts according to such principles, he must be a devil incarnate. Such principles are, however, attributed to Huntington.

Before allowing Huntington to speak for himself on the topic of Antinomianism, it must be explained that during the latter half of the 18th century there was a great controversy going on between Arminians and Calvinists. Each side was guilty of calling the other monstrous names. Huntington was branded an Antinomian by the Wesleyans, but so were Romaine, Hervey, Gill and Toplady. Wesley himself wrote accusing letters to many a Calvinist condemning

them for being in his eyes Antinomians. Calvinists of note were not too delicate in their criticism to call Wesley and Fletcher "Antinomians", too. In the above quoted work from the pen of Toplady we read *"The Arminians have of late made a huge cry about Antinomians! Antinomians! From the abundance of experience the mouth is apt to speak. The modern Arminians see so much real Antinomianism among themselves, and in their own tents, that Antinomianism is become the predominant idea, and the favourite watch-word of the party. Because they have got the plague, they think every body else has"*⁴ Huntington gives an example of the tensions between the two parties in his book 'The Arminian Skeleton'. One day the preacher went with two Christian friends to visit the mentally ill in a neighbouring asylum. The friends were challenged at the door by the woman who had the key to the ward with the question, *"Do you belong to Mr. Whitefield or Mr. Wesley?"* Huntington replied that he belonged to neither of them but shared the same doctrines as Mr. Whitefield. The woman, who happened to be an Arminian, then refused Huntington permission to visit the patients⁵.

Huntington on Antinomianism

What was Huntington's true attitude to Antinomianism? When quoting John iv: 14., where he is linking the "infinite divinity" of Christ with His power to give 'waters of life', the preacher informs us that: *"The Atheist denies the fountain; the Arian, the well; and the Antinomian denies the rivers."* It is quite clear from the context that Huntington is speaking **against** Antinomianism⁶. He sees Antinomians as denying Christ's work in the believer. This is not a solitary criticism of Antinomianism on Huntington's part. In fact, the frequency which Huntington deals with Antinomianism shows how sensitive he was of being accused of being such and how shocked he was at such an accusation. Writing again in 'The Arminian Skeleton', Huntington states: *"If God of his infinite mercy keep you from Arminianism, Arianism, and Antinomianism, I shall think you are Christians indeed."* He then goes on to write: *" . . . they are all three agreed against Christ; the Arminian cries down his merit; the Arian cries down his divinity; and the Antinomian cries down the revelation of*

*him to the heart*⁷; and then he adds the words, “*May God turn their hearts to the truth, and keep your souls from turning to their errors!*”

Such quotes hardly indicate that Huntington was an Antinomian. In fact the pastor argues in this work that the Arminians are in reality the Antinomians as with their doctrine of Universal charity they “*run away from the Law of God*” and give sinful people the vain idea that they can be and indeed are perfect. The Arminian, he says, in his criticism that Calvinists are Antinomians, teaches men “*to condemn the just, by saying they are Antinomians; and to justify the wicked, by telling the proud and insensible hypocrite that he is perfect*”⁸. Again in ‘The Arminian Skeleton’ we find Huntington criticising the Arminians of his day because of their favourable view of Arians and Socinians. Huntington’s comment is that: “*The Arminian calls upon you to forsake the strong food, or every essential truth in the Bible, the Arian and Socinian want you to give up your God, and to bow your knee to a creature; the Antinomian calls upon you to give up the Spirit’s quickening power, your daily cross, and a tender conscience; and the Deist make short work of it; he tells you there is a first cause, who had a hand in the beginning, but has nothing to do with our end, and declares that God hath forsaken the earth*”⁹. Whatever one thinks of Huntington after reading his own words, it would surely be impossible to infer that Huntington was an Antinomian.

Huntington on the Law

It is true that Huntington often wrote seemingly disparagingly of the binding nature of the Law of Moses. He felt that those who trusted in Moses for their salvation had a veil over their faces and a yoke around their necks¹⁰. Such a belief was merely the sour leaven of the Pharisees, he argued, quoting Romans vii. 5. Most reformed evangelicals nowadays would agree with him. Huntington, however, is not saying that the Law of Moses has no relevance to a Christian but “*doing much business*”, as he puts it, never saved anyone. He is against the view that works promote salvation. The Law convicts and kills, he teaches, but the gospel brings life. This must be borne in mind when reading Huntington’s comments on

those who make *"a most furious oration for the law, and against the Antinomian"*¹¹. The fact that many Methodists of the day accused all Calvinists of being Antinomians because they emphasised Sovereign Grace should make us cautious about condemning Huntington as such. On numerous occasions, the preacher, for instance, urges believers to follow Paul's example and *"serve the law of God"* and love *"the law of God after the inner man"*. Huntington is also careful to stress that *"Gospel obedience"* is the mark and duty of a Christian. It is obvious that though Huntington rejects any efficacy in trusting in the Law, he believes that a love for the Law of God does occur after conversion¹². This view is quite foreign to the Antinomian but a homely truth for the Bible Christian.

