

Volume 19

William Huntington

The Loss and Restoration of the Image of
God in Man;

Two Sermons,

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*And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also
bear the image of the heavenly. - I Cor. xv. 49.*

William Huntington (1745-1813)

SERMON 1.

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I
worked,.." John, v. 17.

We have an account in this chapter of a pool called Bethesda, or the House of Mercy, having five porches, which I suppose were a sort of alcoves, arched over, to screen the poor impotent folks from the inclemency of the weather. These five porches may be emblematical of the different points of light in which the elect of God may be considered. 1. They were from all eternity in the purpose of God. 2. And, as chosen in Christ Jesus, they may be considered as in him, according to Jude, "preserved in Christ Jesus, and called," Jude, 1. 3. They are likewise in the promise of God; "A seed shall serve him, and it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation; the children of the promise are counted for the seed." 4. They are in the covenant of grace; "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my Servant: his seed will I make to endure for ever, and build up his throne to all generations." And, 5. They must all be brought into a state of grace, and to be of the household of faith. But, as considered in them selves, they are impotent folks, through the fall, and have many infirmities about them, though they are sheltered from eternal ruin and destruction.

The means of God's appointment for the conversion of these sinners, such as preaching the pure gospel, attended with God's grace and a holy experience of it in the hearts of the preachers, and this attended with the Holy Spirit, is often in the scriptures compared to rivers, springs, and pools of water; but, unless the Angel of the Covenant, by his Spirit's operations, gives life, power, and efficacy to the means, none are healed of their spiritual diseases, the excellency of the power being of God, and not of men; and without faith, there is no stepping into the power and enjoyment of these things. Among these impotent folk lay one poor man who had had an infirmity thirty and eight years. The omniscient Saviour, knowing that he had been long in that case, asked him if he would be made whole. The poor man, having no hopes but in the pool, complained in answer to our Lord's question, that

when the waters were troubled he had no man to put him in, but another stepped in before him. Jesus saith unto him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked; and on the same day was the sabbath." The Jews, seeing him carry his bed, tell him it is unlawful to do so on the sabbath-day. The man replied, "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk." The Jews ask him who it was that gave him such orders; but the man could not inform them who his benefactor was, for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Soon after this the Saviour discovered himself to the man in the temple, and said unto him "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." It seems by this that his long-standing infirmity was a judgment of God upon him for some heinous sin that he had been guilty of; for the Lord intimates that something more dreadful would fall upon him if he relapsed into it again. This man does not appear to me to be one of God's elect, for there is not one covenant blessing pronounced on him - such as his being called a son of Abraham, or that his faith had saved him, or his faith had made him whole, or Thy sins are forgiven thee, or Go in peace, as was commonly done when the recipient of a cure was a chosen vessel. Christ came into this world to save sinners, and took the name of Jesus because he would save his people from their sins; but he says nothing of salvation to this man, but leaves him under a strict command, "Sin no more;" and intimates that a heavier judgment would ensue if he broke it, "lest a worse thing come unto thee." But man has no power against sin. A strict commandment, armed with a threatening sentence, makes sin rage the more, and Satan to labour the harder. Adam and Eve both broke through the bounds. The law is weak through the flesh - without Christ man can do nothing: and it is well for us that the elect are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation.

The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole: "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day." Thus did this poor creature raise a persecution against his greatest benefactor. From the whole, there does not appear one favourable symptom that this man belonged to the election of God. He, with many others, receives temporal mercies, deliverances, and benefits, when not one thing that accompanies salvation appears upon them.

The answer that our Lord gives to his persecutors is, that he ever hath been, and still is, a joint-worker with his own Father; "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work :": and, therefore, if he is a profaner of the sabbath, the same reproach must be cast upon his Father. But the Jews were the more stirred up at this, as supposing it to be adding sin to sin; and therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God. If this deceiver (as the Jews called our Saviour) had deceived them in this assertion, of God being his father, and of his being a co-worker with him, and equal to him, he never drops one hint to undeceive them; he neither denies his sonship, nor his equality with the Father, but goes on to confirm it by infallible proofs, as will appear hereafter.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," John, v. 17. In giving you my thoughts on this text, I shall take but little notice about creating the world, upholding the world, governing the world, disposing of all things in the world, destroying and renewing the world, or judging the world; for all these things are subservient to one grand end; all things are for the elect's sake. Christ created all things: he upholds all things by the word of his power; and he has power over all flesh; all things that the Father hath are his. He will destroy this world, burn up the earth, and fold the heavens together; he will make all

things new, and be the only judge of quick and dead. The work that our Lord and his Father are engaged in appears to me to be one principal work; and to serve the turn of this are all other things created and upheld; and it was this work that our Saviour had in his eye when he spoke the words in my text. To form a human race, and to bring an innumerable company of that race to eternal glory by Jesus Christ, is the grand work that God had in view from everlasting. Hence Christ was set up to be future man and mediator from that date. Moreover, it was the determination of God that the multitude of his elect should be brought to glory in the likeness of his dear Son. This was determined on in God's councils of old, whose councils are faithfulness and truth, and in both which we are deeply concerned. Hence, at the creation, when the first man was formed, and we in him, Adam is said, by the Holy Ghost, to be "the figure of him that was to come," Romans, v. 14. To this likeness were the elect predestinated, and in this likeness was man created; and it is as plain that the greatest blessing of all blessings, or the principal thing in God's image in man, was LIFE; and therefore with the loss of this invaluable blessing was he threatened, in case of disobedience; "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, dying thou shalt die," Gen. ii. 17. But man sinned: "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all, for all have sinned." Hence the image of God, with all its divine adornings on the mind, is utterly defaced, and the greatest of all blessings, that of life, is lost. To restore this image, and bestow this blessing of divine life, is the sole work that our Lord alludes to in my text, as plainly appears in the whole of his reasonings with the Jews. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, "The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these, that ve may marvel." And these greater works follow: "For, as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John, v. 20, 21. This work of raising dead sinners, and

quicken them, justifying and sanctifying them, keeping them alive and saving them, quickening their mortal bodies, and raising them up in his own image and likeness, and bringing them to a life of glory in heaven, is called greater works than healing a cripple; and, indeed, it is greater than all miracles; and this the Saviour tells his persecutors would make them all marvel. And, indeed; the completion of this great work at the last day, will be a wonder and an astonishment to all the enemies of Christ and his church, and to all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. In handling these words, I shall endeavour to prove,

I. That the grand work, determined on in the secret council of the Holy Trinity from everlasting, was to bring a certain and determinate number of the human race, in the likeness of the Son of God, to heaven and endless glory by him.

II. That the image of God in Adam was the noblest and the grandest work that appeared in the whole creation when the world was made.

III. That the principal thing, or the most invaluable blessing, in the whole image of God in Adam, was LIFE.

IV. That there was something of this blissful and paradisaical state shadowed out to Israel in the land of promise.

V. That the incarnation of Christ, his sufferings and death, the proclamation of the gospel, and the mission of the Holy Ghost, are to restore the lost image of God (the Saviour) to God's elect among the sons of men.

VI. And last, That the grand appearance the saints will make in heaven, and their eternal felicity there, will be the truth and the substance of what was typified and shadowed out to Adam in Paradise. I begin with the first,

Which is to prove, That the grand work determined on in the secret council of the Holy Trinity from everlasting was, to bring a certain and determinate number of the human race, in the likeness of the Son of God, to heaven and endless glory by him. Upon this point the Holy Ghost, by the great apostle, is plain: "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 29. Whom the omniscient God foreknew with a knowledge of love, with a knowledge of choice, with a knowledge of approbation and delight, these he also did predestinate; he did predetermine, immutably fix, and by an irrevocable decree, ordain, that these persons, thus foreknown, should be conformed to the image of his Son. In pursuance of this appointment was that identical seed of the Virgin Mary pitched upon, chosen, and appointed of God to be joined or united to the divine person of the Son of God. Hence the Father's declaration of this choice, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Here Christ appears (thus considered) the first in choice, the first elect; and it is on account of his birth of a virgin being first determined, as well as on the account of his inconceivable and eternal sonship, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, that he is the first-born among the chosen family; and so says Paul, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," Romans, viii. 29. In this decree of election he is considered first and head; for all the rest were chosen in him. As head and representative, as future man and king mediator, "he was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," Proverbs, viii. 23. As God, and as such abstractedly considered, he could not be set up; for how can the most high God, who is higher than the heavens, be set up any higher than he is? In this decree of election Christ was appointed the everlasting father also of all the chosen family; and this was figured out at the creation of Adam, whom Paul calls "the figure of him that was to come," Rom. v. 14. Hence he is

called the last Adam; he is the last Adam in order of time, but the first in the purpose and appointment of God.

This decree of election must be resolved wholly into the divine sovereignty, good-will, and pleasure of God; but with respect to Christ, he, being first in the choice, and in whom the choice of a11 the rest was made, he is the basis or foundation in whom the decree stands fast. Hence the declaration of it by God himself, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded," 1 Peter, ii. 6. All that God foreknew he made choice of, and gave them to Christ; he made them his charge, and ordained them to life by him; who is sure to be faithful to him that appointed him to this grand trust and charge. "The foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

I shall now proceed to consider what it is that we are predestinated and appointed to. Paul says we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. We may likewise consider what those divine ingredients, of which this image consists, flow from, and what those heavenly partakers are.

1. They all flow from the free, sovereign love of God, which alas set upon Christ as future man, and upon us in him, before ever the world was made: "I have loved thee," saith God, "with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." But it may be objected by some, that although the love of God in that text is called an everlasting love, or a love which will ever last or continue, yet it is not said to be from everlasting. Answer: The Saviour says, speaking to his Father in this short prayer, "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; for thou lovedst me before

the foundation of the world," John, xvii. 23, 24. God's love to Christ and his church was before the world was made. Sovereign love precedes our adoption; for our sonship is the blessed result of it: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," 1 John, iii. 1. And this love was fixed upon Christ, and upon us in him, before the world was made. I am not speaking of the love that God had to his own dear Son, as such, who is called the Son of the Father in truth and love; because his love to us cannot be in the superlative degree, as it is to him; I am speaking of the love which God fixed upon Christ as future man and mediator, of which Christ speaks, John, x. 17. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." It was the life of the man that was laid down, and this love was set on him as such. Between this, and his love to us, there is a very great resemblance: "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." This love set upon Christ, as head of the family, is likewise upon all the children in him, as will soon appear; and, though sometimes the enjoyment of it is withdrawn from the children for the trial of their faith, or for their misdemeanors, and their sins are visited with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes, yet it is still the same, and eternally secured to them in the covenant Head; and so it follows, "Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I 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. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me," Ps. lxxxix. 35, &c. In view of this our holy apostle triumphs, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" No; "neither height, nor depth, nor life, nor death, nor angel, nor principality, nor power, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Hence it is

plain that the love of God is eternally secured to us in Christ the head. I now proceed,

2. To treat of our sonship, to which we were predestinated.

The highest character of our Lord Jesus Christ is that of the Son of God; he being God's only begotten son, the son of the Father in truth and love, of the same divine nature with him, distinct in personality from him, and one in essential divinity with him. - Now, as God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, so he hath predestinated us to the adoption of Children, that our character may, in some measure, answer or agree with his. And I believe that the highest character, and greatest honour, that ever was put upon a human creature in this world, is that of a son or a daughter of the Lord God Almighty. It is much higher than that of princes, kings, or emperors; for these are common in this world. And, though the name "Son of God" is sometimes applied to angels, Job, xxxviii. 7, magistrates, Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7, and hypocrites, Gen. vi. 4; yet there is a distinction to be made between their sonship and ours. Angels are sons by creation, as all men are, Mal. ii. 10. Magistrates are only so by office; but at death they "die like men, and fall like one of the princes," Psalm lxxxii. 7. And hypocrites are only nominally so by an external profession, and are called so only because they outwardly appear such. But a son of God by pre-adoption, and manifestly so by spiritual regeneration and faith, is a most wonderful honour, and a very exalted character. And this appears in the Almighty's most gracious and encouraging promise, "Neither let the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name

better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off," Isa. lvi. 3-5. It is easy to see what this everlasting name is which is to abide. The eunuch complains that he is a dry tree, he hath no sons nor daughters; therefore he cannot be under the blessing pronounced upon him that hath his quiver full of children; and another part of his complaint is, he hath no sons to keep up his house, family or name. To these complaints God answers, "I will give him a place in my house, and a name better than of sons and of daughters;" a place in my house that is better than a lot of inheritance in the promised land. And the name of a son of God is better than the name of a father, which a man obtains by having sons and daughters. Let a man's house be never so great, or his family never so innumerable, yet it must be cut off by death; or, if it continue till the day of judgment, it must be cut off from the earth then; but adoption remains for ever. They are called the many sons, when brought to glory, and will be embraced and acknowledged as such by God himself when Christ presents them to his Father, with a "Behold me, and the children which thou hast given me." This is an everlasting name that shall not be cut off, either at death or at judgment. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, when the name of the wicked shall rot."

To this adoption of sons we are predestinated: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," Eph. i. 5, 6. Having shewn and proved that we were loved in Christ with an everlasting love, and that this love was fixed first upon Christ as our head, in whom it is safe, and upon us in him, that we might participate the same love in him, and with him: and that we were predestinated to the adoption of children, that there might be something of a resemblance between us and him in honour and character; so likewise it is determined by God the Father

that there shall be something of a family-likeness between the covenant head, the everlasting Father, and his seed. Hence, says the apostle, "Whom he foreknew, those he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 29. Now, if the good Spirit of my God will be so kind as to lead me to point out clearly what we were predestinated and appointed to, or what that is that is given to us in Christ Jesus in eternal election, we shall see what this image of his Son is to which we are predestinated to be conformed. And,

1. It seems to stand in wisdom and understanding. This the great apostle points out to us: "Howbeit, we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew; for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," I Cor. ii. 6-8. This wisdom is a spiritual and an experimental knowledge of Christ, and of God as a covenant God and Father in him, given by the Holy Ghost; and is attended with a believing insight or view by faith into his secret purposes and grace, into his good-will of promise in Christ Jesus, that we might know most assuredly, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the things which are freely given us of God; such as his eternal love to us, the gift of Christ to us, and all saving benefits and spiritual blessings in him. Hence we have the promise of a knowledge of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, by the three-fold witness they bear in the souls of all believers upon earth. The love of God the Father, when shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, says, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Thus we come to God the judge of all; and God leads us to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness. This is the blood of sprinkling that speaks pardon, peace, reconciliation, and

friendship; and these are better things than were spoken by the blood of Abel. And the Holy Ghost cries, Abba, Father;" and bears his eternal and invariable witness to our sonship, even in the court of conscience. And this three-fold witness upon earth will most assuredly bring us to the blessed and eternal enjoyment of the holy three which bear record in heaven. In this triune witness on earth we must all meet and agree as one body, if we hope ever to meet in the happy enjoyment of the holy three who bear record above, which three are one; and so says Jesus, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one, and that they may be made perfect in one," John, xvii. 21-23. They must come "to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," Col. ii. 2. Hence it appears that the first thing in this image of Christ is wisdom, or knowledge. This appears, in the purpose of God, as the first part of Christ's image to which we are predestinated; hence Christ is said to be made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, &c., wisdom stands first. And so it will be found in Adam at creation, and on the saints that are regenerated, and in heaven at last, as I shall endeavour to prove as I proceed. But I must go on to prove,

2dly, That the next divine feature, or heavenly ingredient, in the image of Christ is righteousness. And this we were likewise predestinated to: "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 30. When Christ was set up from everlasting to be the covenant head and representative, he was made of God unto us both wisdom and righteousness; and on which account he is to be called by this name, "The Lord our Righteousness." For, when he consented to become future man and mediator, and agreed to take a human nature

on him, and to appear in a human body, which God in his eternal purpose had appointed, and in his purpose prepared; that is, he decreed that it should be prepared by the Spirit of God, and be preserved in its formation from every stain of human defilement; on which account it is called a body prepared; and these things having all passed in the eternal mind, are therefore said to be done. Hence the body is said to be prepared, as the persons John was to make ready are said to be "a people prepared for the Lord," Luke, i. 17. And when Christ had agreed to the assumption of human nature, and in it to offer himself as a sacrifice for sin, according as it is written, "Burnt-offerings, and offerings for sin, thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," Heb. x. 5. In which words you have the Saviour's hearty assent, agreement, and acquiescence, both with respect to his assumption of the body prepared, and in the offering himself as a sacrifice for sin; for he says, "Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." When the Saviour thus undertook we were let go; when he agreed to be made sin for us, who knew no sin himself; by the same agreement we were made the righteousness of God in him. This was promised to the Saviour in the councils of old, and agreed to in the covenant, which is called a covenant of promise; and this is one of the promises, "Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified," Isa. lx. 21. Let us take a little survey of this work of God's hands, and what we are to understand by "the branch of God's planting." I have proved, that in the secret councils of old, when Christ undertook to become our surety, and to make his soul an offering for sin, that we were made the righteousness of God in him, he being made wisdom and righteousness to us; and therefore he is to be called The Lord our Righteousness. But no man can come to Christ except God the Father draw him; and when it pleases God, by a law work, to root us up out of the soil of

corrupt nature, and from all self-righteousness, and to cut us off from the old stock, and bring us out of old Adam's family, and to lead us to Christ, and to accept us in the beloved, then he enables us to say, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." This is called translating of us, or transplanting us into a better soil; a noble vine, wholly a right seed; being then called "branches in the true vine," or wild olive branches grafted into the good olive tree, to partake of the goodness and fatness of the good olive-tree; that in him we may have righteousness and strength, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Righteousness may be considered as a perfect obedience to some law, or rule of righteousness; in which obedience a person stands upright before it, and doth not fall under it, so as to be cast and condemned by it when they come to be tried or judged. Hence that saying, "The wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." But there are some that will stand, and that with intrepidity, even in that day when all God's books will be opened, and the secrets of every heart made manifest, and every work brought into judgment; for so it is written, "Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of man," Luke, xxi. 36. Paul tells us that "we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith," Gal. v. 5: that is, he hoped in that great day to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 9; and this Paul calls the obedience of one, that is, of Christ, Rom. v. 19. This day will try all sorts of righteousness; and the highest touchstone of all righteousness will be that of the glorious revelation of that most tremendous attribute or perfection in God called justice, or righteousness; for the great day will bring this to light: "He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant

with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is judge himself," Psalm v. 4-6.

As it has been a custom in some countries for persons, after taking a trial, when they have been found innocent, and have been honourably acquitted and justified, to be crowned with a garland of leaves and flowers, prepared by their friends, which was done to make their innocence or righteousness appear conspicuous to all; so the apostle, having embraced the abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, expected to reign in life by Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 17. And he was so effectually assured of this, that, in the prospect of a violent death, and in full view of an immediate appearance before God, and in expectation of a more remote standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, he could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. The apostle had embraced this gift of righteousness at the beginning of his profession; and he had preached it, and abode by it, throughout the whole course of his ministry; and he expected to receive it as his wedding garment, at the consummation of the marriage of the Lamb, and to be crowned with it at the general doom, and to appear in it as his royal purple in the kingdom of glory. And this he expected as a free-grace gift, and therefore says, "Which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day." And this he knew would come in a way of strict justice; for God is as just to his promises made in Christ as he is to his threatenings out of him, and as righteous in the distribution of his favours as he is in the execution of his sentences. Righteous souls, and a righteous God, shall both meet together in Christ Jesus; he will accept them in the righteousness that he has prepared for them and given to them, and they shall see him, even the righteous judge with joy. God ever did, and he ever will,

appear just in every justification of them which do believe, or have believed, in Jesus, as well as their justifier. I must now hasten on to my next head, which is,

3dly, To consider the next, or third, glorious feature in this divine image of the Son of God, to which we were predestinated to be conformed; and this particular is holiness. Upon this our great apostle is plain: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy without blame before him in love," Eph. i. 3, 4. Here our apostle says that we were blessed in Christ with all spiritual blessings, according as he hath chosen us in him; and three of these spiritual blessings are named: the first is holiness, which is to be our meetness to appear before him; for without holiness soul can see the Lord; the second is, our appearing without me, irreproveable and irrebukable; and the third blessing is love; in which, when perfected, there is no fear. But holiness is what I must consider. We know there is no real holiness but in God he is the only one, in and of himself; and the fountain of holiness to all others that are holy, whether they be holy angels, the spirits of just men made perfect, or holy men, called "holy brethren, partakers of the holy calling."

And this holiness is not a ceremonial holiness, obtained by sanctifying or purifying the flesh with the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean. For nothing of this sort could make the comers unto them clean as touching the conscience, much less make them holy.

Nor is this holiness to be obtained by works of righteousness done in obedience to the moral law. None could stick closer to it than some of the Jews did; as the young man in the gospel who had kept all these things; and the elder son in the

parable, who had never transgressed. Nicodemus and Paul also. And indeed that whole generation was "pure in their own eyes, though never washed from their filthiness," Prov. xxx. 12.

Nor does this holiness consist in an external reformation made the preaching of the gospel, as when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, and the man finding the house empty, or the devil departed from it, sets about sweeping and garnishing of it with a little legal repentance, or the motions of natural passions stirred up, as of sorrow, as they had who "howled upon their beds," Hosea, vii. 14; or the passion of joy moved, as the stony-ground hearers had, who "heard the word, and anon with joy received it;" for these things, together with light in the head, knowledge, zeal, and spiritual gifts, either to converse, pray, or prophesy, will never make a man holy: no, nor yet a conformity to any of the outward ordinances of the gospel; such as joining a church, making a public profession and confession of Christ, submitting to baptism as Simon Magus did, or receiving the sop as Judas did; no, nor filling up our places in God's house, nor walking constantly in fellowship with the saints, though it be to the end, as the foolish virgins did. There is no real holiness in all this, nor in any of these things, though there are thousands and tens of thousands that are wrapped up and secure enough in these webs. But this is not the holiness that the elect were chosen unto, nor is it any thing like it; it is like Jezebel's painted face; and many are as pleased with it as she was; but it has not the least resemblance of that inward and all-glorious adorning of the king's daughter, Psalm xlv. 13. Whatever this holiness is, it is something that is to be experienced and enjoyed in Christ Jesus. Without being united to him there is no holiness in any man; so says Paul, "According as he hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Hence it is plain that those who are out of Christ can know nothing about holiness experimentally, but what they know

naturally: and as natural knowledge puffeth up, so men, by such knowledge, corrupt themselves, by soaring aloft in self-love or self-admiration, as Satan did, till he fell into condemnation for his pride. And we are informed that in the last days there shall be a good deal of this in professing men; "Men shall be lovers of themselves, proud, boasters," &c.; and we have plenty of these in our days. In Christ Jesus God hath chosen his people, that they might be holy; and interested in his salvation must every one be who participates of this holiness. Christ is made sanctification to us, as well as wisdom and righteousness; and it is not without cause that he is so often called The Holy One of Israel; because all true Israelites have their holiness in him, and of his fullness do all the children of God receive it. But, as I shall have occasion to speak more fully upon this point when I come to treat of the lost image of Christ being restored to men by the Holy Ghost, I shall pass on to consider,

4thly, The next heavenly lineament in the image of Christ, and that is "glory. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," 2 Tim. ii. 10. Here the apostle connects election, salvation, and eternal glory, together. And well he may, for we are appointed, by the decree of election, unto both, as will appear by the following quotations: "Take for an helmet the hope of salvation - for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us," 1 Thess. v. 9, 10. And, as glory, seems to be the last and finishing stroke of Christ's image in man, that seems to be more fully expressed than any of the former: "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," Rom. ix. 23, 24. This glory will consist chiefly of light. The light that shined on Moses' face is called glory, the glory of his countenance; "which glory," says Paul, "is done

away in Christ." And the light that shined round about Paul at his conversion he calls glory, and says he could not see for the glory of that light, Acts, xxii. 11. The Prophet Isaiah, when he was illuminated, prophesies to others, from his own experience, what Christ would do for them: "Arise, shine, For thy light is come, and the glory of God is risen upon thee, and the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory; and thy sun shall no more go down." And again: "For, behold, 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; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," Isa. ix. 2, 3. This most brilliant and illustrious appearance, in which the Saviour visits his church, is the native hue, or natural complexion, of the Son of God; and this may be seen on mount Tabor, where it is said that our Lord took with him three of his disciples, Peter, James and John, and was transfigured before them. But, in truth, his mean appearance that he continually made in the days of his flesh was rather a transfiguration; for he was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; though at the same time, as lord and the creator of angels, he had more than twelve legions of them at his beck and call. Indeed, he styles himself lower still; "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him," Psalm xxii. 6-8. And if the Lord of life and glory appearing in this servile form, and in the midst of such reproach, contempt, and scorn, be not a transfiguration, I know not what is; for sure no being could ever be more altered, changed, or transformed, than his figure and likeness was; especially if we compare the appearance that he has at times made, as described by Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, and John, with that which he made in his suffering circumstances. Ezekiel the first chapter, Isaiah the sixth, and the first of the Revelation by

John, contain the best portraits of his natural hue or complexion; and, though all the creation seems ransacked to set him forth there, yet they are all as far beneath the real appearance of Christ, as the omnipresent God and king of glory, as a taper is beneath the sun. To be conformed to this glorious image and likeness we are predestinated, says Paul: nay more, he says the vessels of mercy are afore by God prepared unto glory. This image of Christ, to which we are appointed and predestinated, is to be impressed by the Holy Ghost upon all the chosen seed in regeneration, and to be carried on by the renewing operations of the Holy Spirit till this begun work be perfected and completed. But I must hurry on to the next particular of the image of Christ, which is,

5thly, Love. This is a most striking feature in Christ's image, as he is delineated by the spouse. Having given as good a description of him as she could, she sums up all together, and says, "His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem," Song v. 16. Now to this we are appointed also, as I hinted before: "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. This is the perfecting stroke in this image. Hence we are exhorted to put on charity, or love, which is the bond of all perfectness; and charity is said never to fail. This is the badge of our holy profession; it is a seed of God, for God is love; and nothing appears more conspicuous than this in the new man as soon as he is formed. It is by this we know that the spiritual birth has taken place in us; for "he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; but he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." This is the work that was carried on in the secret council of the holy and blessed Trinity from everlasting.

Thus have I shewn you to what the Father hath predestinated and appointed us; to all which the Son of God agreed, with whom the bargain was struck, and with whom the covenant was made, and with whom it stands fast for ever and ever. And, if it be asked what part the Holy Spirit took, or takes, in this work, it shall be proved, as I go on, that the beginning and finishing work of this image in Adam when he was formed, and in the elect when they are regenerated, and in all the saints at the day of judgment, when they shall be glorified, will be done and completed by God the Holy Ghost. But I must hasten to my next general head, which is to shew,

II. That the image of God in Adam was the noblest and grandest work that appeared in the whole creation when the world was made.

Some men, who are wise enough above what is written, and, through the judgment of God upon them, foolish enough below it, have dreamed of the eternity of matter; that the materials of which the world was made ever did exist, and will ever abide the same as it now is. But God, who is the best judge, tells us it is not so; and that faith, which is God's gift, will believe what God says about it. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that the things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear," Heb. xi. 3. The things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear; for, if the matter, or the materials of the world, be eternal, and did ever subsist, however God might alter it, new model it, beautify it, or reform it, this would not have constituted him a maker or a creator, but a repairer, beautifier, or reformer. "Out of nothing, nothing can be made," say some. This, when applied to men, is true, but not with respect to God; for all things are possible with God, and nothing shall be impossible, Luke, i. 37. To make God a reformer of the world, and to ascribe impossibilities to him, is to destroy out of our minds all the sense, reverence,

and awe, that we have of his omnipotence, which the creation of the world is calculated to establish; as it is written, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse," Rom. i. 20. His eternal power is to be known by the things that are made; and they who consider not the operation of his hands he shall destroy them, and not build them up. At the creation God's creating voice spoke that into existence, which never existed before; and this is called chaos, the gross and confused materials of the world, which at first was without form, and void of order; but every part of it moved at his word. God spoke, and the creating word which was with God, and was God, went forth, and "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters;" and divided the elements, and made them prolific. God the Father spoke, and the Word and the Spirit instantly executed: "God created all things by Jesus Christ," Eph. iii. 9. But this is not spoken to exclude the Holy Spirit, for the essential Word and the Spirit always work together: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," Psalm xxxiii. 6. God said, "Let there be light, let there be a firmament, let the waters be gathered together, let the earth bring forth, let there be lights in the firmament to give light upon the earth;" and it was so: "For he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast," Psalm xxxiii. 9. The allwise Creator did not make man till he had brought the world into beautiful order for him. He prepared the vast kingdom, and then formed him that he intended should (under himself) have the dominion over it. We have seen, in all the parts of the creation, that they were done by speaking; "He spake and it was done." But about the formation of man, there was a council held among the divine persons: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion," Gen. i. 26. These words were spoken by the Father to the Son, whom the Father possessed before the beginning of his way, Prov. viii.

22; and who, at the creation," was by him, as one brought up with him, and who was daily his delight," Prov. viii. 30. But some, who deny a plurality of persons in God, would make us believe that God spake these words to angels; but angels are creatures, and to apply the speech of God to them is to make them joint-creators and co-workers with God in the creation. But they had no hand in it; they are the morning-stars that sang together, and the sons of God that shouted for joy, Job, xxxviii. 7. And we need not wonder at their being called sons of God, for such they are by creation, and so are we. "Have we not all one father, hath not one God created us?" Mal. ii. 10. And in this sense angels may be called our brethren; and as they are all servants, and as they all minister to the heirs of salvation, they are fellow-servants also; and so they call themselves; "And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets; worship God," Rev. xxii. 8, 9. Strange it is that there should be such enemies to the Son of God, who, though he be the creator of angels, for "he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," Heb. i. 17; yet they would introduce his angels into God's councils, and into the work of creation, before him who is the creator of all principalities and powers. Besides, man was not made in the image and likenes of angels, nor are ever said to be made in the image and likeness of God. To the Word, which was in the beginning with God, and which was God, did God the Father speak when he said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness;" for the image of the Father, and the image of the Son is one; and therefore it is said to be our image, our likeness; for "Christ is the image of the invisible God," Col. i. 15; yea, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3. This is the council which they held, and what they consulted about, and agreed to; and this they immediately executed: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he

him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them," Gen. i. 27. Observe here: in the consultation a plurality of persons appears; "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let him have dominion;" but, in the execution of the work, the unity of the divine essence is preserved; "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," Gen. ii. 7. God the Father and God the Son formed this human body: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Thus "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" and so says the Saviour, "When he prepared the heavens I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, Prov. viii. 27. I was there; not as a spectator, but as a co-worker; for "all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made," John, i. 3. Nor is the Holy Ghost excluded from any of the works of creation. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and divided them from the earth, and impregnated both the earth and the waters. Indeed, he seems to have given the finishing stroke to this lower world; and so he did to the upper world also, as the scriptures witness: "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent," Job, xxvi. 15. By the crooked serpent it is thought, by some, that the galaxy, or milky-way, is intended; because, in the above text, it stands connected with the heavens, and because the milky-way is one of the ornaments with which the Spirit of God has garnished the heavens. And it is as plain that the Holy Ghost quickened and animated Adam, and impressed the image of God upon him. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and so God breathed upon the dry bones of the whole house of Israel in Chaldea, when he is said to put his Spirit into them that they might live; and, in allusion to this at Adam's creation, Christ breathed on the apostles, and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." And God's breathing into Adam's nostrils was

putting the Holy Spirit into him; and what the Spirit did when he came into Adam the scriptures inform us: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life," Job, xxxiii. 4. There were many things in the apostles that seem to allude to the creation of Adam. Adam was created by God; the apostles were created anew in Christ Jesus. God breathed into Adam, and Christ breathed on the apostles. The Spirit of God inspired Adam with wonderful knowledge of God's will and of God's works; and the same Spirit led the apostles into all truth. As soon as Adam was formed he forthwith spoke; and, as soon as the Spirit came upon the apostles, "they spake as the Spirit gave them utterance," Acts, ii. 11. What Adam called the creatures, that was their true name; and what the apostles bound or loosed on earth was bound or loosed in heaven. The Holy Ghost formed the soul of Adam, and endowed it with all its faculties, and animated and quickened Adam's body. There was a peculiar life which attended the Spirit's first animation of man, and it is the same most Holy Spirit that quickens God's elect among Adam's dead family now; and thus the Saviour testifies: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," John, viii. 63. From this passage we may learn, that, according the tenor of God's covenant, God's word and Spirit are always go together; both are given to the Covenant-head; and, by God's appointment, Christ gives them to all his members; so says God, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall never depart out of thy mouth, nor it of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever. This is my covenant with them," Isa. lix. 21. From all which it appears that the formation of Adam's soul, and the differrnt faculties with which it was enriched, and the light, knowledge, and wisdom, with which it was adorned, together with the image of God upon him, was, all of it, by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And in this state Adam was the figure of him that was to come,

Romans, v. 14; and is called the Son of God, Luke, iii. 38. But I proceed to discourse of God's image in Adam. And,

1. The apostle intimates that it stood in knowledge: "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 9, 10. Hence it appears, that spiritual knowledge, which was lost by the fall, was, in a measure, restored to these Colossians by the renewing of the Holy Ghost; for this renewing in knowledge is said to be after the image of the Creator. And, indeed, it appears that the knowledge of Adam was very great; and it is as plain that all spiritual knowledge is given by the Holy Ghost, whether in the old creation or in the new: "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding," Job, xxxii. 8. Adam's knowledge discovers itself in the names that he gave to the creatures: "For every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, which God formed, did he bring and set before Adam, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof," Gen. ii. 19. It has been observed by some how applicable the names of the different creatures, which Adam gave, were to the nature of them. But this is a subject too wonderful for me; but that which he gave to his wife was so most certainly. And yet Adam was in a deep and profound sleep when the rib was taken out of him; and so I believe he was when the woman was formed; therefore he could not have had any sight or knowledge of her till God brought her to him, and set her before him, upon the sight of whom Adam said, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Thus Adam knew who she was and her origin, and forthwith gave her a name suitable, and assigns a reason for it; and he knew all this by the spirit of revelation and understanding, and by no other way. And it was under the same influence that the three disciples, Peter, James, and

John, knew Moses and Elias upon mount Tabor, though they had been gone from this world many hundred years, and had been in heaven, and among the spirits of just men made perfect, and appeared now in a glorified state: yet they had a true knowledge of them, and called them by their names; for the more spiritual and heavenly men are, the higher they come to a perfection of knowledge. But, above all, Adam knew his great Creator with a knowledge of love and delight; and he knew the law that God had given him; and I think he knew something of the rebellion and fall of angels; for the scriptures tell us, that when he went into sin he was not deceived, neither by the devil nor by Eve; he transgressed with both his eyes open; he knew and understood what he was going about before he fell, as will appear hereafter.

2. Adam was created in righteousness and true holiness. These two things being lost in the fall, the apostle hints that these are brought to the soul when we are renewed by the Holy Spirit; for so he speaks, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 23, 24. Adam's righteousness was native, and it was creative; it was a part of God's image in which he was made, and it lay in the rectitude and uprightness of his whole man; and it was what the Holy Spirit of God impressed upon him, and influenced him with; but the highest degree of righteousness in him lay in real love to his great Creator, and in the delight and happiness which Adam had in him. The spouse informs us that it is the upright that love the Lord, Song i. 4; and Wisdom adds, "This only have I found, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many inventions," Eccl. vii. 29. The Saviour tells us, that love to God and our neighbour is the grand hinge on which the whole law and the prophets hang; if so, love must be the principal article in Adam's native righteousness; yea, love and delight in God is the quintessence of all real righteousness, as may be gathered from the cheerful

expressions of the second Adam, the Lord our Righteousness: "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is written within my heart," Psal. xl. 7, 8. And now we will look at the good report that Christ obtained by love: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name," Psal. xci. 13-15. Christ, in his obedience, set his love on God, and delighted to do his will; and this was the righteousness of Adam, which the Holy Ghost adorned his soul with; and in this he stood complete before the law that was given him, and before his righteous Creator, without any dread or slavish fear of him, for "there is no fear in love; charity thinketh no evil," and therefore can do none.

3. Adam was created holy. "The image of God," says Paul, "is in true holiness." The Holy Spirit entered him when God breathed into him, and influenced all the powers of his soul with holiness; so that he was not only pronounced good, and was pure from every spot or stain, but Paul says, "The image of God is in righteousness and true holiness." Wherever the holy and blessed God has condescended to appear, there is holiness spread all round about him. When Isaiah saw him on his throne, high and lifted up, the seraphim cried, "Holy, holy, holy!" And the very glory overwhelmed the prophet till he appeared, under that influence, a leper from head to foot, Isa. chap. vi. When God dwelt in Jerusalem it was called the holy city; the temple, in which he resided, was called the holy place; yea, when God appeared to Moses in the bush, and Moses was turning round to see the sight, he bids him not draw nigh, but tells him to pull off his shoes from his feet, for "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And he ordered Joshua to do the same in the plains of Jericho, and assigns the same reason, "The place whereon thou standest

is holy ground." It is the Holy Spirit's influence upon all the elect angels that gives them the character of holy angels; and it was the entering of the Holy Spirit into Adam that made him a holy man. And it is no less now than the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, which he is pleased to spread throughout the whole church, that makes it a holy temple in the Lord, and therefore it is said to be "built for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

4. The sacred writings instance that there was a glory that attended the image of God in Adam, which may be concluded from the following passage: "For a man, indeed, ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man," 1 Cor. xi. 7. And this glory was a divine radiance which shone through all the faculties of his soul, which gave him such light and understanding, and such insight into things, as soon as he was made, so that he spake immediately and sensibly off hand, without ever learning letters or words; and I have no doubt but Adam's face, when he communed so familiarly with God, shone as much as ever the face of Moses did; for something of this glory shines now on the face of every newborn soul when this image is restored. "God is the health of their countenance." In every glorious appearance that the Saviour has made to the children of men (I say, glorious appearance), it has always been with rays of glory on his face, as the eternal God dwelling in the light; and his face is often compared to the sun shining in his full strength, and sometimes to the face of an angel of God, very terrible; as every appearance of divine light is, and must be, terrible to poor corrupted mortals. Adam, as he was a figure of him that was to come, had a divine lustre on his face, as Moses had at the giving of the law, which supported his countenance on that tremendous day; and the same kept the countenance of Stephen from falling when the perjured witnesses and desperate magistrates were driving him to his grave. This is

what I take to be the apostle's meaning by the man being "the image and glory of God." If this be denied, I know not what that glory was to which the apostle alludes. With love to God in Adam's heart, and beams of divinity on his face, he spake freely and familiarly with God face to face, as Moses did under the same rays, and that without horror, dread, or fear. Every creature that God brought to him he named, and that was the name of it. And the Almighty seemed very well pleased to hear this little petty prince talk away as he did. As God is the fountain of light, and Christ the true light, it cannot be supposed that God's image in Adam should be express without such a heavenly lustre: and, if I might assert what I really believe, I would say, that the Spirit of God shone in Adam, and through him, and that it was the Spirit of God that spoke in him; and many, besides me, think the same. God was the health of David's countenance, much more the light of Adam's, who was made in the image of God. Oh what a place was paradise! and what a sight was there! There was God the Father, and Christ the express image of him; and there was Adam in the image of Christ, as a figure of him that was to come; and there was Eve, the image and glory of the man. This image was the noblest work in all the creation. Wisdom and power appear in the whole fabric of nature; and faithfulness and truth in the seasons of the year. Justice and judgment appear in the wars and commotions of the world. But his image in Adam had a trait of every perfection of the divine majesty; and therefore this was the noblest work. And this is more plain, because all the elect of God are ordained to appear in it to all eternity. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Which leads me to my next general head, which is,

III. To shew that the principal thing, or the most invaluable blessing in the whole image of God in man was life. This may be concluded from three particulars which appear at the creation. The

1. Is, God's breathing into him, and what followed upon it, which is, "and man became a living soul." He not only appeared with an animated body, but there is a peculiar emphasis laid upon his becoming "a living soul:" he had divine life in his soul. This appears in the word of God. God says to Ezekiel, "Prophesy unto the wind; prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live," Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 14.

2. It may be concluded, from the blessing which God pronounced upon him at his creation. "Male and female created he them. And God blessed them." And sure I am that God's blessing is life. "As many as are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham ;" and none believe but those that are ordained to eternal life. God's spiritual blessing in the gospel is called life: "Upon mount Zion hath God commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

3. The loss of this life is what Adam was threatened with, in case of disobedience, as the greatest loss and the most dreadful calamity that could befall him. Many things Adam lost; as the whole of God's image, communion with God, righteousness, peace, comfort, paradise, and all the fruits and delights of it. But this is all summed up in the loss of life. Life was to go from him immediately upon his transgression; and death, in all its dreadful consequences, was to ensue: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die! Dying, thou shalt die;" be continually dying, and utterly expire at last. Whatever this life in Adam was, it is expressly called the life of God: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts," Eph. iv. 18. This life in Adam was spiritual and divine; the Holy Ghost entered into him, and quickened him, and infused life throughout his whole soul: and

we know that the entrance of the Spirit giveth life, for it is the Spirit that quickeneth.

4. Adam stood high in the divine favour, as may be seen by the Saviour's own declaration at the creation of the world, "rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men," Prov. viii. 31. God's "anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life;" Adam's was a life in the favour of God.

5. There is life in divine love; and that Adam loved his God is plain, by the freedom and familiarity that he used with him, and that without the least fear or dread upon his soul, at the sight, or at the voice of him; and this may be clearly seen by the enmity which took place in his heart after his fall, when he fled from God, and became alienated from the life of him, and desired to have no more to do with him; but hid himself to shun him. Love and life go together. All gifts, such as knowledge, prophecy, faith to remove mountains, and the tongues of men and angels, make men only instruments without life, if charity or love be absent: if God circumcises our hearts to love him, it is that we may live; and, indeed, all that love the brethren are passed from death unto life. Adam's life was a life of love, and the Holy Spirit gave him both. Without love to God in Adam there could be no obedience. All the laws of God set forth his glory and greatness; and, in the next place, call for love to him with all the heart and soul, mind and strength. The moral law, which is the law of Adam, calls for this; but it is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus which brings it to the souls of men now by the gospel. The gospel is a revelation of the love and good-will of God in Christ Jesus; and the Holy Spirit, accompanying it, sheds abroad the love of God in the hearts of all that believe in Christ.

6. Adam's was a life of communion and fellowship with God. There was a mutual love between the Almighty and this petty

prince: he delighted himself in the Almighty, and the Lord took pleasure in Adam's prosperity. For, looking upon him, and seeing him with delight, and considering the enjoyments he had endowed him with, and the honour he had advanced him to, he said, "It is not good that man should be alone;" I will make an help-mate for him; I will make one that shall share in his happiness. And he did so, and brought her to Adam, and, as a father, gave her away to him; God himself honouring this first wedding with his own presence. We have no account of the angels being there. God, Father, Son, and Spirit, were present at the ceremony, when the union took place between Adam and Eve; as they were once since at a marriage in Cana of Galilee, though few of the guests knew it, being more charmed with the generous wine than with their divine company. And, by what my soul has felt, I know they were all three present when my soul was first espoused and united to the great Bridegroom of the church; for it was as if heaven and earth were coming together. In short, Adam's was a spiritual and divine life, with which the Holy Spirit influenced him; it was a life in the favour and love of God, and a life of communion and fellowship with him, and a life peculiar to that state of holy innocence, because it was loseable; and lost it certainly was.

God's mind and will being made known to angels, or his decree published among them, that Adam was a figure of the Son of God, who in future was to become incarnate, and that whenever God should bring his first-begotten into the world, all the angels should worship him, Heb. i. 6; one of them seems to have taken offence at this, and led others into his rebellion. The scriptures tell us that Satan abode not in the truth, that he was charged with folly, and condemned for pride; and when fallen, sought the ruin of Adam; and knowing the law that God had given to man, he disguised himself in the subtlest beast of the field, and took an opportunity when the woman was alone to accost her with the law of God, "Yea,

hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree?" &c. and she answered him not in the words which God had spoken, "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die;" but the woman said, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die:" the serpent replied, "Ye shall not surely die," Gen. iii. 2-4. Here Satan obtained the name of "serpent," and the title of "father of lies." A threefold bait was held forth to Eve; 1, "the lust of the flesh;" she saw that the tree was good for food; 2, "the lust of the eyes," and that it was pleasant to the sight; and, 3, "the pride of life," it was a tree to be desired to make one wise; for Satan promised that they should be as gods. John says that these three, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are all that is in the world; and this is not of the Father, but of the world." Nor has Satan been able to add one more to these three in the practice of five thousand years, nor need he, for these are enough. However, the woman took and ate, and all was over with her. Sin entered, not in a hostile way, but in a lascivious one: strange emotions seized her, much like those wild unaccountable raptures which at times appear in graceless professors, just before they go mad, attended with uncommon light, pride, and consequence: and, having satisfied herself with the fruit, she carried some to her husband, and strongly recommended it; who saw where she was, and was well armed with light and knowledge, with a filial fear, with a good conscience and a sound mind, and not without strong oppositions to it, by the Spirit of God: but she became now a complete mistress of arts, by the ascendancy of Satan over her, and by the possession he had gotten of her; therefore she powerfully enticed him, and persuaded him, and sin having entered into her heart, and the law likewise, it wrought in her the fire of concupiscence, Rom. vii. 8. She was filled with wanton amours, and her eyes and tongue soon prevailed; for she took him with her eyelids, and by the moving of her lips she forced

him, and he went after her, against both light and knowledge, like "an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks," Prov. vii. 22. These things God resents; I mean her persuasions and his wilful compliance; for both appear in Adam's sentence, at his arraignment, "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." Natural affections, together with the charms and artifice of Eve, under the evil influence of Satan, overcame Adam (just as the daughters of Cain prevailed against the sons of God since), Gen. vi. 2, as is plain from the word of God, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression," 1 Tim. ii. 14. He took of the fruit, and did eat, and all was lost; the eyes of them both were opened; not in a good sense, as when God opens the understanding of poor sinners by the gospel; but in a bad sense, to see what they had lost and what they had gained: as the rich man in hell lifted up his eyes, to see that his soul was lost, and damnation obtained. And so here - the God of this world blinded their eyes with his veil; and all the enjoyment of God's presence and the light of his countenance was hid; and their eyes were opened to see the mystery of iniquity, in the lusts of the flesh, the depths of Satan's guiles, the guilt they had contracted, the shame they were covered with, and the curse or sentence of the law that had entered into them. And just so does the poor sinner find it now - when the commandment comes, and sin revives; all manner of concupiscence is stirred up, with unutterable enmity, malice, and desperation; under which the sinner sees an angry judge; sinks down into the horrible pit, and dies without either hope, help, or expectation. Eve's eyes were opened before, and now the eyes of both were opened. The new man of grace, which was God's image, in which they were made, was now put off; and the old man, as he is now called, with all his deceitful lusts, was put on.