Huntington on Imputed Righteousness and Sin

It is not surprising that critics have found difficulty in understanding Huntington's teaching on imputed righteousness. This doctrine was one of the great dividers between orthodox believers and Arminians. Whitefield, for instance, could write *"The outward righteousness of Christ imputed to us, I believe, is the sole foundation and cause of all inward communications which we receive from the Spirit of God"*¹³. John Wesley, however, objected strongly to the term arguing that it was ambiguous and contained an entirely unbiblical notion. In a very scathing letter to James Hervey, who delighted in using the term, Wesley wrote *"I have had abundant proof, that the frequent use of this unnecessary phrase, instead of furthering men's progress in vital holiness, has made them satisfied without any holiness at all; yea, and encouraged them to work all uncleanness and greediness"*¹⁴. Now what does this alleged *"unnecessary phrase"* i.e. *"Christ's imputed righteousness"* mean? A contemporary of Huntington's, William Cowper paraphrased the doctrine in the following words: *"Faith in the righteousness of the Son of man, as the instrument and means of our justification in the sight of God, is itself considered as righteousness, and for the sake of that faith it is, that creatures, unrighteous in themselves, are yet accepted."* In order to back up his definition Cowper refers to I Cor. 1:30 *"But of him are ye in*

Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption”¹⁵.

Now the question is, did Huntington use the term in any other way than that expressed by Cowper? The answer must be, "No!" This term is used very often by Huntington and always to stress that the righteousness which is imputed to Christians is always Christ's and never becomes in this life inherently ours though it is Christ's actual righteousness in the new man. Writing to a friend in January 1804 Huntington takes up the doctrine of being crucified with Christ. Here the preacher is careful to argue that the believer is justified by an imputed righteousness, so that he is **not reckoned** as a servant of sin, and **not until death** will we be freed from sin's inbeing.

One significant feature of Huntington's works is that he is constantly bemoaning his own present and actual sins and limitations. He makes this quite clear in a letter written to 'a farming friend' dated Nov. 20, 1799, in which he says:

"I have got a bad cold, not only in my head and stomach, though that is bad enough, but I have also a cold heart. O this body of sin and death - what a sore burden! And how closely allied to Satan is the old man! What amazing condescension and humiliation in God, that he should stoop so low as to remember and visit with his great salvation such poor, rebellious mortals, who are so feeble, weak, helpless, and so unmindful and ungrateful."

The writer is obviously talking about his own sinfulness and not about his pre-conversion state! He goes on to argue how this proves that iniquity is still present in the Christian though he trusts in God's forgiveness. Furthermore, he points out that we are justified by being bought through an act of God's Grace alone. He then continues by saying:

"Here is the poor sensible (i.e. sensitive, responsive) sinner's firm basis under all his trials, temptations, and discouragements."

Such thoughts show that Huntington was a long way from believing that he possessed **actual** righteousness (*Editor: i.e. in himself apart from Christ*). In fact he was very careful to stress that Jesus was our **only** righteousness. Two things always remain with the Christian, Huntington taught: knowledge of sinful self and divine life¹⁶. On one occasion Huntington wrote that he did not know what to wonder at most; his own bad heart, or the unfailing goodness of God's dear Son. This was written in 1808, many, many years after the pastor's conversion¹⁷.

Far from showing signs of heresy, Huntington's descriptions of Christ's saving work are not only Biblical but often full of exquisite beauty. This can be seen in Letter CCCCLXIV, headed 'Cricklewood'. The preacher outlines the history of redemption and ends with the words:

"God has left in all his children the old crop, to remind us of our base origin, to hide pride from our eyes, to exclude boasting from our lips, and to keep us from putting any confidence in the flesh. It is to exercise our grace, especially patience; to make us watchful, to make us sensible of the depth of man's fall, and, finally, to exalt the grace of God; to make us sick of self, and sick of the world; sick of sin, and to teach us to prize the great Physician, and to make us long for that perfect rest which remaineth to the people of God. Sin is purged by the death of Christ, and dethroned by the grace of the Holy Spirit: we are justified from it by faith in Christ's righteousness, and we shall take our final leave of it at death."

(*Editor's Comment:* The Banner of Truth argued *contra* Huntington that justification was merely a metaphor describing an 'as if' legal formality and was thus not a *real* justification. This error is traceable to Melancthon's rejection of Luther's doctrine of justification. Luther emphasised the transforming work of justification in the lives of the elect and thus opened the doors to true, Biblical Reformation. The faith which justifies is thus, for such followers of Melancthon and deniers of the main doctrine of the Reformation, a mere formal belief in a legal status. Huntington was as thoroughly Reformed as Luther on this issue. The Banner's un-Biblical stand on

a mere legal and fictive justification, imputation and sanctification is analysed by Dr. Ella in a series of six essays entitled *The Old Paths versus New Divinity* appearing in *New Focus Magazine*, vol. 10, No 04 [December/January] and succeeding issues. His conclusion is that the Banner of Truth have shut their doors to the work of our Reformers and opened the sluice-gates to both theoretical and practical Antinomianism.)

Huntington on Faith, Repentance and Holy Obedience

An odd criticism which has been made recently is that Huntington believed that faith, repentance and holy obedience were mere covenantal conditions on the part of Christ and not on the part of the believer. What the critic seems to be getting at is that there is no desire for personal holiness in Huntington. The preacher was, however, so fully aware of his own corruption and spoke so often of faith, repentance and a holy life that he was hardly in danger of forgetting them. He did, however, denounce those who confused Christian holiness with adhering to the letter of the Law. Writing about his stubborn, rebellious heart Huntington states, *"I am truly sick of self and of sin"*¹⁸, and adds:

"I do not wish to be high, nor highly exalted: to be self-abased, meekened, lowly minded, sorrowful, broken-hearted, contrite, humble, and less than nothing, is safest and best for us in this land of drought, this barren wilderness, I may say the land of the enemy. But surely they cannot be of this world who hate it, and are hated of it."

Huntington always urged the believer to practise the faith which God had given him. Commenting on a fire that had occurred, the preacher used it as a picture of the trial of faith, saying: *"The new man will revive out of all this smoke, and receive not the least damage by it, for no such unhallowed fire will ever kindle upon him. The dross will consume, but not the gold: "the trial of faith is much more precious than gold, though it be tried with fire; and shall be found unto praise and honour at the appearing of Christ."* Both the trial and the victory of faith are precious, because faith appears in triumph. It has fought with the devil,

with the flesh, and with the spirit of opposition in this world. It has fought with imposters in the pulpit, with hypocrites in profession, with hereticks, with all the fears of death, and with all the imaginary horrors of hell. Surely then the trial and conquest of such a faith must be more precious than gold; and the more it is tried, the stronger it grows¹⁹."

On reading such a testimony it is difficult to imagine that some critics believe that Huntington is only speaking about Christ's duty to exercise faith and not the believer's. It is obviously the penitent believer's exercise of holy faith that Huntington is referring to when he writes movingly: *"When the poor sinner is sensible of his lost state, and feels the plague of his own heart, he is the object whom Christ came to save, and the patient that he came to cure. Such a soul, hungering and thirsting after righteousness; fixing his longing eyes upon Jesus; mourning, sighing, and praying to him, with sincere and honest confessions; pleading the promises; loathing himself in his own sight; acknowledging his guilt before God; pleading the blood and righteousness of Christ; covered with shame and confusion; driven on by a sense of want, and encouraged by the kind invitations in the word of God; such a soul, I say, is as an army with banners."* Is that not a heavenly touch of holiness? Let our prayer be that such words from the mouth of the old coalheaver may still be heard today from our pulpits!