Satan wonderfully enlightened them into the arts of carnal gratifications; and set these before them as the quintessence of all real pleasures; and so he serves every child of God to this day, when the best beloved is not at home. These evil imaginations entered and abode with them; and it is sin's entrance here that gives him the name of the old man - "the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," and which deceived them, and is what they have communicated to us. And upon the entrance of these the Holy Spirit, being grieved and offended, forsook him; and at the departure of the Spirit, the image of God vanished; spiritual wisdom, righteousness, holiness, love, and the light of immortal glory, all went together; and sin having entered, and the law too, they became filled with evil desires, and with carnal and amorous delights, and with continual vain imaginations about these things, Gen. viii. 21. And these deceitful lusts they have communicated to all their children, who are all filled with the same to this day; and this every child of God, under heaven, knows to his sorrow.

When Adam and Eve, under this new influence had wearied themselves in keeping wedding, then came pouring in, all at once, slavish fear, guilt, shame, confusion, and the cutting accusations of Satan and conscience; and then they began to patch and cover themselves with leaves, as all their children do to this day, when the Spirit convinces them of sin. And no sooner had they added this sin to the former, by covering with a covering, but not of God's Spirit, Isa. xxxi. 1, than the voice of God called to Adam. It may be observed here, that when God judged Adam and Eve, the curse lighted upon the earth; and Adam's sentence is, that in sorrow he should eat the fruit of it all the days of his life; and that of the woman was, that he would multiply her sorrow by conception and care: and that the heaviest curse falls immediately upon the serpent, and upon the devil in him. There was no call to pass any sentence of condemnation upon either Adam or Eve; the sentence of

death went forth from God before they had transgressed. And when the devil laid the old man of sin at their door, death followed at his heels; and, as soon as each of them, by eating the fruit, had opened the door, "sin entered, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. v. 12.

Upon this matter, we may clearly see that the whole of God's image, with which Adam was adorned, was wrought, and preserved in its glorious lustre, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, who, being grieved and offended at man's sin, immediately left him; though, like Samson, he did not directly feel it, the lust of the flesh, and wanton desires and pleasures, springing up to supply the absence of God, as in Samson, till the cheat was discovered by shaking himself. And this the children of God find to their sorrow whenever the presence of God goes, and they get under spiritual desertions; for the same bait, as the most pleasing substitute to flesh and blood, is presented to them. God's image in Adam, and all his soul's adorning, was owing to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; and, when that sweetest of all comforters took his leave, all was gone; and, when Nature had spent all her pleasing charms, they felt for their inward peace, might, tranquillity, and happiness; and, finding all gone, they agreed together to make aprons of leaves. But we must now take our final leave of paradise, for God's image is gone, and divine life is lost, and the garden of Eden is too sacred and holy a spot for rebels in league with Satan to range in. We may, from what has been observed, get a sight, and God knows we have long had a woful sense, of what Adam obtained when the Holy Ghost left him. He was called, before his fall, a son of God; and, when fallen, a child of wrath and a child of the devil; for his image Adam took, for he fell into sin, death, and condemnation, as Satan did. And, from Satan's deception in the serpent, Satan was not the only one that obtained the name of a serpent. The best judge in heaven and earth found

"serpents," and "a generation of vipers" among the children of men, and calls the devil the father of them. God's image was knowledge; Adam's image after the fall was ignorance; God's image was righteousness, Adam's image was guilt and condemnation; God's image was true holiness, Adam's was sin and filth; God's image was love, Adam's image was enmity against God; God's image was light and glory, Adam's image was darkness, shame, disgrace, and contempt. The Holy Ghost adorned Adam with the first, and Satan deformed and disfigured him with the last. And this image he communicated to all his seed: "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image," Gen. v. 3. And this image is propagated to all the human race; in this we are all born, and in this we live; and unless the Holy Ghost come and renew us, in this image we shall die; and all they that die in it will rise in it, and be exposed to everlasting contempt: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment; they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest thou shalt despise their image," Psalm lxxiii 18-20. But I must proceed; for, being all shut out of paradise, God has opened a "valley of vision," Isa. xxii. 1; and, instead of the gates of Eden, we must look for "a door of hope;" for God's elect were from everlasting predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ; and this was not to come from the figure, but the real person represented; not from the first Adam, but from the second; not from the earthly representative, but from the heavenly; not from the fleshly parent, but from the everlasting Father; not from a living soul, but from the quickening spirit. Nor would God suffer the image of his dear Son to be communicated in so low a way as by natural generation, but by spiritual regeneration. Nor was it to come by a legal covenant, but by an evangelical one; not by a command, but by a promise; not of works, but of grace. God will not minister his Spirit by the works of the law, but by his

promise in Christ Jesus. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And, as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," I Corinthians, xv. 48-50. Redemption's work is finished, and reconciliation is proclaimed. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Justice is satisfied, and Christ is risen. But the work of regeneration and renewing is still going on; "For, as God raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." I now proceed to my next general head,

IV. Which is to shew that there was something of this blissful and paradisaical state shadowed out to the children of Israel in the land of promise.

The promised land was a pleasant, fruitful, and delightful spot, and is often compared to the garden of Eden. Hence, in the prophecy of God's displeasure against the king of Tyre, who had been and took a survey of the desolations of the city of Jerusalem and of the land of Canaan, after the king of Babylon had wasted it, says, "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth: and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire," Exekiel, xxviii. 13, 14. So the prophet Joel compares the holy land to paradise before the Chaldean army wasted it: "The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them," Joel, ii. 3. And I have often thought (pardon my digression) that, after our first parents were expelled from paradise, they settled somewhere near the promised land, if not in it; which I

gather from the names of many places in and about that country; as there are thousands of places in this island, both in London and the country, which bear the names of men to this day, and have done for many hundred years; and so in the land of promise. Hence we read of "the city Adam," that is beside Zaretan, near Jordan, Josh. iii. 16. We read also "of the stone of Abel," whereon they set the ark of God, 1 Sam. vi. 11; and of a city called "Abel," where the wise woman delivered her proverb to Joab, saying, "They were wont to speak in old time, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel; and so they ended the matter," 2 Sam. xx. 18. So we read of "Abelmaim," 2 Chron. xvi. 4; "Abel-meolah," Judges, vii. 22; and of "Abel-misraim," Gen. 1. 11; and there is a long arched stone vault in that country to this day that is called "Abel's grave."

2. Israel, when he came out of Egypt, is called God's son, as Adam was: "Israel is my son," says God to Pharaoh, "my first-born; let my son go, that he may serve me, or else I will slay thy first-born, even thine." He was a son by national adoption, Adam was a son by creation. But the sonship of Adam being only so by creation, was only typical of God's elect, who are a new creation, created anew in Christ Jesus, and are the sons of God by the renewing of the Spirit; and so Israel was an adopted nation, and a chosen generation: but it is the true Israel of God who are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," in election. Adam had the Lord with him, and so had the children of Israel. God always dwelt in a tent or a tabernacle, from the time that he brought them up out of the land of Egypt till the days of David, 2 Sam. vii. 6. The same law that was given to Adam was revised and given to the children of Israel. God's image was in paradise; and there was always a remnant, according to the election of grace, in whom God's image was renewed and restored in the promised land. The tree of life was in Eden; and Christ, who is called the tree of life, was between

the cherubim in the temple, Prov. iii. 18. Adam's continuance in Eden was conditional, and so was Israel's in the promised land. Adam's life was loseable, so was Israel's. All the time Adam obeyed he lived in Eden; and Israel's long life in the land which God gave them was only secured by their obedience. But Adam sinned, and was banished; Israel sinned, and was transported also. Adam's greatest loss was that of God's image; and the Jews rejecting and killing the express image of the invincible God, was the greatest loss that ever they sustained. When our first parents were banished, they had a promise of a return to God by the woman's seed bruising the serpent's head; and Israel has a promise of returning to God when they are brought to acknowledge and accept him who hath destroyed the works of the devil. Again: though the law given to Adam could neither give him eternal life, nor secure him a life in paradise, yet eternal life was set before him by the tree of life, which God had planted in the garden; hence Christ is called "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," Rev. ii. 7. So, had there been a law given to Israel, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law; but it could not. It promised a life in Canaan upon conditions; but it could not secure even that, the law being weak through the flesh: yet eternal life was set before them, even by Moses: "That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him; for he is thy life, and the length of thy days," Deut. xxx. 20. Once more: Adam had the cherubim placed before him at the gate of Eden, to teach him where to direct his worship; and so had Israel. They were to direct their prayer and to look up for help from between the cherubim; "for here," saith Lord "will I meet and commune with you." No people, but Adam and Israel, ever had the cherubim set before them.

I have much matter still on my mind upon the subject in hand, which, to hurry over briefly, would not be doing justice to my

text; therefore will leave the remaining part of my thoughts till the evening. May God command his blessing upon what hath been delivered.

Amen

W.H. Huntington S.S.

The Loss and Restoration and Restoration of the
Image of God in Man;

TWO SERMONS

PREACHED AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, ON SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 28, 1800.

*And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also
bear the image of the heavenly. - I Cor. xv. 49.*

William Huntington (1745-1813)

SERMON II.

"But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," John, v. 17.

Is the morning I shewed you that, in the decree of election, it was ordained of God to bring his elect to heaven in the image of Christ, and what we were predestinated to by virtue of that decree.

2. What the image of God in Adam was, and that it was the noblest work of God in the whole creation. This is plain; for, when this lower world shall be destroyed, nothing of all God's

works will be left to the glory of the great Creator, but the elect of God in the image of the second Adam.

3. That the principal thing or the most invaluable blessing, in God's image in Adam, was life. This may be seen two ways. first, by all the misery of the wicked; 2, by all the happiness of the righteous. All the misery that the wicked suffer in this world, anti their endless torments in the world to come, are for the want of life: "The wages of sin is death:" they are dead in trespasses and sins while they live, and when they die. So all the comfort that the elect have in this world is from life: "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me." Yea, all the glories of the upper world, together with all the grace of God bestowed upon us in this, is included in this one word "life" for, as "the wages of sin is death," so "the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Hence it is plain, that eternal misery is the want of it; and eternal happiness is the enjoyment of it; therefore it is the greatest blessing.

4. I shewed you that there was something of this blissful and paradisaical state shadowed out to Israel in the land of promise. It seemed to be something of a reviving of it, as well as emblematical of a paradise yet to come; but that all vanished and faded away, and Israel is banished from all his bliss; as every thing will that hath not the promise of momentary support from God: for nothing can stand alone. "We to him that is alone when he falleth." Angels fell, and Adam fell, and Israel is fallen, by their iniquity: but the elect angels stand; they stand in God's decree, and are confirmed in it by the head of all principality and power: and so the elect stand, being kept by the mighty power of God; without this they could not stand one moment. Let them have what strength they may as Samson had, and have Christ revealed to them by God the Father from heaven, as Peter had; and be blessed by Christ in that revelation and confession of it, as

Peter was; yet, under one violent assault of Satan, when the whole mass of human corruption is stirred up, all would wither in a moment, were it not for momentary support and supplies, by which they are preserved in Christ Jesus; "I will water them every moment, I will keep them night and day; for the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever," Psalm xxxvii. 28. How soon do we find the strongest joys, the warmest love, and most lively frames, wither, and our best purposes broken off, even the thoughts of our hearts; so that, though to will is present with us, yet how to perform that which is good we find not; yea, what we would, that we do not; and what we would not, that we do. But our life is hid with Christ in God; and, though the branch may seem to wither, and sensible barrenness to follow, yet eternal life is in Christ the root; and our being in him, by an indissoluble union, virtue must go out of him; for the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit: "I am like a green olive-tree," says Ephraim: but "in me is your fruit found," saith the Lord. I shall now proceed to shew,

5. That the incarnation of Christ, his sufferings, and death; the proclamation of the gospel; and the mission of the Holy Ghost; are to restore the lost image of God the Saviour to God's elect among the sons of men.

1. The incarnation of Christ. God's image being lost in Adam, and a most despicable image obtained in the room of it; and all Adam's offspring coming into the world in his image and likeness, which God despises; and sin having separated between God and man, and our actual transgressions making the breach wider and wider; Christ, by his incarnation, determining to destroy that image, came down into our likeness: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to

bondage: for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham: wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," Heb. ii. 2-17. God having predestinated us to be conformed to his Son's image; and Christ being set up from everlasting to be future man, second Adam, and covenant head; of whom the first Adam was a figure; he came, in the fullness of time, to assume that nature, anti to appear in that body, prepared in the purpose of God. The apostle says he passed by the nature of angels, which was our ruin, and took a part of our flesh and blood; and then assigns the reason for so doing: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." In God's purpose, and in the Saviour's incarnation, this resemblance and likeness is still preserved, that he may in all things be made like unto his brethren. "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

But then his brethren are not only partakers of flesh and blood, but, through Satan's malice and the fall of man, they are now partakers of sin and misery: be it so Christ still pursues them throughout all the profound depths of their low estate, and will in all things be made like unto them; that his brethren may, at last, be made like unto him; "For what the law could not do God did, in that it was weak through the flesh; God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh," Rom. viii. 3. Here we have the Son of God, the firstborn, and elder brother of the whole family, in the likeness of sinful flesh. Sin had entered, and death by sin, and so the judgment of God had passed upon all, for all have sinned: so in the likeness of sinful flesh God sends his own Son, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. God condemned sin in the very nature which Satan had ruined. Satan's image is what God despises: and the body of the sins of the flesh, or the old man is what hates; therefore

he sends his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and lays upon him the iniquity of us all; and crucifies him, and the old man with him, that the body of sins might be destroyed: "He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 7, 8. There was a union which took place between Christ and his elect from everlasting: they were chosen in him and loved in him, and given to him; and he was set up and appointed to be the head and representative of them; in pursuance of this he takes their nature, and their sins, and dies in their room anti stead; and they all die and suffer the law representatively in him: "if one died for all, then were all dead;" and at conversion we become dead to the law, dead to sin, and dead to the world; this is called a likeness in their sufferings: "For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," Rom. vi. 5. When Christ was condemned and crucified we died, being crucified with him; and when the law enters at our arraignment and conviction, sin revives, and we die, like Christ: this is being planted together in the likeness of his death: but when faith comes, and we are delivered from sin, and from the law, we rise to a lively hope under the operation of the Spirit of God; and so serve God in the newness of life: this is called rising, with our risen Head, under the operation of the Spirit of God: "Thy dead men shall live," saith God; "with my dead body shall they arise," saith Christ. This Paul calls being planted together in the likeness of his resurrection: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified, with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; that henceforth we should not serve sin: for he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him," Romans, vi. 6-8. In Christ we die representatively; and in our own souls when the law is applied, and we are condemned and die by it. By faith we

pass from death to life; and, having obtained justification, we become freed from sin: freed from every stain of sin in Christ, being complete in him; freed from sin with respect to the book of God's remembrance; they are blotted out, and God will remember them no more: freed from sin as considered the putting on the new man; for he is created in righteousness and true holiness: and freed from sin its the covenant of grace "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." And, though sin be in us, and work in us, yet 'it is condemned; it is crucified with Christ. And, the Lord Jesus Christ being put on, the old man is put off; and, as Christ is dearly beloved by us, and the old man perfectly hated (although we do at times that we would not, and do not what we would), it is no more us, but sin that dwelleth in us: thus we become dead; and, in the above sense, freed from sin.

But let the following consideration be attended to: namely, that when God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, this image respects him in his incarnation; for when Adam was made he had a body of flesh, and a reasonable soul, and the image of Christ on him; and in these he was a figure of him that was to come: he could not be the figure of Christ as God, abstractedly considered; for whatever inward endowments the Spirit of God might impress the soul of Adam with, he must be infinitely short of being the image of the invisible God. We are informed, by the word of God, that Adam was a figure of him that was to come; and I have shewn you that when Christ did come he had a body as Adam had; he was made of a woman; he was made like unto his brethren; he was found in the likeness of men, yea, in the likeness of sinful flesh: this was Emmanuel, God with us, or God incarnate; and it is to Christ's image, as such, that we are predestinated to be conformed. He was made flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, and had a reasonable soul like unto us: in all these he was' made like unto his brethren; and, according to his word, his grace and his Spirit is never to

depart from us; and by these we are made like unto him. Thus have I proved that the incarnation of Christ, his sufferings and death, were to bring about this image and likeness; and it is plain that the Father and the Son were joint-workers in all these. God prepared that body in which Christ appeared: the Father anointed him: and, in all his miracles, "The Father that dwelleth in me doeth the works," says Christ. In his sufferings, "I am not alone," says the Saviour, "because the Father is with me." In short, God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." I am to prove,

2dly, That the proclamation of the gospel is intended to bring the elect of God to a participation of the image of Christ.

1. The gospel promises that all God's children shall be taught of him, and that they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest; which is the first thing in God's image that Adam lost.

2. The gospel sets forth the righteousness of Christ, and the good-will of God to men in the imputation of it: "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;" and we are informed, and experience teacheth us the same, that "the righteousness of Christ is unto all and upon all that believe." Adam's righteousness was creative and native, and lay principally in love and delight in God, and was the second ingredient in God's image on Adam, and was lost when sin and the sentence of condemnation took place. But our righteousness is the obedience of Christ imputed to us, and is a perfect, a divine, and an everlasting one, better than ever Adam's was.

3. The gospel is called the ministry of the Spirit; and God promises us a new birth by the Spirit, and that the offering up of the Gentiles shall be accepted, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And to prepare a way for the reception of the Spirit,

comes all the fatherly chastisements of God upon us. "God chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness;" and it is declared, that "if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." Holiness, the third particular in God's image, was lost in Adam; sin entered, and all true holiness left him.

4. The gospel promises destruction to the veil of ignorance with which the god of this world hath blinded our minds; "which veil shall be destroyed," saith the prophet, "because of the anointing." Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel. Christ rises and shines upon us, even when we sit darkness and in the shadow of death, and becomes our everlasting light, our God, and our glory. This light of the glory of God Adam lost, and Satan spread the covering of a dismal gloom of darkness over him, which has reached to all mankind: "Darkness hath covered the face of the earth, and gross darkness the people." When the light of God's glory left Adam, then this dismal veil came on.

5. The gospel sets forth the love of God to us, which is manifested, even to the world, by the gift of his dear Son; and it manifested in the hearts of all God's elect in drawing them Christ; and in shedding abroad his love in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is called circumcising our hearts, that we may love the Lord our God with all our heart, that we may live. This sweet feature of God's image in Adam left him at the fall, and, his mind becoming carnal, the devil filled it with enmity against God; so that it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

6. Everlasting life is set before us in the glorious gospel. This was the greatest blessing that attended the image of God in Adam. With the loss of this was he threatened in case of disobedience. But he disobeyed, and the life of God left him; and sin, which is the sting of death, and the law, which is the

ministration of death, and he that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, all entered into him at once. Now, to sum up all this in a few words: God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and man became a living soul; the Holy Ghost quickened him, illuminated him, and impressed the image of God upon him, and abode with him, to support him in that image as long as he obeyed; but he disobeyed and died; and we all died representatively and spiritually in him, and became obnoxious to death temporal and eternal. The Spirit of God immediately left him; and what Job says of all mankind was found first a truth in Adam: "If God gather unto himself his Spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto his dust," Job, xxxiv. 14, 15. God gathered to himself his Spirit, and Adam died in his soul; and after that he gathered to himself his breath, and Adam returned to his dust.

3. The mission of the Holy Ghost is intended to renew us, and to let us know the things which are freely given us of God in Christ; and to take these things which are in Christ and apply them to us, that we may be created anew in Christ Jesus, and have the new man wrought in our souls after the image of him that created him, in righteousness and true holiness. For to be conformed to Christ's image are we predestinated; and this conforming us is bringing us back again to the image of God. To conform us is to make us, who bear the image of the old Adam, to resemble, or to be made like unto, the second Adam; and reduce us, who are rebels, to be conformable to the mind and will of God, by making us pliant, submissive, and obedient to Christ Jesus. Hence Paul wished to be made conformable to Christ's death; he desired to be crucified daily to this world, and this world to him; and that, whenever it might please God to call him to suffer in confirmation of the truth, he might be enabled to submit with fortitude, that God might be glorified in him, both in life and in death. And Paul knew that dying daily to this world, and living a life of faith on the Son of God, and walking in the Spirit, and minding the

things of the Spirit, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling, would, in some measure, prepare him to be conformable to Christ's death; hence this exhortation, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," Rom. xii. 2. The more a man conforms to this world, the less is he prepared for death; and the more diligent a man is in running his race, looking to Jesus, the more is that man transformed; for, "while we look as through a glass darkly, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

But I come now to the restoration of this image in man: and wherever this image is to be restored, there must be a spiritual birth. We have been born once; and our birth was of blood, of the will of the flesh, and of the will of man; and we were born in the image of the earthly head: and God says we "must be born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Without this birth there can be no likeness. Thousands in a profession are pleasing themselves with head notions, dead formality, and in external conformity to the precepts of men; and are kept on, partly by applause, and partly by the fear of the preacher, who at the same time know nothing of this image, and hate every appearance of the power of the Spirit by which we are transformed, and even them that enforce it. But, let them have what knowledge they may, and reform as much as they please, and be as steadfast in their profession to the last as the foolish virgins were, God still despises their image. God has appointed the ministry of the gospel as the means of bringing God's elect to the image and likeness of Christ. He has promised, also, that his Spirit shall attend his word to make the preaching effectual; and he has promised regeneration to all the chosen seed: "I will pour my blessing upon thy seed, and my Spirit upon thine offspring." Hence the gospel is sent hither and thither, wherever any of this chosen seed are, to gather them in; and it is forbidden to be preached

at this and that place, as you read in the Acts, and it is because there are none of the chosen family there to be gathered in. And here I may take notice of a whole train of concurring providences working together in behalf of every one of them, not only in bringing the gospel to this and that place, which is called lifting up the standard to the people: but in sending a sound abroad, to proclaim where this standard is: "The sound goes out through all the earth, and the word to the world's end," Rom. x. 18. All that embrace it proclaim it; this raises malice in some, fear in many, and curiosity in others; and so, from the Thessalonians, "sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place," says Paul, "your faith to God-ward is spread abroad," 1 Thess. i. 8. This sound goes before, and the good tidings follow after. Now this sound goes by various means. When God drowned Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, he "made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall," Ezek. xxxi. 16. This sound reached the ears of Rahab, the harlot, in Jericho; this she tells to the spies, and obtains an oath of them, and is justified by her faith. The sound of Solomon's fame reached the country of the Sabeans, and brought the queen of the south, who came because of the name of the Lord; and the Sabeans, men of stature, were in future to come over to Christ's standard. The sound of the slaughter of the Assyrian army brought the Babylonish ambassadors to Hezekiah, to know the wonder that was done in the land. And from thence came the wise men when Christ's star appeared in the east; and since that a church, according to "Peter, was elected together at Babylon." A famine drives Naomi from Bethlehem, and she carries the sound of God's tame into the country of Moab; and the unlawful match of one of her sons shall bring Ruth near to Naomi, and altogether shall bring her to God. The Syrians, unprovoked, shall invade Israel, and carry captive a little maid, who had no hand at all in the war; and she shall be the means of bringing her leprous master to Elisha; and God heals him, and he disclaims all gods but the

God of Israel. A famine shall drive Elijah to a widow of Zidon; and Elisha's continual walks by Shunam shall attract the eyes and heart of the Shunamite to entertain him, because he was a man of God. So a multitude out of every nation should be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, and all of them should hear the word in the language wherein they were born; and when these returned they went out the sound, and others reflected it from them. Tim AEthiopian eunuch shall come to Jerusalem to worship he knew not what, and return just as he came; but while reading the prophecies of Isaiah, knowing nothing about them, the Holy Ghost orders Philip to join himself to his chariot, and explain the meaning; at which the Holy Spirit enters him, and he goes on his way rejoicing. Here Ethiopia also stretches out her hands unto God. Austin goes with a guilty conscience from Carthage to Rome, and there he gets worse and worse, and falls into desperate heresies; from thence he moves to Milan, where he shall hear the truth as it is in Christ. God bears his elect from the womb, and to hoary hairs he carries and does deliver them, though they never know any thing about it till he makes "darkness light before them, and crooked things straight." There is a train of circumstances working together in behalf of every chosen vessel. Their parents shall be obliged to move here or there, where this or that elect one is to be brought forth; or this and that chosen seed shall be bound out apprentice, or be put to service, or go to work somewhere or somehow, so that the sound shall reach the ears of them who are to be called. And this sound, when it first comes, shall hang on their minds, and vibrate in their ears, till it either excites their curiosity, or brings uneasiness upon them; and under either of these they will go, as they often say, *and hear for themselves*; and, when they come, they have no more knowledge of what they hear than a blind man has of colours; it is something that they cannot get at, and it is something they cannot condemn, and therefore they sometimes determine to go again, but they know not for what; and thus they play upon the hook till they cannot get

away, and it is the determination of their unknown God that they never shall. Time would fail me to tell how many have been caught in the gospel net by the different reports that people have heard of me; some have been informed that I have been a coalheaver, that I have had no classical education; and they, being fully persuaded that no man can preach without it, have come, and God hath given them more knowledge under the foolishness of my preaching than ever they got under Grecian wisdom. The reproach and implacable malice that some eminent preachers, and their whole flocks of professors, have loaded me with, has contributed not a little towards this good work of bringing God's elect to Jesus Christ. For not a few, like the prodigal son in a far country, have, in the chains of their sins, joined themselves to citizens of this country, citizens of Jerusalem that now is; and they have been sent into their fields to feed swine, by preaching they knew not what; and others have been sent to carry a few shillings and a few prayers to convert the sick, to attend prayer-meetings and spouting societies, to speak in workhouses, and to pray by criminals in goals and persons under sentence of death and at the gallows this I take in the general to be feeding swine; and not a little of this work is going on now among us. And not a few of this sort have, as the prodigal did, experienced a famine afterwards in their own souls; and they found that the husks that they carried to others would not keep themselves from starving; and in their want they have run from place to place to get food, but all in vain; and at last have ventured themselves, though not without the most confirmed prejudice, nor without much fear and trembling, to hear the rank Antinomian; and to their astonishment they have found what they never expected; and they have been as agreeably undeceived as the Samaritans were when they turned their backs upon Simon Magus, and adhered to Philip. These, and many more concurring providences, work together to bring God's chosen to hear the gospel, and by the gospel to receive the Holy Ghost; and by the Holy Ghost to be regenerated and

renewed, and under his regenerating operations to be conformed to the image of Christ.

"Unto Shiloh shall the gathering together of the people be;" but "No man," says Christ, "can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him," John, vi. 44. Hence God works in his providence, and by the law, to bring his elect to Jesus, and Jesus receives all that the Father draws to him; thus "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

I shall now proceed to the confirmation of this image of Christ, and of bringing eternal life to light in the soul, which is the joint work of the Father and the Son; "For, as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John, v. 21. And it is as plain that all God's elect are to be taught both by the Father and by the Son. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me," John, vi. 45 And it is plain, from the word of God, that we learn one lesson of the Father, and another of the Son, and eternal life attends the teaching of them both; "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John, xvii. 3. God teacheth us first out of the law, by the which is the knowledge of sin, and the knowledge of spiritual death and wrath. This teaching is intended to discover the old man to us, and the image of the earthly head which we bear, and the dead state in which we all by nature lie, and in which we are children of wrath even as others. I have before observed, that every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to Christ; and God's teaching is sure to make us feel our need of him. Hence David says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged up for the wicked," Psalm xciv. 12, 13. In the verse before this quotation David is speaking of the vain

thoughts of man; "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity." Hence the law is sent home to discover these thoughts of the heart, and to let us know that God is privy to them all, and that all our vain thoughts and false notions of God, and of the goodness of our own state, and the way in which we expect to please God, and to recommend ourselves to his favour, are empty and vain. A thorough law work helps to cure us of this self-conceit.

For "by the law is the knowledge of sin," which in that glass becomes exceeding sinful; and the law being spiritual, it reaches the soul and all the inmost recesses of the heart. The old man rouses up himself, sin takes occasion by the irritating power of the law to oppose it; and the law being holy, our comeliness turns all into corruption, and we are filled with all manner of concupiscence; which coheres the soul with shame, and fills it with confusion.

Here the old man is discovered with all his deceitful lusts; and most vile, filthy, polluted, and impure, do we appear. Well may the prophet say, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we do all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us all away." The law having discovered sin to us, it fills us with terror, and a horrible dread overwhelms us; slavish fear and torment possess us. The sentence of the law comes home, and sin being revived and discovered, the curse lights upon us, and the wrath of God enters into our conscience, and makes sad work there; and God appears an inexorable judge, and no less than a consuming fire. This he calls coming near to us to judgment, and appearing both judge and witness against us: "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and that fear not me,

saith the Lord of hosts," Mal. iii. 5. That text, when God applies it, is sure to take the sinner, let him be who or what he may; for, if he escape all the first list of charges, the last is sure to take him; for, in a state of nature, there is no fear of God before the eyes of men till God puts it into their heart. When God deals thus with us we know that he is come near to us, we feel ourselves in his strong hand, and at his awful bar; and every day, yea, every hour, brings some forgotten sin to mind, or some unsuspected lust to light: yea, all is made manifest, every thought of the heart is discovered, as Paul himself describes it: "But, if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth," I Cor. xiv. 24, 25. God having thus made us and our wicked deeds manifest, we become guilty before him to the last degree. And, having nothing to plead, nothing to say, and seeing no door of hope, no way of escape, and it appearing impossible for us to be saved; the law, gospel, God, and conscience, all against us; and expecting every day either to go raving mad, or to be drowned in despair, or to be cut off by death, or to be swallowed up alive, like Korah and his company; or else that the devil will be permitted to carry us away in the night; expecting nothing from God's hands but ruin and destruction, and being fully persuaded, from what we feel, that it is impossible we should be saved; it tills us with most desperate enmity against God; the old man, and every feature of old Adam's image, shew themselves. Instead of knowledge, we are filled with confusion, ignorance, blindness of mind, and darkness that may be felt; and appear the biggest fools in the whole world. And instead of righteousness, we are guilty by the very precept of the law, and condemned by every truth in the gospel; condemned by every thought of our heart, and by our own conscience; by every professor of religion. and by every pharisee in a form of godliness and carnal security; yea,

and by every fowl of the air, and by every beast of the field; for they all seem to answer the end of their creation in some way or other: but, as for us, we are rebuked by the ox that knows its owner, and by the ass that knows its own crib; by the stork, and the crane, and the swallow, which know the time of their coming; and even by the ant, which gathereth her food in the summer.

And, instead of true holiness, in which we were created, from head to foot there is no place sound; we are even loathsome in our own sight, and abhor ourselves, and wonder from one hour to another at finding ourselves in the land of the living; astonished that God does not cut us down as cumberers of the ground, and send us to our own place. These are the cursed features of old Adam's image.

And, instead of love, our souls are filled with inexpressible enmity against the best of beings; and, instead of glory, there is nothing but guilt and filth, disgrace, shame, and, as we fear, everlasting contempt; and, instead of life, we are in the dark regions of the shadows of death; dead in soul, dead to God, and to all that is good; dead in the law, and dead at the bar of equity, and under the dominion of Satan, who has the power of death. Nevertheless, all this time we are imperceptibly and wonderfully supported. And, indeed, this teaching of the Father is intended to cut us off from the wild olive-tree, that we may be grafted into a better stock. And it is to persons under this teaching that the Saviour calls "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Heavy laden we are; for guilt and filth, God's wrath and Satan's rage, the reproaches of conscience and our own despondency, the soul-woundings that we feel, and the dread of worse to come, is a most intolerable burden. And, though we labour hard in soul and body to do something to appease the wrath of God, and to move him to pity, yet, feeling such desperate enmity against him, and such rebellious strugglings to get out of his

hand, to flee from his presence, or to get above him, or to contrive some way or other to skulk into non-existence, that he may not bring us forth at the last day, these things make us despair of ever pleasing him. And, Satan filling our souls with blasphemies and blasphemous thoughts against him, and with the most obscene and unclean thoughts, which are not confined to this world, but stirred up even against heaven itself; the devil, by these means, labours hard to stop all crying to God, and, if possible, to chain us down in black despair or wild distraction. "This is *his* hour, and the powers of darkness." Nevertheless, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest," &c. These are the souls that labour and are heavy laden, and that stand in need of rest; and it is God's intention that those that he thus teaches shall find it. and enter into it; hence the text says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity." Isaiah, pointing to Christ, says, "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing," Isaiah, xxviii. 12. And Christ, calling to such, says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest." Yet they cannot come to him till the Father draws them.

Now I know that temptations and legal terrors are common to the reprobate as well as to the elect; yet I think this teaching of God out of his law differs much from all their terrors and convictions; and do you observe what follows:

1. There is a blessing pronounced upon these poor souls that are thus dealt with, thus chastened and taught out of the law. And this blessing is not a temporal one, or a blessing of temporal things; nothing of this appears in the text, it is therefore one of the spiritual blessings with which God has blessed us in heavenly places in Christ; for the blessing promised in the text is rest, which is a new covenant blessing,

and is promised to the people of God: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity," &c.

2. Now, what is God's chief blessing? I answer, God's chief blessing is *life*; "Upon mount Zion God commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." And sure I am that those distressed souls, whose ease the Saviour describes in his sermon on the mount (some of whom mourned, some wept, some hungered, some were poor in spirit, some were meek, &c. and upon all of whom the Lord pronounced the blessing), were under this law work, or were under the chastening hand of God the Father, and he was then teaching them out of his law.

3. Now, as the blessing of God is life, it appears plain to me that these souls, under this law teaching, are secretly quickened by God the Father; and this I think is what the Saviour intimates when he says, "For, as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John, v. 21. For under this, the Father's teaching, poor sinners are strangely raised up, alarmed out of all their carnal security, and effectually awakened from their bed of sloth, and from their death in sin; and they are raised up from their state of insensibility, and brought to judgment; and if they are not secretly quickened, it will be hard to tell what this blessing of God upon them is, even while God is chastening them, and teaching them out of his law.

Moreover, the keenness of their sensations under God's chastening hand; the motions of their hearts towards God; their earnest and incessant cries day and night unto God; the diligent searches of their souls after God; the keen hunger after righteousness, and after the bread of life; the parching thirst that is upon them while their souls are scorched with the

fiery law which God describes, calling them the poor and needy, that seek water and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, saying, "I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them;" are all such a the prodigal son felt when he came to himself: and, if he had no life, how could he have motion towards God? and yet he arose and came to his Father, and God says he had life: "This my son was dead, and is alive again," &c.

4. The Saviour tells us, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth;" and again, "And when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." And it is under the secret operations and convincing power of the Spirit that the handwriting appears against us, and an angry God before us. And I think all the Saviour's real followers were under the Father's teaching in the days of his flesh; for he compares them to women in labour when he left them; nor were they enlarged, brought forth, or born again by the perfection of love, till the day of pentecost was fully come. Then, but not till then, were their fears and torments cast out, no, not even the fear of men; for they were all shut up till then, for fear of the Jews. Yet these had life in their souls, as appears by Peter; "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Yea, the Spirit of life was in them, though he did not fill them with his joys and comforts; hence the Saviour tells them, upon their desire to command fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of.

5. It is the Spirit that discovers the heart; "The spirit in man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of the belly," Prov. xx. 27. I do not understand that text as most do, who make that candle, or spirit, to be the soul of man; for Satan blinds that too much; it is too dim to search all the innermost parts of the belly; besides, that candle never found out the sin of unbelief; and therefore we want a better. God

says, "I will search Jerusalem with candles, and will punish the men that are settled on their lees," Zeph. i. 22. And this was fulfilled in the apostles' days; for, when Christ had inspired and illuminated the apostles by his Holy Spirit, he tells them that "Men do not light a candle to put it under a bushel, or under a bed, but on a candlestick, that all that come in may see the light;" and calls them the world, and tells them to let their light shine before men: and, when he had searched out his own elect with these candles, he called for the Roman sword, and punished severely the carnally-secure Jews, who were settled on their lees.

6. James says, "God of his own will begat us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," James, i. 18. And his word is called the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever; and which seed never leaves us, but terminates in a spiritual birth; "Being born again," says Peter, "not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed; the word, of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Peter, i. 23.

It is well known that there must be a spiritual begetting and quickening, before there can be a spiritual birth; and it is with the word that God begets us; and Peter says that this word is an incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever; and to this agrees Christ, "My word is spirit, and my word is life." But you may object, and say, the word of life is peculiar to the gospel; whereas you are speaking of a law-work, and the law is the ministration of death, Well, let me make this matter more clear, and do be observant.

It is not always a sentence, or a passage of the law, or from the law, which enters the soul of a sinner when he is first summoned to the bar of God: this was not the case with the great apostle of the Gentiles; the voice that called to him was, "Saul! Saul! Why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to

kick against the pricks." The light which attended this voice shone round about him, and about them that journeyed with him; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to Paul. Now I have no doubt but that voice quickened Paul; "The time cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live," John, v. 25. The above passage, Saul, Saul, &c. is not to be found in the moral law. The apostle describes this word of the Lord, and the entrance of it 'rote his heart, and what effect it had upon him, when he says "For 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. The apostle here describes the first entrance of the Lord's voice into him; and he says, the word of the Lord is quick; it quickens, and gives life; it is a sword to wound; and life made him feel the wound which the sword gave him. Now, though it was not a sentence of the law that was pronounced in the ears of Paul, yet what he felt within him was law. He found at once that sin revived; and he tells us, it is by the law we have the knowledge of sin; it stirred up all his corruptions, and set all his crimes before him; it condemned him to death, and he died: "Sin revived," says he, "and I died."

But I will for once presume to dive a little into the apostle's heart, and shew you how matters were with him, and how he found these things out.

First then, he tells us, that the commandment came to him; "I was alive without the law, but, when the commandment came, sin revived and I died," Rom. vii. 9. But it may be asked, What does he mean by the commandment? the law has many commandments; why does he call it the commandment, in the singular number? The reason of it according to his own explanation is, because the whole law is fulfilled in one word,

namely, love; "Love," says Paul, "is the fulfilling of the law." Love in the heart, is one love; and the commandment requires only love; this includes all things: yet this love has two objects set before it, namely, God and the neighbour; and therefore the commandments are called two; "On these two commandments," saith the Saviour, "hang all the law and the prophets." Yea, our Lord himself makes it one and the same thing as our great apostle does Take it as he speaks it. A pharisee, who was a lawyer, put this question to our Lord, tempting him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment: and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets," Matt. xxii. 36-39. Here our Lord says, the second is like unto the first. And so much like it, says Paul, that love in the heart fulfils the whole; "Love is the fulfilling of the law," the whole ten commandments: and this the apostle takes from the Psalms, "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad," Psalm cxix. 96. >From hence Paul takes it; and David says, it is the commandment, and it is exceeding broad: for it reaches to God in the highest heaven, and calls for love, with every power of the soul, to him; and it extends to all the human race, according to Christ's explanation, whether friends or foes; whatever others, in old time, may have said to the contrary; as it is written, "It was said in old time," &c. "But I say unto you, love your enemies," &c. In this Paul agrees with David, in calling this the commandment. David says, in his matter, "I have seen an end of all perfection." Paul follows him, and says, "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned," 1 Tim. i. 5. This, says David, is all perfection; so says Paul; "And, above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of all perfectness," Col. iii. 14. And to this agrees John; "He that feareth is not made perfect in love; but he that loveth

dwelleth in God, and God in him; and herein is our love made perfect," 1 John, iv. 16, 17. Love is what the law calls for, and demands; and this commandment is exceeding broad, it reaches both friends and foes; and it was this commandment that came to the apostle; and when it came it found him as full of desperate rage, malice, and enmity, against God, as the devil himself; he was persecuting, opposing, and doing all that he could against Christ; he had blasphemed him, that is, he had cursed him, 1 Tim. i. 19; and, in wasting the church, he had made others recant, and give up their profession of Christ, and he compelled them to blaspheme or anathematize the Saviour, in order to bind or confirm their recantation, or to establish their apostacy; "I," says Paul, "compelled them to blaspheme," Acts, xxvi. 11. After Paul's conversion his enemies threw this in his teeth. But what Paul had done was in real blindness and unbelief, and, as he thought, was doing God service; but the Spirit had taught him better; "Wherefore," says he, "I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit, calleth Jesus accused; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord (with an application to himself) but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. xii. 3. And this awful work goes on among the Jews to this day; they can find no better name than this for the Son of God. This was all the love to God which the moral law found in the heart of Paul; and it found no more love in Paul to his neighbour than it did to God.

For some of them he had beaten each, in every synagogue, others he had shut up in prison; some he had driven to strange cities, others he had compelled to blaspheme their great Creator; against some he had given his voice as a witness, others he had killed, and had even held the clothes of some who were stripped to stone others to death; and all this not out of love to his neighbours, "but being exceedingly mad against them." And I bear some record among us, who are sworn enemies to Antinomians, and very great sticklers for the law, and who call it, and make it, their only rule of life, that

they are as much filled with exceeding madness against some of their neighbours as ever Paul was against his; one of whom has been honest enough to confess that he hates me worse than he hates the devil; and I believe him, for all that are in the flesh do find that "the motions of sins, which are by the law, do work in their members to bring forth fruit unto death," Rom. vii. 5. "The law worketh wrath:" and that good man's confession of his hatred to me confirms it. Thus I have shewed you what Paul means by the commandment which came to him; and at the entrance of which, instead of finding any love, either to God or man, it found him hating and persecuting both. And now his enmity was stirred up and discovered to him; and all his wrath, batted, blasphemy, and murder, was set before his eyes; and all the vanity of his birth, privileges, pharisaical righteousness, and zeal for human traditions, this whole baseless fabric tumbled down about his ears; and down he went also, for he could not stand in the judgment: "Sin revived, and he died."

Nor did Paul get rid of this schoolmaster, in a hurry. Hence, when he tells the Ephesians to be watchful, he adds, "Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one of you night and day with tears," Acts, xx. 31. It was an awful alarm in his own heart that kept him at this three years warning. If it be asked what that alarm was, he tells us himself: "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," 2 Cor. v. 11. But, when he got rid of his chains of bondage, he laboured under a better influence, as he owns: "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead," 2 Cor. v. 14. From what has been said, this is the sum: it was the quickening voice of the Lord Jesus Christ which reached the ears and heart of Paul; and this voice of the great Judge of quick and dead summoned Paul to the bar of God; and the commandment, which calls for love to God and man, entered into his conscience, and found

him filled with enmity and hatred to both. Nor did it stop here; it stirred up all the lusts of his heart, sin worked by the law till he was filled with all manner of concupiscence. This made him sick of trust in self, and of all confidence in the flesh, for he found that there was no good thing dwelt in him. Now, when Paul grew up in grace and knowledge, he searched into these things. Then says he to himself, How is it? it was the voice of the Son of God that called to me, and it was light and life that attended that voice; his word was quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword; it pierced to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and discerned every thought of my heart. And yet it did not remove my sin, but stirred it up; it did not purify my filthiness, for sin wrought in me all manner of concupiscence; it did not bring love to me, but slavish fear and trembling; not liberty, but bondage; not love, but wrath; not life and immortality, but the sentence of death; not justification, but condemnation: and therefore I conclude it could not be the gospel that worked in me, but the law. Paul having made this judgment of the matter, he confidently affirms and founds all these dreadful sensations of his soul upon the law: "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Sin by the law becomes exceeding sinful: "Sin took occasion by the commandment, and wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Without the law sin is dead. The law gendeth to bondage; it communicates the wrath of God, which is a spirit of bondage to fear. The law worketh wrath; it is the ministration of condemnation, it is the ministration of death. And thus he establishes all his dreadful sensations upon the law; and he is quite right in so doing, for none of these things can be called "good news from a far country." But some one may reply, How does all this agree with the account that Paul gives us of this affair in the word of God, where it is said, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the

Holy Ghost," Acts, ix. 17. If Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost, how could Paul labour so long under the terrors of the law, and the bondage of it? Can the Spirit of God, and the bondage and wrath of the law, be in one soul at one and the same time? The Holy Ghost was in all his fullness in Christ when he hung upon the cross; it was through the eternal Spirit that he offered himself to God; and yet, at the same time, all our sins were on him, he was made a curse for us; and the wrath of God, like fire, melted his heart like wax in the midst of his body, Psalm xxii. 14. The Spirit of God was in Job when the handwriting exhibited bitter things against him, Job, xiii. 26; when the wrath of God worked in him, Job, xiv. 13; and when the arrows of God stuck fast in his heart, Job, vi. 4. The Spirit of God was in David under all the sufferings which befell him on account of his fall, as he prays, "Take not thy holy Spirit from me." The Spirit, as a spirit of supplication, was in Hezekiah when God, by the law, was shewing him all that was in his heart. The apostles had life in their souls before the crucifixion of Christ; the Spirit had quickened them; and, as a spirit of faith, he had wrought faith in them. Christ owned this when he says, "I came forth from thee, and these have believed that thou didst send me; and the word which thou gavest me I have given them, and they have received it." Thus had God begotten them, and the Spirit had quickened them, wrought faith in them, and had applied the word of God to them; yet, as a spirit of revelation of love, of power, and of liberty, and of a sound mind, he came not on them till the day of pentecost. So the word from Christ's mouth quickened Paul, and after that illuminated him, emboldened him, equipped him with might, fired him with zeal, and kept him warning sinners day and night with tears for three years, that he might bring in both Jew and Gentile guilty before God, by preaching the law. But when these were to be built up, then the Spirit worked in him as the spirit of love and comfort; and then the churches walked in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, and were edified. Jeremiah, who was filled with the Spirit of

God from the womb, preached in bondage almost all his days. But some may say, This doth not tally with what Paul himself affirms: "Now the Lord is that spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." How can bondage and liberty stand together? Do you believe God's covenant, that God's word and Spirit are never to depart from Christ, nor from his seed? If you do, then take the Holy Ghost anti the bonds of Paul both together: "And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every place, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me," Acts, xx. 22, 23. All that I aim at is this: when the elect of God are convinced of sin, and the law works in their souls, the devil generally sets before them the terrors of Cain, Judas, Saul, and others, and tells them that their case and state is the same as theirs; and hence a madhouse in this world, and hell-torments in the next, are expected by them. Thus he dealt with me; on which account I have long studied, meditated, and watched, to see wherein the convictions of hypocrites and apostates differ from those that come upon God's elect before their deliverance, and which sometimes fall upon them afterwards; as upon David after his fall, and upon Job and Hezekiah. When the terrors of God fell upon king Saul an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him; and when those awful convictions fell upon Judas, Satan had entered into him; but, when convictions entered Saul of Tarsus, the Spirit of life from God attended the word of Christ, and quickened him, and gave him a dreadful sight and sense of sin, which hypocrites have not, and which immediately set Paul to praying. And Christ does not call it making long prayers, nor saying prayers; but he says to Ananias, "Go, and inquire for one Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth." The Spirit of life and of supplication was in him. And all this agrees with my own experience. It was not a sentence, or any passage, from the law that entered into me: the words were these," Believe that I am in you, and you in me." Light, like a flash of lightning, entered into me with those

words: and all my sins came up before my eyes, and a manner of concupiscence rose up in my heart, attended with the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the sentence of my own conscience, and most infamously unclean thoughts and blasphemous suggestions of the devil. These came in all together; and I immediately cried to God; nor could I ever give up seeking, longing, thirsting, and praying, till my deliverance came. And, as to that passage, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," it is true such a man is free from all future demands of vindictive justice, having righteousness in Christ, and the spirit of adoption in him; and, indeed, God, by his chastening hand, is dealing with him as with a son; yet the Spirit does not always operate as a spirit of love, or as a comforter; at least I have not found it so; nor did David. He was often shut up, and cries, "Bring my soul out of prison;" and again, "I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart;" and again, "Thou hast loosed my bonds;" and again, "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit;" all which proves that he did not always enjoy liberty. And, as for Jeremiah, he seems to have been in bondage almost all his days, unless when he wrote his 31st chapter; and he gets into his bonds again before he could finish that. But, although David and others could not always feel love nor comfort, yet they got satisfaction from this, that the word, coming in the power of the Spirit to them, had given them life: "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me," Psalm cxix. 50 Perfect liberty is only felt and enjoyed under the influence of love and comfort; but the Spirit illuminates, quickens, strengthens, emboldens, fortifies, bears witness, helps our infirmities in prayer; yea, and convinces us of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and, what is still more, pierces the very soul, at his first entrance, by the word. Hence the word of God is called "the sword of the Spirit;" which gives the word its edge, and attends it with those cutting convictions, reproofs, and rebukes, which made Peter's audience cry for

quarters. The word comes with power at such times; and whenever it comes with power, it comes in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. It is the Spirit that makes the word "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. There are diversities of operations, as well as gifts; and "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing" his gifts and operations "severally as he will," Read I Cor. xii.