Huntington and an Angry God

Critics tell us that Huntington does not believe that a Christian's standing with God can be affected by indwelling and practised sin. God just cannot be angry with his people. This again is a caricature of the preacher. Time and time again Huntington argues that our God is a jealous God and will not tolerate unfaithfulness amongst believers. Although Huntington stresses the love of God to His elect, he nevertheless depicts God as being also the Harvester with a *"threshing instrument having teeth"* in His hand dealing out *"reproofs and rebukes, judgements and calamities"* to purge the believer throughout his life²⁰. Critics often maintain that when Huntington refers to the Lord's rebukes, this only refers to *"the lawless"* as Huntington terms non-Christians. Huntington, however, argues

that the winnowing of the believer's soul is a life-long task and it is not until death and judgement that the wheat will finally be purged and be gathered into God's garner. Scripture quotes such as *"I will put my fear in their hearts and they shall not depart from me²¹"* occur in many instances in Huntington's writings to warn the believer of the folly of backsliding. Elsewhere Huntington speaks of God's *"yoke, rod, anger, wrath, justice and terrible majesty"* only to follow this, of course, with the Good News of *"God's pity, compassion, love, favour and mercy²²"*. Again, he is, most definitely not referring to the former as non-Christians and the latter as Christians as critics would have us believe.

Huntington's Alleged Bad Character

The preacher is reported to be an inaccessible, conceited, dogmatic tyrant. He is even accused of thinking himself infallible and above criticism. It is difficult to attach too much importance to the criticism that Huntington was 'dogmatical'. It is rather refreshing at times to read of one who was not afraid to 'stick to his guns' and who was not bowled over by every new theological wind of change. The epithet 'conceited' needs commenting on. Huntington's letters are full of his bemoaning the fact that *"enmity, rebellion, hardness of heart, infidelity, revenge, madness, desperation, selfwill, perverseness, obstinacy and inflexibility"* are so much part of his life. What modern evangelical would admit all that? Even if Huntington were conceited, he was obviously very troubled about this possible weakness. It is a matter which he is constantly bringing before the Lord. In a letter to a *"beloved brother and true yokefellow"* Huntington explains how he sometimes feels firm in the faith and *"fearless, confident and bold"*. At other times all he can say is, *"What changes do pass upon us potsherd of the earth! I am now dead and cold, inactive, dry, parched, formal, legal, stiff, peevish, consequential and self-conceited; appearing as something, though less than nothing²³"*. The point is, however, if Huntington were the conceited person he is held to be by his critics, he would hardly be the person to confess his sins as he does. In fairness to Huntington his critics should point out that the preacher was well aware of his 'army of inbred corruptions'²⁴.

Many a Reformed, Calvinistic minister will have had the sobering experience of being called a tyrant. One often hears this accusation from the mouths of those who object to being told what to do by their pastors. When Huntington, however, begins his letters to those whom he wishes to instruct pastorally with such expressions as, "*May the sweet and soul-cheering presence of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*" and when he ends those same letters by signing himself "*the worst of all sinners*", one hardly gets the impression that he is a tyrant.

The criticism that Huntington called ministers in other denominations "*false prophets*" and "*blind guides*" need not mean that Huntington's tongue was always too loose. The preacher was surrounded by Arians, Pelagians, Universalists, Deists and Unitarians. The Methodists were up in arms against the doctrines of imputed righteousness and total reprobation. Huntington's language is extremely moderate in comparison with many of his contemporary ministers. One only needs to think in sorrow of John Wesley's scathing verbal attacks on the dying James Hervey or the words such true men of God as Toplady and Fletcher used in their Arminian-Calvinist controversy. After a detailed study of Huntington's criticisms of Arminians compared with those of Romaine, Hill and Toplady it would appear that Huntington was the more sober of the lot. Although his verbal attacks on his enemies would seem harsh today they had nothing of the wild unfounded verbal explosions of John Wesley who seemed to think that Calvinists were devils and "*worse than the Turks*". The claim that Dissenters were the object of Huntington's perpetual hatred just cannot stand. Huntington, himself, professed to be a Dissenter and had over thirty Dissenting ministers amongst his closest friends. Nor does one have to look far in Huntington's works to find positive statements regarding Anglicans. Huntington is full of praise for Whitefield and Toplady who were Church of England ministers but he had equal praise for many a Presbyterian. Anglicans such as Stephen Adams and the great Dr. Doudney, of the Gospel Magazine were high in their praise of their Dissenting brother. Indeed, few Dissenters of the day had such an

interdenominational following of Reformed men as Huntington. It is a tragedy indeed that the Banner of Truth Trust has taken upon itself the task of utterly denying such historical truths and, opting for the make-believe, declaring of a work in which I stress Huntington's popularity amongst writers of all denominations "*The only way Dr. Ella can explain Huntington's isolation from his evangelical contemporaries (of all denominations) is to denigrate them.*"²⁵ If this were so, it seems very odd that the BOT had formerly published some five essays of mine dealing with highly positive appraisals of Huntington's contemporaries in several denominations and some twenty or more essays on 18th century stalwarts had appeared from my pen in numerous evangelical magazines (*Editor's Comment: Since writing this in the early nineties, further numerous essays on 18th century witness have appeared from Dr. Ella's pen and he has authored a number of books on this period*).

Much is made of the fact that Huntington put 'letters after his name' and was thus an imposter. This again is hardly a fair argument. Everyone who knew the preacher was quickly made aware of what the S.S. (Sinner Saved) after his name meant. He did not sign himself 'Doctor' to make people believe he was a learned man but used the word as a spiritual physician offering guidance to sick souls²⁶. He also signed himself '*Doctor Sack*' (i.e. Coalsack), '*A Physician of no value*', '*poor Doctor*', '*Q in the corner*', and, of course, '*S.S.*' and '*Coalheaver*', the latter two names being his favourites. It seems that Huntington's entire circle practised the use of pseudonyms. Such a practice was, of course, widespread in the 18th century. It was not unusual for ministers to be called "Doctor", thinking, no doubt of Jesus "*sitting amongst the doctors*" in Luke 4. During the 18th century many ministers were addressed as "Sir John" etc. though they were not knights. William Cowper, the Christian poet, had at least eight different 'titles', pen-names and pseudonyms which he used for various purposes, and, if that was a record, his friend John Newton ran a good second. A brief glance at the newspapers and magazines of the day, both Christian and otherwise, will show how widespread were "nicknames" amongst writers.

The criticism that Huntington merely favoured 'people of standing' need not be dealt with as his letters show how he cared for the souls of the humble. The fact that the preacher at one period had a carriage driven by his farm-hands can hardly be called 'foolish magnificence' as one critic put it. We must also remember that Huntington had worked as a liveried footman himself. Nowadays pastors have cars, washing machines, telephones and computers. In the 18th century pastors usual kept a horse-drawn carriage with driver. John Rippon, Gill's successor at Carter Lane had a 'glass coach' which was described as having 'windows all round.' Such pastors, no matter how poor, had invariably a housemaid to do the washing and a house-boy to run errands and take messages. Such servants then cost a lower percentage of a minister's wages than do mechanised or electronic servants today. Many 18th century ministers who were on stipends of less than £100 a year had several servants. Even in those days £100 was not a lot of money. Cowper kept two servants when he was only earning about £60 a year and he even cooked for them! As most professional people, teachers, pastors, farmers and even tradesmen had servants in the 18th century, it would seem odd to pick out Huntington alone for criticism. Ministers had servants until well into the present century and Huntington was only seen in a private coach in his old age when he was crippled with what he called "*gravel in the loins.*"

Huntington's critics make much of the fact that the following words are engraved on the pastor's gravestone:

"HERE LIES THE COALHEAVER:- BELOVED OF HIS GOD;
BUT ABHORRED OF MEN. THE OMNISCIENT JUDGE AT THE
GRAND ASSIZE SHALL RATIFY AND CONFIRM THIS TO THE
CONFUSION OF MANY THOUSANDS; FOR ENGLAND AND ITS
METROPOLIS SHALL KNOW THAT THERE HATH BEEN A
PROPHET AMONG THEM. W.H. S.S."

The story goes that Huntington actually wrote these words himself, thus proving what an arrogant person he was. This theory must be examined in detail. We know from the records of Mr T.

Bensley and Lady Sanderson that Huntington's epitaph was written a day or two before his death after a severe illness lasting some three weeks. During this time we learn that "*his bodily sufferings were great*" and that his illness was of "*a violent and alarming manner*". During his last days he was quite unable to sleep and suffered from high blood pressure²⁷. We also know that he was too weak to write and asked friends and his wife to take down notes of what he said. Now even if Huntington had penned these words himself in such a low state of health at the very end of his life, it would be uncharitable indeed to judge his whole service for the Lord in their narrow light. Furthermore, it was quite common in Huntington's day for saints to be so very expressive of their own standing and similar statements (especially when taken out of context²⁸) could be taken to point to arrogance in the works of Toplady, Wesley and even Whitefield. The fact is that some people are inclined to accept the most negative of interpretations as invariably the true one.