But, after this long digression, I must return to shew how the lost image of God in man is restored and re-impressed; and this is done by the Holy Ghost in regeneration. Whenever the set time shall come to favour Zion, as it does sooner or later to all that belong to that chosen city, the Spirit of God first presents Jesus Christ to the sinner's view, and enlightens the mind and understanding to discern him. This is the Spirit's work. Christ says, "he shall testify of me." This is what the psalmist calls "seeing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living: at which time (he says) I had fainted unless I had believed." Balsam saw him, but never saw his need of him, nor believed in him. This which follows, is Paul's account of the matter, which came to him some time after his first alarm; and I think it was in Jerusalem, when he fell into a trance in the temple; "And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I was praying in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him, saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee out of Jerusalem," Acts, xxii. 17, 18. And Paul describes it thus: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. iv. 6. Paul says that Christ is the image of the invisible God, and in his face God shines, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of himself in the Saviour's face. Now, as knowledge was the first thing that discovered itself in God's image in Adam, here is that knowledge of God restored, together with the glory of God, in the second Adam's face. The Holy Spirit thus testifying of Christ, and keeping him in the

view of the enlightened mind, he changes our whole soul into a likeness of him; while we stand gazing, wondering, and looking on the blessed object set before us. At this transformation the devil's veil is rent, and the Holy Ghost changes the whole soul, and forms it into another vessel, and transforms it into another likeness. The finishing and polishing work is thus described by the apostle: "But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is still upon their hearts; nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit or the Lord is, there is liberty. 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. 15-18. Here is a most noble account of this renewing work. Christ is set before us; God shines in his face and displays his glory, and the light of the knowledge of it in the face of Jesus: and, while we look and wonder at him, says Paul, the Holy Spirit impresses the same image upon us: we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This is called God's forming a people for himself, that shall shew forth his praise, Isaiah, xliii. 21. And Paul, after this work is done, calls us new creatures in Christ; and says, we are created anew in Christ Jesus; which means one and the same thing. But then it may be asked, what the apostle means by changing of us into the same image from glory to glory? Why the brightest saints upon earth, at times, get under spiritual desertions, and lose sight of the darling of their souls, and get into darkness; when the image seems utterly to be defaced, and nothing but Satan and corruption left or felt. But then they never continue here; the Lord is their everlasting light, their God, and their glory; therefore the Holy Spirit is sure to testify of Christ again and again; and, when another ray breaks out from Christ's face, which is called lifting up the light of his countenance upon us, the Holy Spirit gives faith another view: then the image appears again; and, as the path shines more and more, so we

are changed into the same image from glory to glory. And this will most surely be carried on till endless life in heaven takes place. Christ is our everlasting light, our God, and our glory; and never, till that sun goes down, shall this renewing work cease going on; God "will work, and who shall let it?" This is the work that concerns us, and God will perfect it: he will not leave us until he has done the thing that he has spoken to us of; and that thing is, to set us down in the image of the second Adam, in everlasting glory: for, "as we have borne the image of the earthy (head), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

But some will say, My deliverance was not so conspicuous as Paul describes it. Whether it was or not, alters not the matter: some have had visions of him in his suffering circumstances, as Isaiah had; others have had visions of him on his throne, as Ezekiel and John had. These last were appearances of him in his glorified humanity. The former is to encourage faith to believe in him as Christ crucified; and the latter, the glorious appearances of him, were to encourage hope and expectation; to be looking out after the glory that is to be revealed in us. Now, though some poor souls have not had such glorious visions and views of the Saviour as others bare, yet they have had him as the true light shining into their hearts; at which time they had such a killing sight of sin in the glass of his sufferings, as they never had in the glass of the law. It was this that made Job abhor himself, and the comeliness of Daniel turn into corruption; the mind perceived the glorious light, and there was a looking at him whom we have pierced; and a being in bitterness of soul for him; and hating self for sinning against him, and for bringing such sufferings upon him. This is seeing him who is invisible' who is invisible to bodily eye-sight, and invisible to the light of reason. It is in his light we see light, as the sun is perceived in his own rays. And this open vision is supernatural light; it is God shining into the heart; and without this there is no salvation.

"Where no oxen are, the crib is clean;" so, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," Prov. xiv. 4; xxix. 18. Many, yea, even ministers too, laugh and make game at vision, which is tacitly acknowledging that they never had any such thing; therefore, God says, "They speak a vision out of their own heart; and not out of the mouth of the Lord," Jer. xxiii. 16. Christ is light, and the fountain of light; he is the sun of the church, and he is seen at times by all his children: "The world sees me no more, but ye see me; and because I live, you shall live also." And so the weakest of all his saints will tell you when he comes, and when they have got him, and how he shines upon them; and they will tell us of the love, the peace, the joy, the comfort, the sweetness, the rest, the tranquillity, and sweet composure of mind, that he brings to their souls: and they will tell you, with grief and sorrow enough, when he is gone; and of the darkness, temptations, carnal lusts and evil tempers; the wrath, peevishness, infidelity, and distrust; together with the doubts and fears, that succeed upon his departure: and we know that this is he of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. You may know him from all others; for there is none like him in heaven or earth. Thus the enlightened mind perceives him, and the melting-soul is susceptible of the divine impressions which the Holy Ghost makes; he not only regenerates, but renews us. He transforms us by the renewing of our mind; or, as Paul says, he changes us "into the same image, from glory to glory;" and this is done "by the Spirit of the Lord."

And now, for the comfort and establishment of the weak, I will proceed to shew every particular of this image to which we are conformed; for, if we can come up to this, we shall make our calling and our election sure; for we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Therefore, without this, all religion will be nothing at last. And I verily believe that there are whole churches, as they are called, in this nation, that have not one feature of Christ's image among

them. And where nothing appears but the image of the first Adam in the pulpit, it is in vain to expect it in the pews; seeing God says "it shall be, like people like priest:" if the eye of the body be evil, the whole body, guided by such an eye, shall be full of darkness; and, if the whole body be dark, how great is that darkness. But now to the restoration of this image of Christ, and to each particular of it. And,

1. Adoption appears. Our sonship is made manifest by regeneration; for, the love of God being shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, all fear and torment are cast out, whilst love encourages and emboldens us to lay a claim upon God as our God; and, that we may be enabled to do this, the Spirit bears his witness with our spirit; which witness silences all the accusations of Satan, law, and conscience; for the clamour of these in the soul makes such a noise, and breeds such confusion and distraction, that nothing can be done, heard, or attended to. But, the witness of the Spirit silencing all these, there appears in the soul a most sensible serenity and profound silence, while the Spirit, by our own mouth, cries, "Abba, Father;" the mind, at the same time, listening to hear if any thing from law or gospel, Satan or conscience, contradict this; and, finding there is nothing, either seen or heard, felt or feared, that appears to gainsay or resist the Spirit's testimony, but rather a full persuasion of the genuineness of the work, from a sense of the presence of God, the enjoyment of his love, and the deep impressions of his power, revealing or making bare his arm, in persuading the mind not only to believe the report of the word, but to believe the work of the Spirit; and matters being thus considered and examined into, and the witness of the Spirit being so clear, and all our accusers silenced and sent out of the court, the heavenly conclusion is drawn, and we wist that all is true that has been done by the angel, and therefore are constrained to say that this scripture is fulfilled, "Thou shalt call me, My Father; and thou shalt not turn away from me."

And from that time the tongue of the stammerer speaks plainly, when he says, "My Lord, My God, and the rock of my salvation." All which appears true in the Spirit's cry, in his witness, in the love of God, in the regenerating work of the Spirit, and in the faith which he has received, or in the persuasion of his own mind; and therefore from that time forward, he goes on with it. But, as Satan is most desperate at our adoption, in every after trial he will hale this work over and over, and call this and that part of it in question, and then set us to reason upon it, and so to raise doubts in our mind about the truth of it; and then influence us with infidelity, and, if possible, bring us to disclaim it. And sometimes he has had the insolence to tell us that he has transformed himself into an angel of light, and that he himself has done the whole of it, and that on purpose to deceive us, and to lead us to trust in a delusion, and to ascribe that to the Holy Spirit of God that was only a Satanical counterfeit. And here he often preveils; but this does not last long; for, "when the enemy comes in like a flood," and seems to carry away all before him, "the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." And this lifting up the standard against him is nothing else but taking away the dark vail that Satan has spread over the mind, and once more testifying of Christ to us, or giving us another glimpse of that just One; and, as soon as he shines again, the whole image appears afresh, and the same impression is felt and enjoyed. This is called "changing us into the same image, from glory to glory." But, in the Old Testament, it is called "reviving the work in the midst of the years, and making known,;" Hab. iii. 2. And thus does God the Spirit again and again present the Lord Jesus Christ to our view; and every time he does so we come forth to the light, and behold his righteousness, faithfulness, and truth, to his poor children, and to his own good work an them; for he will carry it on, and perfect it, and complete it, in spite of men and devils; and will do it over and over again a thousand times before they shall wholly lose sight of it, or die away from the quickening influences of his Spirit And here

suffer me to give you a little advice. Christ has promised his presence with us always to the world's end whenever we meet together. And it is in his sanctuary that he promises to shine, and to display his outgoings as our God and our king. And hence ministers are called standard-bearers, because, by the word preached, Christ is evidently set forth crucified before us. And preaching the word is sowing light for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart; because the Spirit works mostly by the word. And where the Spirit presents the light and glory of Christ by the word, there is another transforming view: faith perceives it: this is sowing light. And every view of his sweet face is attended with gladness; and gladness springs from love; and it is the upright that love him. Light soon discovers him; and love going out to him fills the soul with gladness. The disciples are always glad when they see the Lord. Thus light is sown that we may see him, and gladness rises at the sight. This should teach us to be diligent in the means. The loss of one transforming sight is a great loss to a real lover of Christ. How David longed for the sanctuary of God when in Gath, because he had seen the outgoings or manifestations of his God and his king there! Moreover, we should be diligent in the means, not only on account of our being changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory every time that the Spirit presents Christ to our view, but because our fruitfulness appears in this also; for every view that we have of him draws forth our love to him, our faith is exercised on him; and sometimes meekness, self-abasement, contrition, humiliation, self-abhorrence, compunction, gratitude, thankfulness, joy at the sight of him, blessings and praises are heaped on him. When we get a view of him by the Spirit, then the Spirit takes of the things that are his, and shews them to us, and at the same time fills us with grace from his fullness; and then these things all flow out. This is what is called "our spikenard sending forth its smell;" and Christ being delighted and glorified by our grace thus in exercise is called "my beloved coming to eat his

pleasant fruits." In this way does out fruitfulness appear; and at such times the mind is truly heavenly, and life and peace attend it. The old man is put off at every sight of Christ, and the new man is put on; and some of these fruits, more or less, are put forth. Thus "with the mind we serve the law of God." But no sooner is this best beloved hid, and this transforming ray eclipsed, but the pleasing impression wears off. and a dismal gloom and sensible dryness and barrenness succeed, and then carnal reason works and unbelief preveils; peevishness and fretfulness follow, and legal bondage steals insensibly on; and Satan, having put on his armour, and stirred up the old man to coincide with all his advice and counsel, all the delights of the sons of men are set before the poor sinner; such as men-singers, and women-singers, and musical instruments, and those of all sorts; the unutterable pleasures of the wicked, that have no war between the two laws; no cross on their backs, no chastening rod on them, nor spiritual desertions. The happiness of all these is set before us; and the old man, with all his deceitful lusts, is stirred up, and all that is pleasing to flesh and blood is imagined: and this will ever be the case when the good man is not at home; for "with the flesh we serve the law of sin." I now proceed,

2. To treat of the knowledge which is communicated to us in regeneration. This knowledge is not a knowledge of things natural; this was not wholly lost by the fall. It was the knowledge of God that was lost; and of this God complains to Israel: "The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, in the land," Hosea, iv. 1. And, as for the Gentiles, they were still more ignorant of God, though wise enough in other things; and the account of both is, that "the world by wisdom knew not God." Now God promises that the knowledge of himself shall be restored to us. Adam, at his creation, had no teacher but God; and God promises that all his elect shall be

taught of him: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

1. Paul tells us there is a "form of knowledge and of the truth in the law," Rom. ii. 20; but he observes that those who have it, do "not like to retain God in their knowledge," Rom. i, 28. But, when God enters into judgment with his own elect, by the impressions of his own glorious perfections, he strips them of all their false and vain notions of him. His holiness, that appears in the law, makes them cry out, as Isaiah did," Wo is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips."

2. His omniscience appears in this law-work. He lets us know that there is not a thought in our heart, nor a word in our mouth, nor an action in all our life, but what he is privy to. These are all discovered and brought to light; yea, our secret sins are set in the light of God's countenance.

3. His justice appears also. Hence the complaints," Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and I am afraid of thy judgments. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." This drives the sinner to his wit's end, for he sees no way of escape till a door of hope is set before him.

4. In the law, the terrible majesty of God, which appears before the convinced sinner, and the wrath of God that works in him, effectually convince the soul that God is true to all his threatenings. And he is taught to know that, unless truth is cleared some way or other, there can be no escape for him. However, "Mercy and truth are met together" in Christ, and "righteousness and peace have kissed each other?"

Nor is the sinner without an awful sense of the immutability of God. He finds God is not to be turned by all his confessions, vows, prayers, or tears. Do what he will, he finds him true to his law, strictly just, and immutable; as Job says, ". He is of

one mind, and none can turn him; and what his soul desireth, that he doeth." But, as it is declared that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and by the law the knowledge of God's terrible majesty; so by the gospel is the knowledge of pardon, and the knowledge of God's sovereign clemency.

God deals with us as he did with Israel of old under Moses. First comes the law in all its fullest meaning, terrible appearance, and unlimited demands, and the Lawgiver in it and by it as "a consuming fire;" but, after Israel had, by these terrible means, been convinced of the need of a mediator, and begged of Moses to undertake that office, the Lord seeming somewhat pleased; says, "They have well spoken that which they have spoken:" and promises to give them one like unto Moses. And after this a mercy-seat appears; and, added to this, there is a most glorious proclamation of the ever-blessed name of God: "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 will by no means clear the guilty," Exodus, xxxiv. 6, 7. This is the blessed name proclaimed to Moses; but this name is not to be found in the law, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin," but not of pardon; by the law God will not clear the guilty. This name is in Christ Jesus, and no where else; and forgiveness must be sought there. and not elsewhere: "Behold I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him," Exodus, xxxiii. 20, 21. God in covenant is all this in Christ Jesus; hence the promise: "And they shall no more teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." But the knowledge that Adam had of God in a state of innocence was

not such a knowledge as this; he was a stranger to God's terrible majesty; nor did he need a knowledge of his pardoning mercy till after he fell. Adam's knowledge of God was a knowledge of his wisdom and power, which appeared in the creation; and a knowledge of God's goodness, which appeared in the happiness, and in the delightful situation in which God had placed him, and in the dominion God had given him over the rest of the creation. But, above all, Adam's knowledge of God was a knowledge of love and delight; and this made him the object of the devil's envy; and therefore he sought his ruin, and by his wiles obtained it. But this last branch of knowledge is likewise restored to us at our regeneration; for "he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

3. At our regeneration righteousness comes to us also. Not a natural one like Adam's, nor a creative one: but the obedience of the Surety is placed to our account, as our disobedience was placed to the account of our Surety: "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This is presented to our view by the Holy Spirit; faith apprehends it, and claims it; and the soul feels all its nakedness and shame, guilt and filth, entirely hid. When Adam lost his native righteousness, the entrance of guilt opened his eyes, and he saw that he was naked, for the Holy Spirit with all his adornings left him; and then he took counsel, not of God, but of Eve, and clothed himself with a covering, but not of God's Spirit, for he was gone; and this was adding sin to sin, Isa. xxx. 1. But our robe is a better righteousness than Adam's was, for his was not lasting; but ours was wrought out by Immanuel, who is God with us, and who thought it no robbery to be equal with God when he made himself of no reputation, but took on him the form of a servant and became obedient: and it is by the obedience of that one that many are made righteous. And this righteousness, put on by faith, and attended with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit,

and with the love of God in the heart, enables us to look up to God, and to stand justified even before the law itself; for "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" for it is God that justifieth, and none can condemn: for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." The grace of God in the heart, and this best robe on the soul, makes the poor sinner shine: "Put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 24.

4. I come now to treat of *holiness*, which is a most brilliant feature in the image of Christ, to which image we are predestinated to be conformed; and the apostle calls it true holiness, in opposition to all ceremonial, spurious, negative, or counterfeit holiness; and in doing this I will offer my thoughts of the matter under three heads.

1. Consider holiness as ours by virtue of our union with Christ, as the root; for, "if the root be holy, so are the branches," Rom. xi. 16.

2. I shall treat of holiness by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us, "for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are: What I know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not, your own? 1 Cor. vi. 19.

3. I shall consider the new man that is formed in the believer, and treat of the holiness of him.

1. I begin with the first. The law of God, which we have all broken, not only calls upon men for righteousness or obedience unto it, which Christ has obeyed; and which obedience God imputes to us, and in which we stand justified before him, Christ being made righteousness to us; but the law requires an holy nature, for the commandment is holy, as well as just and good. And we know that the payment of the

surety must reach as far as the score of the debtor; the remedy that effects a perfect cure must go as deep as the disease. And, as we are told that the law is just and holy, so is Christ made unto us righteousness anti sanctification. I know the scripture says that we are sanctified by his blood; for it is said of Christ, "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, he suffered without the gate;" and again, "He hath by his one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Thus John tells us that "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." But making us clean or setting us apart from all pollution, is not making us holy. The gates of heaven are barred against the unholy, as well as against the unclean; "Into it," saith the Spirit, "shall nothing enter that defileth;" this is truth, Rev. xxi. 27. And "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" this is truth also. If we are pardoned anti cleansed from our sins, this comes to us on the footing of redemption, and redemption is by sacrifice: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i. 18. The redemption price is the blood of Christ; faith applies this and purifies the heart with it: this is "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," Ephes. i. 7. The apostle often puts redemption and cleansing together: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Titus, ii. 14. Now Christ is not only made redemption to us, but righteousness and sanctification also. He "is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Wisdom makes us wise, righteousness makes us just, sanctification makes us holy, and redemption makes us clean. Thus, by the blood of the covenant, we come forth out of the pit in which is no water. The Saviour took part of the children's flesh and blood; and the Holy Spirit, in the formation of his human nature, preserved it from all defilement. Hence

he is styled a Holy Thing: "That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God:" from which it appears that the Saviour's manhood was not only pure from all human defilement, but holy; the Holy Spirit made it holy, as the law of Adam required a holy nature, for in true holiness was Adam made; and Christ, as man, was so too. And I think this is one thing meant in our Lord's speech to the Jews: "Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" Whatever that sanctification was, true holiness was a part of it. Without spotless purity and true holiness the humanity of Christ could not be a fit temple for all the fullness of the Godhead to dwell bodily in. And it is well known that he is often called the Holy One, and the Holy One of Israel also; for all God's Israel have all their real holiness in him and from him: "For, if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches," Rom. xi. 16. No other can be meant by the first-fruit but Christ; because it is not called fruits, but fruit in the singular number. And we know that he is the root of David, and of all the saints. Into this good olive-tree were the Jews grafted, and the wild olive Gentiles were grafted in among them, and both partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, Rom. xi. 17. Christ is called the first-fruit, the church is called the lump; Christ is called the root, the church the branches; then says Paul, "If the first-fruit be holy, the lump is holy; and, if the fruit be holy, so are the branches." But then the branches must be grafted into the tree before they can partake of the root and fatness thereof. There is a double union between Christ and his saints: we are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, he taking part of the children's flesh and blood; and he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit; this comes to us by regeneration. To be short Christ's flesh is called a part of the children's, his obedience is called ours, his life is called ours, his redemption is ours, and his holy nature as man is ours; and, being united to him, made one with him, and standing fast in him, we have righteousness and

sanctification in him; and, if this be granted; then those unaccountable passages of scripture may be accounted for: such as, God "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel." And, "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power," Col. ii. 10. And again, "For they are without fault before the throne of God," Rev. xiv. 5. And this also, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." I am in this matter hunting after truth. The law does require a holy nature, a holy body, and a holy soul, as Adam had. Now the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us does not destroy either the life or the motions of sin in us, neither in our body nor in our soul; there is a carnal mind which is enmity, and a body of flesh in which is nothing good, and yet we stand complete before a holy God and a holy law: and I cannot account for this, but by our having perfect holiness in the head, or the holiness of the Saviour's human nature being considered as ours by imputation; and, as he was made in the likeness of his brethren by incarnation, and appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh by imputation, so his grace and the holiness of his human nature became ours in the same way. God sanctified Christ, and sent him into the world in a holy human nature to fulfil all the righteousness of a holy law; and Paul says, "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," Heb. ii. 11, 12. And this is called sanctification in Jesus: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and are called to be saints," 1 Corinthians, i. 2. I know that this is an unfrequented path in our days; but whether it be a way that is not cast up in the word of God, I shall leave to the saints to judge, and proceed to my next head, which is,

2. To treat of true holiness by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. And do you observe: all the hints that are mentioned about the image of God are built upon the formation of Adam, who was created in that similitude, James, iii. 9. And the apostle intimates that righteousness and true holiness were two

eminent qualities of God's image in him; which holiness was a most holy influence, that the Holy Ghost spread throughout all the powers of his soul: and this holiness, the Holy Spirit kept up in Adam, by a continual influence, as long as he lived obedient. And the holiness of the saints now is nothing else but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who at every believing and renewing view of Christ, by faith, spreads his most sacred and sanctifying influences throughout all the powers of the soul; as the most glorious cloud of holiness attended the appearance of God in the most holy place of the tabernacle and temple, when God came down to sanctify and consecrate them with his presence: when it was said "the glory of the Lord had filled the house" of the Lord. After which it was called "the most holy place," or "the holy of holies," so God, calling the temple of Jerusalem Lebanon, because it was built of cedar, says, "The glory of Lebanon shall be given to the church," Isai. xxxv. 2. That is, he will dwell with them that are of the household of faith, and make Zion his resting place for ever; and his influence shall be their holiness. And this God intimates when he prefaces the following passage: "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit," Isai. lvii. 15. Hence it is plain that the heavenly glory of the old temple is now in the church, for he that is holy, and dwells in the high and holy place, dwells also with the contrite and humble spirit: "Know ye not," says Paul, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are," 1 Cor. iii. 16. 17. Nor do I believe that the glorious appearance of God, at the dedication of the temple, had more majesty in it than that which attends him when he visits the humble and contrite; for the poor soul rises and shines like the sun; and well he may when "the glory of God is risen upon him," More might have been seen in the temple, but not more felt: for, when God by his Spirit comes with his glorious train,

and sets Christ crucified before us, he spreads his beams of light and love, glory and beauty, holiness and immortality throughout, and we appear, during that time, quite perfect and complete. All is changed, all is renewed: "Old things are passed away, and all things become new," But, when this heaven upon earth withdraws, and all that is in our heart appears, and all our imbred corruptions and deceitful lusts are stirred up, to set our vain imaginations to work, how polluted does that once holy place appear, and how soon are we defiled! for" the thought of foolishness is sin," Prov. xxiv. 9. And here we lie, sick of sin and sick of self, groaning, "Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?" And now Satan works with his artful suggestions, and piercing accusations. But the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him; and this is done generally under the word preached; he testifies afresh of Christ, sets him forth evidently crucified before us; and away goes Satan, and down goes the old man; he is put off with all his infernal entertainments: and Satan shuns the light; for the devil cannot exist, being an unclean spirit, but in filth; nor can he feed, but upon the lusts of the flesh; these are his element, and these are his food: "Dust shall be the serpent's meat," but "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord? The old man is never put off, but by putting the new man on; nor is the new man ever put on, but when the Holy Spirit presents Christ afresh to our view; at which time the enlightened mind, susceptible of the rays of Christ's countenance, by faith discovers him; and faith, hope, and love, go forth, and solace themselves in him; and" while we thus look, as through a glass darkly, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord," Thus doth God save us, not only by the washing of regeneration, but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost: and it is by this continual renovating work, reviving and transforming of us, that the temple of God is holy. And where this Spirit dwells not, and where regeneration never takes place, and where no glimpse of the Saviour is discovered, there is none of the Holy

Spirit's renewing work, and, of course, there is no true holiness. It is the indwelling of God, and nothing else, that can make a soul holy. Christ's transfiguration on mount Tabor is the reason that Peter calls that a holy hill, when he says, "And this voice we heard when we were with him on the holy mount," 2 Pet. i. 18. And he church goes by the same name: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Isaiah. xi. 9. But there is none of this knowledge of the Lord, but by the Spirit, for it is he that testifies of Christ; nor can we know the things of God but by the Spirit of God; nor can there be any holiness in this mountain without him; for "the offering up of the Gentiles is accepted, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 16. All holiness short of this is only what the scripture calls "a fair shew in the flesh," and proud enough are our carnally-secure professors of this shew: but God despises their image. Now for a word of advice. The views that some poor souls have of Christ by the Spirit are very dim, and the renewing influence very transient; therefore, if the believer be not attentive to the Spirit's work, and very observant, he may lose also much satisfaction by such neglect: let him observe the appearance, and he will feel the holy influence. Now poor Stephen had a wonderful sight at his trial; for the Spirit opened the heavens, and presented Christ to his view, as standing on the right hand of God; and while Stephen looked he was filled with the Holy Ghost's Power; and the Spirit did so renew and change him into the image of Christ while he looked, that his very lace shone; and, under that transforming influence, Stephen went to glory above: the old man was put off for good and all. I come,

3. To consider the new man that is formed in the believer. and to treat of the holiness of him. By the new man I understand the fruits of the Spirit; or the different graces which the Spirit, under his operations, produces or brings forth in the soul:

these fruits are said to be born of the Spirit; as our Lord says, "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," John, iii. 6.

1. One thing that is born of the Spirit is light; and this light, wherever it shines in the heart, gives the saints the name of "Children of light and children of the day." Such, says Paul, shine as lights in the world, Phil. ii. 15. And God is the father of these lights, James, i. 17.

2. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." This faith is of the operation of God, and therefore is said to be born of God, 1 John, v. 4.

3. Hope: "God hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." God begets us by his word: "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth." And the word comes to the soul in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, and raises an expectation of future glory. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and this is called "a good hope through grace,"

4. Love: "Every one that loveth is born of God," 1 John iv. 7. This love is the fulfilling of the new commandment that Christ gave us; and it is called a new one because it differs from the old, which says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" but this says, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another," John, xiii. 34. Here the neighbour is changed for the brother; and not "as thyself," but, "as I have loved you."

5. Mercies and comforts: God is called "the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort," 2 Cor. i.3. God, by his Spirit, produces every mercy in us; converting mercy, pardoning, preserving, and supporting, mercy; and every comfort that we enjoy.

6. Life: "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death," Psalm, lxxviii. 20. Under the quickening operation of God's Spirit we pass from death to life; we pass from the condemning sentence of law and conscience, to justification unto life, and that by faith, which faith is of the Spirit of God. This is "the offspring and issue" of God, which hang on the nail fastened in a sure place, Isa. xxii. 24.

7. God is called the Father of Glory: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of revelation and wisdom, in the knowledge of him," Eph. i. 17. There is a glory that attends the word of the gospel, hence it is called the glorious gospel; and there is a glory that attends a work of grace in the heart also: "Upon all the glory there shall be a defence," Isaiah, iv. 5. And this glory beams forth with every renewal of that work; and which is enjoyed in all our exultations and glorious triumphs that we have in Christ Jesus. Put all those fruits of the Spirit together, and it will give you a little light into what the scripture calls the new man; and the reverse of all these is the old man. I have no doubt but some of you must remember to have heard these words out of the common-prayer book of the church of England, mentioned in the baptismal service: "Grant that the old man may be so crucified in this child, that the new man may be raised up in him; that all things belonging to the flesh may be so buried, that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in him." The few things which I have here selected out of the word of God, and set before you, are the things which belong to the Spirit, or what is called the new man; and there is true holiness in every grace of the Holy Spirit. Hence you read of the holiness of faith: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost," Jude, 20. In short, Peter says the saints "are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Peter. ii. 5. And every revival of the

work of grace in us is called changing us from glory to glory. The fruits, or graces, of the Holy Spirit are holy; and hence the new man is called holy; take the apostle's account of him at large: "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and that you put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22-24.

I have now to shew that the greatest blessing in Adam's image, which was life, and which was lost, is now restored also, with the image of Christ, to us; and this is not a life depending, as Adam's was, upon our obedience, but upon the eternal purpose and decree of God; and it is a free gift: "The gift of God is eternal life." And it is secured to us by the oath of God, by the death of Christ, by a covenant of grace, by the word of God; and by the witness, seal, and indwelling of the Holy Spirit: and the Almighty being willing more abundantly to secure this most invaluable blessing to the heirs of promise, has connected it with every particular of Christ's image, to which we are predestinated. For instance,

1. It is connected with knowledge: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

2. It is connected with righteousness: at justification we pass from death to life: hence you read of "justification unto life."

3. It is coupled with sanctification by the Spirit: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." And the offering up of the Gentiles is accepted," being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

4. It is joined with love: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live."

5. The light of glory on the soul has life in it: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." And it is the same life that Adam had; but it was to come to the saints through a better representative, and be secured by a better covenant, established upon better promises, and to be secured by the perfect obedience of a better Adam. And it is a life in the favour of God, a life in Christ, lived on by faith, and realized to the soul by the life-giving energy of the Holy Ghost; and it is God's blessing, and an everlasting one. "Upon mount Zion God commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." I now proceed,

VI. and last, To shew that the grand appearance which the saints will make in heaven, and their eternal felicity there, will be the truth and the substance of what was typified and shadowed out to Adam in Paradise.

1. The third heaven, the residence of God and of Christ, and the holy angels, is called paradise: "I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words," 2 Cor. xii. 2-4. This glorious residence will be the receptacle of all the lovers of Christ; for he says, "Where I am, there shall also my servants be." And this appears to, be the place by the request granted to the prayer of the thief upon the cross: "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shall thou be with me in paradise," Luke, xxiii. 42, 43.

2. Eden was the place where the tree of life grew, of which Adam might freely eat, for it was the tree of knowledge, and no other, that was forbidden. And we find the Saviour, when encouraging his poor tried children, promises to him that preveils in the fight of faith the same request: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," Rev. ii. 7.

3. The garden of Eden abounded with most delicious fruit. This appears in God's grant to Adam: "Of every tree thou mayest eat; but of the tree of knowledge thou shall not eat of it." And we read that, "In the midst of the holy city, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month," Rev. xii. 2.

4. Adam had only one command to obey, in order to keep him in his happy possession, and in his right to the tree of life. And sure I am that "charity hopeth all things, beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things; and charity never faileth." He therefore that loves Christ and his saints, shall be admitted into this paradise; for they pass from death to life that love the brethren, love being the fulfilling of the law, and the blessed end of the gospel: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city," Rev. xxii. 14.

5. Eden was noted for one of the most famous fountains or springs of water in all the world; it supplied no less than four very large rivers, and perhaps some of them the largest in the world. And there is a fountain in the paradise above that shall so supply the saints of God as to give them an eternal fullness: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall

lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," Rev. vii. 16, 17.

6. In Eden Adam was perfectly holy and happy, both in body and soul. He was not compassed about with impure thoughts, and a body of sin and death, as we are: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption," 1 Corinthians, xv. 50. "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself, Phil. iii. 20, 21.

7. In Eden Adam enjoyed that life of God, which the Holy Spirit gave him when God breathed into his nostrils, and the Holy Spirit quickened him; and so in heaven: "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.

8. In Eden Adam bore the image of his great Creator. When he was sent forth into the world that image was gone. A sinful world and a corrupt image is all he gave to us: "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. And, as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Corinthians, xv. 47, 49. And in this blessed place and state will the image of Christ appear more stalking than ever it did in Adam. We shall awake with his likeness, and be satisfied therewith; for we shall see him as he is, and not be struck dead with the sight, for we shall be like him.

1. Now will our sonship appear plain, and never will any doubts more arise about it. It will be seen of all that we "are the children of God, being the children of the resurrections" Luke, xx. 36. Now also will perfect knowledge take place. We

shall not peep by faith through a glass darkly as now, but see as we are seen, and know as we are known; for that which is in part shall be done away when that which is perfect is come.

Righteousness also shall now appear in all its glory and beauty: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever and ever."

Holiness also shall now appear conspicuous, and not be obscured with a mass of corruption and the vail of a tempting devil, as is now too often the lamentable case: "Blessed and holy are they that have part in the first resurrection, for on such the second death hath no power."

Love also, which now so often waxes cold, will, in this state, for ever burn, and for ever abound; for we shall be filled with all the fullness of God, and "God is love;" and so it is written, "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.

Joy also shall be no more damped and intermingled with bitterness, as in the present state: we "shall return with songs, and everlasting joy upon our heads," we shall obtain "joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Glory, too, shall for ever abide. Our bodies shall be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, and shine in the light of the Lamb for ever and ever. This my beloved, is the prize and the joy that is set before us.

On Christmas-day I found myself very ill, and at night I went to bed so; and in my sleep I dreamed that I was by the side of a river, the water of which was remarkably clear, but very shallow; and, when I had fixed my eyes intently upon it, I beheld a great many fine fish swimming about in the water. There was somebody in company with me, to whom I spoke;

but who it was I know not, for I saw no man; only I can remember talking to somebody, and I seemed to be very earnest to catch some of these fish; and I thought I would be as careful as possible how I handled them. I would, if I could, take them at each end, one hand at the head and the other at the tail, and hold them fast. And many very fine ones I caught, as I thought; and, as I took them out of the water, they did look so white and delicate upon the bellies of them, that I thought I never saw finer fish. And I remember that there stood some kind of vessel by me, into which I put them; n 99a or do I remember that one got out of my hands. And, when I had cleared the water, I got not a few out of the mud, and was mightily pleased with my great success. But I awoke, and there was an end to my fishing. But it came into my mind what the Lord said to Peter, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And again, when our Lord compares the kingdom of God "unto a net that was cast into the sea, and it gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they draw to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away," Matt. xiii. 47, 48. I likewise thought of Ezekiel's river, and the account of fishing in that, Ezek. xlvi.; for the conversion of sinners, and nothing else, is meant in all that account of fishing. The next morning I awoke a little before three o'clock, and, as I was turning many things over in my thoughts, the image of God, in which Adam was created, came into my mind, and I was led through the whole book of God in my meditations upon that subject. First, about what it was, and the loss of it, and of God's promise about the restoration of it; and my soul was most wonderfully meekened, humbled, and comforted, in me, while I was meditating upon these things; and it abode with me some time in the forenoon; but, on the Saturday afternoon, it was all gone, and I doubted at times whether it would ever come back again. But, knowing that God often takes things, thus premeditated on, away for a time, and sends his Spirit to bring them again to our remembrance when he intends we shall

handle them, I told a friend of mine last night what had been my thoughts, and how gone, and that I believed they would all come again fresh to me this morning; and so they did; and, as I was about three hours meditating on them, so I have been much about three hours in delivering them; and they have, even every particular of them, been brought so exactly back to me and set before me, that I cannot recollect any one thing of moment, in my view of them, that has not been brought forth and set before you. And, as the dream the night before was about fishing, and the next night's meditation was about the gospel, God grant that this may be of some use in God's hand, that not a few may be effectually taken. God grant it, for Christ's sake Amen.

WILLIAM HUNTINGTON

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE GOD OF ISRAEL

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER I.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX.

Cricklewood.

Dear son in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied. I have for some time had it upon my mind to send thee some account of my late goings on, having for some few weeks back been much indulged and helped by the Holy Spirit of promise, of whose influence, help, and energetic intercession at the throne of grace, I have been very watchful and observant; and, on the other hand, could not but wonder at the backwardness, deadness, dryness, and barrenness, both in power and in expression, when his sensible influence was withheld from me. His divine person, and his most benign influences and operations, were for many days my meditation, both by night and by day: and during this time, these things were the principal subjects of my ministry; and, had I wrote them then, I have no doubt but thou wouldest have felt the blessed effects; but now it is not so with me; my harp is upon the willows - and, with respect to sensible enjoyments, the

Comforter that should relieve my soul seems to be far from me. Oh, what is all religion without the operation of the Holy Spirit! An empty shew, and a weariness to the flesh.

I thought not a little of his divine personality; and wondered much how any man living, who reads the scriptures, could ever have the effrontery to deny his being, a divine person. But the world knows him not. "I will send you a comforter 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." He is therefore to be known by all believers: and those who do know him will glorify him and Honour him; reverence him and adore him; and we know that all who are destitute of him, and strangers to his operations, are sensual men, and know nothing but what they know naturally. Hence some have called the Holy Spirit no more than a quality, or an attribute of God; others an influence only; others no more than a name; avowing that there is but one person in the Godhead, but a plurality of names: - as Simon Magus gave it out, that he himself was God the Father in Samaria, the Word in Judea, and the Spirit in the other parts of the world. Surely that monster of a man must be the father or ringleader of all heretics. But we know that no curious diving, no speculative prying, no presumptuous intruding, will meet with the divine approbation. "God resisteth the proud." But O how safe, how sweet, how salutary, how satisfactory, how humbling and softening, are the sweet influences, operations, discoveries, and communications, of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of the children of God!

Various things are meant by the word Spirit in the holy scriptures: - as wind, the spirit of beasts, and the souls of men, and angels, both good and bad. But the Holy Ghost is distinguished from all these, being, emphatically called God, not in a figurative or metaphoric, but in an absolute sense; "to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father,

and of Christ," Col. ii. 2. In which passage the Holy Ghost stands first in the Holy Trinity, and he is distinct from the Father and from Christ: and surely, if he were not essentially God, to all intents and purposes, he never would have inspired the apostle to name and place him as God before the Father. The church also is called "the temple of the Holy Ghost; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." No spirit whatever that is mentioned in all the book of God, is ever numbered with the persons in the Holy Trinity, or ranked with the Father and the Son, except the Holy Ghost. Nor is the church the property, the temple, or the habitation, of any but of God alone: and, as the church is called the temple of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost must be God.

A ghost is a spirit The Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit is one and the same in the original, as say the learned. Now what I have upon my mind, to write to my dear brother, is upon this important subject: and, however weakly, or however imperfectly I may express myself, I am fully persuaded, by my own experience, that it is most safe, and ever will be satisfactory and establishing to the elect of God, who are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Spirit, to believe as I do: while the contrary is most dangerous, if not perilous: - I mean, that the Holy Ghost must be acknowledged to be a divine person by all those who are sanctified, and who hope to be saved. They must acknowledge the mystery of God, of the Father, and of Christ; for we are baptized in the name of all the three, and therefore, in our holy profession, we must acknowledge this greatest mystery of all mysteries.

A person, according to the account of learned men, is an individual being, an intelligent agent, who is singular, and subsists, lives, speaks, understands, acts, and works-and such is the Holy Ghost. Nor is there a distinct personal character but what the holy scriptures apply to him; such as I, me, him, he, his, thou. As for instance, "Separate me

Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when he is come he shall guide you into all truth:" Again, "I will send you a comforter, 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." Again, "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these his doings?" Again, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I go up into heaven, thou art there." Sure I am that these personal characters cannot be applied to a name, or to a quality in God, or to an influence from him, or to an accident, or to a transient impression; much less to a nonentity. It is true, that personal characters, and personal actions, are sometimes ascribed to things inanimate; as, "The trees went forth to choose themselves a king, and invited the vine and the olive to reign over them, who refused; and the bramble bid them put themselves under his shadow." The red sea is also represented as seeing and fleeing.

"The floods lift up their hands on high, and the little hills skip like lambs." Yet we have no voice from any of these, only dumb signs at best; these all wanted persons to speak for them. Jotham speaks for the trees and the bramble; Habakkuk speaks the motions of the sea, and David the actions of the little hills. But the Holy Spirit wants none to speak for him; he can speak of himself, and for himself. He spoke in Adam, giving names to all creatures. He spoke to Philip - "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." He spoke to Peter - "The Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee; arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting." The Spirit said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." The Holy Spirit not only speaks; but all that have ever spoken to any good purpose have been taught to speak by him; he brings the things to their minds, puts words in their mouths, and teaches them how to pronounce

them. "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," I Cor. ii. 13. The Spirit put a word in Balaam's mouth, and bade him speak thus and thus; and "the apostles spake as the Spirit gave them utterance." He not only speaks to the saints, and in them, but he teaches us in some measure to discern between those whom he teaches to speak, and those who follow their own spirit, and speak a vision out of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. And how evident this is in all who write or speak of divine things without the Spirit's teaching! What flagrant errors, self-contradictions, inconsistencies, confusion, and darkening of counsel, doth appear! Instead of making rough places plain, and crooked things straight, they make the plainest places rough, and the straightest things crooked; and, instead of going through the gates, and removing the stumbling blocks, and casting up the high-way, they grope like the blind for the wall, cause many to stumble at the law, and destroy the way of our paths. And, if at any time any of them appear to be tolerably sound in the letter, yet the deep things of the text, the unctuous matter of it, or the choice experience of the holy penmen that lies hid in it, is never dived into, nor brought up; the glorious beauty of it is obscured, the surface of it is skimmed over; a few parallel texts are brought in, and dark constructions put upon the words, and the passage left more obscure than when the workman began. There is nothing, in your ears but swelling words and empty sound; and nothing in your soul but leanness and beggary. Instead of watering the trees of righteousness, or refreshing the bowels of the saints, these clouds without rain rather exhale or dry up all the dew of heaven that is on the soul, however refreshed before. Such workmen obscure and becloud the Spirit's work, cast a dimness on the brightest evidences, contract the most enlarged heart, and imprison those whom the Lord has made free indeed. This I know by woful experience. And it must be so; for "the natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit

of God, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Personal properties also, or those properties and things which are ascribed to persons, are also ascribed to the Holy Spirit such as will, power, mind, judgment, wisdom, understanding, knowledge, love, joy, grief, vexation, &c. for instance - "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. Mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Holy Ghost." And "God that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit." And "The Lord of hosts shall be for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment: upon him shall rest the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." Again, "Now I beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit." Again, "YOU received the word with joy of the Holy Ghost." "Grieve not the Spirit of God, by which ye are sealed." "But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit, till he turned to be their enemy, and fought against them." I cannot see how all the above-mentioned things can with propriety be ascribed to anything but a person. To apply them to a quality, an accident, a name, or a nonentity, must be absurd to the last degree. And I have often thought that, if men were allowed to take the same liberties with the evidences of a purchase, a man's will and testament, title-deeds, and writings of estates, &c. that some take with the word of God, there are lawyers and counsellors wise enough to dispute every landholder in the nation out of all that he hath, and even out of his own personality and existence too. For it is but to prove that there is no such man, no such person that it is only a name; and all the relative or personal characters are to be understood in a figurative or an allegorical sense; and that it means no more than a quality in man, or a power put forth by man on certain occasions; or that it signifies only the breath of a man's mouth, an accident, or a

transient emanation, flowing out with his words when he speaks. Allow a wise lawyer or counsellor to go this way to work, and we should soon see the greatest landholders in the nation begging in the streets.

Now, my dear brother, I must leave this subject for the present, submitting this my scribble to your perusal. And, should your thoughts meet with any rubs in the way, as they rove; should any thing grate upon your ears; should any thing sound harsh, should any of the things appear to clash, or seem unintelligible; or appear low, mean, unworthy, or unbecoming the glorious subject; signify the same, and offer your thoughts freely-it will be kindly received by him who subscribe himself, in undissembled love,

Yours in Christ Jesus,

W. Huntington

CONTEMPLATIONS

A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER II

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWIS, SUSSEX

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

Having, now a little time on my hands, I will reassume my former subject. When I began the last my mind was dark and my heart cold. Much work and many engagements at the time of Christmas had banished my former sweet meditations far from me; so that, when I came to sit down to put them to

paper, I had them far to fetch, and all to collect afresh; but before I had been long at the work they came about me again, and I found myself rather happy in the return of my pleasing visitors. I left off after I had offered a few thoughts on the personal characters which the scriptures of truth ascribe to the Holy Ghost; and I shall now mention some few works and actions which the scriptures ascribe to the Spirit, and which are personal works and actions, such as none but real persons can do.

None but persons can bear record to the truth of any contract, covenant, or agreement; nor be admitted as a witness in such cases, or to any deed, or upon any trial whatever. But "there are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, the Holy Ghost: and there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood. And we are witnesses of these things," says the apostle; "and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him," Acts v. 32. The Spirit bears witness to the truth of the word; he gives testimony to the word of his grace, and to the truth of their commission whom he sends to preach it. He brings the righteousness of Christ to the soul; we "are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God!" And he bears witness to our justification, and to our adoption. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." And even in the court of a believers conscience his witness is so powerful and effectual, that neither law, devil, nor sin, which is represented as crying to heaven, no nor even conscience itself, is suffered to speak. And this witness is true, and is no lie; and we are to abide in him. I know that Jacob set up a pillar at Bethel; and that Laban and Jacob gathered a heap of stones together at mount Gilead, and called them witness: but these were only to help the treacherous memory of persons, who are apt to forget, as Jacob did, when God bid him arise, and go up to Bethel, where he anointed the Pillar.

Power and authority; qualifying, equipping and investing men with offices, must be personal works. "You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. To one is given the word of wisdom, to another faith, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues; and all these worketh that one and the self-same spirit." "Take heed to yourselves, and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," Acts, xx. 28. And, "as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed," Acts, xiii. 2, 4., And they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. And they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not." Now, upon the whole, if speaking teaching, leading; qualifying of men with grace, gifts, and abilities for the ministerial work; furnishing them with wisdom and knowledge, and giving, them divers kinds of tongues; appointing them to the office of overseers, and telling, them what to say giving readiness of mind, aptitude and utterance in speaking, telling, them where to go, and forbidding them to go here and there, where he had no work for them to do, at least not at that season if these are not personal works and actions, what are? There are some, I believe, in the world, who deny the very being of a God: The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." These must be left to be convinced by the torments of the damned. But I believe there are very few, who profess to believe the Bible, but will allow that there is one divine person in the Godhead, which is in general allowed to be God the Father; though many will not allow the Saviour to be a person, although he is his only begotten Son, the Son of the Father in truth and love: and still less will they allow divine personality to the Holy Ghost; though the scriptures ascribe the same personal characters, properties, works, and actions, to the Son, and to the Spirit, as they do to God the Father. Therefore, if the Father be a person, the Son and Spirit must. The work of

creation is ascribed to the Holy Ghost, as well as to the Son and to the Father: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." He operated upon the confused chaos, and brought it into beautiful order. "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens, his hand hath formed the crooked serpent," Job, xxvi. 18. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth," Psalm xxxiii. 6. Here the creation of the heavens are ascribed to the essential Word and to the holy Spirit. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth," Psalm xxxiv. 30. Here is the work of creation ascribed to the Spirit, and it is he that renews the face of the earth every springs. The creation of man is ascribed to the Holy Spirit also. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life," Job, xxxiii. 4.

Nor was the Holy Spirit a spectator when Christ appeared for our salvation. It was the Holy Ghost that came upon the Virgin Mary at her conception, and that formed the human nature which Christ assumed, and preserved it from every stain or spot of original sin, and then rested upon him with his fullness of gifts and grace. He applied the word which the Saviour spoke, and displayed his power in the miracles that be wrought; and those that blasphemed either his words or his power, blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. It was thought the eternal Spirit that he offered himself in sacrifice to God, and it was the same Spirit that quickened our Lord's body in the tomb. "He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." And under his great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and hence it is said that he is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the [testimony of] the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 4.

Making the saints meet for heaven lies much upon the Holy Ghost. It is he that applies the word, and makes it effectual:

the word comes in power, and in the Holy Ghost; he convinces of sin; and it is the Spirit that quickens the dead sinner; and, as a Spirit of illumination and understanding, he enlightens him, testifies of Christ to him, works faith in him to believe, regenerates and renews him; takes the Lord's righteousness and peace, and shews them to the sinner; works the life and power of; reigning grace in him, and sets up the kingdom of God in the heart, which stands in power, in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The law of faith by the Saviour, which the isles were to wait for, is applied and made effectual by the Holy Ghost, who is our last law-giver. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." He bears witness to our adoption, and empowers us to Claim it; produces the first-fruits of the Spirit; and is the pledge and earnest of the future inheritance. He seals us up to the day of redemption; renews us, or restores the lost image of God to us, and sanctifies us, and carries on his sanctifying, renewing, and transforming work in us, and makes us meet for the inheritance with the saints in light: "that the offering up of the Gentiles may be accepted, being, sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

Sins against the Holy Spirit, in his work and operations, are taken notice of in a very particular manner, and are highly resented, even in the saints, and punished with peculiar severity in the daring, and presumptuous. The Israelites in the wilderness vexed his Holy Spirit, till he turned to be their enemy, and fought against them. Some of the Young Gentile converts grieved him, and many were sickly and weak among them, and many slept, for their unbecoming behaviour at the Lord's table. The Holy Spirit (says Christ) shall glorify me. And the Spirit is grieved when the Lord is dishonoured. Ananias and Sapphira, agreeing together in sin, tempted the Spirit of the Lord, and Satan filled their hearts to lie to the Holy Ghost. "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God," says Peter, Acts

v. Therefore the Holy Ghost is God. And they were both struck dead upon the spot for it. Great and innumerable sins against God in his law, as in Manasseh and others, have been forgiven; and many awful things done and spoken against the Son of man have been pardoned, as may be seen in Paul. But those that do despite to the Spirit of Grace; who willingly, and wilfully counteract his operations and designs in the souls of God's people; and who see his power, and yet oppose, hate, and fight against it; and who ridicule and blaspheme both the author and his operations; never have been, nor ever will be forgiven; for "the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men," Matt. xii. 31. And can any man in his senses believe, or attempt to affirm, that the all-wise God, the Judge of all the earth, who is rich in mercy and abundant in goodness and in 855 truth, would exclude men from all possibility of pardon, and doom them to eternal damnation, for sinning against a name, an accident, or only a quality, attribute, perfection, or a power in God, which may be transiently put forth, and displayed as an operation on man? Surely sinning, against God the Father himself, which is sinning against all the revealed perfections and attributes of his nature, must be a more heinous crime than sinning against a single quality in him. And yet all manner of sins and blasphemies, committed against him in the law, have been forgiven unto men, Matt. xii. 31; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost never was, nor ever will be. And why this sin unto death should be emphatically called "the great transgression," I cannot conceive, if the Holy Ghost, against whom it is committed, be not the great and terrible God.

The dispensation of the gospel, in the administration of it, is peculiarly his: hence it is called "the ministration of the Spirit," that exceeds the former ministration in glory, 2 Cor. iii. 8. He is the operator and worker of all good from God, through Christ, in men; and of all the glory and praise that rebounds to God by men; and will be greatly concerned in the first resurrection,

the resurrection of the just. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and the Spirit will attend it, and quicken them all, 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. II.

I must beg my dear brother's pardon for the length of this epistle. My pen ran on; and, being deeply engaged in the subject, I had quite forgotten myself. Ponder these matters over attentively, and send me your thoughts upon the subject. I have written them as I see and believe them; and so to see and believe, in my judgment, is to walk in the ways of God safely.

Ever yours,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER III

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX.

Dearly beloved in the Lord Jesus - Perfect peace, and at such a time.

If I have not wearied my beloved brother with my epistles on the pleasing subject, I will resume it and proceed. That the Holy Spirit is properly a person, I have endeavoured to prove from scripture; and that he is a divine person appears as

plain, because he personally subsists and has life in himself "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself," John, v. 26. And so hath the Spirit life in himself. This appears in his creation-work. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life," Job, xxxiii. 4. He quickened, animated, and inspired Adam, and furnished him with a life of love. What power but a divine person, who has life in himself, could form a living soul in Adam, and give him life, righteousness, and true holiness? He is the author of natural and spiritual life. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth," John, vi. 23. And, as he giveth spiritual life, so he maintains it; hence he is called "a well of living-water, springing up into everlasting life," John, iv. 14. And all the elect of God, who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and children of wrath, even as others-these doth the Holy Spirit quicken. "I will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live," Ezek. xxxvii. 14. Hence our Saviour says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified" John, vii. 38, 39. It was the Spirit that quickened the Saviour's body in the tomb. He was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit," 1 Peter, iii. 18. Hence the Spirit is expressly called life; and he will, at the last day, quicken all that ever died in the Lord. "And, if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. I have sowed and you have reaped; and he that reaped receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life; when he that sows and them that reap shall rejoice together." The Spirit, as a well of living water, shall spring up into everlasting life. This is the glorious harvest promised, as the present is the seed-time, in which the blessed crop (that we have already got in hope) is sown for he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," Gal. vi. 8. If, therefore, the Spirit be not a

person, and a divine person too, who has eternal life in himself, we never could reap everlasting life from him by yielding spiritual obedience to him. I say spiritual obedience, because we are said to serve "in newness of Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," which is only bodily exercise. And we are said, likewise, to worship God in the Spirit, and to walk in newness of life. Furthermore, the names which, in the strictest sense, are peculiar to God, are by the scriptures given to the Holy Ghost. As Jehovah; which is an incommunicable name of God. "Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high God over all the earth," Psalm lxxxiii. 18. He, whom the children of Israel tempted and proved, vexed and rebelled against, was Jehovah. And Isaiah ascribes it to the Holy Ghost, "But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them," Isaiah, Lxiii. 10. The apostle ascribes the same to him. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest," Heb. vii. 11. Isaiah, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ascribe his tempting and rebelling of the Israelites to be done against the Holy Ghost; therefore the Holy Ghost must be Jehovah, and so it is written, "And he called the name of the place Massab, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted Jehovah, saying, Is Jehovah among us or not?" Exod. xvii. 7. It is therefore plain that the Holy Ghost is Jehovah, which incommunicable name is peculiar to the most high God.

The Holy Ghost is called God, not in a figurative, but in a proper sense. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I Cor. iii. 16. What is

not essentially God cannot be the Spirit of God; therefore the Holy Ghost is God. The Spirit of Jehovah is Jehovah the Spirit; the Spirit of God is God the Spirit. And this rule may be seen in the Epistle to the Corinthians. " Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 16, 17. The Spirit of the Lord is the Lord the Spirit. Hence we may safely conclude that the Holy Ghost is Jehovah, God, and Lord.

And, to shew the divine equality of the adorable persons in the Godhead each person at times is named or placed first. Sometimes Christ is named first: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Sometimes the Holy Spirit stands first: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding; to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," Col. ii. 2. Sometimes God the Father stands first: "For 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. Now, as this last order is not always attended to, it shews that one is not before or after another; and that one is not greater or less than the other. Again - "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God, which worketh all in all," I Cor. xii. 4, 5, 6. Here the Holy Ghost rates the name of Spirit, Lord, and God, to himself; and therefore he must be the Spirit, Lord, and God. Sometimes the Holy Ghost is prayed to as God. "But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," 2 Thess. iii. 3, 4, 5. The Lord, who

is faithful, and who establishes the churches, and keeps them from evil, and in whom Paul places his confidence, is the Holy Ghost; and he is prayed to, that he may direct the saints hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. The Holy Spirit is prayed to as a divine person, to direct souls into the love of God, who is another person, and into the patient waiting for Christ, which is another, and a distinct person from the former two.

That the Holy Ghost is truly and essentially God, appears from the scriptures, which ascribe divine attributes and perfections to him; such as eternity: "Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself to God," Heb. ix. 14. Omniscience also -, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, 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. 10, 11. Omnipotence is ascribed to him." The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee," Luke, i. 35. He is called " the Spirit of counsel and might," Isaiah, xv. 2. And "the Spirit of power and of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i. 7. How can he be called the Spirit of power, the Spirit of might, and the power of the Highest, if he be not the Almighty God? Nothing can be the power of the Highest, but Omnipotence itself; and whatever is omnipotent is God.

Omnipresence. - "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me," Psalm cxxxix. 7-10. Here is the Holy Spirit, and his presence, and his hand, in all places; therefore he must be omnipresent, and immensity itself, seeing there is no going, from him, either in heaven or in earth, in the sea, or in hell.

Holiness also. - He is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 4. If he be the Spirit of Holiness, he must have holiness in himself, as he has; and he is the author of holiness in all the saints, for they are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, Who dwells in them. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," 2 Cor. vi. 2ad 16. He is called the "Spirit of truth," and "truth itself," who leads the saints into all truth. The "Spirit of wisdom" also and, if he be the Spirit of truth, and truth itself, then he must be divine verity and divine wisdom, or he cannot be the Spirit of truth and wisdom. All these things, properly considered, are sufficient to prove that the Holy Ghost is a person, a divine person, and therefore truly and properly God. I must conclude, wishing my dear brother much of the presence of God in this new year. And when it is well with thee remember.

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER IV

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX.

Beloved,

Since I sent off the last, my head and my heart have been conceiving and bringing forth again, insomuch that I think I

have more oil in my cruse now than when I began. "My horn is exalted like the horns of an unicorn, and I am anointed with fresh oil." Therefore I will proceed to shew that the Holy Ghost is a distinct person. He is said to proceed from the Father" - When the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," John, xv. 26. If he proceed from the Father, he must be distinct from him from whom he proceeds. Again - "It is expedient for you that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will send him." Here the Spirit proceeds from the Son also, as well as from the Father. And, as he is distinct from the Father, so he is also from the Son - "I will send him." The Spirit, which is sent, is a distinct person from him that sends him. He is likewise called another. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter." God is called the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort: the Saviour is called the Consolation of Israel, which good old Simeon waited to see; and Christ, being, about to leave his flock, promises to send them another comforter, that should abide with them for ever; and, if he be another comforter, he must be distinct both from the Father and the Son, or else he cannot be another, but must be the same.

I believe that God the Father never did any works from which the Son or the Spirit were excluded. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doth the Son likewise," John, v. 19. Nor did he ever work any work from which the Spirit was excluded. Their distinct personality appears in all their divine operations; and in every work they seem to be jointly concerned. In the secret councils of old, and in the decree of election, and in the covenant of grace which was made from everlasting, they were jointly concerned: there was the Father choosing, the Son in whom the choice was made undertaking to save, and the Spirit to

sanctify and make obedient the objects chosen. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 2. This will appear more plain in the following passage, where you have an account of the covenant, and of the persons in the Holy Trinity altogether. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which 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. Here is the Father and the Son agreeing, about a covenant; "I have made a covenant with my chosen." The Son is undertaking to become man: it is to be a covenant by sacrifice. He undertakes in our behalf, and for us: the promise of eternal life and the Holy Spirit are to come upon him: this the Holy Ghost undertakes to do; and these are to abide upon him, the head of influence, till salvation is finished. And, when Christ was glorified, then the Word and Spirit were to be sent forth by the Covenant Head to the chosen seed. The Spirit is to apply the benefits of the cross, and proclaim liberty to the elect "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." They are called Christ's prisoners, because they are given unto him to redeem, sanctify, and save.

In the work of creation the distinct personality and operations of the Holy Trinity plainly appear. There is God the Father creating all things by Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 9; and there is the Holy Spirit moving, upon the face of the waters, Gen. i. 2, bringing, the confused chaos into its present beautiful form and order. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth," Psalm xxxiii. 6. Here is the Lord, and the essential Word which was with God, and was God, creating the world; and the breath of his mouth, which is the Holy Ghost, equally concerned in the

work; for by his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens," Job, xxvi. 13.

Nor need it be thought strange that the Holy Ghost is compared to breath and to the wind; seeing, as a learned man observes, that "generation expresses the Son's distinct mode of subsisting in the divine Essence, so spiration may also express the Spirit's distinct mode of subsisting therein; and, perhaps, is the true reason of his bearing, this name." And, as he is called the Breath of the Almighty, and as Christ breathed on the apostles and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" the procession of the Holy Spirit is beautifully set forth thereby.

There was a council held among the divine persons about the creation of man. "Let us," says the Father to the Son, "make man in our image, after our likeness;" and the Holy Ghost was breathed into him, who formed his soul and quickened him. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." In those words, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," a plurality of persons appear; but in the last text, "So God made man in his own image," the unity of the Divine Essence is preserved; the first account being in the plural number, and the last in the singular.

In the government of the world the Trinity appears to be equally concerned. This may be seen in the king of Babylon's visions: "I saw in the visions of my head, upon my bed; and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven," Dan. iv. 13. This is in the singular number. "This matter (says Daniel) is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the Holy Ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will," Dan. iv. 17. I know that many are of opinion that these watchers are angels; but that cannot be; for the decree is called the decree of the watchers, and

the demand by the words of the Holy Ones; but angels are not of God's council, nor have they any hand in making God's decrees. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord; or, being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him?" Isa. xl. 13, 14. What is called the decree of the Watchers and of the Holy Ones, is explained by the prophet. "This is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king," Dan. iv. 24. Besides, though the angels are holy creatures, yet three of them cannot be emphatically called the Holy Ones," for there are twenty thousand of holy angels, and there are holy souls in heaven and holy saints on earth. But God in three persons is the fountain of holiness. Nor need we wonder at the Trinity being called Watchers, seeing God the Father, Son, and Spirit, watch over all the saints. He that keepeth thee will not slumber - "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" Psa. cxxi. 3. And, unless the Lord keep the city of Zion, all other watchmen wake but in vain. Thus do the Holy Trinity work jointly together, and their distinct personality is seen in all their glorious works; and so it will further appear in every branch of the work of salvation.

As in the mission and commission of Christ - "From the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me," Isa. xlviii. 16. Here is Christ who is the ME that is sent, and the Lord God and his Spirit which sent him. If a trinity of names is meant, and not persons, as a wise man observes, it should have been worded thus: "And now I myself, and myself, have sent myself," This prophecy had its accomplishment just before Christ entered on his ministry, at his baptism. Christ was upon the earth, the Holy Ghost descending in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." These are the Lord God and his Spirit sending, Christ forth, and bearing their testimony both to his sonship and to his appointment.

Salvation also is ascribed to all the three persons, who are equally concerned in it. The Father speaks thus: "But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God; and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen," Hosea, i. 7. Thus the Father bears testimony to his only-begotten Son, and tells us that he is the Lord God by whom he saves us; and we believe him, not doubting, but God is a faithful and true witness, and must be a better judge of his own Son, and what he is, than all the Arians and Socinians in the world. God the Father saves us by the Lord our God, who is the Son; hence he is called "Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins," Matt. i. 21. Nor is the Holy Ghost excluded from the work of salvation; for the Father, who tells us that he will have mercy upon the house of Judah, tells us also how this mercy shall come to us, even by the Holy Spirit - "But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. iii. 5. Thus are all the three divine persons engaged in our salvation. Hence we read of wells, more wells than one, in which salvation is to be had - "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation," Isa. xii. 3.

Again, an empty name cannot write nor bear record. How does a fictitious name appear in a court of law, when there is no person to be found that bears that name, or is called by it? But 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, 8. And this is not a trinity of names accommodated to the making, of a covenant, as some suppose; for a name cannot be a father nor a son. So, likewise, if there be but one person in the Trinity, there cannot be either a Son or a Father; he that denies either, denies both. - "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son: whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father," I John, ii. 22, 23. None, therefore, but persons can bear record: but the persons in the Holy Trinity

do bear record; and the record that they bear is to the sonship of Christ; and their distinct record stands in the holy scriptures. The Father's record, twice written, is this - "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased," Luke, iii. 22. Again, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," Matt. xvii. 5. The Lord's testimony of himself stands upon record thus - "say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God. If I do not the things of the Father, believe me not," John, x. 36, 37. For this blasphemy, as the wicked Jews called it, was Christ condemned; and this he never denied, but sealed it with his blood. The record of the Holy Ghost is to the same truth. "Paul, a servant, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 1-4. This is the witness which is recorded by the Spirit that Christ is the Son of God; not in name, for there is no power in an empty name; but he is the Son of God with power, the Omnipotent, "the First and the Last, the Almighty," Rev. xi. 8. And this is declared, or manifested, by his own resurrection from the dead - "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up: this is the testimony borne and recorded "by the Spirit of Holiness." Now, that the threefold record, borne by the Father, Son, and Spirit, is to the sonship of Christ, appears plain from the apostle John's conclusions, - "There are three that bear record in heaven, and three that bear witness on earth. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made himself a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son," I John, v. 7-10. Thus God's witness, that he hath

testified, and which stands upon record, is called the testification and record that God gave of his Son. The natural inferences are these: 1. That none but those who believe in the only begotten Son of God have the witness of the Spirit in themselves. 2. That all those who tell us that Christ is only a name, or a mere creature, are infidels; they believe not the record that God gave of his Son. And, 3. The infamy charged upon such is, that they make God a liar, than which nothing can be worse; and such liars are all our Arians and Socinians, and therefore their witness is nothing worth.

Thus the holy Three bear record, which a trinity of names cannot do; for, as I before observed, if a fictitious name appear in a court of law they can do nothing, with it, being, but an empty name: and it must be some person or other that must have written that; but the Holy Trinity want none to write for them (unless it be in condescension to our weakness), for they can all write for themselves. Thus saith God the Father. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people," Jer. xxxi. 33. And God the Son promises to write the following inscription upon all conquerors: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name," Rev. iii. 12. And the Holy Ghost's hand-writing is recorded thus: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart," 2 Cor. iii. 3. The law that God puts into the hidden parts is shedding, abroad his everlasting love in our hearts (love being the fulfilling of the law) by the Holy Ghost given unto us. Writing his law in the

mind, is persuading us by his Spirit, and working in us the law of faith; "The Lord shall persuade Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." What Habakkuk was ordered to write plain upon tables, that he who runs might read, God writes on the fleshly tables of our hearts, by justifying us and giving us faith and life; and in this the vision speaks in our conscience - "The just man shall live by his faith."

Christ writes upon us the name of his God; that is, he gives us an experience of that glorious covenant-name which God proclaimed before Moses - "The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger abundant in goodness and truth; pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin." Pardon comes by the blood of Christ; grace, goodness, and mercy, all come together when God reveals his dear Son in us. To write upon us the name of the city of God, is to give us the happy enjoyment of peace, which is the fruit and effect of imputed righteousness; and to bless us with the presence of God. The city is to be called Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there; or the city of God's presence; God promising to dwell in Zion for ever, it being his resting-place, and he having desired it. The Lord's new name seems to be that worn upon his vesture and on his thigh, and is, King of kings, and Lord of lords;" which name he will achieve by the destruction of antichrist, and taking, to himself his great power and reigning, when the kingdoms of this world will become his; and he then will make his children princes in all the earth. This greatest of all kingdoms, bigger than the Babylonian, Grecian, or Roman, will be given to the saints of the Most High, who shall take it and possess it for ever and ever; then the saints will be kings, and rule over their oppressors. Making, them pillars, is polishing them by grace, making them upright and ornamental in their profession; and where these things are found written by the Holy Spirit on the fleshly tables of the heart, the sum and substance of the New Testament, whether in the gospels or in the epistles of the apostles, are experienced in the souls

of God's elect, which makes them the pillar and ground of the truth, known and read of all men, being, made manifest in the consciences both of saints and sinners, hypocrites and heretics; and such living epistles have a seal upon them, as all epistles should have, having the broad seal of heaven on their souls, by which they become God's secret treasure, being sealed up to the day of redemption, which is redemption from the grave. These things are recorded by the Holy Trinity, and these things are written in the minds and hearts of all believers; and these inscriptions are as puzzling to the wise and prudent among us, as the hand-writing, upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace was to the wise men of Babylon. But messengers who bear such tidings, and interpreters to explain them, are scarce. "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him," Job, xxxiii. 23. And I think that, if every congregated thousand in a profession in this nation had a real messenger to bring forth such good tidings, and endowed with divine skill to interpret them to sinners in whose hearts they are written, old England would be one of the happiest countries in all the world.

Dearly beloved, pardon me for the amazing length of this epistle; it was written, some late at night, and the rest early in the morning. When the waters are moved, and I can step in, I am (like Peter on the mount) apt to forget myself, but hope ever to remember thee at the throne; and he that hath such a friend must shew himself friendly.

Ever yours,

W. Huntington, S.S.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER V

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWIS, SUSSEX.

Fellow Servant and Fellow Soldier,

Grace and peace be with thee, both in the armoury and in the field. "Counsel in the heart," saith the wise man (or rather Wisdom itself), "is as deep waters, and the words of wisdom a flowing brook" This witness is true; for before I had gotten the last out of hand I had two more in my heart; and therefore I must speak, or write, that I may be eased. I shewed, in my last, how each person in the glorious Trinity were jointly concerned in the salvation of God's elect; and treated a little of their co-operations in every branch of it. And this will further appear, even in the application of the promise. "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd," (Eccl. xii. 11. In the masters of assemblies a plurality of persons appear; but in the one shepherd the unity of God is seen. If it be replied, that by the masters of assemblies the Jewish doctors are meant; I answers they were not preachers of God's word; they made that of none effect by their own traditions. Nor can it mean the apostles or ordinary gospel-ministers, for they dare not take the title of master: "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ," Matt. xxiik 8. Nor is it in the power of any man to apply the word of God. To fasten the word of God, as a nail driven up to the head, requires power; and "the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. 1886 " If the most eloquent orator in the world, by the dint of elocution, was to attempt this work and move the passions of men to the uttermost, all that can be said of it is, that they

received it in word only: but, when the word comes "with power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," the nail is fastened; nor is it possible for either men or devils to draw it out. God the Father calls himself a master. "If I am a master, where is my fear?" Mal. i. 6. "Call no man master, for one is your master, even Christ." And so be that is taught of the Spirit sows to the Spirit, and is led by the Spirit; he learns, obeys, and follows his master. Now these words of the wise, called goads, that prick; and nails, that hold fast, are given from one shepherd, even God: "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore I shall not want: for we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

Again - We are baptized in the name of all the three divine persons. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. xxviii. 19. And, when we are baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, the love of God is shed abroad in the heart; the sun of righteousness arises with healing in his beams, and shines like the sun in his full strength; when the Holy Ghost brings the live coal from off the altar, or puts both life and love in the word, and says it upon our tongue, telling us that our iniquity is taken away, and our sin purge, and that we must now confess it, and proclaim it. This baptism makes a minister a flaming fire, a burning and shining light; and unites poor souls to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and interests them in the love of all three. But, besides the baptism of the Holy Ghost, there is another that follows, and that is the fiery trial. We read of the spirit of judgment, and of the spirit of burning: for God keeps his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem, that his real churches may not be overrun with tares and chaff, straw and stubble. The vessels of gold and of silver will stand the furnace, but the vessels of wood and of earth will consume: the former, by losing their dross, appear the brighter and better for the fire; the latter, like a fool brayed in a mortar, ten times worse.

This blessed mystery ever was, and ever will be, with the chosen of God; for thus it is written: "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come," Haggai, ii. 5,6. Here is God the Father speaking and covenanting; and the essential Word, who in the covenant-head, and the covenant itself; because the covenant is with him, made with him, confirmed by him, and all the blessings of it are in him. The glorious proclamation of the name of the Lord is nothing else but the mercy and blessings of God in Christ Jesus, held forth in the covenant of grace: and this "my name," says God, "is in him" - in the angel that went before them. Hence they are charmed to obey him, and not to provoke him, "for he will not pardon your transgressions." When Moses calls Christ the Rock, whose work is perfect; and sets him before them as their refuge, their life, and the length of their days; and tells them not to say in their heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven, or who shall descend into the deep?" to fetch the Word to them these are all applied in the New Testament to Christ, and are the things of the new covenant, which the Spirit applies to the elect of God. Here is the Lord of Hosts speaking, and the Word (Christ) spoken of, and called "the desire of all nations;" and the covenant with him; and the Spirit remaining still among them; for, although national mercies were often taken away from Israel, and national calamities brought on, yet the elect were never deserted of their God.

Moreover, the Holy Trinity are to be considered in all our addresses or approaches to God: "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Here is the Father, to whom we find nearness and access, the surety having removed our sins and a broken law out of the way, and appearing as our peace-maker and mediator, through whom

we are indulged with this access; and here is one Spirit, under whose influence, as a spirit of grace and supplication, we draw nigh. This is the new and living way which Christ hath consecrated: and he tells us that no man can come to the Father but by him; and he that enters not by this new way and straight gate, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; and such thieves and robbers are the Arians, Socinians, and Papists; the former of which allow of no mediator, and the latter have brought in a hundred.

This mystery, my dearly beloved, we must keep, hold fast, and abide in; which is so clearly revealed in the word of God. For, "if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father; but the anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him," I John, 1. 24-27. Hence we may conclude that whosoever hath not the doctrine of Christ hath not God; but he that hath the doctrine of Christ, who receives the love of the truth, or the love of God, which is promised to us in the word of truth; and he that receives the truth in the love of it, believes in it, and holds it fast, confesseth it, and abides in it, even he shall continue in the Son, and in the Father; and likewise he shall continue in the anointing which is truth, and is no lie. But I must break off, and go to our gates, where there are things new and old, which are laid up for the king's beloved, that a portion of meat in due season may be given to the household. Adieu.

Yours in him,

W. HUNTINGTON, S. S.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER VI

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX.

Beloved in the Lord,

Yours came to hand; and I am glad that the subject meets with your approbation, as my mind is still employed in this glorious mystery. I concluded my last with our abiding in the Son and in the Father; and likewise in the anointing, which is true, and is no lie. And shall proceed, and begin this with the apostolic benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us," is of the same import. Now from all these plain passages of scripture, which I have quoted, three divine persons appear in the one God, and no more: not one can be left out, nor can one be added.

But the adversaries to the Trinity object, because the express word Trinity is not mentioned in the Bible: but it is not the word that they hate and fight against, but the doctrine. We know that two is a couple, or a pair; three is a trinity, and four a quaternity: and "there are three that bear record in heaven," and no more, "and these three are one:" not three names and one person, but three distinct persons in one undivided essence. So likewise they object to the word satisfaction by the sacrifice of Christ; because the express word is not mentioned. But the thing, is to be found in the Bible. God is called a creditor, Luke vii. 41, and poor sinners are debtors, to fulfil the whole law, on pain of eternal death; "and he that offends in one point is guilty of all;" and should he die in this state, into the prison of hell he must go; for, if we die in our

sins, where Christ is we cannot come; and therefore cannot come out of prison till the very last mite is paid; and, as lying, in jail cannot pay debts, there can be no hope of a jail-delivery. Exposed to this, and threatened with it, are all men while in their sins. In this state Christ found us when "he took our nature, and was made of a woman, and made under the law;" which law he obeyed, and his obedience is placed to our account for righteousness our sins he took, and bore them in his own body on the tree, and was made a curse for us, and died in our room; the just for the unjust, and so redeemed us from the curse," and thus fulfilled all righteousness, with which our creditor is well pleased; and by the blood of his covenant he sends forth his elect prisoners out of the pit, declaring himself faithful and just in forgiving our sins, and in cleansing us from all unrighteousness. And this is real satisfaction made for sin, for the creditor is well pleased with it; and to be well pleased with the payment is to be satisfied with it. And, as these things are found, we hold the words which well express them; and it pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching these things, to save all those who believe in them. And, on the other hand, we find many things advanced by those who are opposite to us, which sound as bad in our ears as the words person, trinity, and satisfaction, do in theirs. Some tell us that Christ was only an instrument in the creation, or a creating, instrument. "Nothing can sound worse in the ears of a true lover of Christ than this; it is not common sense. We know that instruments are used by mechanics and builders, to fit and prepare materials for the purpose the artist or builder intends them; but to tell a man that such a mechanic has finished such a curious machine, and such a building is erected, to be the property of the tools that were used in the work, and for the praise and glory of them, would appear madness. So to talk of a creating instrument, or an instrument possessing creating power to make all things out of nothing, are such things as no man in his senses can believe. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in

earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist," Col. i. 16, 17. He is here declared to be before all things; and of course long, before this creating, instrument could be invented, or brought forth. "All things were created by him, and for him, created by his own power, and for his own glory and use: and by him all things consist," or are preserved in their existence. Now this glorious Creator cannot be an instrument, but he must be God: and to this the Father bears witness - "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish but thou remainest; and they shall all wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail," Heb. i. 8, 9. In the above words God the Father calls the divine Creator of heaven and earth, God and Lord; and tells us, that the heavens are the work of his hands: and he must be the best judge of his own Son. The tell us that Christ had a human soul pre-existing from eternity, and that it was with this that God took counsel, and by this he made the world. But "Christ is before all things," which this thing cannot be; much less can it be called the fellow of the Lord of Hosts," and surely it must be robbery with a witness, for such a thing as this to make itself "equal with God," as Christ did, even when "he made himself of no reputation, but took on him the form of a servant," Philip. ii. 6. Some talk of Christ being a delegated power, and a subordinate God, and a God by office; but this is making more gods than one: for, if one be supreme, and the other subordinate, there must be two; different in essence, glory, power, and majesty. And to worship with divine

adoration any thing below infinite divinity, is rank idolatry. However, this vain-imagined distinction between the Father and the Son hath no place in the Bible. The Lord of Hosts calls Christ his fellow, Zech. xiii. 7. And Christ thought it no robbery to be equal with God the Father, Phil. ii. 6. Christ says, "I and my Father are one." And "all men must honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." And, if he is truly and properly God, equal to the Father, and one with him, and always in him, then there can be no idolatry in worshipping him; for all the angels of God are commanded to worship the first-born, even in his state of incarnation; as they all did at his birth, Heb. i. 6. And Zion is commanded to do the same; and the true reason given for this command is, because he is God: "He is thy Jehovah, and worship thou him," Psalm xlv. 11. And we know that "the Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. vi. 4. And we must have no other gods but him: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," Matt. iv. 10. And he that obeys this first and great commandment must banish far from his mind all the spurious deities of the Arians and Socinians, for these are no better than the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Many such strange notions as these does Satan beget in the vain imaginations of men; and such are inventors of evil things, and set up the stumbling-block of their iniquity in their heart; and God takes them in their own craftiness, by suffering, them to pay adoration to that which is not God; which is idolatry, and an image of jealousy: which the pure gospel, if ever it had been attended with power to their hearts, would have pulled down. "For the weapons of our warfare are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting, down imaginations, and every high things that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. And sure I am that those who deny the eternity of Christ, and talk of a human soul pre-existing, talk nonsense. No

human soul can be God's fellow, nor God's equal, nor one with him, nor one in him; much less can such a creature, which is inferior to an angel, be the only-begotten Son of God, or the Son of the Father in truth and love: But, as for Christ, "all things were made by him, and he is before all thing," Col. i. 16, 17. And, if he is before all things then he must be before this human soul was made; and, if all things were made him, then he must make this soul also, and of course make himself. But this phantom is not the Christ of God; this is not God's mystery among the Gentiles, which he is pleased to reveal in us, the hope of glory. We are not to hope in a creature, but to set our hope in God. Christ is the faithful and true witness, and the record that he bears of himself is true; and this is the record that he bears of himself: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty," Rev. i. 8.

The enemies to the glorious mystery of the Trinity hold a trinity as well as we; they allow that there are three in God; so that if we err in this matter, so do they; only they allow of three names, and but one person; nor are they agreed which is the person: some Sabellians hold Christ to be the person, and the Father and the Spirit to be only names; some, that are called Arians and Socinians, say the Father is the person, and the Son and Spirit are only names: thus one denies the Father, and the other denies the Son; and between these two they have no God.

This, however, must be true, that whatsoever the Father is, the Son must be the same; and so the Jews understood the Saviour's confession of his own sonship, and laid this thing to his charge, namely, that he made himself equal with God. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God:" which the Saviour

never denied, but confirmed. The Son can do nothing of himself, (and how can he, when the Father and he are one?) but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," John, v. 19. Hence it is plain, that the Son is equal with the Father; and, if so, then he must be of the same nature with him. So that, if the Son be a son only in name, the Father must be the same; if Christ be only a son in office, or in a figurative sense, the Father must be so too; and, if Christ be no more than a human soul, which is but a mere creature, the Father must be such also. For Christ is declared to be "the only begotten Son of God," John, iii. 16. Begotten and not created. Nor is he a son by office, as magistrates are; nor by creation, as angels and men are: but "the Son of the Father in truth and love," 2 John 3. Therefore, whatever the Son is, such is the Father; for Christ is the Son of the Father in truth and love: and, as the Father is God, such is Christ; "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3. "The true God, and eternal life," 1 John. iii. 20. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory, 1 Tim. iii. 16. And, were all the Arians and Socinians in the world to combine together, they never could apply the above, nor the following ascriptions, to a human soul, or to any mere creature, however exalted or glorified. "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling, in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen," 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15, 16. Let all the enemies of the Son of God prove that an empty name, or a pre-existing, human soul, or a demi-god, or a god by office, or a creating, instrument, or a subordinate god; let them, I say, choose out of this list of

imaginary deities which they please, and let them prove that the apostle's ascriptions are applicable to their feigned gods, namely, that their pre-existing human soul is "the blessed and only Potentate;" that this creature is "the King of kings, and Lord of lords that this human soul hath only immortality; that it "dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see;" and that "Honour and power everlasting, Amen," is to be ascribed to that. "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Isaiah, xlv.

Nor did the incarnation of Christ bring a fourth person into the Trinity. The human nature of Christ is not a person; it is called "a new thing," Jer. xxxi. 22, and "a holy thing," Luke, i. 35, Christ never had personal subsistence, or it never did personally exist alone or of itself, but it subsisted in union with the divine person of the Son of God; and this union took place before the human nature was prepared or formed - "the Word was made flesh."

Some tell us that Christ took on him a "human form" from everlasting; but how he could assume a human form when there were no human beings, is what I cannot conceive; there can be no form of a thing that never existed, any more than the sun could have a shadow from everlasting when the sun had no being. I read that "Christ was found in the form of God, and that he thought it no robbery to be equal with God." And this form does not mean any outward shape; for "who hath heard God's voice, or seen his shape?" But it means that he possessed, in the highest degree, all divine perfections which are peculiar to the divine being; "being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." What has led some poor, blind, presumptuous souls into this mistake is, the Saviour's being seen by Abraham and by Joshua in a human appearance: and by the same rule they

might prove that he assumed the nature and form of angels from everlasting; for he appeared to Moses, to Jacob, and to Manoah, as an angel of God. But the truth is, Christ is neither an angel nor a man; not an angel, because he is the creator of angels - "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire;" nor a man, for as such he never had personal subsistence or existence.

But they tell us that the human soul of Christ, and the form of a human body which Christ took from everlasting, and which they call "the glory man," and in which he appeared to the ancient patriarchs, was part of our nature; so that, when he became incarnate, he took only a human body, not a reasonable soul; which they prove from these words - "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels." "Human souls," they say, "are angelic; but he took not on him the nature of angels." But, if this can be any proof, we shall not know what the scriptures mean by things; there is a distinction between "an innumerable company of angels," and "the spirits of just men made perfect." Nor are the souls of men ever called angels, though ministers of the gospel are; but even this respects their office, not their nature; for both angels and preachers are ministers to the heirs of salvation: but preachers are only angels by office, not by nature. Nor can it be proved from the words of Christ, when he says; "They neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven;" for this only respects their glorified state: and the words were intended to confound the Sadducees, who asked, "Whose wife of the seven the woman should be in the resurrection?" The Saviour informs them that marriage is peculiar to this life, and for the procreation of children; but in the world to come there would be no more of this than there is among the angels. Otherwise there will be a great deal of difference between angels and saints; the former being the Lord's servants, the latter the Lord's wife - "Thy Maker is thy

husband, the Lord of hosts is his name;" but this never was said of angels.

One would wonder (were it not for the power and dominion that the devil has over mankind) how any man dare to assert such things in plain contradiction to the word of God. For, if this human bodily form and the human soul of Christ were from eternity, and nothing, taken at his incarnation but the body, how can this scripture be true - "Wherefore, in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren," Heb. ii. 17, when there was none of his brethren ever made like unto him? And if this behoved him, if it was meet and fit it should be so, it ill becomes men to make such a difference. Nor could Adam be "a figure of him that was to come;" for Adam came not into being this way. Adam, Christ's figure, was made body and soul at once, and all Christ's brethren come into the world with a body and a soul; and they are all born under the law and under the curse of it, being by this natural birth children of wrath even as others and the heaviest sentence of the law is levelled at the soul - &qu 8ac ot;the soul that sins shall die." Now Christ, as our surety, must be made like unto his brethren; and so he was; he was "made of a woman," and "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," by making, his soul an offering, for sin; and then he was to see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. But, if his human soul existed from eternity, it was not made under the law, and therefore could not be subjected, by virtue of his suretyship engagements, to endure the wrath and curse of God for us. They that suffer the law, whether they suffer as surety or as debtors, must be made under the law, and be subject to the law. Men have bodies and souls, and both are under the law, and both have sinned. And he that redeems them must be of the same nature with them, and near of kin to them, or the former institution of God will not admit of it. He that redeems must be a "brother," or one "near of kin," Lev. xxv. 48, 49. Christ is both brother and goal; but a human body

is neither a brother nor a kinsman, it is only half a brother, and the worst half; yea, a dead brother, "for the body without the spirit is dead," James, ii. 26. The truth is, Christ took not on him the nature of angels to redeem fallen angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham, the whole human nature, body and soul; and this is plain by the growth of both; for "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man," Luke, ii. 52. His soul grew in wisdom, and his body grew in stature; but, if his soul had existed from all eternity, his wisdom and understanding must have been mature and fully ripe before the world began, and therefore incapable of such a growth.

O, my brother, my pen has run on at a strange rate; double letters, I fear, will bring, thee to poverty, unless thy faith increaseth more than it has hitherto done. I received yours, and thank you for it; and shall still entreat thee to find fault where you see cause, and you will much oblige your affectionate friend and brother in Christ Jesus,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER VII

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE, NEAR
THE DEANERY, LEWES, SUSSEX.

Companion in travail,

By the contents of your last I perceive that your fits of incredulity are returned upon you. I was in hopes that you had been in a great measure recovered from this disease; but epidemical disorders are not easily eradicated. "In the ministry you are lifeless, in bodily sickness just ready for the grave, and in circumstances almost a bankrupt." You must think me one of Solomon's simple ones, indeed, if I can believe all this, when you do not believe one word of it yourself. I shall go on with my former subject, and not suffer the devil to employ all my time in disproving what he himself knows to be lies of his own inventing.

The damnable heresy of denying, the divinity of our Lord and Saviour seems to me to render him of no use in any one of his office characters; it renders, also, his great undertaking and his finished work neither meritorious nor efficacious; for no mere creature can merit for himself, much less for another. His divine nature stamps infinite dignity on all his office characters, and so it does on all his mighty works.

His kingly office stands on this - "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Which kingdom stands in power, and is always called the kingdom of God. "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace; of the increase of his Government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this," Isa. ix. 6, 7. Hence he is called King of Zion, and King of glory.

The merit and dignity of his priestly office proceeds on the same footing. How could any mere man's dying atone for all the transgressions that were committed under the first

testament, and all the sins of God's elect under the second? Insomuch as those that are called do "receive the promise of eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15. Hence it is asserted that "by his one offering, he hath perfected for ever all them that are sanctified." The dignity of his office and the merits of his oblation spring, from his divine sonship. "For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmities; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore Heb. vii. 28.

His prophetic office, and the perfection of it, proceeds on the foundation of his proper deity. "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people: all his saints are in thy hand, and they shall sit down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words," Deut, xxxiii. 2, 3. At this divine prophet's feet did Mary sit, and receive of his word, when Martha was cumbered with much serving. And in allusion to this text is Mary commended, and is said to choose the good part, which shall not be taken from her. She was a disciple that was brought up at the Lord's feet; and, as all God's children are taught of the Lord, Mary was one of this family, who could never be deprived either of the word of life which she received, nor yet of her adoption into God's family; she was an heir of promise, and a child of God. And who but the only-begotten Son could reveal and make known God's counsel and covenant, his goodwill of purpose and of promise; his tender mercy, loving-kindness, pity, and compassion, which were but dimly known under the former dispensation? And that "God is love," I John iv 8, was not known, at least not recorded, under the first testament. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," Matt. xi. 27.

His office of mediator could stand us in no stead if he were not Immanuel, God with us." The breach opened by sin between God and man was infinite, as the Scriptures witness - "Is not thy wickedness great, and thine iniquities infinite?" Job xxii.5. Our sin had separated between us and our God. Moses, indeed, was at times allowed to stand in the gap; but it was by virtue of his office, in which he personated the Saviour, that he was suffered to mediate there; and, though at times he prevailed to lengthen out Israel's tranquillity, yet judgment always overtook them at last. "I have pardoned according to thy word. But "they have tempted me now these ten times, surely they shall not see the land," Numb. xiv. 20, 22. No prayer of Moses, Noab, Daniel, or Job, will purge our sins, magnify the law, or satisfy divine justice. He that stands in this breach, and lays his hand upon both, must be God's equal, Phil. ii. 6, and man's fellow, Psalm xlv. 7; or else mercy and truth will never meet together, nor will righteousness and peace kiss each other. But Christ was the mighty God when a child born, and the Prince of life when crucified, Acts, iii. 15; the Holy One, who saw no corruption, when in the tomb, Psalm xvi. 10. It was "truth that sprung out of the earth" at his resurrection, "when righteousness looked down from heaven" well-pleased, Psalm lxxxv. He was "God manifest in the flesh when he was received up into glory," I Tim. iii. 16. And "the Lord of hosts and King of glory when he entered there," Psalm xxiv. 9, 10. And we can have no better proof of all this than by seems, poor prisoners come forth out of the pit in which is no water, by the blood of his covenant, Zech. ix. 11.