What causes most criticism in this epitaph is the word "prophet". Now this was Lady Sanderson's loving term for Huntington²⁹. Lady Sanderson also tells us in her Introduction that she wrote the epitaph at Huntington's bidding. The wording of it, however, is couched in the vocabulary we know was Lady Sanderson's. In other words the theory that Huntington wrote his own epitaph must be greatly modified, and even if its words were the preacher's own, knowing the circumstances we should not judge his whole life by it. Huntington did, however, sum up his life in his own words and with his own pen in an undated letter which he wrote in good health in later life as an answer to a call to preach:

"Rev. Sir,

If God permit, and you approve, I shall honour your pulpit on Sunday next; honour it, I say, with the preaching of the vilest wretch that ever was born, in possession of a hope that can never die. I am by birth a beggar - by trade a coalheaver - by practice a devil - by profession a sinner saved - by principle a stiff dissenter. If your hearers seek for eloquence, for historical research, or profound knowledge, I am the man who can completely

*disappoint them all. But, if they will be contented with a few scraps of apostolic ignorance, it shall go hard but they shall have some of those*³⁰
S.S.”

These words speak for themselves and best describe the character of William Huntington. This short letter also illustrates the methods Huntington's critics have used in the past. If the words, *"I shall honour your pulpit"* and, *"If your hearers seek for eloquence . . . I am the man"* are taken out of context, they could be used to prove that the writer was conceited. In their proper context, however, they show how humble the 'coalheaver' was.

Those who are prepared to read Huntington without a plank in their eye will find amongst Huntington's 'scraps' a choice, wholesome meal of Gospel food. The man certainly had his faults but it would be hard to find another representative of his class and background who was so successful in bringing the Gospel to thousands of people from all walks of life from the most humble beggar to the most aristocratic of families.

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1 After Huntington's death loving friends who, indeed, showed more love than discretion, published a great deal of material that the preacher had not seen fit to make public. Huntington's situation can be compared to that of C.S. Lewis whose legatees thought they must publish every scrap of his work no matter how unsuitable it was. It is such jumbled unfinished and unorganised thoughts that often give rise to criticism of an author. It is like sacking the best cook because in a rare power cut the soup would not come to the boil.

2 Huntington used the term Arminian to refer to those who believed in God's universal saving charity to all mankind.

3 Works, A Caveat Against Unsound Doctrine, page 319, 1794, Sprinkle Publications reprint, 1987

4 Ibid, Free-Will and Merit Fairly Examined, page 358

5 The Arminian Skeleton, page 117

6 Pothumous Letters, Vol. 8, Complete Works, page 28.

7 The Arminian Skeleton, pages 11-1

APPENDIX A – THE MINISTRY OF WILLIAM HUNTINGTON S.S.

8 The Arminian Skeleton, page 51

9 Ibid, page 119

10 May 24, 1809. Isaac Watts used to write in a similar vein.

11 Oct. 17, 1805

12 See H's argument in Letter LXVIII, vol. 8, page 182 ff., also Letter DLXXXVIII, vol. 8, page 471

13 Quoted from George Whitefield, J. R. Andrews, Sovereign Grace Union, 1930, page 74

14 The Works of the Rev. James Hervey, Mr. Wesley's Letter, Thomas Nelson, 1837, page 472

15 Cowper's commentary on Milton's Paradise Lost, Book III, lines 290-294

16 Letter, Dec. 13, 1805

17 Posthumous Letters, vol. 8, page 219

18 Letter, Jan. 29, 1806

19 Letter, Feb. 4, 1806. Should the critical reader jump on the word 'imaginary' and thus protest that Huntington did not believe in hell, he must be reminded that the writer is talking about believers for whom the real torments of hell will never be experienced. Elsewhere Huntington shows that he is quite orthodox on the subject of hell.