And sure I am that his being our Advocate with the Father, if he be no more than a creature, would never be sufficient to silence law and justice, Satan and conscience; but, as he is "the wonderful Counsellor, and the mighty God," he can do it; and, blessed be his precious name, we know that he has done it, and will do it.

His endearing character of a Husband is founded on the same divine basis - "Thy maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name, the God of the whole earth shall he be called."

His character of a Father stands on the same bottom - "The second Adam, the quickening Spirit, the Lord from heaven;" hence called the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.

And that of a Saviour must needs stand on the same footing - "God has laid help upon one that is mighty." For how can a creature save? "Vain is the help of man," Psal. cviii. 12. "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. 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. 16, 17.

The efficacy of his blood springs from the same divine source; for, though he was put to death only in the flesh, yet his human nature suffered in union with his divine person. "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," Acts, xx. 28

The efficacy and excellency of his everlasting righteousness takes its divinity and dignity from hence - "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man: and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 6-8. From hence springs the glory and efficacy of his obedience; and by the obedience of [this] one shall many be made righteous;" yea. "in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory:" for he has brought in an everlasting

righteousness, which takes its name from the Saviour's divine nature. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith. And this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness."

As Head over all things to the church, what comfort could flow to it from the consideration of Christ's being a mere man? She is exposed to thousands of inveterate adversaries, ghostly and bodily; and continually floating upon the waves and billows of trouble and distress, and deemed as the filth and off-scouring of things, and treated accordingly: while Christ, the Head, is ascended far above all heavens, and of course at an infinite distance from his well-beloved, if he be no more than man. No comfort can flow to her but from his immensity and omnipresence - "Behold, I am with you always to the world's end;" which, as man, abstractedly considered, he cannot be.

As a Physician, who is God's way upon earth, and his "saving health among all nations," Psal. lxxvii. 2. Who bore our sins and took our infirmities, and who binds up the broken-hearted and restores health to us; which cannot be done but by purging us from all our guilt and filth, idols and dead works, false notions of God and a dead form of godliness: the comfort of all which springs from his being God. "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes; I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee," Exodus, iv. 26.

As the Covenant Head. - "Thou speaks in vision to thy holy one, and aids, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. Also, I will make him my first-born higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I

keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed, also, will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven," Psalm lxxxix. Which covenant is a covenant of royalty; the Lord is king, and the elect are subjects. A covenant of wedlock, in which the Lord of hosts is the husband, and the elect the wife; and he betroths them unto him for ever - "Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord," Hosea, ii. 19, 20. It is a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, in which the Son of God is high-priest, and God the Holy Ghost is his anointing and consecration; and he is ordained by God the Father to this office for his elect, to make an atonement for them, to perfect them, and to intercede for them, till they are all brought, in a state of holiness and happiness, "into the holy of holies, eternal in the heavens," where our high-priest is for us entered. The comfort of all which springs from his being, not as Moses, who was a faithful servant; but from Christ being "a son over his own house, whose house are we;" and the son over this his own house is God. "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God," Heb. iii. iv.

As an object of trust and confidence-no consolation can arise to us from his being no more than a creature; so far from it, that it is dangerous to the last degree to trust in him as such. "For thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land not inhabited," Jer. xvii. 5, 6. This is the woeful case and state of all those who deny the godhead of Christ, and yet trust in him as no more than man. But there is no curse upon them that trust in the only-begotten Son of God.

I have set my king, upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him," Psal. ii. Here is no curse to them that trust in the Son of God and King of Zion, but an eternal blessing; and no blessing; can be upon those that trust in Christ if he be not God; but he is truly and properly God, and therefore those that trust in him are doubly blessed. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree Planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh; but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit," Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

As the object of the saints love. - "He that loveth father or mother, wife or children, more than me, is not worthy of me." And adds, "If any man come unto me, and hateth not his father and mother, and even his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Surely, if Christ be not God, he hath zealously affected us, but not well; for we are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart; and with all our soul, mind, and strength. And, as Christ demands this love of all the saints, he must be God; and so he is; and therefore we can never love him enough. And those who dearly love the Son of God, God the Father is well pleased with - "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him," John, xi v. 21. And he adds, "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God, John, xvi. 27.

As an object of prayer, - Almost every recipient of a bodily cure and of special grace, in the days of his flesh, prayed to

him before they obtained either; and prayer is a branch of divine worship: yea, they worshiped him with divine adoration, as the tenth leper that was healed, who returned to give glory to God; the woman with her bloody issue also, and the Syrophenician woman; yea, and all the apostles, also, on the mount of Olivet, when he was taken from them up into heaven, worshiped him as he went up. And all the heavenly host worshiped the Firstborn when he was brought into the world; and Stephen, that evangelical deacon, breathed out the following, petition to him with his expiring, breath - "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep," Acts, vii. 59, 60. But we need not wonder at Stephen putting, up his last prayer to Christ; Stephen knew him, and had the spirit of supplication in him; and the Spirit always testifies of Christ, and glorifies him also - "He shall glorify me." And, besides, Stephen had a view of the Saviour; he saw "the heavens open, and Jesus standing, at the right hand of God." And we know that, if Christ be not God, he could not be admitted to "the right hand of the Majesty on high," Heb. i. 3. Hence it is plain that all who debase the Saviour to the level of a mere creature are ignorant of him; they have never known him nor seen him. But all believers do see him, though not in that miraculous manner Stephen did. "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: and because I live ye shall live also," John xiv. 19.

As a foundation. - What security could a perishing sinner expect by venturing his eternal all upon any thing, less than God? A human arm, and all human works, are but a sandy foundation, which must give way when the fiery trial, the dying hour, and the day of judgment come to try it. But Christ is an elect, precious, tried stone, and a sure foundation; but not as a mere man - "For who is God, save the Lord? And who is a

rock, save our God?" 2 Sam, xxii. 32. He that ventures here is safe, for the gates of hell shall never preveil, either against the foundation or the superstructure. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, is like unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and when the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock," Matt. vii. 24, 25. In all this, my dearly beloved brother, I have endeavoured, as far as God hath enabled me, to cast up the high way, in opposition to them who obscure and destroy the way of our paths. But we have the promise that some shall be raised up and be enlightened, and shall be called healers of the breach, and restorers of paths to dwell in; and these are the good old paths which the just are to inquire after, and to walk in, and in which they are to find rest for their souls, Jer. vi. 16. For never surely was there more opposition made to the divinity of the Son of God, and to the power of the Holy Ghost, than in the present day. "But, if the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" The wicked can rejoice in Zion's calamity - "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation there 17cd of." But what shall the righteous do? Christ is the Lord our righteousness; and "he is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he," Deut. xxxii. 4. To remove these foundations is to strip Zion both of her ornaments and bulwarks, and to leave her "as a cottage in a vineyard," or "as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city !" Isa. i. 8.

A most daring, bold, presumptuous man, not long since, had the effrontery to declare in public, "that Christ was no more God than he was; so far (said he) from his being God, he did not know the time of Jerusalem's destruction." Alluding to the following passage, which he thought was a full proof it - "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," Mark,

xiii. 32. We know that the human nature of Christ is not omniscient: as man he "grew in wisdom and in stature. I wonder this poor child of Satan did not go a little further, and prove him to be blind also; the scriptures would have borne him out according to the light which is in him, for his light is darkness. "Who is blind but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing, many things, but thou observest not: opening, the ears, but he beareth not. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake; he will magnify the law and make it honourable," Isaiah, xlii. 19-21. Though men might call him blind, yet he was perfect, and seeing many things. Who is deaf as my messenger? Opening the ears, but thou hearest not. Though he was blind yet he saw many things; and, though he was deaf, yet he opened the ears of others. And one of the many things, which the Lord's perfect messenger saw, was the day of Jerusalem's destruction; and this be declared eight or nine hundred years before it came to pass. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me. For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come," Isa. lxiii. 3, 4. The day of vengeance, that was in his heart, was the day of Jerusalem's destruction - "Let not them that are in the countries enter into the city. for these be the days of vengeance," Luke, xxi. 22. The year of his redeemed was not the year in which Christ died, when he redeemed his elect from death and hell; but the time of the saints' redemption from Jewish persecutions, And, when ye see these things come to pass, then look up, and lift tip your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh," Luke, xxi. 28. Christ redeems his people from the deceit and violence of men, as well as from the wrath of God; and precious shall their blood be in his sight," Psal. lxxii. 14. And so the Jews

found it when all the righteous blood shed, from the blood of Abel to Zacharias, was required of that generation.

The going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem, and from that time to the coming of Messiah the Prince, and to the cutting off the Messiah; and the people of the Roman prince that was to come to Jerusalem to destroy the city and the sanctuary; together with the seven years' peace with many nations, which the Romans were to make during the time of their war with the Jews, till God's decreed indignation was poured out upon the desolate; were all foretold by the angel Gabriel to Daniel, Dan. ix. 25-28. And the whole of this matter was made known to Gabriel by a man clothed in linen, which was no other than the High-priest of our profession. "And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision," Dan. viii. 16. Hence it appears that, though he knew not that woeful day as man, yet he knew it as God, and highly resented their cruel treatment of him, and their blasphemy against his Holy Spirit; for it was Christ that executed that fearful judgement upon them, God having committed all judgment to the Son, and all power in heaven and on earth. And he displayed it with a witness, as he foretold them he would - "Yea mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite then," Psalm xli. 9, 10. And he did requite them: for it was he that mustered the Roman army, and brought it against them: and the appearance of that was "the sign of the Son of man in heaven, when all the tribes of the earth were to mourn, Matt. xxiv. 30. The Jews had long required of him a sign, from heaven, and he gave them one. The destruction and desolation of the Jews was not to come till Messiah was cut off; and their ruin and destruction was a sure sign that Jesus was the Messiah; and, though, the blind Jews could not see it, the children of light did.

These my dearly-beloved brother, are the men that labour at Zion's foundation, which to them is a stumbling-stone and a rock of offence; and too often do they preveil, till the foundations are almost hid, and then God raises up others to bring, them forth again. "And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many Generations; and thou shalt be called, the Repairer of the breach, the Restorer of paths to dwell in," Isa. lviii. 12. Thus some bring to light and some bury; some pull down, and some build up. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth."

True yoke-fellow, adieu. Grace and peace be multiplied. So prays,

Yours in the path of tribulation,

W. HUNTINGTON, SS.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER VIII.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

Dearly-beloved and longed-for, my joy, and the crown of my rejoicing!

I WISH above all things that thou mayest prosper in thy labours, and be in health for the work, knowing that hard labour and a frail tabernacle make us move heavily: but our

God has promised that, as our day so shall our strength be. I shall now resume my former subject, as I find you are by no means weary of it. And what I purpose to send to my dear brother is something of the unctuous experience which believers have of the glorious mystery that I have been writing about. I shewed you in a former epistle that if ever our hearts were comforted, if they were ever knit together in love, and if ever we come to the full assurance of understanding, it must be by an humble "acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 2, 3. This mystery is not only to be acknowledged or assented to as a revealed truth, but it is to be embraced by faith, and to be held, and held fast; as many violent and unwearied attacks, both by devils and heretics, will be made against it; and, if we are unsound or unsettled in the ground-work or foundation, all the rest will be out of order. The building, cannot be fitly framed, according to the account of a wise master builder, unless the glorious proprietor of the building be savingly known; for it is a mystical building, founded in faith, and cemented together in love, and grows up in wisdom, knowledge, and powers not by my spirit, human might, nor by the power of free-will, "but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Take the apostle's account - "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 19-22. The apostle tells us that the living, stones, the choice materials of this building, are God's household, freeborn citizens; and that Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone that unites all saints, Jews and Gentiles, antediluvian and postdiluvian saints together; and that the building grows up into an holy temple in the Lord, an habitation of God through the Spirit. If God the

Son be left out of our faith, there is no foundation; and if God the Father, or the Holy Spirit, be left out, where is the inhabitant? It is "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Christ is the nearest object to faith, as our Mediator. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me;" for through Christ we believe in God, who "raised him from the dead," 1 Peter, i. 21. And we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Here is the mystery; faith lays hold of Jesus Christ, and through him we believe in God the Father, and upon our believing we receive the Spirit through faith, and are sealed by him. This is the ground-work, the basis, and power, on which faith stands or rests; all building is in vain without this. "Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," Jude, 20, 21. The most Holy Trinity is the mystery on which faith rests; and we stand by faith, or rest on the powerful confidence which the arm of God reveals in us. Hence the exhortation, "Hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience," 1 Tim. iii. 9. This is called building up ourselves on our most holy faith. Faith is the Father's gift to us through Christ, and from his fullness it comes, and by the operation of the Spirit it is wrought in us, and therefore called a fruit of the Spirit; this is the basis, namely, the Holy Trinity. Love is the bond of union, or the grand cement that compacts and builds up; charity edifieth, or raises the edifice. Hence we read of the love of God to us, in giving the Son; and the love of the Son, in laying down his life for us; and the love of the Holy Ghost also. "Now I beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit," Rom. xv. 30. The love of the Trinity to us is the bond of union, which, when perceived by faith, and enjoyed, leads to a most blessed freedom and familiarity with the Father, Son, and Spirit; as you read, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery," Eph. iii. 9. We can have fellowship with nothing but persons; there is no fellowship with names. "These things have I written unto you, that you may have

fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John, i. 3. And you read of the "comfort of love," and of the "fellowship of the Spirit," Phil. ii. 1. Hence the foundation of vital godliness is God-Father, Son, and Spirit. Faith apprehends this, and by a fall persuasion stays the mind thereon; love is the cementing bond that unites the soul to God. "He that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him; that is, he abideth in the Trinity; he abideth in the Son, and in the Father. And it is added, "As that anointing hath taught you, you shall abide in him." Read 1 John, ii. 27. Here is our inbeing and abiding in the Father, Son, and Spirit; and fellowship is the effect of this union.

True fellowship among men is a company of real friends meeting together in love. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." And the Holy Ghost applies the word of reconciliation. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," John, xv. 15.

Persons in fellowship often meet and associate together. Believers, with their confessions, prayers, praises, and thank offerings, pay their constant visits to their God: and in their conclusive doxologies address all the three divine persons distinctly and by these we ascend, in faith and affection, to the Almighty. And, with respect to the sensible enjoyment of God's presence, the Holy Trinity often condescends to visit us. "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John, xiv. 23. And the Holy Ghost comes also - "I will send you a Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever." Thus does the holy and blessed Trinity visit and take up their abode with believing souls.

Persons in real union and fellowship are a comfort to each other, and partake of each other's joys. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," John, xiv. 16. Christ does not say, "I myself will pray to myself, that I may send myself," which would have been the right way of expressing the matter, if there were but one person in the Trinity: but "I will pray the Father." Here is Christ upon earth praying; the Father in heaven prayed unto; and another Comforter, distinct from them both, prayed for, The Father comforts us by revealing his dear Son in us, and by accepting us in the beloved, and appearing well pleased with us in his righteousness. "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," Isai. xii. 1. The Saviour comforts us by speaking the word of eternal life to our hearts. "My word is spirit, and my word is life. My sheep hear in voice, and follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John, x. 27, 28. "This is my comfort in my affliction; for thy word hath quickened me," Psalm cxix. 50. The Holy Spirit comforts us, by applying the promises to us, and attending them with power; the word comes with power in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; which power brings peace, joy, and gladness of heart; which is called the sincere milk of the word; and so it is written, "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 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 be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem," Isai. lxvi. 10-i2.

This joy, consolation, love, and peace, are in the New Testament called the fruits of the Spirit," Gal. v. 22.

Persons in true fellowship have great confidence in each other, and know much of each other's minds; and so it is with God and his saints. In the saints' worst hours they believe without doubting the truth of God, and the truth of the whole of his word; whether they can take the comfort of it or not, they know it is true, and that God the author of it, is true: and, as God is true so he makes his children sound in the truth, lovers of it, and earnest contenders for it, and sworn enemies to all false doctrines. "For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie; so be was their Saviour," Isa. lxiii. 8. They know much of each others minds; and so it is with God and his elect: they are made acquainted with God the Fathers secret purposes of grace, of his counsels and his covenant, of his good will of purpose, and of promise in Christ Jesus before the world began. Christ chooses us out of the world, and discovers himself to us, with all his finished work and saving benefits; while the Holy Spirit takes of the things that are his, and shews them to us, and makes them manifest in our hearts, and secretly seals up to the day of redemption.

Persons in fellowship often feast and banquet together. The Father makes us "a feast of fat things, of marrow and fatness, and of wines on the lees well refined," Isa. xxv. 6. Which glorious feast is the offering up of Christ (in sacrifice) once for us all. This is bringing forth the fatted calf to entertain the returning prodigals. Wisdom says, "She hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath furnished her table. Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled," Prov. ix. 2, 5. And no sooner does the poor perishing sinner's mind and conscience feast upon his sin-atonement blood and life-giving flesh, but the fire of inbred lusts, the fiery wrath of a broken law, and the fiery darts of Satan, are all quenched and disposed, while the Holy Spirit and his

grace flow-in, and overshadow the soul with the discovery of Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste," Song ii. 3. And as the Almighty banquets us, so does he feast and feed upon the satisfaction Christ made for sin, and upon the fruits of his own implanted grace. "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry," Luke, xv. 22, 23. And the Saviour says, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly. O beloved," Song, v. 1. Nor is the Holy Spirit less entertained, when we are lively under his influence, observant of his instructions, and obedient to his dictates; as appears by the approbation that he gives, the witness that he bears to our hearts, and by filling us with more of his grace, while we are blessing him for what we have got. When the apostles were apprehended and taken before the council of the Jews, and threatened and charged to teach no more in the name of Jesus, the Spirit of God enabled them to speak with such fortitude that the council marvelled; and, when they joined their own company, and put up their united prayers, the Holy Spirit shook the very house, and filled them all again. "And when they had prayed the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness," Acts, iv. 31. For, as the Spirit is said to be grieved by the sins of some men, and to be vexed and rebelled against by others; so he rejoices in some, approves of others, and fortifies them to the astonishment of their most inveterate persecutors. Philip, when he obeyed the Spirit's voice, and joined himself to the Ethiopian's chariot, and preached Jesus to him, "was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was found at Azotus," Acts, viii. 39, 40. He fortified, furnished, and

emboldened Paul before the Roman governor, that Felix trembled when Paul stood undaunted. He made Stephen's face shine like the face of an angel, when his persecutors gnashed their teeth with anguish and desperation; and made Paul and Silas sing the high praises of God in the prison at midnight; and sent an earthquake and shook the prison to the foundation thereof, and opened the doors of it, and made the chains fall from off the criminals, to let them know that he proclaims liberty to captives - "For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" and this the poor jailor found soon after, to his astonishment. In all these things it is easy to see how the Holy Spirit is entertained, pleased, and delighted, when men obey his dictates, and give themselves up to be led by him.

Persons in fellowship are jointly engaged: so God and his people are engaged in one cause, and jointly concerned in one interest. God is the portion of his people, and Jacob is the lot of God's inheritance. He that toucheth the saints toucheth the apple of God's eye; and the saints hate them that hate God, and count them their enemies: they love them that love the Lord; and, when any professors turn their backs and forsake God, as Judas did, the real saints always forsake them. God's own glory, in all his works, is what he aims at; and in the defence of God's glory and honour are his people engaged. God seeks a quarrel with the Philistines, and Sampson will fight it out if he die in the field. God will avenge his people on the Egyptians, and Moses engages the whole nation. The wicked Jews judged and condemned the Son of God, and the apostles got upon twelve thrones to judge and condemn them; and, when they had passed the sentence upon them, the Lord executed it. "But, when they persecute you in this city, flee ye to another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come," Matt. x. 23. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are God's enemies; and against these do the saints cry, pray, and fight, all their days; and, if they are foiled or overcome, it is

called violence, captivity, or a rape, which God will highly resent; and, if they are pressed beyond measure, and despair even of life, and are thrown seven times, and complain, I die daily," or "for thy sake we are killed all the day long;" yet they up and at it again, and never give over, nor give up, till they die; for "as he is, so are we in this world," 1 John, iv. 17. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that we might live through him:" and "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." And the Spirit's love appears in his convincing us of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and in taking up his eternal abode with us, when we were the most vile, filthy, and abominable creatures, and to every good work reprobate.

The saints have suffered all sorts of torments, and every kind of death that men or devils could invent, rather than dishonour their God, or lose their exceeding great reward: hence they labour after conformity to him, and disallow of every lust and corruption that resists his sovereign will.

If God arraign, they will not excuse; if he punish they accept. If he search, they submit; if he condemn, they will not acquit; if he rebuke with fire, they approach the light; if he is wrath, they fear and quake; if he invite, they come up; if he chasten, they submit; if he attract they follow on; if he frown, then they fear; if he command, they commend; if he forbid, they forbear; if he withdraw, they despond; if he threaten, they contract; if he allure, they enlarge; if he is absent, they are jealous; if he indulge, they make free; if his anger burn, they are mute; if he resist, they withdraw; he hides himself, they go in search: his bowels move, their bowels yearn; if he contend, they attend; if kindness flow, their spirits melt; if he forgive, they cannot forget; if he commune, their heart will burn; if he embrace, they swoon in love; if he bind, they will not be free; if he pull down, they will not build up; if he should wound, none else shall heal; if he lay on, they will not throw off; if he detain,

none shall release; if he afflict, they will not be soothed; if he shut up, they will not come out; if he desert, they will not be wooed; if he cause grief, they will not hear peace; and, if he chide, they will not flee; he bends his bow, they yield their breast; if he delay, they still persist; if he deny, they will not give up; he will not relieve, they till entreat; he says "Begone," they importune; he shuts the door, they knock the more.

The divine and essential Word has taken our nature into God: and there is a divine nature lodged in all the saints, and no separation can be made, either by life or by death. O my brother, my mouth is opened to thee, my heart is enlarged; thou art not straitened in me, but in thy own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same (I speak as to my beloved son), be ye also enlarged. Adieu. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and endure hardness as a good soldier. The Captain has overcome the world, and the victory is yours.

Ever thine in him,

W HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER IX.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX.

Fellow-servant and fellow-sufferer, companion in travail and tribulation, peace and truth be with thee.

I AM glad that you approve, and that any thing clear, harmonious, consistent, informing, or establishing, appears to you. I shall, therefore, propose to bring forth what little yet remains on my mind, or may yet occur on the sublime subject. Reason, or the dim light of nature, is a poor guide in this mystery. Light in the head, without love and reverence in the heart, has a tendency to exalt. "Knowledge puffeth up, but, charity edifieth." A high look, a stiff neck, and a proud heart, God will not suffer; but he will dwell with the humble and the contrite, and will own and acknowledge those that reverence, love, and fear him. In his light we see light; and, if teachable and tractable, he will guide us with his eye, and lead us by his Spirit; while the inward anointing, which is the illuminating, renewing, softening, and humbling influences of his grace and Holy Spirit, which the saints experience, will teach them all things necessary to be known, or essential to salvation. Our sufficiency is of God, who can make us able ministers of the New Testament; and, if he does not make us so able as some are, yet we must "minister as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. iv. 11. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and our unctuous experience of his divine impressions and influence, must regulate all our views, opinions, and conclusions, upon divine subjects. Whatever the understanding discovers, and the mind conceives, is always handed down to the soul's experience of divine power; the Spirit's work on the soul being, an exact and an infallible copy of the revealed mind and will of God in the scriptures of truth; on which account the church is called "the pillar and ground of the truth," 1 Tim. iii. 15. The Spirit is the author of the scriptures, both of the Old Testament and the New. The gospel is the ministry of the Spirit, 2 Cor. ii. 8. And the Spirit of Christ, in the prophets of the Old Testament, "testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory that should follow," 1 Pet. i. 11. And we are told that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," Rev. xix. 10. Therefore, whatever the enlightened

understanding discovers, and the mind perceives or conceives, it is immediately handed down to the experience of the Spirit's teaching within, to see if it be consistent with the anointing which teacheth all things; and, if it agree with the anointing, and has the sanction of the Holy Spirit, immediately the mind is led to the written word for support and confirmation, and the Spirit brings some word home to the mind which proves and establishes it; and this witness of God is greater than the witness of all the men in the world: but, if it agree not with the anointing, and in it receive not the Spirit's sanction, nor any word come in to confirm it, it is rejected and cast out, as being contrary to the anointing. "And ye need not that any should teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you," I John, ii. 27. Whatsoever, therefore, contradicts the Spirit's work and his teaching, is to be rejected. If my dear brother will attentively observe this inward teaching, he will perceive something of it all the day long; and, without this divine compass, it is in vain to launch out into the profound depths of divine mysteries, and especially that of the Holy Trinity. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea," Job, xi. 8, 9. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever," Deut. xxix. 29. And God has promised that he will give us a heart to know him, for he will pardon them whom he reserves, Jer. 1. 10. And again. "For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. viii. 11, 12. I was led into the glorious mystery of the Holy Trinity by the teaching of God in my own soul. It is written in the prophets, "All thy children shall be taught of God," Isa. liv. 13. This passage our Lord quotes, "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," John, vi. 45. And it is added, "No man can

come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him," John, vi. 44. Now, from this divine teaching there is none of God's elect exempted; they shall be all taught of God. And the Saviour informs us, that, by God here, God the Father is meant; and he adds, "Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." He must both hear and learn of the Father before he comes to Christ; nor can any man come to Christ except the Father draw him; and all such, says Christ, "I will raise up at the last day," John, vi. 44. From hence we learn that all the elect are taught of the Father; and that every one of the Father's pupils come to Christ; and, without being drawn by the Father, they cannot come; and those that do come shall be infallibly saved and raised up at the last day.

But then where is the Fathers teaching described? How does he teach us? And what do we hear and learn of him? This is what I will endeavour to make plain. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity, Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give law rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked," Psalm xciv. 11-13. Now the schoolmaster, by which God teaches us, is the moral law; as for the ceremonial law, that was never enjoined to the Gentiles. Out of this law are we taught of God the Father; and our lessons are prefaced with his chastening rod. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest;" and Christ says, we both bear and learn of the Father. Two things we hear; first, the chastening rod. "The Lord's voice crieth into the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," Micah, vi. 9. Here is the voice of the Lord crying, to the chosen, calling the city of Zion, and here is a rod that speaks, "Hear ye the rod." Now this is what our Lord says-we hear and we learn of the Father; and he teacheth us out of the law. The second sound that we hear is called the Lord's voice, that cries to the city; and that voice is,

by Paul, called a voice of words; it is "blackness, and darkness, and tempest; the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words," Heb. xii. 18, 19. A voice of words, not a life-giving power. And this voice of words is called a killing letter, or the letter that killeth, which, when it came to Paul, sin revived, and he died. And what can kill us, but the curse, or sentence, of the ministration of death, engraven on tables of stone? The voice we hear, therefore, is the curse of the broken law condemning us; the rod that we hear is the wrath and anger of God smiting, reproving, and rebuking us. This is what we hear; and the lessons we learn are, the guilt and filth of sin, the wrath of God, and the enmity of our own hearts. The next lessons we learn are, the holiness, justice, and terrible majesty of God. These are the things that we bear and learn of the Father; and "Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father (says Christ), cometh unto me." Now what is that which is promised to this blessed man, thus chastened and taught out of the law? Why, God will "give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked." The thing promised is rest; but who wants rest? None but those who labour, and are heavy laden. The labourer is he who is toiling under the curse and wrath of God, to recommend himself to God's favour, and to get life by the works of the law: and hard labour this is. The load that he carries is the guilt he has contracted, and the corruptions of his heart which the law discovers; and this is a sore burden, too heavy for any to bear. Now there is a voice in the word to such souls pointing to Christ, "To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing," Isai. xxviii. 12. The Saviour calls to such souls also - "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." But no invitations will do for a poor soul that finds himself condemned already. And, therefore, "No man can come to me (says Christ) except my father draw him." However, to Christ all that are taught of God must come; for the Spirit of God and the promise of life are both in him; and into his hands are all

the elect put, and to his foot they must be brought, and be made to hear his voice and receive the word from his mouth, that they may live. The fiery law comes first to condemn us to death, and the voice and word of the Son of God afterward to raise the dead. "The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people: all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of 1df9 thy words," Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3. This passage shews that all whom the Father teaches out of the fiery law must come to Christ the great prophet, and sit down at his feet to receive of his word. This was the good part which Mary chose, that could not be taken from her. Here Mary Magdalene sat, and got her pardon and her much love; and here God draws us all. But how does he draw us?

First, by causing the storms of Sinai now and then to abate, and the arrows of his quiver to lose their keenness.

2dly, By guiding our eyes to the promises, encouragements, invitations, and kind pathetic words spoken by the Lord Jesus.

3dly, By causing now and then a ray of light, a beam of hope, and some budding expectations, to spring up in our hearts while we attend to the voice of Christ in the gospel.

4thly, The dreadful passages of scripture that pierced us through get out of sight, and nothing but Christ and his kind dealings with sinners appear; and while our face is turning to the Lord the veil is gradually taken away. The more we see of Jesus, the softer our souls get, and the more our hearts melt; and the more Christ shines in the word, the more we wonder, till his very name appears as a healing ointment poured forth; and, as the bowels yearn over him, so faith in him springs up; the Holy Spirit then testifies of him, and presents him to view, till the, understanding becomes susceptible of the light of his

countenance, and then confidence goes out and embraces him; then God accepts us "in the beloved," and gives us "the light of the knowledge of the glory of himself in the face of Jesus Christ," while the Spirit fills us with joy and peace. And here the soul finds "rest from the days of adversity, till the pit be digged up for the wicked;" that is, they shall rest safe and secure in Christ Jesus, while the wicked fill up their own measure; for the wicked are said to dig their own pit, and to fall into their own destruction. This, my dear brother, is what the apostle calls coming "to God the judge of all;" and then "to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel," Heb. xii. 23, 24. This is a saving and an experimental knowledge of the holy and blessed Trinity. We come first to God in a fiery law; when he chastens and judges us, "that we should not be condemned with the world," 1 Cor. xi. 32; and then draws us to Christ, and accepts us in him. And in Jesus Christ we find rest from both our labour and our load, and, at the same time, we come into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The Holy Ghost sheds abroad the love of God in our heart, and this casts out wrath, which is a spirit of bondage to fear, and all torment with it; and operates in us as a spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind." This is an experimental knowledge of the Holy Trinity, and such as none ever experience but the elect of God; and in this way they are all taught of God: and the experience of this good work is such as Satan and all his emissaries can never destroy. No man, made thus wise to salvation, ever dared to set his mouth against the Holy Trinity; and a fool cannot, for this wisdom is too high for him.

This is coming to God, "the fountain of living waters," Jer. ii. 13; and to Christ, "the well of salvation," Isaiah, xii. 3; and to the "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God," Psal. xlvii. 4.

Thus, also, saith God: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," Jer. xxxi. 33. "And I," saith the Saviour, "will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which commeth down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name," Rev. iii. 12. And the Spirit makes us living epistles - "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us; written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart," 2 Cor. iii. 3.

The voice of God the Father's love in the heart is - "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3.

The voice of the atonement of Christ, in the believer's conscience, is, pardon, peace, and reconciliation with God. And these are better things than those spoken by the blood of Abel, Heb. xii. 24.

And the distinct voice of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of all believers is, "Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. This divine teaching, my dear brother, is attended with a holy claim upon God as our own God; and God will own and acknowledge such. To such God speaks, "Thou shalt call me thy Father, and thou shalt not turn away from me," Jer. iii. 19; which is what no man can do, in truth, without the witness and voice of the Spirit of adoption; for it is he that cries, "Abba Father." Such souls, also, claim Jesus for their own, with an infallible witness in their own souls of the truth of it; which no man can do, in truth, without the Spirit of God; for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord" (with application) but by the Holy Ghost," I Cor. xii. 3. Hence it is plain that the Spirit of God makes us, as he did the prodigal, arise and go to our Father; which, when spoken by the Spirit, is what God will ever own and honour, as he did

in that parable - "This is my son." And, though at times unbelief preveils, yet the Spirit subdues it again and again, as he did in Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" These plain truths, my dear brother, clearly reveal this most sublime mystery; and these things the children of God have in their own experience; and it is such experience as this that worketh hope. This is submitting to divine revelation, and not being wise above what is written. And whatever appears dark to us in the word of God we must pray the Lord to shine upon it, that we may know the mind of the Spirit in it; for it is in his light that we see light. And, "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraided not;" and he will guide us by his counsel. But let us for ever shun the bold intrusions of unhumbled and unsanctified men, who are so daring and presumptuous; for God will resist such, and make their feet stumble upon the dark mountains; while "the meek he will guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way." Strange notions are daily circulated in town against these things; and such men "shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" for, if the force of truth beat them out of one refuse of lies, the devil drives them into another; and, being hardened to the last degree, they can adopt words which one dare not recite, and use arguments which it is scandalous to imitate: but the time will come when God will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible," Isa. xiii. 11.

I shall conclude this long, epistle with the triune benediction of heaven - "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you," 2 Cor. xiii. 14, and with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ, now and for evermore. So prays, dear brother,

Yours in the ties of immortal love,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER X.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX.

To the man of God, greeting.

BELOVED, when I finished my last, I thought I had nearly exhausted the treasure that was to be brought forth upon this subject I went last night to my bed weary, having sat hard at it for fifteen hours; and I thought the spring in my heart, as well as my bodily strength were both spent. But before I could get to sleep another branch of this subject sprung up, and soon my cup overflowed again, which kept me awake for some time: nor could all my weariness and heaviness counterbalance it, so as to convey me into the regions of forgetfulness. The subject of my contemplation was communion; and here another field opened; and, on entering into the small avenue, it soon became a vast expanse. The first thing that struck me was the words of God to Moses - "Thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold; and thou shalt make two cherubim's of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat," Exod. xxv. I knew the mercy-seat to be a throne of grace A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary," Jer. xvii. 12. The great condescension of God the Father, which appeared in the above passage, forcibly

struck me, the mercy-seat I considered to be a type of Christ, who is our throne of grace. He is "a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem," and "a glorious throne to his Father's house," Isa. xxii. 23. The two tables of the testimony were to be put into the ark, so they were not to terrify nor arrest them who fled for mercy: this led me to the words of Christ, which says, "Yea, thy law is within my heart; I delight to do thy will, O my God. I then considered the words of the Psalmist, which says, that "though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect to the lowly; he humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth, Psal. exiii. 6. But how much more to meet and commune with men!

To Christ Jesus, who received the sure mercies of David for us, and in whom all the fullness of grace dwells, and who is full of grace and truth, must we poor sinners go, that we may find grace and strength to help in every time of need. And here God promises to meet with us; for Christ is the way to the Father - "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways," Isa. lxiv. 5.

I then considered what were to be the blessed effects of this communion, or what was to be communicated to the children of Israel when God met them in their representative above the mercy-seat, and what they were to communicate to him. They were to communicate their troubles, cares, burdens, wants, fears, requests, c., to the Lord by prayer; and likewise their recitals of his favour with thanks, praises, blessings, and grateful acknowledgments of them; these were some of the things that they were to communicate to God. And God promises to communicate the following blessings to them by the priests - "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of

Israel; and I will bless them," Numb. vi. 24-27. This whole cluster of blessings is now to be found in Christ; the blessing of eternal life is in him; we are in his hand, and kept by his power through faith; the knowledge of the glory of God is in the face of Jesus Christ; from his foulness all grace is received; he is the Sun of Righteousness that rises and shines upon us; and he is our peace, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. These, my beloved brother, were my thoughts of God our heavenly Father communing with us upon the mercy-seat.

My mind then roved to the free and friendly communion which our Lord Jesus Christ held with Abraham, when he communicated to him his mind and will with respect to the cities of the plain, and how freely Abraham communicated the desires of his soul to the Saviour; all which was granted as long as Abraham could find a heart to ask; and when Abraham stopped in asking, the Lord stopped granting. "And the Lord went his way as soon as he had left communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned unto his place," Gen. xviii. 33.

Then my mind roved to the two disciples going to Emmaus - And while they communed together, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them, and asked them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? They answering him said, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning, Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And, besides all this, to-day is the third

day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre: and, when they found not his body, they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive," Luke, xxiv. 21-23. Here they communicated to the Lord Jesus their bitter grief and trouble, and that the crucifixion of their dear Lord was the sole cause of all their calamities, and that the women's account from the angels that he was yet alive was good news. But they could receive no comfort from these things, "for him they saw not." And now he began and opened up the scriptures concerning his sufferings; and, as they had been eye-witnesses of them, they could compare spiritual things with spiritual while he opened the prophecies of the things concerning himself. And, after making himself known to them, he vanished out of their sight. However, all that they desired in this world was now granted them: they saw and knew that he was alive; "And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" Luke, xxiv. 32.

I then thought of what the apostle says of our having the same communion with the Holy Spirit also: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen," 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

And upon the subject of communion with the Holy Ghost, is my mind now led.

Real communion is the blessed effect of vital union. God communicates no spiritual blessings to them who are in fellowship with devils, with the unfruitful works of darkness, with unrighteousness, or with infidels or heretics, "But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," with him. And from this union springs communion; and communion is nothing else but giving and receiving, and is both active and passive: active, in

giving or bestowing good things upon others; passive, in receiving good things from others. Now all real believers are united to and in grafted into Christ, as the branch is to the vine: and without continual supplies of life, from the vine to the branch, the branch cannot live, much less be fruitful; it must wither and die away. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and [wicked] men gather them [into their company] and they are burned." No creature can stand alone; angels could not; Adam could not; Judas could not; no, nor could even Peter. "Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for there is not another to help him up. But he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit for without me ye can do nothing." No stock in hand will do, however large a portion of the Spirit, as Elijah had; however strong the mountain of prosperity, as David's was; however emboldened and fortified, as Peter thought he was when he promised to face either prison or death all will soon wither without continual supplies. Elijah fled for his life from the face of Jezebel; God hid his face, and David was troubled; and Peter fell before the face of a servant girl. Christ is the root both of David and of all believers. They are wild olive branches grafted into the good olive tree, and partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree; and we bear not the root, but the root bears us, Rom. xi. 17. The life of all trees lies in the root; Christ is our life; and we must live in the root, and the root in us, or there will be no fruit. There are continual communications from the root to the tree, and to every branch of it: let this communication be obstructed, or the union cut off, or the intercourse be stopped up, and the tree will shew it as soon as the sun shines upon it. Nothing less than vital union with the living root, and momentary communications therefrom, can keep us either alive or fruitful. "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," Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. Momentary support and supplies, and nothing, else, can keep the strongest believer standing;

without this all joys, yea, the strongest joys, will wither away from the sons of men, Joel, i. 10. Hence the apostle endeavours to bring his beloved son Timothy off from trusting in his own comfortable frames, however strong they might be, knowing that they are very short-lived, transient, and continually changing; "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," 2. Tim. ii. 1. Here grace is, in all its fullness, always the same, and inexhaustible; and it is in the fountain, and not in the streams, that we must trust; for even for temporal supplies it will not do to trust in the grist that is in the house, nor in the barn that fills the grist, nor yet in the harvest that fills the barn; but in the living God, who promises seed-time, and harvest, and "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy," 1 Tim. vi. 17.

But then how are these momentary supplies of life and strength, grace, and help, to be communicated to us? I answer, By the Holy Spirit of God. As it is written, "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 19. Again, "Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," John xvi. 13, 14. All spiritual and temporal blessing, truths, promises, grace, and glory, are secured to us in an ever lasting covenant; which covenant was ratified and confirmed by the death of Christ, and therefore he is called the Covenant - "I will keep him and give him for a covenant to the people," Isa. xlii. 6. In him all covenant mercies and blessings are, and he is appointed the "heir of all things," Heb. i. 2; and we are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17.

The first work of the Holy Spirit is to convince of sin. "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart,

I will send him unto you. And, when he is come, he will reprove [or convince] the world of sin," John, xvi. 7, 8. Sometimes the Holy Spirit sends the word with such force and terrible majesty, as to arm the conscience of a sinner with a troop of terrors against him; which stops the mouth even of a gainsayer, and makes the preacher manifest in the conscience even of a persecutor; and yet does not convert him, nor bring him any more to the light; but he so silences him as that such an enemy has been brought to live in peace with a man whose ways have pleased God, Prov. xvi. 7.

But, when the Holy Spirit comes to convince a chosen vessel of sin, he applies the truth with such a piercing power as to penetrate into the deepest recesses of the heart, which alarms and awakens the conscience; and this is followed up with continual reproofs and rebukes; and he attends all his reproofs and rebukes with divine light, which makes the sinner's crimes manifest, and lays them all open to his view, even his secret sins and all his works of darkness - "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light," Eph. v. 12, 13. No candle ever discovered the foulness of a room, nor the sun in his full strength the dust and atoms that fly in it, as the Holy Spirit discovers the guilt and filth, the corruptions and deceptions, of the human heart; as it is written, "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. Hence our Lord told the disciples that, "men do not light a candle to put it under a bushel," Matt. v. 15. And when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles he searched Jerusalem with a witness; he mightily convinced the Jews of their unbelief, of their persecution, rejection, and crucifixion of Christ; and brought it home to their souls with such infallible proofs and facts as cut them to the heart, and made them cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And here I can but

take notice of a passage in Solomon's Proverbs, which is as real a prophecy, and was as punctually fulfilled in the apostles' days, as any prediction in the Bible; and sure I am that the words were spoken by the Spirit of Christ indeed - "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," Prov. i. 23. This Peter promised them - "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost as well as we," Acts, ii. 38. And, as Solomon foretold, desolation came upon the rest - "But ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproofs. I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; then shall they call, but I will not answer," Prov. i. 25-27.

The Spirit not only convinces of sin, and gives cutting reproofs and rebukes for it, but he applies the word with power, and fixes it upon the mind; otherwise the elect would be robbed, as the reprobate is. "Then cometh the wicked one," and steals the word sown out of his heart, "and he becometh unfruitful." But the Spirit makes a powerful application of the word-by this God gives "testimony to the word of his grace."

3. The Holy Spirit attends the convictions and reproof that he gives with life, and the quickening influences of the Spirit makes his reproofs sink deep, and this makes the poor sinner's sensations so keen that he cannot rest day nor night: otherwise they would act like Cain, amuse themselves with other things, as he did when he built a city; or like Saul, who sought to the witch of Endor; or like the young man in the gospel, who went away sorrowful, and yet hugged his worldly possessions. But it is not so with a soul convinced by the Holy Spirit; he does not want to shake his convictions off by going from Christ, as the convicted accusers of the adulterous women did; all his fears are, that his convictions will wear off, and that he shall be given up to his own heart's lust. For

4. The Holy Spirit makes his heart honest. He receives the word in an honest and good heart; and therefore "comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." His language is, Search me and try me. He accepts the punishment of his iniquity, and would put his mouth in the dust, if so be that there might be hope; he kisses the rod, and dreads the thoughts of carnal ease. He is an enemy to them that would bolster him, or cry, "Peace, Peace," to him, or heal his wounds slightly - "To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." He would sooner labour under the guilt of sin, and the wrath of God, than fail of his grace, or be set down short of the promised rest. He sees the deceitfulness of sin, the treachery of his heart, and the cunning of the devil; and trembles at the sentence of the law, and the severity of the Most High - "He that rebukes him finds more favour in his eyes than he that flatters with his lips." Sweet to him "are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Thus does the Holy Spirit communicate power, life, honesty and sincerity, with the convictions and reproofs which he applies to the elect of God.

5. He supports them under the burden of sin which they feel, and under the sight of it which he presents to their view, and sustains them under the wrath and curse of a broken law. They are "holpen with a little help." Through the fire he is with them", and through the water; or else the former would dry up their spirits, and the latter drown them in desperation. And in all these things the convinced sinner obeys his divine operator, though he does not know who it is that leads him. The evils which the Holy Spirit discovers to him he confesses; the reproofs he gives he falls under; to the word the Spirit leads him, and he searches the scriptures daily. Where he hears the word with power, and where he finds his case pointed out, there the preacher is made manifest in his conscience; there he desires to abide, however searching and trying the ministry may be; for where he gets his wounding

there he expects his healing: "He that is of God heareth God's word. We are of God (says John), and he that is of God heareth us; and he that is not of God heareth not us."

6. The same Spirit that gives him light and quickening grace sets him to crying to God - "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications," Zech. xii. 10. The life and feeling, the holy longings, the desires, thirstings, cravings, and bitter cries, which are found in the convinced sinner, all spring from the energy and operations of the Holy Spirit of God: hence the many precious promises that are held forth in the word of God to such poor souls - "Shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night? When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue fails for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. Wait upon God, and he shall give thee the desire of thine heart; trust in him, and he shall bring it to pass. They shall come that are read to perish. Because of the deep sighing of the poor, now will I arise, saith the Lord. I will satiate the weary, I will replenish the sorrowful soul, I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst. Blessed are the poor in spirit." Again, "Thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it he will answer thee," Isa. xxx. 19. All these intense longings and holy breathings are produced under the quickening energy of the Holy Spirit, even before he proclaims liberty to us, or creates "the fruit of the lip," Isa. lvii. 19; or gives us a door of "utterance," Acts, ii. 4. "The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered," Rom. iii. 26. And this may be seen in the apostles themselves, before that miraculous outpouring of the Spirit upon them, on the day of Pentecost. The apostles had felt the power of the Spirit attending the word - "He speaks like one having authority, and not as the scribes; for his word is with power." He had

convinced them of sin, as may be seen in their different cases, described by our Lord's first sermon on the mount, and by the confession of Peter - 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' They owned that Christ had the "word of eternal life;" yea, and they believed in him - "Father, the word which thou hast given me I have given them, and they have received it, and have believed that I came forth from thee, and that thou didst send me." And they loved him too, and abode with him: and both faith and love are fruits of the Holy Spirit. But, as a spirit of revelation and understanding, as a distinct comforter, as a spirit of power and of a sound mind, and with all his miraculous gifts and graces, they were to be baptized with him in this wonderful way not many days hence. Hence it is said that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Power, also, in a wonderful manner, they were to receive when the Holy Ghost came upon them, to embolden them, and enable them to preach the gospel in all languages, and to work miracles in confirmation of it.

I must once more beg the pardon of my beloved brother for thus exceeding the limits of an epistle; but hope to have an opportunity of conveying this, as I did the other, by some stroller or straggler wandering from his nest. Begetting, quickening, travailing, and bringing forth, still go on among us - "our bed is green," Song. i. 16.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XI.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, LEWES, SUSSEX.

WHAT, my son! and what, the son of my faith! and what, the son of my vows! Children are not to lay up for the fathers, but the fathers for the children; and I would willingly give thee one portion above thy brethren; yea, a double portion; because thou art poor and needy, near-sighted, subject to the rickets, to incredulity, and many other infirmities which have gone from father to son; but, as poring over these things, with fretting and grieving at them, does no good, we will amuse and comfort ourselves with a better subject.

7. The Holy Spirit testifies of Christ - " But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," John, xv. 26. And this the Holy Spirit does by giving testimony to the word of his grace; by proving the truth and reality of the word to the sensible sinner's conscience; by attending it with faith, light, evidence, and full demonstration; so that Christ is evidently set forth as crucified before them, Gal. iii. 1. Christ's voice is heard and felt, and his all-subduing power is displayed in the soul. The Spirit testifies of him as the almighty and eternal God, by the glorious majesty of Christ which the Spirit discovers, and which shines into the soul. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of God is risen upon thee; and the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." Under this manifestation the soul falls prostrate before him; owns, honours, adores, and worships him. The Spirit testifies of him as our high priest, and applies the atonement, with pardon and peace, as the blessed effects of it. He testifies of him as our physician; and the proof of it is, our iniquities are all forgiven, and all our infirmities are healed.

He testifies of him as the end of the law for righteousness, by applying his righteousness to the heart, and by passing the sentence of justification upon the conscience; at which time Christ, as our Advocate, silences all our accusers; and, as our Mediator, he gives us access to God, a claim upon him, and boldness with him. The Holy Spirit testifies of him as our King, and reveals him as such, and erects his empire in the soul upon our reception of Christ; which stands in power, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When sin is dethroned, the devil, his armour, and artillery, are cast out, death is abolished, life and immortality is brought to light, and the fear of death and the dread of damnation are dispersed; and all our perplexing doubts, cares, and gloomy thoughts about it scattered into all winds. Thus, my dear brother, does the Holy Spirit testify of Christ, and gives evident proofs of his ability to save to the uttermost; he realizes his saving benefits, applies his merits, proclaims his omnipotence, his mild and blessed government, the powerful sway of his righteous sceptre, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

8. The application of all the promises is the work of the Holy Spirit. The promise of life and the spirit of life always go together, for it is the powerful application of the word by the Spirit that makes the promise - "The incorruptible seed, the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever." All the promises of divine consolation have their sincere milk from Christ, by the Holy Spirit: one promise brings peace, another joy, another love, another comfort, another rest; just as the Holy Spirit sends them in, so they discharge their rich contents: the hungry soul, by exercising faith upon them, sucks the sweetness of them, till he is filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory," Isa. lxvi. 10, 11. There is no

converting, refreshing, encouraging power attends the word without the Spirit's operation. When he makes application of it, faith, life, and love attend it; for "our gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurances," 1 Thess. i. 5. And various are the sensations of the soul under the Spirit's influence when he applies he word: sometimes it is a word of support that fortifies and strengthens; sometimes a word of encouragement to keep us watching, waiting, and to bear us up under trials and crosses; sometimes a word of correction that leads us to self-examination, which awes us, and excites watchfulness and amendment; at other times a soft word that breaketh the bone, and melts us under a sense of undeserved love and self-abhorrence; and often a word of instruction to correct the mind, disperse some wrong notion, to inform the judgment, and to bring more harmonious and consistent views of things to the soul. Innumerable are the ways by which the Holy Spirit works by the word, and in his application of it; but it is always a seasonable application; "And a word spoken in due season, how good is it? A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," Prov. xv. 23; and xxv. 11.

9. The secret things of God, such as his counsel and covenants, are made known to us by the Holy Spirit. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," 1 Cor.ii.11. The Holy Spirit, when he has testified of Christ to us, leads us back to his great undertaking and appointment from everlasting; he leads us up to the everlasting love of God, and to his absolute choice of us in Christ Jesus; to his secret decrees of election and predestination; to his good will of purpose in Christ, and to the secret counsel of his will; and to his covenant made with Christ before the world began - "For the froward is abomination to the Lord; but his secret is with the righteous," Prov. iii. 32. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him;

and he will shew them his covenants 'Psalm xxv. 14. The secret of predestinating us to the adoption of children by Christ Jesus, and of his giving us life in him, and of his ordaining us to it before the world began, is revealed and made known to the elect of God by the Spirit; and our knowledge of these things, and of our interest in them, is our highest wisdom; "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew; for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But 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 to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," I Cor. ii.7-10. Our faith is called "the faith of God's elect," not only because it is a grace peculiar to them, but because God's election of us is a truth revealed to faith, and a truth which faith apprehends and holds fast; for there can be no such thing as making our calling and election sure, without being assured that there is such a doctrine as election. From God's secret counsel and covenant springs no small part of our unspeakable joy. God fills us with joy and peace in believing, and especially in believing our election of God: "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven," Luke, x. 20. If these things are lacking in our faith, our faith is deficient in one of the most sublime and establishing articles. He that believeth the love that God hath to him, is led to believe that this love took its rise from eternity (for there are no new acts in God); and from those ancient settlements are the goings forth of Christ dated. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting Micah, v. 2. Into these deep

things does the Holy Spirit lead us, and into a humble acquiescence with them, and fills us with wonder and astonishment at them. And he likewise leads us into the distinct personal works of the holy and blessed Trinity. As a spirit of adoption he gives us power and boldness to claim our interest in God as our Covenant-God and Father; "To as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This birth makes our sonship clear: love gives us a dwelling in God - "He that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him." Faith gives us a dwelling in Christ - "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." And the Spirit's witness proves our adoption-the Spirit cries, "Abba, Father." Receiving power to become the sons of God, is receiving the Spirit; and by the Spirit the grace of faith, to enable us, as I before observed, with a holy boldness to claim our sonship before God. "But I said, How shall I put thee among, the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me," Jer. iii. 19. This promise the Spirit makes good; he makes us say, "My Father." And this may be seen in the prodigal son - "I will arise, and go to my father." These words were spoken under the emboldening, and encouraging influence of the spirit of adoption; and whatever the Holy Spirit says or does is always owned and honoured by God the Father, and confirmed in heaven; as may be seen in that parable - "This is my son," says God; "he was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The Jews spake the same language the prodigal did, even to Christ - "We have one father, even God." But this is neither owned nor honoured; for, "If God were your Father," (says Christ) "you would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in

the truth, because there is no truth in him," John, viii. 42, 44. Thus we see that no claim upon birth-privileges, no, not upon national adoption; no unwarrantable, no presumptuous claims upon God, are either approved or confirmed.

10. The Holy Spirit is given for a witness to us. "If we receive the witness of men," (as many do, and rest in it,) "the witness of God is greater. He that believes hath the witness in himself." And sure I am that without the infallible testimony of the Holy Ghost, no poor, convinced, self-condemned, the self-despairing sinner could ever lay any claim upon the Almighty. A sensible sinner, who feels the enmity of his mind and the rebellion of his heart, who is loathsome in his own sight, and conscious to himself that, he is a child of wrath, and a willing drudge to Satan; for such an one to call God his father (even while God's wrath and jealousy seems to smoke against him) he would think it the vilest presumption in such a wretch as he, and the greatest affront and insult, the greatest dishonour and indignity, that could be offered to the majesty of heaven. He may say "to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother," Job, xvii. 14. But to think that God would, or could, ever acknowledge or accept such an one as a child of his, is what would never have entered his mind world without end, if the Holy Ghost did not put it there. And he does it in the following manner: - First, he silences all the sinner's accusers and all accusations, and brings the confused and confounded soul into a state of the most profound calm, quietude, peace, and tranquillity. Here our sins, which appeared like the sins of Sodom, crying to heaven; Conscience, also, with his cutting accusations; the law, with all its curses and unlimited demands; Justice, with his calls for vengeance; Satan, with all his blasphemies, fiery (darts, accusations, and terrible suggestions; together with all our heart-misgivings and heart-risings, and those terrible passages of scripture which describe the fruitless cries of Esau, the horrors of Judas, the misery of Cain, the distraction

of Saul, and the fearful end of Corah, Abiram, and Dathan; are all stilled and bushed into the profoundest silence, the violent storm of wrath abates, and the troubled sea ceases from her raging. The poor sinner stands astonished to know what are become of all his accusers; he looks about him, and finds that all his sins which were set in order against him, all his secret sins which stood in the light of God's countenance, are blotted out as a cloud, and his transgressions as a thick cloud; and, as far as the east is from the west, so far does God separate our transgressions from us. The guilt and filth of sin within is all purged away, and every inbred corruption is subdued and out of sight; so that not one unclean bird remains upon the living sacrifice. The Holy Spirit sets Christ crucified before the eye of faith; while the Spirit, in the application of the blood of sprinkling, speaks pardon, peace, reconciliation, and perfect friendship. Sin being purged, nothing separates or stands between God and the soul. The Holy Ghost sheds abroad God's love in the heart, which casts out fear and torment, doubts and all misgivings of the heart about it; while love dissolves the stony heart, melts the stubborn mind, and makes the rebellious will submit and become pliant. Joy unutterable flows in, while floods of pious and godly sorrow flow out. The benign Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort, indulges the soul with the greatest freedom and familiarity, and with nearness of access to him. God shines well-pleased in the face of Jesus, accepts and embraces the soul in him; while Faith, attended with the fullest assurance, springs up and goes forth in the fullest exercise upon the everlasting love of God, and on the finished salvation of Jesus Christ, and is fully persuaded of her eternal interest in both; while the Holy Spirit cries " Abba, Father:" to which cry both law and gospel, the love of God and the blood of Christ, retributive justice, and honest conscience, all put their hearty amen.

The Holy Spirit, with the witness that he bears, follows the convinced sinner through every stage of his experience, from his first awakening, until his translation into the kingdom of God takes place. So that the convinced sinner who comes to the light who waits upon God, and waits for him, has the witness of the the truth of what he feels, and of what Spirit in his own heart to the truth of what he feels, and of what he seeks. The Spirit bears his witness to the reality of his wants; to the deep sense that he has of his sins; to the honesty and integrity of his soul; to his fervent cries and earnest searches; to his real grief on account of his sins, and his earnest desire of deliverance from them. Nor can such a soul look either God or conscience in the face, and say, I am neither awakened nor quickened; I am neither in earnest, honest, nor sincere. Nor dare he say, I have no hunger nor thirst after God, nor that I neither labour nor am heavy laden. Nor dare he say that he has neither hope nor expectation of better days and better things; nor dare he say that there is no truth in him, nor that God has done nothing for him; nor would he change states (miserable as he is) with the most secure pharisee, nor with the most gifted professor in the world; nor would he part with his dreadful feelings, the chastisements, the reproofs of God, the bitter sense he has of his sins, nor the intolerable burden of them, for all the treasures of Egypt, unless he could get rid of them the right way; namely, by an application of the atoning blood of Christ. He can smell the stinking savour of an hypocrite in Zion, and feel the barrenness and emptiness of a minister of the letter; he can see through a sheep's skin on a wolf's back, and knows the empty sound of swelling words. Neither the graceless heart of a foolish virgin, nor the arrogance of them that talk of liberty while they are the servants of corruption, are hid from him-though he is fast "bound in affliction and iron." He is a strange creature both to himself and others. He speaks a language that few understand; and it is a language that he cannot explain. He is always in action, and acts a part that astonishes himself. He

sucks his sweets from bitterness, Prov. xxvii. 7, and cleaves to the rod that beats him. By affliction he lives, and in the shadow of death he finds the most life. He gets health in his sickness, and healing in his wounds; satisfaction in sorrow; life in death; faith in severity; hope in heaviness; and expectation in self-despair. His burden is more than he can bear, yet he dreads the thought of losing it. He is completely miserable, yet he hates ease. And, though his life hangs in doubt, he trembles at the thoughts of security. And that which he is most afraid of, is that which he seeks most after. None work so hard as he, and none so great an enemy to works. To secure himself is all his concern, and yet he hates himself more than he hates the devil.

Beloved, farewell; be of good comfort, follow peace, and the God of truth and peace shall be with thee. I add no more at this time, but my poor petitions, and subscribe myself,

Yours in him,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XII.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE VICARAGE, NEAR THE DEANERY, LEWES, SUSSEX.

To his Excellency the Welch Ambassador his friend sendeth greeting.

AMBASSADORS personate their sovereigns, and are as their month in foreign courts; and are, or should be, respected according to their wisdom and faithfulness, and according to the greatness, dignity, and formidability of their royal masters. But, O, my beloved, what an honour is it to be an ambassador of the King of kinds! Called and commissioned, owned and honoured, by him; and to be in a pardoned and justified state; in union, in Fellowship, and in peace with him: and therefore ambassadors or peace, bearers of good tidings, publishers of salvation, and that say unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth!" Such are the chariots of the Lord of host, in which he rides, and by which he bears his name among the Gentiles; out of which he shines, and from whom he sends out his line into all the earth, and his words to the end of the world. Infinite condescension is this. And when we consider what we were; how mean! how low! how poor! how despicable! But he hath chosen the poor, the weak, the foolish, and the base, that he may stain the pride of human glory, and bring into contempt the honourable of the earth. "Now he which establisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. Upon this delightful subject I shall yet proceed.

11. The Holy Spirit is to aid and assist the true worshippers of God in every branch of religious worship; and the saints must "serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." God requires worship suitable to his nature - "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; for God seeketh such to worship him." Worship in the spirit is opposed to all carnal worship with a dead form, in which the body only is engaged; and therefore called bodily exercise, which profiteth little. Worshipping God in truth is opposed to all false, deceitful, and hypocritical worship, when the heart and soul are altogether disengaged: "They draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but their heart is far from me; therefore in vain they worship

me." In order to this true worship we must be purged and purified, justified and sanctified, and influenced with the Holy Spirit of God. God requires a pure offering, and an offering, in righteousness, or offerings offered up by persons in a justified state. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years," Mal. iii. 3, 4. The days of old, and the ancient times spoken of, are the days of Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noab, Abraham, Melchizedek, Isaac, and Jacob, &c. of whom, and of whose worship, we have no fault; but they obtained a good report through faith." Now God promises that, under the gospel the same acceptable worship shall be performed; and therefore he promises to influence and guide us in every branch of it - "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them," Isaiah, lxi. 8. And the Lord directs us in all our works by his Holy Spirit, and especially in prayer; "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God," Rom. viii. 26, 27. The apostle here tells us that we know not what we should pray for as we ought, unless the Spirit help us. And there are prayers that have been put up by good men that have not been answered; "Elijah requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough: now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers," 1 Kings, xix. 4. Zebedee's wife's request for her two sons to sit, one at the right hand of Christ, and the other at the left, meets with no better answer than, "Ye know not what ye ask," Matt. xx. 22. Which shews us the need of a Spirit of grace and

supplication. The Holy Spirit enlightens us to see our wants, and quickens us to feel them, and creates a hunger and a thirst after the provision of God's house; and then leads our minds into the word, and shews us what is held forth, promised, and freely given to us - "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God," I Cor. ii. 12. The Holy Spirit, which searches the deep things of God, knows what is in reserve for us, and the time appointed for us to receive that which God hath laid up for us; and he sets us to praying for them when that time arrives. Thus, when the time of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage drew near, the spirit of supplication was poured out, and the cries of the children of Israel went up. "And God heard their groanings; and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them," Exod. ii- 24, 25. So, in Daniel, just as the time was approaching for them to return to their own land, Daniel understands, by the prophecies of Jeremiah, that God would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem; then Daniel sets his "face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" Dan. ix. 3. So, also, there is a set time to favour Zion, and every one that is ordained to be of her community; a set time for every purpose; and, when that time is up, which the Holy Spirit is perfectly acquainted with, then he makes intercession with such energy, that the kingdom of heaven, which suffereth violence, is taken by force. The Holy Spirit furnishes the soul with suitable promises to Plead, with invitations and encouraging passages of scripture: these he brings to the mind and puts into the mouth, enabling the soul to use all sorts of arguments, pleadings, intercessions, supplications, confessions, and reasonings; and, at the same time, helps the poor creature against his unbelief, misgivings of heart, desponding thoughts, shame, fear, and confusion of face. He draws forth faith into

lively exercise, and raises up hopes and expectations of being heard and answered. He emboldens the poor sinner, and fortifies his mind; he strengthens his heart, silences his accusers, and clothes his words with power; enabling him to pour out his very soul before God with earnest cries and tears, till his cares and concerns, his burdens, his griefs, his distresses and sorrows, his doubts and fears, all flow out with his words; and he goes from Shiloh with his countenance no more sad. How did he help Manasseh, who was an idolater and a wizard, who made Judah and Jerusalem do worse than the heathen, and who was deaf to all warning and admonition, till God brought an host against him, who took him and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon? "And when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God," 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. How did the Holy Spirit furnish the poor Syrophenician woman with her great faith and treble plea, till she got all her heart's desire? He made the poor prodigal claim his sonship in a far country, even when stung with the guilt of sinning against heaven and before God, as his own father in covenant; and Hezekiah, also, when both heaven and earth seemed to combine against him. Some of the children of God, who have foully fallen, and brought on themselves, and on God's cause and family, open reproach and scandal; as Noah, David, Peter, &c. and those who have awfully backslidden, and got into sin and into the world, till their hearts have been almost hardened from fear, and who would have gone from bad to worse, till they had become quite callous; and return no more, if the Holy Spirit, either by his own immediate operations, or by the instrumentality of some Nathan, did not alarm and awaken them to a sense of their state; and, when they are awakened and brought to a sense of their sins, their crimes are aggravated with such a complication of circumstances,

and attended with such bitter reflections, as would sink them for ever, if the power of the Spirit was not put forth in them. Sins against light and love; against comfort, joy, and peace; against a merciful and compassionate Father; against all the blessings of the better testament; against a God formerly known and enjoyed, and against a Saviour revealed, and after union, communion, and fellowship with him; and against the consolations, witnessing and sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise. Looking back to the glorious times that are past; to the blessed days of the Son of man; and to the joy, peace, rest, quietude, and happiness then enjoyed. But now all is gone. "Fool that I am," says the poor creature; "for a little self, a little imagined pleasure, and by the deceitfulness of sin, am I shorn of all my strength, and divested of all true happiness. I have stumbled the weak, and have opened the mouths of the enemies of my God: they that have watched for my halting, and who would rejoice when I am moved, and who eat up the sin of God's people as they eat bread, will now say, This is the day that we have looked for. My smiling God is gone, and all sweet intercourse appears to be cut off. The Holy Spirit is grieved; no access to a throne of grace, no liberty in the Spirit, no liberty of speech. A dismal gloom appears in the Bible; nothing but reproofs and rebukes from the pulpit, barrenness in the pew, a fallen countenance before the world; and nothing but secret rage, envy, and jealousy in my heart, when I am among them that love God, which casts a damp upon all their holy fire. O my base ingratitude! "Fools, because of their iniquities, are afflicted." I may go halting to my grave under fatherly severity, and perhaps it will be worse than that. Who knows but I have committed the unpardonable sin, and have crucified Christ afresh, and done despite to the Spirit of grace, and therefore am a castaway.

A sheep thus strayed would never return, a soul thus fallen would never rise more, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. David knew this when he prayed - "Cast me not away

from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me," Psalm li. 11. A soul under such circumstances watches, observes, and attends all the day long, to the Holy Spirit, to see if he can find any enlargement of heart, any risings of hope and expectation, any goings forth in faith or affection, any freedom of soul or of speech in prayer, any flowings out of godly sorrow, any sounding of the bowels after God, any real compunction, contrition, or pious mourning's after the Lord; if there be any goings forth of love to him; if any filial or childlike fear of him springing up, which has the goodness of God for its object; if he can find any fortitude, help, or inward support, or assistance in prayer; if any word come to assuage his grief, to soften the heart, to support, encourage, or to produce submission to the will of God: if there be any dispersion of his fears and terrors; if any self-abhorrence or self-loathing; if Satan's accusations and fiery darts lose their force, or abate in their violence; if the reproaches of conscience get less severe. Thus does the poor distressed soul wait upon the Holy Spirit, and watch and observe every influence, operation, or change, that is made in the heart; and greedily catches every hint, dictate, sensation, motion, affection, allurements, or encouragement, which is produced in the soul; and weighs it, considers it, embraces it, and interprets it in his own favour as far as circumstances, truth, and conscience will permit him.

Sometimes souls under such relapses find that the law is armed with fresh wrath and terrors against them, and that bitter things in that hand-writing appear against them; that it lays a fresh hold of them, and binds them fast - "The strength of sin is the law," I Cor. xv. 56. The spirit of bondage seizes them and shuts them up; which is nothing else but the anger of God working wrath, slavish fear, terror, and torment, in them; under which they are contracted, bound, and hemmed in; shut up in unbelief, in hardness of heart, and under the rebukes of God, and in fear of worse to come; and while thus imprisoned neither faith nor love dare to venture out. Hence

David complains in his fall - "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul, I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: My throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God," Ps. ixix. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit," Psalm li. And again - "O, my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," Psalm xlii. In the above the psalmist feels the spirit of bondage, which is wrath and fear; and he prays for the joy of God's salvation, and to be upheld by God's free spirit; which is the Holy Spirit, the spirit of love and power. He complains of "deep calling unto deep." A soul in the horrible pit hears little else but the calls of law and justice for vengeance which are always answered again by the accusations of Satan and conscience. The storms of Sinai, like a water-spout at sea, threaten the earthen vessel with a deluge of wrath, which would soon drown it in destruction and perdition. These waves of real, and some imaginary displeasure (no less terrible than real) rolling over the poor creature, are ready to send the bark to the bottom. This is the terrible way in which some fallen and backsliding souls are purged and reclaimed; and especially such as have brought public scandal upon the gospel and church of Christ, as the incestuous Corinthian, &c. Others are revived and restored by more gentle means - "A soft tongue shall break their bones," Prov. xxv. 15. Divine kindness shall melt them, humble and soften them. But even this unexpected kindness, which is coyly received, and in much self-abhorrence often put from them, as they are utterly unworthy of the least notice of God,

and is mixed with some resentment, which keeps the soul at a distance, mixing his fear with trembling; and when any child of God is raised up and restored in this way, as the poor prodigal was, when the kiss, the robe, and the ring, quite killed him; and as a propitious look from the Lord Jesus Christ killed Peter to sin, self, and the world, when he went out, and, with a flood of the tears of penitence and love, discharged the guilt with which he had been drenched while in the sieve of Satan. Such are forgiven; but it is long before they can forgive themselves. They are acquitted by God; but they will not suffer conscience to acquit them. "What carefulness it works in them! yea, what clearing of themselves! yea, what indignation! yea, what fear! yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal! yea, what revenge! 2 Cor. vii. 11.

Thus, my dearly-beloved brother, does the Holy Spirit help the infirmities of the saints of God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ; and continually communicates grace from his fullness to help us in every time of need: whose inexhaustible fullness of grace is sufficient to change the heart of the stoutest rebel, to raise up the fearfully fallen, and to restore the most awful backslider. "Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen" I Tim. i. 16, 17. And so says,

Your affectionate servant, friend, and brother,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XIII.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

The Coalheaver to the Welsh Ambassador sendeth greeting,
with words of peace and love.

BELOVED, the perishing soul, parched with the heat of a fiery law, who is led to the fountain of living water to drink, is to have a well of living water in his heart, which is to spring up into everlasting life. I know that Christ has rent the heavens and come down; that there is a new and living way opened into the holy of holies; and that he has admitted our hearts and hopes, our faith and our affections, already to the right hand of God, where he sitteth: and where our heart is, there is our treasure. And there is nothing that men delight in more than in their treasure: of this they boast, and on this they set their mind, and this generally employs their thoughts; and therefore you must not wonder if I come again and again, for we have heavenly treasure even in a earthen vessels. The next thing, that I shall treat of is,

12. The assistance of the Spirit against Satan. "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion," Isa. lix. 19. 20. Every time that a new-born soul gets under the hiding of God's countenance, or into the furnace of affliction, or is exercised with legal bondage or spiritual desertions, the adversary is sure to be upon him, to raise doubts and fears in him, by calling the whole work of God upon his soul into question; and, by raising scruples in his mind, he rouses up the unbelief

of his heart; and when he deals with the poor soul just as a highwayman does with the unwary traveler; he comes upon him unexpectedly, and flurries him, and fills him with confusion, so that he is robbed before he can recollect himself. So the believer, when his comforts are gone, is suddenly surprised by the various assaults of Satan; - "As a bird that is caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it cometh suddenly upon them," Ecel. ix. 12. The devil labours to dispute him out of the truth of the work of God in his heart, by setting before him such as the foolish virgins, and how far they went on; the gifts and abilities of Judas, and what became of him; and of many in the present day, who made a great shew and deceived many. Moreover, Satan suggests to the young believer that the real children of God receive a Comforter that abides with them for ever, and therefore they are always comfortable; and that no such temptations befall the real saints of God, for "he that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John, v. 18. The blood of Christ cleanseth them from all sin, and "he that is born of God sinneth not," 1 John, iii. 9. "Whereas (saith Satan) you are full of sin and hardness of heart, full of rebellion and unbelief, and of all manner of concupiscence. No, no; do not deceive yourself (saith he): the saints of God are pureed, and therefore clean; they are washed, and they are whiter than snow: whereas you are as black as the tents of Kedar, and are filled with secret rage and envy at those that do really love and fear God; and this is an infallible mark of an hypocrite; - For they that hate Zion shall be desolate. This (says Satan) was the case and state of Saul, king of Israel; he hated David because the Lord was with him. And this upon him was an evident token of perdition; for he that hateth his brother is as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: yea, he that hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

"Besides, you really hate them because they are happy, and because you see and know that the Lord is with them this is hating the Holy Comforter also; and, if this be not doing 'despite to the Spirit of grace,' what is? Moreover, real believers are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation; but where is your keeping? Have I not access to you when I please? Are you not at this time in my hands? You have often, and (as you thought) with the deepest self-aborrence, confessed your own vileness, and told God that had he destroyed you he would have been strictly righteous, for you have been an awful sinner against him. God only softened your heart, and gave you a little joy, like that of the way-side hearers, on purpose to draw those confessions out of your mouth, that he may take advantage of it, and condemn you out of your own mouth, as a wicked servant. And not only this, but you have called God himself your Father, as the Jews of old did, when the devil himself was their Father; and you have called Jesus Christ your dear Lord and Master, when you know at this very time that I have full power over you. Never, no never, was there such a headstrong, daring, presumptuous, God-dishonouring wretch as you. You a saint! You look like one; don't you? No, no; do not deceive yourself; all your joys and hopes, and all your comfort, that you ran from house to house and chartered about, it all came from me. I can transform myself into the likeness of an angel of light; I can counterfeit all the joys and comforts of the Holy Spirit on purpose to deceive. The whole work in you was all my own, and I did it on purpose to entrap you. Back to my work you must come, for you are still my captive, and I will make you fetch up all your lost time; and this the scripture declares when it says, I and the last state of that man is worse than the first.'

'Deceiving and being deceived.' I have deceived you, and you have deceived others. You have been to your minister and told him a thousand lies, and have deceived him; for he thinks

it is a work of grace. And you have been to old Honesty and told him your experience; you have been to Dame Simplicity and filled her head; and to Miss Lovetruth, and she thinks you are a wonder. Go, go, and undeceive them all; tell them what you really are; that you always was a forward, daring, bold, arrogant rebel; and that you have added this, your deceitful and hypocritical profession, to all the rest of your innumerable and complicated crimes. Never, never more open your mouth, nor drop one word to any soul living about religion-yea, if your heart be hot within you keep silence, even from good words; for you will be a reproach, a public scandal, a by-word, and an offence; and "woe be to that man through whom the offence cometh.' You will stumble these poor weaklings that you have tried to encourage, by telling them your experience; these will faint and give all up: and you know what Christ says to them who offend one of these little ones that believe in him; - Good had it been that thou hadst never been born: yea, "better that a millstone were handed about thy neck, and that thou wert drowned in the depths of the sea, than that thou shouldst offend one of these little ones."

"No soul that ever appeared upon the stage of time, no character that is drawn in the annals of God, ever appeared so desperate as yours. Cain was banished from his Father's house; Esau's cries and tears, and his hatred to Jacob, sprung chiefly for a blessing in temporal things; and Saul's hatred to David was mostly because he viewed him as the rival of his family in a temporal kingdom: but your crimes are worse than theirs, put them all together. For you hate the people of God because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit is in their souls; and to be jealous, envious, and hateful, not only to the children of God, but even to the comforts of the Holy Spirit, is an evident token of perdition. Go, tell them all what you really are, and undeceive them; and tell them never to lift up either cry or prayer for you;" - "There is a sin unto death; I do not say he

shall pray for it." Tell them that all your faith was nothing but presumption, and that all your claims upon God were unwarrantable and daring intrusions; - "And the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, that soul shall be destroyed from among his people." You will now be held up to contempt, and be made a public example to deter others; yea, "a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." And, as for me, I will harass, worry, and drive you, as I did the mad Gadarene into the wilderness. I never sweat nor tire. I will pursue you with unremitted violence, till I drive you mad and desperate.

"Law sinners, that know nothing of the will of God in the gospel, will be beaten with few stripes; the heathen, who are a law to themselves, will be beaten with fewer still. But you are an impostor, a hypocrite in Zion, and a sinner against the Holy Ghost; the hottest place in hell is your portion, and I will punish you (for I am the tormentor) worse than all the slaves I have, unless you will 'fall down and worship me.' It is in vain to cry to God, for there is no God; nor is it of any use to plead the promises, for the Bible is not true, I dictated it; it was compiled by cunning and designing men which I employed on purpose to deceive the simple. Hence many noblemen, and some of the most learned in all the nation, burlesque it and ridicule it as a mere fable and as an idle tale."

Thus with violence doth the devil break in upon the young believer and harass him, when it pleases God to leave him for the trial of his faith, and that he may know what is in his heart; and thus he used to serve me. Well may the prophet say, "The enemy comes in like a flood;" for all seems to be swept and carried away before him. Nothing appears to be left but the bare remembrance of things past, and sometimes hardly that. But, when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." This standard is Christ Jesus. "Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people," Isa. xlix. 22. This

standard is intended to gather together God's elect to Christ, as will appear in the following passage. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare you the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, say ye to the laughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him," Isa. lxii. 10, 11. Christ is the rod from out of the stem of Jesse; he is the standard and the ensign staff; his everlasting love is the banner; a daily cross and a crown of glory is the motto upon the banner; ministers of Christ are standard-bearers; these are commanded to go through the gates, to cast up the way, to gather out the stones, and to lift up the standard to the people. But then we can only lift up the standard to the people, not in them: whereas the enemy is said to get into them; - "When the enemy shall come in like a flood," &c. All in-door work belongs to the Holy Spirit. We can only preach to the outward ear, and set forth the Lord Jesus Christ before them; which is called lifting up a standard to them. But it is the Holy Spirit that testifies of Christ to the heart, and that lifts up the standard against Satan in the soul. And this he does by dispersing all the darkness and confusion which the devil has spread over the mind; and by subduing our inbred corruptions which the devil has stirred up, and by enlightening the understanding afresh, and presenting the Saviour as shining into the soul, and by drawing forth faith, hope, love, repentance, and godly sorrow, to go forth and flow out to him; and, at the same time, raising up and bringing forth to the believer's view the whole work of grace in his soul; by passing afresh the sentence of justification in the court of conscience, by brightening every evidence, bearing his own witness afresh, shedding abroad again God's love in the heart, and filling the soul with joy and peace in believing. Now, says the soul, let my enemy come! No, no; Satan knows better; he will not face thee with all that armour about thee. He lays at the catch; he hates the believing voice of triumph.

When he hears thee mourning alone and sitting solitary, then he will visit thee again with a, "Where is now thy God?" These are Satan's times, and he will let us know it. But still the Spirit lifts up the standard against him, and unfolds the banner of God's love, again and again, in the behalf of them that fear God, that his beloved may be delivered from the power of sin and Satan. "Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth, Selah. That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me," Psal. lx. 4, 5. As sure as ever Satan obscures the blessed work, and raises doubts in the poor sinner's mind about the reality of it, so sure does the Spirit lift up the standard against him, and revives the work, and brings it forth again to the light, that we may behold the righteousness of God in it. He does it over and over again, till he has strengthened, stablished, and settled us.

13. Our fruitfulness, also, is owing to the in-dwelling and operation of the Holy Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law," Gal. V. 22, 23. Again, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth," Eph. v. 9. Christ is our living root, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit makes us one with Christ: while the everlasting love of God the Father to us in him unites us to him. From his fullness does the Holy Spirit continually us supply us. We receive from his fullness, and grace for grace. Present grace to assure us of future grace; or sanctifying grace in this life as a pledge of glorifying grace in heaven. The Spirit takes of the things that are Christ's, and shews them unto us; - his undertaking, his finished work; his truths, doctrines, and promises; his righteousness, peace, and satisfaction; his mysteries, his kingdom, and the power and majesty of it; his exaltation, meditation, intercession, and glorification in heaven above. This is the work of the blessed Spirit; and this union with Christ Jesus does the Holy Spirit

keep up: and we having life in Christ the root, the Holy Spirit communicates life every moment from the root to the branch; for our life is hid with Christ in God. And Christ says, "Because I live, you shall live also." Hence the promise, "Their leaf shall be green, neither shall they cease from yielding fruit." And no small part of the saint's fruit is put forth in God's house of prayer, and by diligent attendance there. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; They shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: He is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him," Psalm xcii. 12, 13, 14, 15. In God's house of prayer the united fruits of the lips are offered up; such as, honest confessions of sins, and humble acknowledgments of mercies received. Prayers, supplications, and intercessions, are offered up in the unity of faith and love. God is extolled by the high praises of Zion, by thank offerings, and by blessings, and the celebration of the perfections and attributes of his nature ; such as his mercy, goodness, truth, and Holiness, love) Pity, and compassion, towards poor sinners in Christ Jesus. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I the Lord exercise righteousness, judgment, loving-kindness, and tender mercy in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Here the saints often have bowels of mercy drawn forth, and their hearts enlarged towards the poor of the flock, to relieve their wants. Those that are enriched by Christ Jesus come not behind in this grace also. Besides all these, there are internal fruits brought forth under the word of God, which word is said to bring forth fruit. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints; for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel:

which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth," Col. i. 3-6. A word of reproof often produces self-loathing and self-abasement. A word of severity mixed with love produces humility and meekness. A word descriptive of the tried soul's case, attended with an increase of strength and encouragement, draws forth faith into lively act and exercise. A word of comfort draws forth love to God, and joy in him. A word that restores a backslider is attended with contrition and godly sorrow. A word that seals pardon to a fallen saint, fires his zeal, and arms him with indignation against both sin and self. A word of instruction that settles a doubting mind, or fixes a soul halting between two opinions, and which informs his judgment and discovers heresy and heretics, produces blessings and thanksgivings to the glory of God. A word that encourages an ec3 d succours the tempted, excites love to Christ and hatred to Satan. A word that strengthens and refreshes the sincere seeker, produces patience, submission, and resignation to the will of God. And though these are sometimes short and transient, yet they are genuine fruits, and such fruits as are produced under the influence of the Holy Ghost, who applies the word, and works with it, and by it.

All these, and many more such fruits, do the hearts of God's children conceive by the word, and under the operation of the Holy Spirit of God; which often fills their souls with pious grief, godly sorrow, or love to God, or self-loathing; so that they would be glad, could the discourse be stopped while they might retire into some lonely apartment to acknowledge his goodness, express their joys, or to pour out their souls before God; and are often grieved, when they go home, to find the blessed unction and the divine power abated, and the heavenly dew dried up.

There is a continual flowing of grace from the fountain to the holy city of Zion. The river of pleasure, that flows from the Fountain of life, sends forth its streams, which "make glad the city of God;" and Zion continually plays all her springs back again in devotion, worship, and adoration: hence the church is called "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." Shut up and sealed under sore trials: opened and unsealed in times of deliverance: shut up and sealed to all rivals and strangers; opened and unsealed to the Lord and to his friends.

At times, when the believer is under sore conflicts, and the Spirit begins to sanctify the trial, the divine flowings are wonderful, especially in prayer; matter and manner, words and power, are so abundant, that the soul is "as wine which hath no vent;" he "is ready to burst, like new bottles," Job, xxxii. 19. He has no sooner sent up the whole weight and sensations of his soul, but the heart conceives again, and he is constrained to "speak that he may be refreshed," Job, xxxii. 20. But still the spring rises, till he can attend to nothing else. "For my love they are mine adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer," Ps. cix. 4. At such times the Spirit of grace and supplication operates in a wonderful manner; the believer, under the Spirit's influence, is more formidable than an army with banners; there is nothing in heaven, earth, or hell, that can stand against him, as may be seen in Hezekiah (Isaiah, chap. xxxviii.), and in Daniel (Dan. ix. 21); the former of whom drove back the sun in his firmament, and the latter fetched down an angel from heaven.

So, on the other hand, when the Holy Spirit furnishes the soul for praises and thank-offerings at the time of conspicuous deliverances from sore trials, temptation, or spiritual desertions, the soul is so banquetted, and the unction is so abundant, that the heart must pour it out: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil my cup runneth," over," Psal. xxiii.

5, While we are blessing God he keeps blessing us. "In blessing I will bless thee." His love flows in, and we pour it out; the sacred flame burns, and the continual burnt-offering goes up, But the former and latter of these are upon our solemn feast days, and at the commencement of the years of jubilee; for, in the general, things are not so.

My son, think on these things, and follow after charity, righteousness, peace, faith, meekness, patience, with all them that call upon God out of a pure heart; while I remain, in the best of bonds,

Devotedly yours,

W. Huntington

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XIV.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

To my joy, and the crown of my rejoicing.

BELOVED, when I finished my last I concluded that the cruse was nearly exhausted - but this morning early it sprung up again, and seemed to flow in various directions; it anointed my eyes, and I perceived it with this observation, "The yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing" I found it was so, and therefore I pursued it with pleasure, finding the service to be perfect freedom. "My horn" is exalted "like the horn of an

unicorn," and I am "anointed with fresh oil." O, that this was a little more observed and attended to! But the believer is too much like the worldly miser, he never knows what he is worth. I must now "speak of the things which I have made touching the King," and his anointing; and I hope it will turn out to thee that my heart hath been inditing a good matter. The matter is,

14. Concerning the judgment of the Holy Spirit. In the justification of our souls the Holy Spirit brings the righteousness of Christ near to us, and enlightens the sinner to see Christ as the end of the law; while he works faith in the heart to go forth, embrace him, and put him on: hence we are said to be "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The Holy Spirit, by the ministry of the apostles, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; he, by applying the words of reproof and rebuke to them, arraigned and brought in many guilty, who humbly craved forgiveness and obtained it; when the blessed Spirit, who takes of the things that are Christ's and shews them to us, pointed these poor condemned sinners to the atonement and satisfaction of Christ, and to his righteousness and reconciliation with God by it; and, upon their believing, he filled them with the flames of love and zeal; and, sanctifying them, he set them apart, and devoted them as holy vessels of honour, meet for the Master's use. You have this work and these people thus described by the prophet; - "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning," Isa. iv. 2-4. Where this work is done there is a court of equity and justice set up and established in the conscience of a

believer, that he may no more call evil good, and good evil; nor put light for darkness, and darkness for light. The law is put into the heart, and written in the mind; or that which is equivalent to it. Faith being a persuasion in the mind, and the love of God (which love is the fulfilling of the law) in the heart; this, with the righteousness of Christ placed to our account, is called, by the apostle, "the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us," while we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Now, to keep things in order in the breasts of all Gods children, God sets up this court of equity and justice, that we may daily cite ourselves at it; and, upon every arraignment, "if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." Our daily happiness depends upon our attention to this; - "Herein do I exercise myself," says Paul, "to have a conscience void of offence;" for "blessed is the man that condemns not himself in the thing which he allows." To this end God promises the Holy Spirit to guide and assist us in judgment: "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people; and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment; and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate," Isa. xxviii 5, 6. My brother, take notice of the personality of the Holy Spirit in that text; of the personal characters and incommunicable names ascribed to him, and of the train of divine perfections-the Lord of hosts; a crown of glory; a diadem of beauty; a spirit of judgment; and strength to them that turn the battle to the gate. I know the text may be accommodated to religion magistrates, and to persons in the church of Christ-judging them that are within: but these things are often done, and well done, even by men who know nothing savingly of the things which I am writing. The apostle, reprehending some of the church at Corinth, for their unbecoming behaviour at the Lord's table, tells them that, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world," I Cor. xi. 31, 32. Did the

believer attend more to this when conscience reproaches or checks him, and go immediately to God by confession and prayer, disallow and disapprove of what he has done, and not suffer his sin to go either from mind or memory, but importune, and implore pardon and forgiveness; he would soon preveil, and save himself many a bitter cry and restless hour. The Corinthians omitted this, and therefore God took it in hand. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep," I Cor. xi. 30. David neglected this, till his soul got hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; till Nathan set him where he ought to have set himself; namely, on the judgment seat; and, by his wise parable, made him condemn himself, which he ought to have done before. These God judged and chastened, that they might not be condemned with the world.

God not only keeps his court in the believer's heart, and the spirit of judgment there; but his house of correction also. God purges the daughter of Zion and Jerusalem by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning; hence he keeps his "fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem," Isa. xxxi. 9. Those whom God judges he chastens; and this fire and furnace are to purge away the dross and tin. Many a time have I escaped that terrible furnace, by judging and condemning myself. And, though sometimes the process has continued for several days, yet I followed it up, and could not, would not rest, till pardon was obtained, conscience quieted, and peace restored; and sometimes this has been done even in the pulpit; there the word has come and healed me. Whereas some are in the furnace almost all the year round, they hardly ever make straight paths for their feet; but that which is lame is turned out of the way instead of being healed, Heb. xii. 13. "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols," says God, "will I cleanse you." This he does at conversion. But dross and tin still remain, and the furnace is prepared for this; - "I will purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin," Isa. i.

25. The spirit of judgment, and the furnace of affliction, are continually at work in Zion. Cold and lifeless frames; ingratitude for mercies received; yielding to unbelief, and listen to Satan; murmuring and rebelling at the daily cross; deadness in the service of God; being often selfwilled and soon angry; speaking hastily and unadvisedly with our lips; indulging evil and unclean thoughts; being stubborn and sullen under the rod, with many slips and falls into sin. Hence the complaints; - "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead. My people are bent to backslide from me. Hezekiah rendered not again according to the kindness done unto him: nevertheless Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart," 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, 26. Hezekiah judged and humbled himself, and so escaped the furnace: "Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah," verse 26. If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged. Upon every sinful frame and miscarriage God calls us to bar of equity; - "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isa. i. 18. "When these things are strictly attended to, a solid joy and lasting consolation is established in the soul. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world," 2 Cor. i. 12. The testimony of conscience, and the enjoyment of peace, are inseparable; and by attending to these, a man walks with God: "He walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity," Mal. ii. 6.

Some indiscreet ones of the Lord's household are like some men who are embarked in several branches of business, and, being often cast down in their own minds, fearing they are

going back, omit taking stock, lest a right knowledge of their affairs should sink them lower. But God will bring all his children to book; and, if they shun the bar of equity, he will bring them to the bar of judgment, and put fresh wrath and terror into the law, and hold up that hand-writing against them; - "Enter not into judgment with thy servant," says David. "Thou writest bitter things e97 against me," says Job. If we will not judge ourselves, the Lord will judge us; and, if we will not reason with him, he will make us bear the rod, and who hath pointed it; and then the question is, "Hast thou not procured these things to thyself?" Then into the furnace we go, kicking and plunging like a wild bull in a net, full of the fairy and the rebuke of our God; and here he keeps us till we can say from the heart, "Not my will, but thine be done. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness," Micah, vii. 9. By these means is the iniquity of Jacob purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin. Faith gets a fresh discovery of the atonement of Christ, and a fresh application of it by the Spirit. If this is not the case, we come out "like a fool brayed in a mortar." It is not a deliverance from the furnace, but is intended to confound us, and to keep us in fear and suspense; doubting whether the furnace is not going to be heated hotter. When God takes us in hand, and judges and chastens us, we are sure of this furnace; - "I will bring them through the fire, and will purify them as silver is purified, and try them as gold is tried; and make a man more precious than the golden wedge of Opbir." But my dear brother will say, "If all our dross and tin are to be taken away, how comes it to pass that so much still remain? "When I would do good, evil is" always "present with me." No furnace that I have yet been in has ever removed the in-being of it from me." No; if the vessels of mercy were ever thus effectually and perfectly purged, there could be no more conscience of indwelling sin. But, the root that bears gall and

wormwood still remaining, the furnace remains. I can find that the furnace purges me from my evil frames; but not from the in-being of sin, which betrays me into these evil frames. Self is daily to be denied; the war between the law of the mind and that of the members remains, and is sure to be, more or less, directly or indirectly, the daily cross that a child of God has to take up. On account of these things the spirit of judgment remains in Zion. To subdue sin, and to keep grace in the throne, is the cause of this fire and this furnace in Jerusalem. Self-examination is to the believer the business of every day; and every bill that conscience files against us is intended to bring us to the bar; and, upon trial, that which is disallowed, disapproved, bewailed, lamented over, and which is a cause of grief, and which makes us groan for deliverance, is no more we; - "It is not I" that do it, "but sin that dwelleth in me." We are complete in him; without fault before the throne; and clean every whit, notwithstanding these things. And now, my dear brother, in observing these things; - "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, amen." So says yours, in the unity of the faith, and in the bond of love,

W. HUNTINGTON, S.S.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XV.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

To the Son of my Vows.