20 Letter dated Feb. 9, 1795

21 See, for instance, letter dated Oct. 10, 1808

22 Letter dated June 4, 1802

23 Letter dated May 12th.

24 This is Huntington's own description of his inner-self.

25 Issue 378, March, 1995, p. 22.

26 See letter dated 25. August, 1797

27 These comments are taken from the introductory remarks in Posthumous Letters, vol. i.

28 James Hervey always maintained that Wesley's criticism of Calvinism was always a criticism out of context.

29 See Lady Sanderson's Introduction to Huntington's Posthumous Letters.

30 Posthumous Letters of the Rev. W. Huntington S.S., 1815, vol. III, page 132.

Appendix B

A Sinner Becomes a Saint: William Huntington's Conversion Story

By Dr. George M. Ella

ONE evening, Huntington was sitting by the fireside reading his Bible when he came across the words, "*At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you,*" John 14:20. These words were at first incomprehensible to Huntington as he had not experienced being 'in Christ' and being thus a new creature. "*There must be some secret between Christ and those whom He will save, that I am ignorant of,*" he exclaimed. As he thought on these things all his sins paraded themselves before him and all his false hope disappeared in a twinkling. Great conviction came upon him but his first thoughts were of hatred to God for putting him in such a position. He shouted out to his wife in great fear, "*Molly, I am undone for ever; I am lost and gone; there is no hope nor mercy for me; you know not what a sinner I am, nor what I feel!*" Amazed Mary tried to comfort her husband as well as she could but her Christian experience was weak and she did not know what was happening to him.

All through that night Huntington confessed his sins to God but dare not plead with his Maker for forgiveness as he was so certain that his own iniquities had damned him, cutting him off from God's mercy for ever. He staggered to work the following morning looking at the horses and cows in envy telling them that they would

never be punished for their sins and they would never have to stand trembling at the Judgement seat only to be cast into hell. Next came an overbearing conviction that he could escape all by taking his own life but soon thoughts of the wrath to come after death drove Huntington back to thinking more soberly. In this way Huntington lived through the days of the following weeks overcome with horror at his own self and at his hopelessness until he was completely run down and exhausted. But going one morning to work, Huntington suddenly asked himself which part of the world Christ was born in. He confessed that he did not know but judged it to be the East. He thus looked in that direction and began to daydream about Christ's name. Whilst his mind was fixed on the birth and name of Jesus he was suddenly overwhelmed with a spirit of love and meekness. Just as suddenly he felt like a bottle without a vent and began weeping tears of joy so loudly that he feared people must have heard him miles away. Huntington's thoughts progressed to the sufferings of Christ on the cross which made him *'melt, mourn and weep'*. As yet, he had no doctrinal knowledge of Christ's death but he heard a voice distinctly say, *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things"*, a phrase Huntington did not understand at the time, nor did he know that it was a passage from Scripture.

Now for many days Huntington was as taken up with thoughts of God's loving-kindness in Christ as he had been by his own sin and earned destruction. Temptations came in an endless train but Huntington began to experience that God's Grace was sufficient. He was rescued from perils into which he had fallen head first before. The more, however, Huntington praised God for temptations defeated, the more they came and still the inner voice told him, *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things"*. It seemed, however, as if the Lord were showing Huntington that he could not overcome – at least not without earnest pleas heavenwards. Huntington found himself now at all times shaking his head against temptations which came five a minute and opening his lips to praise God. This caused his work mates to think he had gone mad. So taken up was Huntington with the battle in his soul that he could not give a

rational answer to a simple question as his thoughts were so strongly concentrated on the forces at work within.

After so many disappointments at so many different churches, Huntington decided he would be his own pastor and stay at home and read the Bible. Now, wherever he looked, he found passages telling him that only the elect would be saved. He thus took a piece of paper and a pen and read through the whole Bible jotting down all the references to man's hopelessness and God's sovereignty. Such verses as "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him,*" John 6:44 and "*I know whom I have chosen*", John 13:18 fixed themselves so deeply in Huntington's memory that he never forgot them. After thus going through the entire Scriptures Huntington concluded that "*the doctrines of predestination and election reflect the tremendous doctrine of reprobation in many passages of scripture*". Now Huntington was in a worse dilemma than ever. What if he merely felt the damnation that was common to all the non-elect? What if all his repentance and sorrow for his sins, however true, were in vain?

Such thoughts were plaguing Huntington one day whilst he was up a ladder pruning a large pear tree. He kept telling himself that though he strove to be holy, he was as worldly as ever. True, he was always trying to please God and appease his wrath, but it was without any success whatsoever. The doctrine of election, he told himself, is true. If I am not one of the elect, I shall never be saved, do what I will. When thinking along these lines all Huntington's bitterness concerning his bastard birth came back to his mind and he thought of the horrible life and death of his true father. He thought also of his mother who took the Lord's Supper regularly but lived in open adultery. He thought of the Old Testament passages that damn bastards and cried out from the tree top "*Is hell to be the reception of both progenitors and progeny? I see no way of escape. Oh wretched end!*"