BELOVED! "the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, even to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills;" and they shall rest upon the head of my son, and "upon the crown of the head of him that is separated from his brethren." But say you, "Who shall ascend into this hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?" Even "he that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully;" he "in whose eyes a vile person is contemned, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord."

A pure heart, is a heart purified by faith; for it is with the heart that man believes unto righteousness. Clean hands, are hands clean from bribes, and from dishonest gain, and from holding lies; and hands that are liberal to the poor of the flock: "Give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you. Such despise the heretic and hypocrite, but they will honour the faithful of the Lord's household.

But the utmost bounds of these everlasting hills are hard to describe; for who can describe the bounds or borders of the heavenly country! However, souls that have hope in their end shall come to the borders of it. This the scriptures witness: "Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from

weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy [the last enemy is death]. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border," Jer. xxxi. 15-17. But I must pull in, or else I shall be carried I know not where. I shall now,

15. Treat of mortification of sin by the Spirit. "For, if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but, if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom. viii. 13. There is a great deal of mortification among the superstitious papists, pharisees, and legal workmongers; but it all stands for nothing, because it is not done through the Spirit; and, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Besides, whipping, thumping the breast, walking bare-footed, fasting, in Lent, abstaining, from animal food, and confining themselves to fish, are human inventions; for "that which goes into a man defiles him not. "And fasting is left to our own option; the Son of man came eating and drinking. It is not the lawful use, but the abuse, of temporal mercies, which the scriptures condemn. Besides, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, are expressly called doctrines of devils, I Tim. iv. 1-3.

This work of mortifying the deeds of the body is called by different names in scripture. Our Lord calls it self-denial: "He that cometh after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

It is called putting off: "Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man."

It is called a crucifying: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

And it is likewise called mortifying the flesh: "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth;

fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth, and lie not one against another; seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds," Col. iii. Here we have a description of the old man, and of the limbs or members of him; and a most formidable monster he is. Now there can be no putting this old man off, but by putting the new man on. Without the law of God in the mind there can be no war against the law in the members, and of course no daily cross. Where there is a renewed self that follows Christ in the regeneration, there will be a denying sinful self that hinders us in the way. The Holy Spirit raises up a new man in us, and then helps us to mortify the old man, that the new man may keep the throne: "Sin shall not have dominion; grace shall reign." Every attempt to mortify sin without the Spirit and grace of God, is like the Ethiopian changing his skin, or the leopard his spots. Satan is not divided against himself. No superstitious modes of mortification, which are invented by Satan, will ever hurt his reign, or destroy his kingdom. Whipping may wound the back, going bare-foot may cripple the feet, and thumping the breast may make it sore. This is not only "neglecting the body" Col. ii. 23, but abusing it; for the old man is still untouched, and of course, unhurt. Such mortification is wickedness; for no man should hate his own flesh, but nourish and cherish it, Ephes v. 29. The body is the workmanship of God, but sin is not. The body was very good till man let sin into it. They punish the poor body, but shew lenity to the old man: These "tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Not the body, therefore, but the deeds of the body, the corruptions of our heart, are to be mortified through the spirit.

1. The Spirit assists us in this work by testifying of Christ to the soul. Every time that faith is favoured with a fresh view of Christ, all grace is in exercise; faith looks and rejoices; love delights in the blessed object; hope abounds at the thoughts

of future enjoyment; patience brings up the rear, in waiting till the change come; humility and meekness sink the soul into less than nothing, at the thoughts of a rebel being made heir to the inheritance of the saints in light. "Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22, 24.

2. By helping our infirmities in prayer, God promises to subdue our iniquities: "He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," Micah, vii. 19. In this way the Spirit helped Jabez: "And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested," I Chron. iv. 10. In this way Paul prevailed against his thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan that was sent to buffet him.

3. The deeds of the body are mortified by our attending to, and delighting our souls in, the influences and operations of the Holy Spirit. When we follow after righteousness, peace, charity, meekness, patience, and faith, setting our minds upon them, and delighting our souls in these things, the old man gets neglected, and withers. "This I say, then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," GaL v. 16.

4. By leading us to love and to delight ourselves in reading and meditating on the word of God. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by

the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doth shall prosper," Psalm i, 1-3. Here we are informed that this delightful work is intended to keep our leaf green, and to make us fruitful, like a tree that brings forth its fruit in due season.

5. The Spirit assists us in mortifying the deeds of the body by his quickening influences upon us, which keep up a keen appetite for spiritual food; such souls thirst for the living God, and long for the courts of the Lord's house; saying, "When shall I come and appear before God?" And such have their promise: Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God: they shall be fat and flourishing, they shall bring forth fruit in old age, to shew that the Lord is upright." A keen appetite and a heavenly banquet employ all the powers of the soul: "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." And, when Christ's fruits are so sweet and delightful to our taste, the devil cannot vend his wares; the old man, with his deceitful lusts, are rather despised and blown upon than relished. This sorrowful meat is set before us when the better sort is withheld, when there is a famine and a compulsive fast. "Can ye make the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days," Luke, v. 34, 35. When these mournful days come, which are but too often, then Satan shews us all the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, and the imaginary happiness of his children, who war after the flesh. These are the days for sour grout, and for filling the belly with the east wind. But Satan never tells us who is to pay the reckoning, nor informs us about an eternal fast, and begging water in hell, when the Lamb and his wife will be bathing in endless pleasures in heaven.

6. The Spirit helps us in mortifying the deeds of the body by exciting us to follow hard after Christ, and by encouraging us to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, to labour hard in order to our abiding sensibly in him, in his favour, in the light of his countenance, in the peace of him, and in the love of him; in the joy of the Lord, and in communion and fellowship with him; and by constant visits to him, and abounding in the work of him: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned," John, xv. 5, 6. This is the most sure way to abound in fruitfulness; the more we commune with the Saviour, the more we savour of his good ointments, and the more we are equipped against Satan and his wiles. When, on the other hand, if this be neglected and not attended to, the branch gets at a distance, till sin, guilt, fear, and shame, stop up the intercourse, and then deadness and barrenness follow; leanness comes into the soul, the heart sinks, the countenance falls, spiritual gifts, abilities, zeal, apparent liveliness, diligence, and all joys, seem to blight under the fire of inbred lust; and all wither away together, unless the Spirit displays his power in such a soul.

7. The deeds of the body are not a little mortified by the fiery trial. When the old man, with his deceitful lusts, are ready to be too much for the believer, insomuch as that the enjoyment of peace and common comforts are not sufficient to keep him, these are withdrawn; at which the soul is alarmed, fatherly anger lowers, fear and terrors follow up and flow in, and a spirit of heaviness succeeds. Doubts and fears about the goodness of our state lay us under great concern; God seems to be gone; every thing looks dismal; and the devil tempts the poor soul that he has no part nor lot in the better inheritance, &c. This sometimes crucifies the old man, with all his lusts and pleasures. This terrible remedy was applied to the

incestuous Corinthian: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," 1 Cor. v. 4,5. Many times, but in a less decree, and not for public scandal, but to mortify the sins of the flesh, which are too strong for the believer in prosperity, does the fiery trial come on, only to subdue his sin and to purge his dross.

These, my dearly beloved son, are some of the kind helps with which the holy and blessed Spirit of God doth assist the believer in mortifying the deeds of the body. And eternal life will most surely attend and succeed this long and lingering toil and labour, which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised therein. Adieu; grace and peace be with thee. Amen and amen,

Says thine affectionate father in Christ Jesus,

W. Huntington

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XVI.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

My dearly beloved Son,

I TOLD thee, in my last, that the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; and that these blessings shall be upon the head of my son. And this shall come to pass "by the God of thy father, who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb." These blessings of heaven are the blessings that will bring us to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth," Psalm cxxi. 1, 2. "But who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart, &c." Psal. xv. The best blessing in heaven is that of being filled with all the fullness of God; the best blessing that lieth under, is the victory Christ obtained over Satan, sin, death, and hell, by his own death and burial; the best of all breasts is the comforts of the Holy Ghost attending the gospel, called the sincere milk of the word; and the best womb is the promise of adoption and life, in which all the children of the promise lay. But I must proceed,

16. To shew the sealing of the Holy Spirit. This is promised to all that are taught of God: "And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, seal the law, among my disciples," Isa. viii. 15. 16. But then what is the testimony? It is the gospel. And what is the gospel? The ministration of the Spirit. But if the ministration of death was glorious, How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8. He therefore, that receives the Spirit and is born again of him, receives our Lord's testimony or witness. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that, which is born of the Spirit

is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness," John, iii. This doctrine Jesus spake; and adds, "We speak that we do know:" and this he testified: "We testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness." This doctrine of the new birth, received in the experience of it, is emphatically called the testimony of Jesus. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," Rev. xix. 10. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Hence it is plain that no man, in an unregenerate state, can be a prophet of the Lord, nor a minister of Christ, nor a testifier, nor a true witness; for he is destitute of the testimony of Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy. Christ sends the Spirit into our hearts, and he is the living testimony and the witness; and we are witnesses of what he does in us through Christ. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning," John, xv. 26, 27. This is the testimony. The bond that binds the testimony is the bond of the covenant; and that bond is the everlasting "love of God" the Father, which is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us," Rom. v. 5. Thus God's covenant, in which he promises that the word of life and the spirit of truth shall never depart from Christ, nor from his seed, are received into the heart of God's elect, and are attended with the sweet blessing of God's eternal love to our souls.

"Seal the law among my disciples." This law is not the moral law; for that was given by Moses, and which Christ came to fulfil: it is another law, that poor miserable sinners, who feel

the plague of their heart, are commanded to wait for; for, as for the moral law, such sinners have got enough of that already, in their soul's cursing and condemning them; and, to encourage them, they are commanded to wait for another. "Hearken unto me, my people! and give ear unto me, O my nation! for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near: my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people: The isles shall wait upon me, and on my arm shall they trust," Isa. li. 4, 5. This law that goes forth is attended with salvation and righteousness; but neither salvation from sin, nor righteousness to justify, are obtained by the works of the moral law. The Lord's arm is to judge the people. It is "the arm of the Lord revealed" that makes a man believe the gospel report; and he that believes is saved with this salvation; and the righteousness of Christ is to and upon all them that believe: they are justified; and that is their judgment which begins at the house of God first. And this judgment of the people is to be a light to them in future; for every preacher that contradicts or denies the justification of God's elect by faith, contradicts the gospel and the Spirit's work: therefore the Lord says, in the same chapter, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20.

Thus, my dear brother, comes the arm of the Lord working faith. Salvation from sin, and justification from all things, attend believing. Such souls have taken their trial; their judgment is over: their cause is decided, and the decision is in their favour: they are pronounced just: and, of course, are passed from death to life, and shall not come into condemnation, John, v. 24. On this arm of the Lord are we to trust, and to say, "In the Lord we have righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24. And this our judgment is to be our future light, to try preachers and their doctrines by; these are to be brought to this law, and to the testimony that we have

received; and if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them: and this is the judgment that we are to make of them. And how few preachers have we that can stand in this judgment, or in a congregation thus made righteous!

Upon believing, we are to be sealed - "Seal the law among my disciples." This law is the law of faith the seal of God never attends the preaching, of any other law. "This would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the preaching of faith?" Gal. iii. 2. Again, "He, therefore, that ministereth the Spirit and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. iii. 5. Not by the law, for that worketh wrath; and all ministers of the law are dead men. "We are not ministers of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

The Holy Spirit of promise belongs to the new covenant and he is the giver of the law of life. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," Rom. viii. 2. Believers in the Son of God, whose hearts are purified, and whose souls are justified; these, and no other, are ministers of the Spirit. No other, however gifted, can convey the golden oil, for that always flows through golden pipes, Zech. iv. 2, 12. Spiritual gifts, such as the gift of tongues, or that of working miracles, or that of prophecy, or that of understanding all mysteries, or of having all knowledge, or that of casting out devils, which is the best of all-are not the things that accompany salvation; men may have all these, and yet be nothing, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, all ye that work iniquity," Matt. vii. 22, 23. Balaam was a worker of iniquity when he prophesied, and so was Judas when he preached and wrought miracles; the love of money, the root of all evil, was in the heart of them

both; nor did they ever love God, or seek his glory; they sought their own glory, and therefore they were not true men, nor was there any righteousness in them. Spiritual gifts have their seat only in the judgment and in the understanding: and the word of God never goes any deeper than into their judgment and their mouth; there they hold the truth, and it is in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. The nobler faculties of the soul are never touches by these gifts, nor does the soul reap any benefit from them. There is no divine power operating on the will, making them willing. He that God makes willing repents, and goes into the vineyard and does the will of his father. Nor is the conscience purged, nor the heart purified, by these things. There is no law written in the mind, nor any holy fire kindled in the affections, to raise them up to the right hand of God where Christ sitteth. If they have any confidence or peace; the former is only presumption, and the latter is kept up by the strong man armed, who remains in possession of his goods unmolested; and all their joys spring from the novelty of the doctrine, and from the operation of oratory on the natural passions. Many of these gifts were bestowed on graceless men in the apostolic age, to raise reports, to send out a sound into the world, to excite curiosity, and to draw people to hear the word, and be witnesses of the power of God; which terminated in the salvation of God's elect, and which was for a witness against others, Matt. xxiv. 14. But, when the elect of God were collected together, and churches formed and endowed with the Holy Ghost, then the year of jubilee was come, and these gifts returned again to the Prince of peace; as was foretold by the prophet; and the men that were endowed with them either went into the world, or into all manner of heresies, and so became the Pests and foes of Zion; just as we see some people do now. "Thus saith the Lord God; If the prince give a gift to any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons; it shall be their possession by inheritance. 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; but his inheritance shall be his sons for them " Ezek. xlvi. 16, 17. Thus we see there is nothing secured to the servant when the year of jubilee comes; but the inheritance of the sons is richly secured. All which is punctually fulfilled by Christ. "Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xxv. 28-30.

But God writes the law of faith in the mind, and the law of love in the fleshly tables of the heart: and where these come, there the year of jubilee is proclaimed, and the law of liberty is published in the soul; and, to make all things sure and secure here, God sets the broad seal of heaven to the work. "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13. Believers are living epistles, and as such they are sealed with an everliving seal. Others may know these epistles and read them; but the choice contents, the mysteries, and the treasure, belong to God, and none else.

Seals are to keep things secret to the real proprietors, who can open them, read and delight themselves with the contents when they please, and seal them up again when they have done, and keep them close from all others. "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse: a spring shut up, a fountain sealed," Song iv. 12. The waters of this fountain are all sacred to the heavenly Bridegroom and his friends; when the Lord chooses that they should spring up in praise and thanksgiving to himself, or flow out to refresh his friends, they are opened, and will keep rising up and running over as long as this

opening or enlargement lasts; and, when shut up and sealed, they always stop.

Sealing is to make things sure. So the Spirit seals the saints, that they may be sure that they belong to the elect of God. Assurance, therefore, attends the seal. "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; as ye know what manner of men we were among you," 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. Assurance, therefore, is to the believer one of the blessed effects of this seal; as it is written, "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places," Isa. xxxii 15-18. The Jewish nation, called a fruitful field, was to be counted a forest; and the Gentile world, which formerly was called a wilderness, was to be turned into a fruitful field, under the out-pouring of the Spirit. Then judgment and righteousness were to remain in this field: peace, quietness, and assurance for ever, are to be the effects of judgment and righteousness. Their habitation is to be a peaceable one: and so it is, for they dwell in the cleft of the rock, that is their habitation - "Let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the tops of the mountains," Isa. xlii. 11. They are to have sure dwellings: and so they have, for they abide in the Son and in the Father - "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," Psal. xcl. . And "he that dwelleth the secret in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," Psal. xci. 1. They are to have peaceable resting-places: they rest in the love of God, in his absolute choice of their persons, in his covenant, in the finished salvation of

Christ, and in the Holy Spirit's work on their own souls; and I know of no resting-places so precious and so quiet as these.

Paul calls circumcision a seal. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised," Rom. iv. 11. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, before ever he was circumcised, that neither he nor his seed might ever glory in the flesh. His circumcision is called no more than a sign of real circumcision; for a true circumcised person is one whose heart God circumcises, that he may love him with all his heart, and with all his soul, that he may live, Deut. xxx. 6. Such, and only such, are truly circumcised - "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. The real seal of true and spiritual circumcision is love; and circumcision in the flesh was a sign of this, and no more. This seal in Abraham's heart, and the sign of it in his flesh, was to assure Abraham that God would adopt (by national adoption) his natural seed, and give unto them the land of promise; which he did; and led then, into it by the hand of Moses and Joshua. And love was a seal to all Abraham's spiritual seed, that he would adopt them by his grace, bless them with faith, righteousness, and life; and that he would give them the heavenly country, and bring them into it by that renowned seed Christ Jesus, in whom all nations should be blessed.

Almost every thing belonging to the believer is sealed; the foundation on which he builds is sealed. "Hymeneus and Philetus, concerning the truth, have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 18, 19. I do understand this passage as some good men do; that by seal here is meant the secret purpose of God, or his prescience. By this foundation the apostle undoubtedly means

the Lord Jesus Christ; as it is written, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 10, 11. Now this foundation standeth sure; as the prophet Isaiah speaks. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16. From this text Paul takes it, and says, with the prophet, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." Now this foundation, which is Christ Jesus, has got the seal of God upon it. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed," John, vi. 27. Christ was sealed with the Holy Spirit; he was distinguished, pointed out, authorized, anointed, commissioned, and sent to be the promised and long looked-for Messiah. He was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb, and sealed by the public descent of the Holy Spirit upon him at his baptism, just before he entered on his public ministry. The miracles that he wrought, and the souls that he converted, were all scriptural evidences of his being sealed and sent of God. Hence the apostle concludes, that though some, who profess the name of Christ, depart from the faith themselves, and overthrow the faith of others; yet the true Messiah, who is the omniscient God, and who, as man, is sealed with the Holy Ghost, must know who his own elect are; he must know whose sins he bore, for whom he died, and who are his own purchased possession: and surely he will never lose what his Father has given him, nor suffer any of those to be plucked out of his hand who are made his charge. The good shepherd may suffer Satan to steal away the wolves, but not the sheep; for the Lord (but none else) knoweth them that are his. Hence it appears that the

believer's foundation is sealed, and so is the believer himself; and his sealing, is said to be in Christ - "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed," Eph. i. 13 And thus God seals both the Saviour and the saved. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God: who hath also sealed us," 2 Cor. i. 21. Those, therefore, that are joined to the Lord are one spirit, for the seal of God is upon them both.

The choice treasures of the covenant also, or the spiritual blessings of the New Testament, are all concealed and hid, under the same seal, from the eyes of all living; nor can any man ever get at them until the Spirit that seals the believer unseals the gospel, and leads the believing mind into it. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. "And the vision of all is become unto you as a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. Therefore, says God, I will proceed to do a marvellous work, and a wonder among this people: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid," Isa. xxix. 11, 14. And this came to pass in the days of Christ - "Father, I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things, from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes: even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," Matt. xi. 25. How many times, before I was twelve months old from my second birth, have I seen men in a pulpit labouring in the dark to get into the treasure of an eminent text which lay hid under the seal, but all in vain. The sweet sense of pardon, of peace, of joy unspeakable and full, of glory; the melting flames under a sense of eternal love; the sweet soul-dissolving sensations enjoyed under the divine flowings of godly sorrow and evangelical repentance, which are drawn forth under the sounding of God's bowels towards us, and the repeated discoveries of his love to us in Christ Jesus; the heavenly

sense and divine glee that spring up by the Spirit, under the impressions that attend the divine presence being about our path and about our bed: the sweet rays of divinity that often appear in the word, ploughing up the deep mysteries, and leading the enlightened mind, by a glorious radiance, out of one mystery into another, establishing the soul in the glorious harmony that appears in the word; when crooked things are made straight, rough places plain, and apparent discords are made to harmonize; the delightful and soul-enriching thoughts of poor worms being indulged with access to God, and with boldness, freedom, and familiarity with him; and to hold communion and fellowship both with the Father and the Son; and, at the same time, to see the word of God tally with all the divine teachings, influences, and operations of the most Holy Spirit of God upon us; and to be sensibly under the divine smiles of heaven; to be acquainted with the private thoughts of God's heart, which are thoughts of good and not of evil, to give us an expected end! How many transient visits! how many transforming views! what sympathy does the God of all grace discover to us in trouble! what succour does he afford! what support does the heart feel in a trying hour! how sensibly does he rent the heavens and come down to our relief! Isa. lxiv. 1. He admits our hopes within the veil, and our affections to his own right hand, where Christ sitteth. His blessed presence, when he shines upon the soul, casts a divine lustre upon the whole work of his hands; his brilliant perfections shine in both globes; "his glory covers the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise," Hab. iii. 3. The astonishing condescension of God, in stooping so low to visit us, makes us less than nothing. The distance and disproportion between God and such worms appear to be more, if possible, than infinite; and yet charity, that believeth all things, says, at the same time, and that with the witness on earth and the record of heaven, "I dwell in God, and God dwells in me." The divine hints dropped for faith to catch, the mysterious leadings of his providence, the goodness that passes daily before us, and the

mercy and truth that follow us; the watchful eye of God upon us; the most minute circumstances which are so sensibly observed by him; the deaf ear that he turns to all our exclamations against ourselves; the divine approbation; the love, the paternal embraces, which are forced upon us, which we, when self-abased, coyly shun and try to put away, judging ourselves unworthy his clemency! These things, and thousands more, which my poor soul has enjoyed, and with which the word of God abounds, are all couched under the seal; which no natural man, however bright his parts, or however profound his learning, can touch, much less discover, and bring to the light. Natural men in the ministry are broken cisterns, wells without water, clouds without rain, lamps without oil, and a cruse without salt. One dead discourse from a minister of the letter is sufficient to cast the most lively soul into a deep sleep, to lay the most enlarged saint in irons, and to make a watered garden like a barren heath. Spiritual lethargy, legal bondage, and soul-beggary, are all that ever I got from such ministers; and I have formerly had enough of this hard fare. They turn a house of prayer into a prison, and freeborn citizens into slaves.

The believer, as a living epistle, has all the contents of God's laws written upon his heart, sealed and kept secret from the world; for the men of the world can neither see them nor believe them, though he declares them. He is sealed with the assurance of faith, which fixes his heart. He is sealed with the love of God in Christ Jesus, which is his circumcision, and a sure sign and seal of the righteousness of Christ being his; for love casteth out fear, and believeth all things. Christ, his foundation, is sealed; the covenant, and all its rich contents, which are hid from the world, are sealed also, and made sure to him; but not concealed, nor hid from him.

Every wholesome truth, promise, or doctrine of Christ; every reproof or rebuke that gives instruction; together with all the

cautions, warnings, and secret counsels, which are given by the great prophet of the church; are clothed with power, impressed upon the soul, and fixed, as with a seal, upon his heart. "For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep filleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealet their instruction; that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man," Job, xxxiii. 14-16. Without this sealing Satan and his heretics would soon steal away the word sown in the heart; as we often see in men of the greatest abilities, when the word is only received in the understanding and in the judgment. These are often seduce, and led to believe the greatest absurdities; and so would the elect themselves, were it not for the seal which attends the word. Truth, when sealed, makes the conscience free; and such souls set to their seal that God is true. Truth, then, reaches the affections; it is received in the love of it. It is the word of healing that makes us whole; the word of faith which makes us believe; the word of power which makes us obey; the word of wisdom which makes us wise unto salvation; the word of health which cures all our spiritual diseases, attended with the abundance of peace; a word of light to guide our feet into the way of peace. It is the word of righteousness which makes us just; and the word of reconciliation which makes us friends. It is the promise of adoption which makes us sons; the promise of life which makes us heirs; and the promise of victory through grace which makes us more than conquerors. All this, and much more, attends the sealing of our instruction. Hence the impossibility of the elect being finally deceived. Satan tries hard at the young believer, and sends the most wise and subtle servants in all his interest to do the same: but the young believer, just verged out of his bondage, and delighting himself in his liberty, and living upon little else but his divine comforts; and finding that these heretics bring nothing to his mind but confusion and bondage, which strip him of his sweet

morsels; he soon begins to be afraid of them; he shuns them, and suspects them to be thieves and robbers: and he is quite right, for they are nothing else. And the Holy Spirit continues to revive and renew the work; this brings the soul again and again forth to the light. And every time the Lord shines into his heart the impostor is more and more discovered; while he feels his own heart the more strengthened, grounded, and settled in the truth.

By this seal the image of God is impressed; and this is done upon the soul by the Spirit, while Jesus Christ is exhibited to the enlightened understanding, and to the eye of faith: as it is written, "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. Various are the views that believers have of Christ Jesus, while the Holy Spirit operates and makes this change, or impresses this image on the soul. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and Manoah, all saw him; for he appeared to each of these, and many more. Some saw him as an angel of the Lord, very terrible. Some in a human form, as Joshua; and in the clouds, as Job. Some as a flame of fire, as Moses. Some in suffering circumstances, as Isaiah. Others in his priestly habit, as Ezekiel and Daniel. Others in a war appearance, with garments dipped in blood, and upon a red horse, as John and Zechariah. Sometimes as the Ancient of days and venerable Judge, with his "hair like the pure wool." Some upon his judgment-seat, as Daniel. And others upon his glorious throne, as King of Zion, and above the cherubim, as Ezekiel. He was seen also of Paul; and since that by Mr. Hart, and by me also, and by many others in the present day, who have seen him in his own light by the eye of faith, and, with the enlightened understanding as man in suffering circumstances upon the cross, and shining, at the same time, in the fountain of eternal light. O most precious, most wonderful, and soul-transforming view! Others see him in the

light of the word. The word is attended with light and life. The Spirit testifies of Christ to the soul; at which time "the Sun of righteousness arises with healing in his wings;" which vision is promised to all them that fear his name, Mal. iv. 2; and it is a promise of gospel times. And this is attended with joy unspeakable and full of glory. - "Arise, shine forth; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising, Isa. lx. 1, 3. Which promise will be fulfilled, and be found to be true, as long as there is a chosen vessel among the Gentiles to be called. And, although we have many preachers who deny all vision, and of course all supernatural light, yet we know that such cannot be burning and shining lights, because they deny the light; nor ministers of Christ; for he makes "his ministers a flaming fire," Psalm civ. 4. Nor are they children of light, nor of the day, but of the night and of darkness; for, if what they assert be true, there is nothing but damnation in all the country: for God says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," Prov. xxix. 18. Such blind guides have nothing to guide them but the light of nature; "They speak a vision of their own heart," Jer. xxiii. 16. To deny all vision is to deny God, who is light, and all knowledge of him. God promises that all his children shall know him; but how? God gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of himself in the face of Jesus. It is to deny all the sure word of prophecy; for this is "a light shining in a dark place." Such deny the title of the saints, and all the good work within; for they are called "the children of light, and children of the day." They deny the path of the just, which shines more and more. They deny the salvation of God; for that is "a lamp that burneth." They deny the lamp and the oil of the wise virgins; yea, and of the foolish too; for how could their lamps go out if they had no sort of light? They deny all joy to the righteous; for "the light of the righteous rejoiceth." Such men deny the scriptures of truth; for they are "a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path." They deny all preaching the gospel; for that is

sowing "light for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." They deny the being of God in his church; for "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." It strips a real servant of God of every name God gives him. How can he be a seer, a prophet, or a watchman, if he be stone-blind? How can he be a burning or a shining light, a flame of fire, a candle on a candlestick, or a star in the Lord's right hand, if there be no light in him? They must be blind watchmen and dumb dogs; for what dogs will bark unless they see a stranger, or hear a noise? And just such blind watchmen are all preachers who deny vision; for all supernatural light, which is above and beyond the light of nature, is vision whether it shine into the heart, as in Paul, or into the head, as in Balaam; whether it shine in the word of God, or in the face of Jesus Christ. Paul calls his the heavenly vision. Such men deny the dexterity of Satan; for Paul says that he is transformed into an angel of light. Yea, more; such preachers even deny their own deception, and the influence that they are under; for Paul tells us that even impostors, or ministers of Satan, are "transformed as the ministers of righteousness," 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15. In this account Satan aims to imitate an angel by his shining; and his servants to imitate the ministers of Christ by walking in the light of their own fire, and in the sparks that they have kindled.

The image of God, which the Spirit impresseth on the soul when it is sealed, stands in light, knowledge, glory, love, righteousness, and true holiness. And such souls shine as lights in the world, for they are converted; and real conversion is turning me 1235 n "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God."

This sealing us is said to be unto the day of redemption. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. iv. 30. The day of redemption, here spoken of, appears to be the resurrection, which is the

redemption of the body from the grave. As it is written, "Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," Rom. viii. 23. Now our sealing is the pledge and earnest of this. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession," Eph. i. 13, 14. In these words the church of God is called a possession, as it is the Lord's portion. "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." This portion is called the purchased possession, because it is bought with a price - "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," Acts, xx. 28. The whole of this possession was given by the Father to Christ, and he laid down his life for it; and the price that he paid purchased the whole body and soul: of all which he will lose nothing; no, not so much as a single hair, "There shall not an hair of your head perish. And this is the Fathers will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day," John, vi. 39, 40. This purchased possession is, at the present time, strangely scattered about. Many souls, called "the spirits of just men made perfect," are now in heaven. Two of the bodies of the saints, as well as their souls, are in heaven also, even Enoch and Elijah. The bodies of thousands of the saints are now in the dust, which their souls in faith have left behind them to sleep in hope. Some part of the purchase is now in a militant state; another part lies in the ruins of the fall: some in the wombs of women; some in the loins of men; and some in non-existence. But, at the first resurrection, they must be all collected together; all whose names are written in heaven, the whole church of the first-born. And this will be the grand convocation, or "the general assembly," Heb. xii. 23.

Now the apostle tells us that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit unto this day of redemption; which shews that none but sealed persons will rise in the resurrection of the just. None but those that are of faith, and who, upon thus believing are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, can rise in the first resurrection; for they, and only they, are blessed and holy persons. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power," Rev. xx. 6. Being of faith, they are blessed with faithful Abraham; and, being, sealed with the Holy Spirit, they are holy. Hence this sealing us to the day of redemption is to assure us of a part and lot in this first resurrection; it is a pledge and an earnest of it. It is the Holy Spirit sanctifying and sealing of us that makes us meet to partake of it. And this is a truth, that the Holy Ghost never will quicken and change any one mortal body, and fashion it like unto the glorious body of Christ, unless he dwell in it, and make it his temple in this life. "Know ye not (saith the apostle) that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost? Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." And this temple is holy; and, being blessed and holy, it must rise in the resurrection of the just; and truly blessed and holy shall it be when it rises. Christ raised up the temple of his own body; and the Holy Ghost will raise up the Church, which is his temple, and fashion it like unto the glorious body of Christ. To these things, which are not seen, must we look. This, and what follows upon it, is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. "So run that ye may obtain."

In the path of the just that leads to life, and in this race that is set before us, and in hope of the prize, this leaves me-faint, yet pursuing.

Ever yours in undissembled love,

William Huntington

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XVII.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

To my own Son in the faith,

BELOVED, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir up thy pure mind by way of remembrance, that after my decease these things may remain with thee. Meditate upon these weightier matters; give thyself wholly up unto them, that thy profiting may appear to all. "Do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry." Bring them off from their old sandy bottom, from all trust in the flesh, and from their sour lees of legal righteousness. Discharge truth in all its naked force and naked simplicity; and observe and watch its operations, its fruits and effects, and thou wilt find it sufficient, in the hand of the Spirit, to subdue the most stubborn, to change the most obdurate, to silence a gainsayer, and to furnish the man of God for every good word and work. But I shall proceed,

16. To treat of the Holy Spirit as an earnest of the inheritance. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," 2 Cor. v. 4, 5. The apostle here calls our earthly bodies a "tabernacle" which is a

portable dwelling, set up, taken down, and removed, just as it pleaseth the owner of it to do. This tabernacle, as it now stands, is not to continue, because of the misery which attends the inhabitants of it in its present state; "We that are in it do groan, being burdened." There is in it the plague of leprosy, and therefore it must be pulled down. There is a body of sin, a body of death in it; and this has made it corruptible, and corruption is the seed of death; "It is appointed unto all men once to die;" God has made it "subject to this vanity, not willingly;" for death, abstractedly considered, is not welcome to us, "but God hath subjected it in hope." Death, disarmed of its sting, which is sin; and of the strength of sin, which is the law; and of the curse of the law, which is wrath and damnation; all which attend death as a penal evil: death, being disarmed of these, it is not death, nor the king of terrors; but the shadow of death, and the gate to life; for all things are ours, "whether life," or death, or things present, or things to come," 1 Cor. iii. 22.

2. The apostle calls these our earthly bodies "clothes," which a man puts on in the morning. So we come into this world with these corruptible bodies; and, as a man puts off his clothes at night and goes to bed, so there is a night coming on (in which no man can work) for the Lord's servants, when they shall be paid they who labour under the cross, in faith and love, and in self-denial, at which time they will put off their clothes, go to rest, or fall asleep in Jesus. But this is not all that hope is conversant about. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." In the resurrection morning, when the marriage of the Lamb is to be consummated, these bodies of ours shall not only be put on again upon our souls, but these corruptible bodies themselves "shall put on incorruption, and these mortal bodies shall put on immortality;" and this is to be done "when he who only hath immortality shall appear." This will be the finishing stroke to the new creation, and is the last transforming view

that we are looking for. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Tit. ii. 13. We have already put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have walked in him; namely, by putting on his righteousness, the garments of salvation, and the covering of the Lord's Spirit. But at this time we shall put him on with a witness, and that for good and all. The Holy Spirit will, quicken our mortal bodies, and infuse divine life throughout every member of them, "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear." The Spirit will purge away, not only all our sins, which is called changing our vile bodies," Phil. iii. 21, but will eradicate all corruptible matter, for incorruption shall be put on. We shall then "know the love of Christ which (in this state) passeth knowledge," and "be filled with the fullness of God," Eph. iii. 19. The church is Christ's body, the fullness of him, all dwelling in him; and he will fill them all, be all fullness to them, and be all in them, Eph. i. 23. Our bodies will not only be purged from all their gross and corruptible matter, which is now a clog and a weight, but they shall be spiritual; "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." This dead weight shall give place to an "eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. It shall be raised in power; power to bear this eternal weight of glory, and power to bear the sight of seeing God the Father; for "the pure in heart shall see God," Matt v. 8. "In that day I shall shew you plainly of the Father." In this power the body will be a fit companion for the soul; it will be vigorous, alert, and for its agility, as the angels of God in heaven," Matt. xxii. 30. Hence, in the delightful service of God, there will be no fainting, no weariness, though we shall "sing salvation to God and the Lamb for ever and ever," Rev. v. 13.

We are to be led by the Lamb to the fountain of living waters, Rev. vii. 17; and, the soul and body both being spiritual, we shall "drink of the river of God's pleasure," Psalm xxxvi. 8; which will fill us with divine fullness as fast as we can pour it forth in blessings, praises, and thanksgivings; together with

the ascriptions of "power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," to God and the Lamb, Rev. v. 12.

Our bodies will be raised in glory. I think our bodies will be fiery, or have a fiery appearance. Which may be gathered from the following passages: "Our bodies," says Paul, "are to be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ." "We," says John, "shall be like him; we shall awake with his likeness." And the glorified humanity of Christ is thus described: "And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it; from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the fire, and it had brightness round about," Ezek. i.27. Divine light will shine through them with such a radiance of celestial glory as will equal, and in many thing, exceed, all the luminaries of heaven. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear," Matt. xiii. 43.

At this time also, and at the consummation of the marriage of the Lamb, the spouse will be "perfumed with all the powders of the merchant," Song, iii. 6. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," Isa. xxvi. 19. The odour of the Lord's sacrifice, with which the church will be perfected, the sweet savour of her glorifying grace with which she will be adorned, will be wonderful. All her Lord's "garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces," Psal. xlv. 8. And this divine fragrance will be spread all over her: "We are a sweet savour unto God" now, 2 Cor. ii. 16; but how much more then?

All the priests that attended in the holy place, near the holy of holies, were perfumed, Exod. xxx. 35, 37; much more so in the holy of holies, eternal in the heavens. Sanctifying grace

makes the church a "bed of spices" now, Song, vi. 2; then what will glorifying, grace do? Prayers in the hearts of believers are golden vials full of odours," Rev. v. 8; but perfect praises in heaven must exceed them. As perfumed, God accepts us in his dear Son in this life; and in Christ we shall ever remain a sweet savour. "I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries," Ezecl. xx. 41. "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," Isaiah, xxvi. 19.

We have reason to believe that Adam was very handsome, as he was "the figure of him that was to come," Rom. v. 14; who is said to be "fairer than the children of men," Psalm xlv. 2. It is said of David, that "he was ruddy, of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to; prudent in matters, and a comely person, and that the Lord was with him," I Sam. xvi. 12, 18. And no doubt but Christ was much like him in person. All defects and deformity came into the world with and by sin; and, when this evil cause is removed, the disagreeable effects will cease: "He that is perfect shall be as his master," Luke, vi, 40.

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," Eph. v. 27. All superfluity, deformity, or deficiency, rendered a Levite under the law unfit for the priesthood, or service of the sanctuary; nor will it be admitted in the true tabernacle above. There will be no spot of sin, no wrinkle of old age, nor the scar of old wounds, nor any such thing as deformity. Leah will appear without tender eyes, Jacob without halting, and Paul without deformity or temptation, and Timothy without his bilious complaint. The church shall be "perfect in one," John, xvii. 23; and no imperfection can stand before God. Christ was a lamb without

blemish and without spot, and "we shall be like him," and "see him as he is."

There will be a perfection of sight. The remains of the old veil hangs heavy upon us in this state; it is a darkness that is often felt; the dismal gloom upon the mind keeps us from looking to the end of things, and from seeing them as they really are: "We look through a glass darkly," 1 Cor. xiii. 12, and see by the mirror of faith. Faith is the visive faculty of the heaven-born soul, which, like the moon, borrows all her light from the sun; for, if the Sun of righteousness shine not, if the Lord's countenance be not lifted up, we are walking in darkness, and have no light; we can only trust in the name of the Lord in the dark, and stay ourselves upon an absent God: "With thee is the fountain of light: in thy light shall we see light," Psalm xxxvi. 9. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But, when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8. And this sweet sight in the face of Jesus Christ is the ultimate end of hope, the fullness of expectation, and the superabounding banquet of all holy and heavenly desires, which shall fill them even to satiety. There we shall see face to face, and know as we are known.

We shall see poor Adam and Eve, our first parent, to whom the first promise was revealed; and Abel, the protomartyr, the first victim to satanic rage and cruelty; and Noah, the second stock, the first ship-builder and navigator, who went a twelve-month's voyage in a sea without a shore; and the venerable Abraham and Sarah, our mystic parents, whose bodies for many years were so barren, and their faith so fruitful, as even to conceive and enjoy many nations at once. There we shall see Isaac, the grand type and figure of the mystic birth of all

the promised seed; and Jacob the mighty wrestler, who overcame both heaven and earth when he had but one leg to stand upon. There will be poor peevish Jonah, well-pleased, and delighting himself in his God, after maintaining a strong contest with him both by sea and land. There we shall see Melchizedek, who is set before us as an evangelical priest, a worshipper of God in the Spirit, and who, with respect to genealogy, has neither father nor mother, birth nor death. There we shall see Peter, without his sword, among the faithful confessors; Mary Magdalene among the wise virgins, and David among the company that were not defiled with women; Paul, also, that unparalleled champion and indefatigable labourer; John the beloved disciple; Mary, also, who anointed the Lord; the blessed mother of the second Adam; and Lazarus, who, though raised a second time, yet is a sharer in the first resurrection.

Adam knew Eve and her origin as soon as she was brought to him; Peter and John knew Moses and Elias through in a glorified state: but knowledge in heaven will be perfect, and therefore far exceed all attainments in this life.

There will likewise be an end for ever to all grief and sorrow, and to all the causes of them. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst no more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any beat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," Rev. vii. 13-17, These happy creatures came out of great tribulation, all

sorts of trials, troubles, temptations, and persecutions; which is the common lot of all God's family. The robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb were their bodies, with which their souls were clothed. Their happiness is, that God dwells among them; that they are before his throne, and engaged in his continual service, being filled with love to him and delight in him.

They hunger no more after righteousness, after life, nor after the word, being perfectly filled. They thirst no more after comfort, after the new wine of the kingdom, nor after the living God, being filled with all his fullness. Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. The sun of persecution and temptation, which comes because of the word, and which offends and withers so many unsound professors, shall smite them no more, nor any treat. Not the fiery darts of Satan, nor the fire of lust, nor a fiery law, nor the flames of spiritual and carnal jealousy, nor the wrath and rage of cruel men; for the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them with his fullness of glory, and lead them' to living fountains of waters; namely, to God the Father; saying, "Behold me and the children which God hath given me," Heb. ii. 13. And God, Father, Son, and Spirit, are the living fountains of living waters; the fountain of life, love, joy, peace, goodness, glory, and majesty. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, being presented unto the Father by Christ; and, being, cordially accepted, embraced, and blessed by him, all fear, sorrow, and grief, and the causes of them, must be for ever banished, and of course all fears and tears about failing of his grace, common short of the promised rest, and all dread about an eternal separation from him, are for ever wiped away. And so it must be; for "there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads," Rev. xxii. 3, 4. These, my dearly beloved son, are some of the things which we have in

view: "Faith is the substance of" these "things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."

Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit," 2 Cor. v. 5. God hath loved us, chosen us in Christ, ordained us to life by him, pre-adopted us, and predestinated us to future sonship and heirship, and to the enjoyment of this inheritance: "that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory," Rom. ix. 23. He hath also reconciled us and redeemed us by Christ; he hath called us, quickened us, justified us, and sanctified us, regenerated and renewed us, tried and purged us; giving us faith, the substance of these things and the evidence of them, and begotten us to a lively hope and expectation of them; and has given us the seal of secrecy, the seal of surety, the seal of ratification and confirmation; and led us to subscribe to the seal with the hand of faith, which has felt them; and to set our hearty amen to these things, and our acquiescence with God in them, and in which we believe and confess that God is true. And, to make things sure to all the seed, he hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.

This earnest of the Spirit is likewise called "the first-fruits of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 23. The end of the world is called the harvest, when the angels will reap the world and gather it, the elect of God, and those who have sown to the Spirit in this life "shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Glory in heaven is the great and grand harvest, when the master and Lord of the harve 1625 st will gird himself and come forth and serve the reapers," Luke, xii. 37; when "he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together," John, iv. 36.

Now, by the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, the first-fruits of this blessed harvest are produced.

Christ is clearly seen by the enlightened understanding and by the eye of faith; and this is an earnest to us that we shall be like him, and see him as he is.

We see "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" and this is an earnest to us, that all that are pure in heart shall see God.

Faith, which the Spirit produces, is the substance of things hoped for. To be found in Christ, and in his righteousness, is what we have in hope, and faith is the substance of this; for Christ, the object of faith, dwells in the heart of all believers.

"Faith is the evidence of things not seen:" it is a clear and perfect proof both of our sonship and heirship. - "We are all (manifestly) the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus: and, if sons, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

Faith is an undoubted certainty which silences all misgivings of heart; it is assurance itself, that persuades the mind, and stays it on the object believed in; it discovers future things to the believer, brings them near, and embraces them, and realizes them to the soul.

It believes in divine life, and applies it; it believes in atoning blood, and purifies the heart by it; it believes in an imputed righteousness, and puts it on; it believes in the promised comforts of the Spirit; and "we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

It believes in the love of God, and receives it in the enjoyment of it. and works by it both to God and to his children. And what shall I say more to my son? for time would fail me to tell of half that I have felt.

Heaven is a place of rest; and we that believe do enter into rest.

Heaven is a place of peace; and, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

With joy and rejoicing shall the church be brought to Christ, and shall enter into the king's palace; and God fills us now with joy and peace in believing.

Heaven is a place of endless day; and the path of a just man, who lives by faith, shines more and more till that perfect day takes place.

The gift of God promised in heaven is eternal life; and "he that believeth hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation."

The inheritance above is endless glory; and even this begins in this life: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of God is risen upon thee." This fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

All these, my beloved son, are the foretastes of eternal fullness, the streams of grace (which make glad the city) flowing from the river of divine pleasure, the head of which is God, the fountain of life; for "unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again," Eccl. i. 7.

All these worketh the Holy Spirit of God through Christ the mediator, from whose fullness all grace is communicated to us, and through whom all grace flows back again, even to its own proper fountain.

What rich security is this, that the heirs of promise might have a strong consolation! God, with his own finger, writes his laws on the fleshly tables of our hearts, and puts them into our minds. He binds up the testimony in the bond of love to us; then he seals the law among his disciples with a comfortable assurance; yea, more, the Spirit himself is the seal. He is the

divine impress of heaven, he stamps the divine image upon us, he affixes the truth and power of it, he makes and maintains a melting impression on the soul, he confirms and establishes the heart, he is the attestation and the ratification of all to us. In his quickening, enlivening, enlarging, and cheering operations, he is the pledge of the first resurrection. In his operations of love, joy, light, and comfort, he is the first-fruits of the glorious harvest; and in all these the earnest of the future inheritance. Well may Paul say, "It is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed."

Matters thus settled between Father, Son, and Spirit; revealed and made known, ratified and confirmed, by the triune God to his chosen and beloved family; testified by God's hand-writing upon our hearts, sealed with the broad seal of heaven, and a pledge and earnest given: O this stands faster than mountains of brass! O the immutability of his counsel, the stability of his covenant, the security and safety of the blessed inheritance!