As Huntington was deep in self-pity and self-reproach a great light seemed to shine all around him and swept all his anxious

thoughts away. As clear as a bell Huntington heard the words of John 14:26 *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* Two sets of Scripture references poured into Huntington's now relaxed and receptive memory. All those which cursed the sinner and all those who spoke of the goodness and graciousness of God in salvation. Huntington climbed down the ladder wondering what was happening to him. *"What is it? What is it?"*, he cried out. He then distinctly heard the words that he never forgot, *"Lay by your forms of prayer, and go pray to Jesus Christ; do not you see how pitifully he speaks to sinners?"*

Huntington was not disobedient to the heavenly vision and dashed into the tool shed with his apron over his head and face for fear of what was happening. He then knelt down and prayed extempore (his prayers up to now had been combinations of written prayers with his own comments) *"Oh Lord, I am a sinner, and thou knowest It, I have tried to make myself better, but I cannot. If there is any way left in which thou canst save me, do thou save me; if not, I must be damned, for I cannot try any more, nor won't."* The very moment that Huntington said these words, he felt a freedom to unburden his soul before the Throne of Grace and prayed with fluency in the language of Scripture that was quite new to him. All the blessed promises of God to a repentant sinner came into his mind and heart and he bombarded the Heavens with all the Biblical claims on God's Grace he could muster. He then saw Christ crucified before him as in a vision and he had never felt his own sin so deeply as he did at that moment. He now prayed loudly, *"I did not know till now that I had been sinning against thy wounds and blood! I did not know that thou hadst suffered thus for wretched me! I did not know till now that I had any concern in crucifying thee! I cannot beg mercy of my suffering Lord and Saviour. No: send me to hell for I deserve it."*

The more Huntington denied his right to Christ's love the more Christ seemed to approach him in love. Slowly but very surely a conviction of God's forgiveness displaced Huntington's assurance

HUNTINGTON – THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

that he was hell-bound. Thoughts of Satan, death, destruction, horror and despair fled as a composure serene and full of new-born hope replaced them. Huntington had met his Lord at the one place where all must meet him who are His - at the Cross. There the farm-labourer met the King of Kings. He went, to use his own words, into the tool-shed in all the agonies of the damned, and came out with the Kingdom of God established in his heart. What a change!

Taken from pp. 48-49, 52-54 in William Huntington: Pastor of Providence.

Books available or forthcoming by Dr. George M. Ella

1989, *Paradise and Poetry: An In-Depth Study of William Cowper's Poetic Mind*, The Cowper and Newton Museum.

1990, *The Sinner Saved: William Huntington, S.S.*, (with Henry Sant). Two essays (reprinted by courtesy of Bible League Quarterly). Focus Christian Ministries Trust

1993, *William Cowper: Poet of Paradise*, Evangelical Press.

1994, *William Huntington: Pastor of Providence*, Evangelical Press.

1995, *John Gill and the Cause of God and Truth*, Go Publications.

1996, *Law and Gospel in the Theology of Andrew Fuller*, Go Publications.

1997, *James Hervey: Preacher of Righteousness*, Go Publications.

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1998, *John Gill and Justification from Eternity, A Tercentenary Appreciation 1697-1997*, Go Publications.

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2001, *The Free Offer & The Call of the Gospel*, Go Publications.

2002, *Isaac McCoy: Apostle of the Western Trail*. Particular Baptist Press, 2 editions. (Presently looking for new publisher Library of Congress number and copyright in Dr. Ella's name).

2003, *The Troublemakers at Frankfurt: A Vindication of the English Reformation*, Go Publications.

2004, *Common Grace and the Call of the Gospel*, Go Publications.

2005 *Introduction to the Life and Works of Heinrich Bullinger*, Prefaced to Joel Beeke's reprint and analysis of Bullinger's *Decades* (2 vols.).

2005 *More Mountain Movers*, Go Publications.

2005-6. *Henry Bullinger (1504-1575): Shepherd of the Churches*

2005-6. *The Atonement and the Call of the Gospel*, Go Publications

2005-6. *Justification and the Call of the Gospel*, Go Publications

Books planned and partly finished:-

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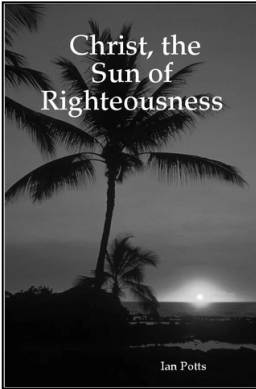
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