An earnest differs nothing from the whole lump in quality, only in quantity. The first-fruits are the same as all the rest of the harvest, only they are a very small part of an abundant crop: whether, therefore, we glean a handful (like Ruth) or reap a sheaf (like Joseph in his dream), it will at last terminate in a barnful. "Gather the wheat into my barn," Matt. xiii. 30. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be all glory, might, majesty, dominion, and power, both now and for ever." So be it, so be it; says

The chiefest of all sinners,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XVIII.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

Dearly beloved and longed-for, my joy, and the crown of any rejoicing; standfast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

METHINKS I hear thee crying out, "Hast thou but one blessing, O my Father?" Yes, my son, I have many blessings. I have as many spiritual and temporal blessings from my God, and as many curses from hypocrites in Zion, as most men living; and the latter is the consequence of the discriminating effects of the former. "Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice," Psalm cix. 28. I shall now proceed, to take notice of the different distributions and influences of the Holy Spirit. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations [or ministries], but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all," I Cor. xii. 4-6. You see here the different divine names which the Holy Ghost takes to himself. In the distribution of his gifts he styles himself the Spirit; in his different ministries, the Lord; and in his different operations he styles himself God.

Now these his ministerial gifts the holy apostle mentions - "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to

another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues," 1 Cor. 8-10. There is nothing in all these gifts that will infallibly assure or secure everlasting life in heaven to the recipients of them. The kingdom of God stands not in word; neither in the word of wisdom, nor in the word of knowledge. We see many wise enough in the word that were never made wise unto salvation, or who never had the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins; and therefore, however wise they may be in the word, they are ignorant of their own hearts, and of the all-conquering grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Nor doth the word of knowledge, or the greatest gifts of knowledge in the word, secure the heavenly inheritance. "Knowledge puffeth up." Satan knows more of God, of the works of creation, of the efficacy of divine grace in sinners hearts, by his being so often cast out by it; yea, and of the scriptures of truth, the glories of heaven, and of the pains of hell; than all the natural men in the world, put them all together; and yet the weakest believer in all the church of God knows more than he. Men may have all knowledge, and understand all mysteries, and yet be nothing, I Cor. xiii. 2.

Nor is the faith here spoken of, that faith which purifies the heart and works by love; but miraculous faith, or the faith of miracles; which many have had to whose heart it never applied the atonement, nor put on an imputed righteousness; nor did it ever embrace the Son of God, much less bring him into the heart, and give him a dwelling-place there. It is like a faith upon sight, which many had, who, "when they saw his miracles, believed." It is temporary, and for a time - "these for a while believe, and then fall away." This faith has its seat in the judgment and understanding, but not in the heart. It deals with the power of God in its operations, but not with the loving-kindness and tender mercy of God in Christ Jesus. And this power is put forth in working miracles on others, when it does

nothing towards the salvation of the possessor of it. And, as it deals not with the loving-kindness and tender mercy of God in Christ, it is nothing in the grand business of salvation; for, "though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing," I Cor. xiii. 2.

Nor is there any salvation in the gifts of healing; such as healing the sick, the lame, the blind, the leper, or the lunatic, by casting out devils. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity," Matt. vii. 22, 23.

Nor is the gift of tongues, or the interpretation of them, any of the things which accompany salvation. This gift has its seat only in the understanding and judgment, and is played off from the tongue; but never reaches the heart nor the affections. Though some value themselves very much upon these things, yet no man will affirm that either Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, can purge the conscience of a guilty and filthy sinner. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," 1 Cor. xiii. 1. All these things have a tendency to lift men up; unless by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and by his humbling operations, they are counterbalanced, as they were in Paul and others. "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace," Heb. xiii. 9.

"There are differences or administration, but the same Lord." The Lord the Spirit administers not only different gifts to men, but grace; he administers strength to the weak in faith, increaseth it in them that have no might, making their strength equal to their day. He administers the word to the preachers of it, and light to see into it; wisdom rightly to divide it; boldness to declare it faithfully, without fearing the face of any;

zeal in the delivery of it, with lively frames to set off the sweetness and excellency of it, and power to enforce, it; and that with the greatest confidence, from an inward testimony of interest in it. And, without this divine influence of the Spirit, the pulpit would be little better than a pillory, and the world of the ministry quite a slavery; as we see in too many who are obliged to have recourse to country tales and old wives' fables, in order to fill up the time; or else to set up some supposed rival as a scare-bird, and call him an Antinomian, and so belabour him, just to help out; which is done for want of matter, and for want of the divine aid of the Holy Spirit. To these men I have contributed not a little, in thus helping them out at a dead lift.

The Holy Spirit administers different power and authority to men; furnishing some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some evangelists, some teachers, and some to be helps; enabling each in his place to be of some use to the body, the church; that the whole, by the joints of one faith, and of one and the same judgment, and by the bands of love and peace, may be bound together; and that the whole body, holding fast the head, may have nourishment communicated from the head of influence (by the Spirit) to every part of the body; so knitting it together that it may increase in grace and in number with the increase of God. See Col. ii. 19. Every one of these different gifts are of use in the mystical body, when each, with diligence and affection, fills his place. "For, as we have many members in one body, and all numbers have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophesy, let us prophesy according to the proportion [or analogy] of faith; or ministry, let us wait our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love

be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good," Rom. xii. 4-9. Thus doth the Holy Spirit administer different gifts and abilities, and assign men to different work in the church of God, to edify the body, and to keep it together, that there should be no schism in the body, or no renting and dividing the affections of one member from another. And each of these is useful in his place; so that "the hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee; nor the foot to the hand, I have no need of thee." Now, as there are differences of administrations, but all these by the same Lord the Spirit, so "there are diversities of operations; but it is the same God which worketh all in all," I Cor. xii. 6.

The divine operations here spoken of are not those which are put forth in persons on whom miracles are wrought; for these, in the general, are only displays of divine power; but the operations of the Spirit in the souls of God's chosen are divers. And the infusing of grace into us, in forming the new man in us, and in keeping and preserving him when formed, requires divers operations. Though the new man, the whole work of grace, is produced at once, at the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the heart (he comes as a spirit or all grace, and a spirit of all supplications); yet it is not perceptible to us but by degrees; nor do I suppose it was, either to the thief upon the cross, who died almost as soon as the new man was formed, nor to the child of Jeroboam, though the work was complete in them both. The first thing that we discover of it is light; this was the first thing that appeared in the old creation, and so it is in the new. And even this entitles us to sonship, though we cannot claim it; such are children of light, and God is the father of lights.

The next thing that is felt is life; and, when this quickening influence is spread through the soul, a mighty famine ensues; we cannot feed upon our former lusts and pleasures; these sweet morsels become bitter, and our former glory in the

pleasures or sin becomes our shame. The famine increasing upon us, and former gratifications becoming nauseous, to work we go to get some entertainment (or satisfaction) from our own performances, and labour hard to fill our belly with these husks which the swine can eat; but the poor hungry soul can find no satisfaction in these. However, there is now and then some strange emotions within, and some softening sensations felt; some flying tidings are brought to the mind by the sudden occurrences of different passages of scripture; and often transient beams of light, attended with a sense of soul-dissolving love; but their influences are so sudden, that they are gone before we can hardly relish them, which makes the appetite the keener.

But, when the Holy Spirit discovers Christ to us with all his finished work, and leads the soul forth in faith to embrace and solace itself in his dying love, the new creature comes forth with all its beauty. But we are so taken up with the love and excellency of Christ, and with the unspeakable joys and consolations of the Holy Spirit, that we know but little of the new man; though this would be the only time to observe him, when he is so lively, and the old man appears to be quite banished. But nothing of this can be attended to till spiritual desertions make us doubt and fear; and then matters are examined and sifted over in order to support and arm ourselves against the attacks of Satan. The sad struggles of the old man, also, make us watch and seek, in order to find out the new one; but it is hard to describe him - the head of the new man is knowledge; he is renewed in this, Col. iii. 10.

His eyes are the illuminating anointings of the Holy Spirit giving us an understanding, Rev. iii. 18; 1 John, ii. 27. Without this he sees nothing.

The hands of him are faith and the assurance of it; with these he holds fast, and will not let go, Song iii. 4; Gen. xxxii. 26.

His feet are the actings of faith under the influence of the Spirit; if these are continued he can walk, either upon the waves of the sea, or upon the dry land; but, if these fail, he either halts or sinks; and, whichever it be, in he goes; nor will he venture out again unless the sun shine: either mercy, love, or divine power, must influence him and draw him, before he will attempt to stir abroad again. "We walk by faith" and feeling "not by sight," 2 Cor. v. 7. I say by feeling: for faith stands in the power of God, and it moves in the same; for we are kept up, and kept on, by the power of God through faith; and without this power there is no walking safely. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe," Psalm cxix. 117.

Righteousness is the robe of this new man, and true holiness his glorious adorning: "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 24. This new man, that I am speaking of, is of divine origin, and of heavenly extraction; he is born of the most Holy Spirit of God. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John, iii. 6. This principle of grace, which is called the new man, and is promised in the Old Testament under the names of "a new heart and a new spirit," is that which Peter alludes to when he says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter, i. 4. The apostle says that this new man is created after the image of him that created him; and therefore it is a creature, and a very holy creature, being created in righteousness.

The heart of this new man is love, for love influences every member of him; hence we are exhorted to "put on charity, the bond of all perfectness," Col. iii. 14; which is the same as to put the new man. Now, as love is the fulfilling of the law, both on the first and the second table; yea, and the gospel too, for charity believeth all things;" the apostle says that this new man is created in righteousness; the heart of this new man

being love, and love fulfilling both the law and the prophets, love is the righteousness of this new man.

Moreover, as one member of this new man is faith, so of course this new man must believe also. Observe the following text: "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, accordingly to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," Rom. xvi. 26. Observe here, it is not called the obedience of men, nor is it called our obedience by faith, or obedience in faith, through this may be true; but the obeyer there spoken of is faith itself, it is the obedience of faith, and this is the obedience of the new man; and, of course, he is created in righteousness, having both faith and love, which fulfil both the laws of faith and of works, and therefore there is no unrighteousness in this new man. And this is a truth, that, as in the justification of our persons the righteousness of Christ is imputed, so in the sanctification of our souls there is a righteous nature imparted. He is created in true holiness in opposition to all ceremonial, negative, spurious, counterfeit, or hypocritical holiness, which is nothing but an outward shew in the flesh.

Every member of this new man is holy, there is real holiness in every part of him; every grace produced in the soul under the operations of the Holy Spirit is holy; hence this new man is called the holiness of God: "God chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness," Heb. xii. 9. That is, after our chastisements are over, which are intended to humble us, God giveth us more grace; for he "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," James, iv. 6. Hence trials make this grace shine the brighter, and appear the more conspicuous; for these are intended to weaken and subdue our inbred corruptions, which lust against the Spirit.

The ornaments of this new man, or that with which he is decked, especially when the believer puts them on and appears at court, are meekness and quietude: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," I Pet. iii. 3,4. These ornaments are said to be incorruptible. Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 23, and exercises itself upon God, after we have been under his chastening hand and are humbled, and the affliction begins to be sanctified to us. These ornaments are worn for many days together at the soul's first espousal to Christ; and are generally continued, more or less, as long as the wedding lasts and the Bridegroom continues to discover his dying love to the bride: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels," Isaiah, lxi. 10. Thus we see that the church ascribes all her attire and her divine decorations to her Lord; he provided both her wedding suit and her heavenly trinkets. He hath clothed us, he hath covered us, and adorned us like a bride with her jewels. Meekness is generally put on upon every undeserved visit that the Lord pays us especially when he restores our souls from our backslidings, or reclaims us from our misdoings, or appears in our behalf in times of trouble, or when he gives us a fresh sight and sense of our interest after some sad days of doubting and fearing. Nay, we never think ourselves, on such occasions, properly dressed without these jewels; these generally attend the kisses that make all up, for they are a satisfactory proof to us of the renewals of love.

Moreover, sore trials contract the heart; and under these contractions a load of grief is conceived, and the heart sets

full, and must have vent. Under such circumstances, if legal bondage and a sense of wrath operate, these beget slavish fear; at such times the lips often ease the heart by muttering perverseness, which only hardens and makes the breach wider: but, when meekness operates, all the ashes are poured out at the foot of the altar.

The other jewel is quietness; this springs from fullness, and all fullness of satisfaction in us is according to faith: In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." "Faith puts on a perfect and an all-sufficient righteousness, and fills the soul with joy and peace in believing in it: "The effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever," Isa. xxxii. 17. And the stronger faith is, the more solid the joy; full assurance of faith is fullness of satisfaction; and full satisfaction produces quietude, and sets us down with contentment, thankful for what we have, and envying none.

But this jewel is only worn by the bride whilst she abides with her bridegroom: "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places," Isa. xxxii. 18. Our quiet resting-places are in the electing love of God the Father, the finished salvation of Christ, and in the work and witness of the Holy Ghost. The soul that is ignorant of these, "is like the troubled sea which cannot rest." But my brother will say, Can the Holy Trinity, with any degree of propriety, be called a place and a resting-place? Yes, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations," Psalm xc. 1. And I know of no rest nor resting-places for weary souls but these.

The bowels of this new man are described by the apostle; for, whenever the old man is put off and the new man is put on, some of the following things appear: "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering." Col. iii. 12.

Bowels of mercies are exercised chiefly towards the children of God in trouble, and flow from the influence of love and sympathy; and are only exercised by those who know what soul-distresses are. Kindness is a grace that springs from tenderness, and tenderness springs from life. Souls quickened by the Spirit have keen sensations and tender feelings, which a child of God in distress will easily touch; for grace in one soul claims kindred with grace in another, and will move in consort with it. If one subject of grace suffer, the other suffers; if one be honoured, the other will rejoice; the motions of it will make us weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice. This humbleness of mind, long-suffering, &c. the apostle ascribes altogether to charity, which is the very heart and soul of the new man, and the choicest principle in him: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," I Cor. xiii, 4-6.

The daily employ of this new man is hoping and expecting to return to his own native country: "Grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. v. 21. And in this hope and expectation it exercises much patience and long-suffering till it be obtained; for, "if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it," Rom. viii. 25.

The ears of the new man are very wonderful, and cannot be described. But this is a truth; God speaks many words by the Spirit to the soul, or speaks friendly to the church's heart, Hosea ii. 14. And what the Lord speaks is not only felt, but heard and understood, although no sound reaches the ears of the body. Paul, when caught up into Paradise, heard unspeakable words, which it was not possible to utter; and yet

he doth not know whether the body was in company or not;" 2 Cor. xii. 8.

To infuse and form this new man in the soul is the work of the Holy Spirit, and so is every renewal and every revival of him, from the first formation of him till perfection in endless glory takes place. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands," Psalm cxxxviii. 8.

How sensibly felt are the revivals of this good work under the operations of the Holy Ghost! Sometimes by communicating fresh power, all on a sudden, when every thing seems to be falling to decay, and the poor believer is just ready to cast away all confidence, and in his own mind to fall a victim to sin and Satan, concluding all to be lost for ever; then is the divine power of the Spirit put forth in this new creature. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man," Eph. iii. 16.

Sometimes great communications of light, and fresh discoveries of the love of God in Christ, wonderfully strengthen and inflame the new man. "But mine horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn; I shall be anointed with fresh oil," Psalm xcii. 10.

At other times the uncommon struggles of hope, attended with vigour, earnestness, diligence, liveliness, activity, and uncommon anxiety, after the glory that is to be revealed, appear in this new man. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13. Every day throughout the believer's whole pilgrimage, does the Holy Spirit revive or renew this new man of grace in one member or another; as it is written, "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many

redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but, though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 15, 16.

That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," John, iii. 6. Now it is against the Holy Ghost, in his forming and preserving this new man which is born of the Spirit, that the flesh lusteth. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But, if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law," Gal. v. 17, 18. The way that the Spirit leads us is by influencing and putting fresh strength, life, love, and fervour, in the new man. This new man of grace is a mighty worker while the Spirit keeps renewing of him. I laboured (says Paul) more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Sometimes we have noble works ascribed to the different members of the new man. We read of the "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. i. 3. Sometimes faith appears very strong, and performs wonders, especially in times of great need; as we see in David, when he went against the giant of Gath. At other times love labours mightily both to the Lord and to his people: the first may be seen in Mary at the Lord's feet, and the second in Paul to the Corinthians. At other times the patience of hope is very conspicuous in waiting for that which is hoped for. "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from Jacob, and I will look for him," Isa. viii. 17.

This new man of grace comes from the fullness of Christ in whom all fullness dwells, and out of whose fullness we all receive, and grace for grace. And it is the Spirit that works it in us by his wonderful operation, and he supplies this new man daily; hence we read of a "supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,"

Phil. i. 19; that is, the Spirit of Christ supplies us with more grace from Christ, the blessed head of influence.

"Now (says the apostle) if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." They that are under the law have nothing else but lust and corruption working in them, let them talk of spurious holiness as much as they please. "Law was given (says Milton) to evince man's natural pravity, by stirring up sin against law to fight." "The motions of sins, which were by the law [stirred up], did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death," Rom. vii. 5. So that he who is under the law is destitute of that new man, and of course has nothing but sin in him.

He may at times feel rebukes, checks, and lashes within; which he may, and many do, call the old man of sin: but this is a mistake; it is not an enemy, but a friend; not the old man of sin, but honest conscience doing his duty, buffeting the sinner for his hypocrisy. So, on the other hand, a hypocrite may, at times, find a little calm of peace and tranquillity in his mind, which he may call the new man, and I believe thousands do so: but as the former is nothing but natural conscience accusing, so the latter is nothing but natural conscience excusing, according to the light of nature.

For, even under this calm of peace and tranquillity, there is no godly sorrow flowing out to God; no condemning, hating, and abhorring self; nor any real tears of pious grief, mourning over a suffering Saviour; no repentance towards the Lord, nor heartfelt gratitude to him, nor real thanks and praises for his long-suffering, undeserved, and unexpected clemency.

Such men's peace springs from a cessation of arms with Satan; they have had a few days' respite, in which the devil has not wallowed them in the mire; and, during, this interval, they have done something for God, and of course he must be pleased with them. All this takes its spring from self, and

centres in self, and there such faith stands; for he has no trust but in his own heart; look to Jesus he cannot, because there is no good thing in him toward the Lord God of Israel: whereas the believer looks to Jesus, depends on his arm, and views his own heart worse than Satan himself-being "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. The believer knows that he can stand no longer than while the Lord upholds him; if he withdraw his supporting hand he is sure to sink, and when sunk he despairs of all help in his own arm, or in his own heart; he knows that nothing can recover him but a propitious look from his dear Lord, or a restoring visit from him, or a fresh discovery by faith of his dying love, attended with the reviving and renewing operations of the Holy Spirit of promise.

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" in behalf of, and to be gratified in, its own delightful fruits; which the apostle mentions: which are, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditious, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings," &c. Gal. v. 19-21. Some of these are sins which easily beset the child of God; they often intrude themselves into his mind; yea, even when he would do good some of these are present with him: nor is the believer without his slips and falls in one way or other. But still he is not a servant of sin; for they that are the servants of sin are "free from the righteousness," Rom. vi. 20. Such are free to sin, and free from all righteousness; which the believer never is. He is a servant of righteousness, and doth serve both in faith and love. And, though he does not live without sin, being in one sense still in the flesh, yet sin is neither his element nor his service. "For, though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh," 2 Cor. x. 3; but war against it. Nor are the sins of believers called service, for they have no wages for it, neither present pleasure nor endless death, which are all the wages that a servant of sin gets. He may be brought "into

captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members," Rom. vii. 23. But a captive and a servant in this matter widely differ.

The apostle, having called the whole mass of inbred corruptions the fruits of the flesh and a body of sin, he also assigns different sins as so many different members of this monstrous body, in allusion to the body of a man. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry," Col. iii. 5.

So, on the other hand, he calls the principle of implanted grace the new man. And, as this new man is formed by the Holy Spirit, and consists of different graces, so the apostle calls these the fruits of the Spirit, in opposition to the other, which he calls the fruits of the flesh. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law," Gal. v. 22, 23. Now all these, strictly speaking are not graces of the Spirit; but fruits and effects of his operation: for gentleness, long-suffering, and temperance, may be exercised, and often are exercised, by men in a state of nature. Some, who are inured to sufferings, may and do suffer with much patience; others are naturally temperate; and others as gentle, easy, and unmoved, who have no fear of God before their eyes. But those that are the reverse of these are made so by grace. When the wolf is taught to dwell with the lamb, and the lion to lie down with the kid, then these things are attended to, and men exercise themselves in them in the fear of God.

Nor are all the graces or fruits of the Spirit mentioned in that catalogue. Fear, patience, zeal, and hope, are fruits of the Spirit and so are contrition, godly sorrow, humility, repentance, &c. Now, as the new man is composed of these manifold graces, so the Holy Spirit, by his powerful

operations, enlivens, strengthens and draws forth into exercise, first one and then another, as seemeth good to him. Sometimes he strengthens faith, and fortifies the mind with such might and power, that the excellency and the power appear so conspicuously to be of God, that the man is quite above himself. "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, ii.i. 8.

Again, when we are led to defend any truth that is opposed, and it pleases the Holy Spirit to instruct, settle, and establish the children of God in them, he not only gives you light into the truth, and brings text after text to the mind to support and confirm it, but fires the soul with such zeal, that we are clad with it as with a cloak. "My zeal hath consumed me; because mine enemies have forgotten thy words. Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it," Psalm cxix. 139, 140.

At other times faith shall be influenced with such power and activity, that the soul can tell beforehand something of the success that shall attend the word. "When, therefore, I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I come unto you into Spain. And I am sure that, when I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," Rom. xv. 28, 29.

Sometimes one grace shall appear predominant, and sometimes another; as patience in Job; meekness, as in Moses; godly sorrow, as in Hannah; jealousy for God's honour, as in Elijah; contrition, as in David; and sometimes love, as in Paul - "I am not only ready to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.". All these move and act as the Holy Spirit operates in them; he enlivens and invigorates them; but, without a divine breeze, there is neither motion nor emission. "Awake, O north wind, and come, then south; blow upon my garden, that the spices

thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits," Song iv. 16.

If my dearly beloved brother will observe these things, he will perceive much more than I can describe; and he will find the different frames that he is cast into to be wonderfully suited to the work then in hand. To the Thessalonians Paul was a nurse; to Timothy an affectionate father; to the Corinthians God made him humility and meekness; to the false apostles an invincible champion; to the weak he was a babe in grace; to the Jews straitened as under the law; to the Gentiles as one guided alone by conscience; to the wise and discerning he was the chiefest apostle; and to Alexander and Elymas the sorcerer he was a lion. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some," I Cor. ix. 22.

Well may the apostle say "there are diversities of operations;" for they are diverse and innumerable too; yea, and often various in one day. Life, contrition, and sorrow, for morning prayer; a sweet flow of Gratitude soon after for a thank-offering; upon the back of this comes a promise in due season, increasing faith then a smiling Providence turns up, that makes the bowels yearn; next comes a letter bringing good tidings, and blessing God for the instrument, and for the power of divine grace put forth; this fires the soul with fresh zeal for the work. Then comes a poor soul telling the dreadful tale of the plaque of leprosy breaking out in the house; these touch your love and sympathy. Next comes in a word, and opens out a large field of hidden treasures, pearls and jewels for Zion. And, last of all, comes in an arch hypocrite, appearing to be some great one, when he is nothing, with all the art and craft imaginable to impose upon your judgment; and, at the appearance of him - "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. But now bring me a minstrel," 2 Kings, iii. 13, 15. Let my dear brother observe these things, and he will have

some insight into this blessed promise - "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day," Isaiah, xxvii. 3.

The new man is fed by prayer, by reading, by meditation, by hearing the word, and by conversing with the lively friends of the Bridegroom. He is very choice in his food. Hence it appears that, under the dry orations which are drawn from the letter, and those confused jumbles upon free-will, enforced by those who have not been emptied of self, but are settled upon their lees, and those violent shouts from the top of the mountain, not of Zion, but of Sinai: none of these entertain the new man; it is not such tidings as these that bring him, nor does the Spirit, who forms him, accompany such. God gives "testimony to the word of his grace." The new man feeds upon power. You read of strength by the Spirit's might in the inward man; you read of his being renewed day by day, and of his being renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Light, attended with love, feeds him; it revives him, refreshes him, and renews him. He gathers his myrrh with his spice. Myrrh is a bitter potion to the old man, but it never hurts the new one. Spice comes after the myrrh has had the desired effect. But this sweet scent is no more pleasing to the old man than the myrrh; the bitterness of trials mortifies the old man, and so does the sweet odours of humbling grace. He eats his honeycomb with his honey, and drinks his wine with his milk, Song v. 1. The promises, and the sweets that are hid in them; divine love, and the comforts that attend it; are the sweet provisions of the new man. The old man, with all his members, Paul describes; and those very evil things of which he is composed are the things that feed, entertain, and gratify him. When he is fed, then the new man is starved, and leanness enters into the soul. So of the manifold graces infused or wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit is the new man composed, and by those very things of which he is composed is he fed. His divine origin is God, and

therefore called the divine nature. His mansion is Christ Jesus, in whom all fullness of grace dwells, and from whose fullness all grace is received. Fresh supplies from the same fullness, by the Holy Ghost feed him and keep him alive; and under no other preaching but that of preaching Christ; and it must be Christ revealed and made known in the soul of the preacher. Under such, and under no other, can this new man be fed and nourished; and this many know by sad experience, who are seeking water and there is none, and their tongues are failing for thirst. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

And so says your companion in travail,

W. HUNTINGTON.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XIX.

TO THE REV. J. JENKINS, AT THE NEW VICARAGE,
LEWES, SUSSEX.

To my deeply beloved Son, greeting; wishing that grace and peace may be multiplied to him through our Lord Jesus Christ. I RECEIVED yours, and am thankful for the good tidings. Go on; God shall endow us with a good dowry, by adding to us many more sons; these are a kind of first-fruits of God's

creatures, and these fruits shall remain. But I shall proceed with my delightful subject, which is to shew.

That the Holy Spirit in the gospel must be obeyed; for, according to the obedience of man, is the reward to be given, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 7-10. To sow to the Spirit is to obey him and to be led by him. Our Lord calls himself a sower, and the word of life which he sowed he calls seed; and in sowing the good seed of the word he was obedient to him that appointed him. "My Father gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the father said unto me, so I speak," John, xii. 49, 50. Now there is a twofold sowing to the Spirit: internal and external. Internal when we observe his operations, and are obedient to his motions and dictates; for instance, when he applies the word with power, and reproveth us with the word, convincing us of our sins by it; then to speak evil of the preacher by whom the Spirit speaks, to rail against him and the truth, is hating the light, and rebelling against it and against our own convictions of the truth of it; and this rebellion is against the Holy Ghost himself. It is said of Israel in the wilderness, that "they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit so that "he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them," Isaiah, lxiii. 10. Moses and Aaron were God's mouth to the people; the Holy Spirit spake in them to the children of Israel: but "they envied Moses in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord," Psalm cvi. 16. And by their rebelling against

these men they rebelled against the Holy Spirit which influenced them and spoke by them. "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," Psalm cvi 32, 33. Sinners, reproved and convinced by the Holy Spirit, should not only come to the light and be diligent in their attendance on the word; but God calls for confessions to be made to him, and for submission to his will; which is called humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time. There is such a thing as accepting the punishment of our iniquity, choosing the chastenings of God before our own will and our own way; saying, as others have done, "Search me, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." And again, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." Coming to the light that our deeds may be made manifest; exposing our conscience to the force and power of his word, however sharp and piercing; confessing all our crimes, which the light of the word discovers and reproves us for; is accepting our punishment, and preferring the chastisements of God before carnal ease and the pleasures of sin, and is yielding obedience to the Holy Spirit; And it shews that the heart is made honest.

2. The Spirit is a spirit of supplication. He sets the elect of God to crying day and night, until God avenge them of their adversaries. "Call upon me in the time of trouble (says God); I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." And again, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried; they shall call upon my name, and I will bear them; and I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God. This should be carefully and diligently attended to when the Holy Spirit is

illuminating, quickening, reproof, and convincing the sinner; and if it is neglected the Spirit resents it, and makes conscience accuse the sinner for this his neglect, and he is often covered with shame and confusion of face when he goes to the throne of grace again. Nor is it seldom that some disaster or other befalls the sensible sinner, under this sin of omission, when prayer has been neglected; and often times the sinner is informed of this when he comes to examine himself. Prayer, in the times of the gospel, was typified by the offering of incense under the law, which was perpetual morning, and evening; and prayer goes by the same name under the gospel. "For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts," Mal. i. 11.

Moreover, God requires of us thank-offerings for favour, received. "I will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." The souls of God's saints are often filled with joy and gladness, that thanksgiving and the voice of melody may redound to the glory of God, by humble acknowledgments of his mercies, and by singing his praises.

Furthermore, we should celebrate those perfections of God which shine so bright in his appointment of Christ Jesus to be the Saviour of mankind; which is done by speaking good, or by making honourable mention of his holy name; and by proclaiming the glorious perfections of his nature, making them famous and illustrious among mankind; praising and commending the holy properties of his nature; and enumerating and extolling them, by speaking of his manifold and wonderful works, and of the innumerable mercies and blessings of his providence and grace towards us in Christ

Jesus. The scriptures abound with such ascriptions, acclamations, and celebrations, in the saints holy triumphs. David is famous for this; there is scarce a revealed attribute of God but he makes honourable mention of.

As holiness. - "God hath sworn by his holiness I will rejoice."

Power. - "Sing unto the Lord a new song, for his own right hand and stretched-out arm hath gotten himself the victory."

His might and reign, his glory and majesty. - "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom," Ps. cxlv. 3-7, 10-12. Almost every perfection of the Divine Being is brought forth in the holy triumphs of the royal psalmist, justice and judgment not excepted. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face." Of loving-kindness David sings; of faithfulness and truth; of goodness, pity, and compassion; and of mercy, and the eternal duration of it, through-out a whole psalm.

Different frames and different dispensations call for different offerings and exercises. "Is any afflicted? let him pray." Times of trouble and times of affliction in the furnace are seasons for extraordinary prayers; the common morning and evening sacrifices are not sufficient at such times; we must give ourselves unto prayer; give up ourselves wholly unto it, and

attend to this very thing. Nor will the old common way, no, nor even the usual mode of expressions, do. Fiery trials call for fresh power, and even for agonizing energy; new words, new arguments, and unusual pleas and entreaties must be made use of; our arguments and pathetic pleadings must tally with our dreadful sensations. Souls that meditate terror must fetch their words from their feelings, or else the words of their mouth will run counter to the meditations of their heart. We must use all the skill and oratory of distress, grief, and sorrow, and all the eloquence of misery. "I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication. What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?" Psalm xxx. 8, 9. "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Psalm lxxvii. 7-9. "For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth," Isa. xxxviii, 18.

As times of affliction are praying times, or times to give ourselves unto prayer; so times of prosperity are times for praise, for thanksgiving, and for singing with grace in our hearts, making melody to the Lord. If we would sow to the Spirit we must observe these things; and likewise shun all damnable heresies, which have the least tendency to depreciate the Son of God, or to eclipse his glory, or lessen him in our esteem or affections. The Holy Spirit is both the testifier and the glorifier of Christ, and he will never countenance any low, mean, unworthy, or unbecoming conceptions of him. I am not speaking of the evil suggestions or fiery darts of Satan, which we cannot help, and which are Satan's sins, and not ours; but of those damnable principles and sentiments which some men hold, and which divest the Saviour of all the glory and majesty of deity, and debase him

to the level of a mere creature, which is what God the Holy Ghost will ever resist and resent.

Sowing to the Spirit internally, is to walk as the Spirit leads us; he is to guide us into all truth, and not to speak of himself. This chiefly respects our principles, the object of our faith and worship, and the true and spiritual worship and adoration which God requires of us; the whole of which is included in what the scripture calls "the way of holiness," Isaiah, xxxv. 8; which is following the Lord "in the regeneration," Matt. xix. 28. In which following, all things become new; not only a new birth, but we are brought into the bond of a new covenant, are made to serve in the newness of spirit, with new views and new principles, and to walk in a new and living way.

The Spirit leads us to "walk with God in peace and equity." These two, peace and equity, always go together. When the believer keeps a conscience void of offence, he delights himself in the abundance of peace; he makes straight paths for his feet, and he finds his ways to be pleasantness, and his paths peace. But, if he make a crooked path (and all the ways of sin are crooked, because they are counter to the will and word of God), he that goes therein shall not know peace. But

2. There is a sowing to the Spirit externally. And the apostle's explanation of this sowing to the Spirit, is given by himself "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." And then tells us what he means by well-doing. "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 9, 10. To do good to them that are not as yet in the faith, is to labour to recommend Christ and his gospel to them by a becoming life and conversation, to drop a word of reproof or instruction to them when opportunity offers, or to use our endeavours to bring them under the word. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that beareth say,

Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. After our Lord had called two or three of his first followers, he made use of these to bring others. Andrew hearing and seeing John point to Christ, followed him; he then finds his brother Peter, and brings him to Jesus; the next day Jesus found Philip; and then Philip finds Nathaniel, and brings him; and, blessed be God, this work is going on still.

Moreover, by doing good unto all men, the apostle means liberality. Poor people have more exalted notions of alms-deeds than they have of any other good-work whatsoever. You may talk to them about faith, and about love to the brotherhood, and the patience of hope, and of suffering afflictions, of bearing the cross, and of self-denial; but these are all out of their sight, and out of their reach; but circumspection in life and a liberal heart, are obvious to all, and stop the mouths of all, unless it be the devil himself. And in this the child of God has a double advantage. The world loves its own; sinners love sinners, and will give and lend to sinners; but sinners cannot love saints as saints, and because they belong to Christ; nor can they relieve them, or be charitable to them, because of God's love to them in Christ Jesus. "When saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?"

The answer is, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to these," my brethren, 'ye did it not to me.'" Not one of all these ever relieved a child of God as such; whereas there are thousands of sinners, persecutors, and even enemies both to God and to his church, who do partake largely of the liberality of the people of God; and this is acceptable to God, as may be seen in the prayers and alms of Cornelius the centurion, Acts, x.; and in the nobleness of mind which Abraham shewed to the King of Sodom. By these means some are drawn or won to

hear the word of God, and that to profit. The mouths of others are stopped, while the believer makes it manifest that the kingdom (of which he is a subject) is not of this world. And in all these things God is glorified; and the children of God are a sweet savour unto him, both in them that perish and in them that are saved. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Matt. v. 16.

But the apostle adds, "Especially to the household of faith." The ties of nature give us a feeling for those who are in the flesh, and fill us with wonder at discriminating grace, when the bond of all perfectness binds us more strongly to the excellent of the earth; for we can only pity the other, but we can delight ourselves in these. To the household of faith, if we sow sparingly we shall reap sparingly, and if we sow bountifully we shall reap bountifully. To receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, has the promise of a prophet's reward. To receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, has the promise of a righteous man's reward. And he that receives one of the little ones that belong to Christ, shall in nowise lose his reward. A morsel of bread, or a cup of cold water only, given to any in the name of a disciple, shall most surely be rewarded at the resurrection of the just; for he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." We must sow prayers in their behalf; we may sow the seeds of instruction in their ears, bread and water to their bellies, apparel to their backs, and relief in their necessities; and reap fourfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. To all this the word of God directs, and to all this the Holy Spirit leads - "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth," Eph. v. 9.

Once more, my dear son. The best of men have no more than their own appointed time on the earth; the strength, the natural and spiritual abilities, the grace, and such wordly

substance as it pleases God to give them. Now, as all these come of God through Christ, so from all these things Christ expects some returns; for when he comes, it will be to know what every one has gained by trading. Some redeem the time while the days are evil. Paul, was willing to spend and be spent for the church; he spent his property and his strength in the service of Christ; with the grace that he had received by the Spirit he seasoned many; and by his natural and spiritual abilities he became all things to all men; he instructed many, he silenced many gainsayers, and left a glorious testimony behind of his fruitfulness in the church, of the goodness of God to him, of the blessedness of his state, and of his glorious and triumphant end: and in all these things he sowed to the Spirit; and they that do so "shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." And this reaping respects this present life as well as the future. God's blessing upon mount Zion is life for evermore 8f5 . And it has pleased God to put the blessing of life into every spiritual thing that the believer deals in. Upon his believing he passes from death to life; his repentance is unto life; the promises he obtains are the words of life; his justification is unto life; God circumcises his heart to love God that he may live; his hope is a lively hope; and the very way in which he walks is the new and living way. In short, the love and eternal purpose of God, the voice of the Son and the operations of the Spirit, are all life to the believer; and the more we sow the more we reap; the more we love God and the brethren, the more lively we are; the stronger our faith and the firmer our hope are, the more abundant is our life. In all these things lie our sowing and reaping. And let us, my dear brothers be constant, unmoveable, and always abounding in this work of the Lord, knowing that our labour is not, shall not, be in vain in the Lord. To get weary and to faint in well-doing, is sad work. "Look to yourselves," says John, "that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward," 2 John, 8.

And now, my beloved son, seeing we are not ignorant of Satan's devices, and knowing his desperate and inveterate enmity both to Christ and his church, suffer him not to baffle and confuse thee, by setting up any imaginary resemblances of the divine persons in your mind when you are approaching to God; infinity and immensity cannot be circumscribed! God filleth all space. Nor suffer the devil to confound thee, by suggesting that you will displease the one by addressing the other. Whatsoever is truly and properly God, is the object of divine worship. And that Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost the Spirit of God, are truly, really, and properly God, is as clearly revealed in the scriptures as that the Father is so. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, and the communion of the Spirit of all grace, be with thee, and with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, both now and for evermore;" is the prayer of, dear son,

Yours in Christ Jesus,

W. HUNTINGTON, S.S.

CONTEMPLATIONS

- A SERIES OF LETTERS TO A FRIEND

William Huntington (1745-1813)

LETTER XX.

TO MR. BRITTON.

SIR,

THE God of all grace neither applauds nor approves of that conceited wisdom which will make a man an offender for a word, and lie in wait for him that reproves in the gate. But it seems that I have offended more than once; in your pulpit, and likewise from the press.

One great offence from your pulpit was, bidding sinners, convicted of unbelief, to ask faith of God. But the greatest offence seems to be taken from two passages in my two sermons lately published on The Loss and Restoration of the Image of God in Man. Gods image of Adam, and all his souls adorning, was owing to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; and when that sweetest of all comforters took his leave, all was gone, Page 52. The other passage is, When Adam lost his native righteousness, the entrance of guilt opened his eyes, and he saw that he was naked, for the Holy Spirit with all his adorning left him, Page 114.

At these capital offences you have stormed and raged for many months, belabouring poor Adam at a sad rate. Adam, you say, never had grace; Adam was a good and an upright natural man; Adam never had the Spirit of God; Adam never was a spiritual man; Adam was a natural man; and this you will defend as long as you have breath,&c. And your audience has caught the same flame, Huntington has quite missed the mark; he has now done for himself; he has cut himself all to pieces in this book; he is inconsistent with himself,&c. All this may be true, for I am no more perfect than Mr. Britton.

About my first offence you might have disputed with me before I left Downham; and about the other you might have written in a friendly manner to me, and I would most willingly have informed you what support I have for my arguments. But this would not answer the end of unprovoked envy; you chose to do it publicly; and the more heterodox you could make me, of course the more orthodox you must appeal; and by beating

out my taper add additional flame to your own lamp. You have likewise invited another to assist you, who has published a twopenny volume of poetry, in which he has inserted many things about Adam, as though they were taken from my sermons, which were never in them. In this I am not the plaintiff, but the defendant. You have publicly attacked me from your pulpit, and I now send you this public answer, that you may have an opportunity of displaying your wisdom, and of fulfilling your promise, to oppose me, in my opinions of Adam, as long as you have breath.

1. I must confess I have often wondered how Adam, just after he was formed, could stand with such intrepidity, and converse with such freedom and familiarity with the most high and eternal God, without being fortified with spiritual might, and furnished with a spirit of revelation and understanding; especially when I read of Daniel, a man greatly beloved of God, fainting away, his strength wholly forsaking him, and all his comeliness turning into corruption at the sight of an angel. And the beloved disciple was twice smitten with such awe, at the appearance of one of the heavenly host, as to forget himself, and even fall down in order to worship the heavenly messenger. Even the ass, on which Balaam rode, started, first to the wall on one side of the road, and then to the wall on the other; and, though cruelly beaten, yet fell down and would go no farther, being so terrified at the sight of the angel. If it be replied that Adam had no sin in him; I answer, no more had the ass.

2. And it is a mystery to me how Adam could, as soon as created, forthwith speak with such promptitude, unless the Spirit of God gave him utterance; and how he could readily give names to all the creatures that God had made, without the spirit of wisdom and understanding from above: and a mystery it must appear to all men, if they consider what some have observed, that the names which he gave them were

perfectly applicable to their different natures; the consideration of which drew the following assertion even from Plato, an heathen philosopher: He was most wise that first imposed names on things; yea, had more than human wisdom.

3. The greatest sacred chronologer that ever I read has the following words: That man had the use of speech as soon as he was created, and a language in which to express the sentiments of his mind; consequently, that God endued him with this speech of language at the time he breathed into him the breath of life, is evident from the history of the creation as delivered by Moses: for Adam, in the day that he was created, before his first sleep, or that Eve was formed of his rib, gave a name to every beast of the earth, and. to every fowl of the air: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. So that no man, who knows and believes the holy scripture, can doubt of mans having the use of speech, or his being inspired with the gift of a language, from the very time he was created; I say inspired.

4. And another very learned divine has these words: Were the wisest men living, yea, a general collection of all the wise men in the world to make an experiment of their skill and learning, in giving names to all living creatures suitable to their natures, and expressive of their qualities, they would quickly perceive the loss they have incurred. Acquaintance with the works of God, spiritual and natural, is lost.

5. If I am not much mistaken, I remember reading, in one of the works of Mr. John Bunyan, words to this effect; Adam knew Eve the same way that the three disciples on the mount knew Moses and Elias; namely, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

6. I have read, in one of the greatest divines that ever old England produced, words similar to these: The knowledge aimed at to be recovered by men, was given unto man [that is,

unto Adam] in order to his walking with God, unto that supernatural end whereunto he was appointed: for, after he was furnished with all his endowments, the law of life and death was given to him, that he might know wherefore he received them; therefore foreknowledge in him was spiritualized and sanctified; even that knowledge which he had by nature in respect of its principle and end, was spiritual.

7. Our very sublime poet has the following speech in his performance:

Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleas'd,
And find thee knowing not of beast alone,
Which thou hast rightly nam'd, but of thyself,
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,
My image, not imparted to the brute,
Whose fellowship, therefore, unmeet for thee,
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike,
And be so minded still; I, ere thou spakst,
Knew it not good for man to be alone.

8. A learned Jew, in his comment on Adams speech to God at the reception of Eve, declares it to be the voice of the Holy Ghost: The Holy spirit says thus, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife."

9. The language of scripture, at the formation and quickening of Adam, agrees with other parts of scripture which are fully expressive of divine inspiration, such as, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live:" which is afterwards explained of Gods putting his Spirit within them, and causing them to live. Moreover, the Saviour in breathing upon his disciples, when he said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," seems manifestly to allude to the inspiration of Adam. And that mysterious speech in Job, where he says, "All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God in my nostrils," to allude to Gods breathing into Adams, nostrils the

breath of life, when he became a living soul; which life was something more than simply forming the soul within him, and giving sensations, affections, and motions, to the faculties of it, for these remained with him, though corrupted, after his fall.

Nor does it mean communicating vital heat by the soul animating and quickening the body, and giving it animal spirits, for animal life abode with Adam after sin and death entered into him. Adam forfeited a higher life than either of these, a life in the favour of God, in whose favour there is life; a life of love and delight in God; a life of communion and fellowship with him. If it may in any sense be called a natural life, it must be because it was natural to him in that state, he being created in Gods image, of which this was a principal part; but, with respect to God, it was of divine origin. And it is a mystery to me how Adam could be made in the image of the living God, who is a spirit, and yet have neither spiritual nor divine life in him. Whatever life it was Adam forfeited it; and when sin entered into him, and the pleasures of lust began to operate, he found a delusive life in the carnal pleasures of sin. Here are the first beginnings of the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts. And when the sentence of the law entered, then guilt, shame, and wrath, overwhelmed him, and he became sullen, and his heart fretted against the Lord; his mind was alienated from him and at enmity with him, as are all his children to this day; and so says Paul, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart," Eph. iv. 18. Here Paul calls it the life of God. And when did this enmity and alienation take place? As soon as Adam fell then he became a lover of sin and death, and an enemy to the Son of God, who made him and gave him life; and so says the Saviour, "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death," Prov. viii. 36. Here began our alienation from the life of

God. But how it can be called the life of God if there was nothing spiritual or divine in it, is what I cannot comprehend.

10. I believe that the Holy Ghost entered, into Adam when the Lord breathed into his nostrils. "The Spirit of God hath made me," says Job, "and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." And I believe the whole formation, of Adams soul, with all its endowments, was compiled by the Holy Spirit; that it was he that influenced him, with a life of love and delight in God and as a spirit of revelation and understanding, inspired him with all that wisdom and knowledge that he had in the mind and will of God, of himself, of Eve, and of the other works of God. And, moreover, that Adam spoke every word as the Spirit of God moved him and gave him utter-ante; or rather, that it was God, by his Spirit, who spoke in Adam; this I think is confirmed by Christ himself: "The Pharisees came to Jesus, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, 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; and they twain shall be one flesh," Matt. xix. 3-5. The words in the fifth verse were all spoken or articulated by Adam, Gen. ii. 24. But Christ does not so much as mention Adam, but leaves him quite out of the question, and declares that the creator of Adam, and the speaker in Adam, was God. God made them male and female; and God said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife," &c.

11. Moreover, the words spoken by Adam were all prophetic, for there were no children upon earth to marry at that time; nor were there any fathers or mothers then to forsake. Adam had begotten none, nor had Eve conceived. The words spoken were to be fulfilled in future, and are regarded anti obeyed to this day by them that love and fear God; not as the words of

Adam, but as the words of God, containing his ordinance and appointment. And we are told that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Peter i. 21. Then it is plain that as Adam was a holy man, his prophecy also came from the same divine motion.

12. Nor will it be easy to prove that, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," if that part of scripture spoken by Adam, which is the first prophecy, came in old time from the will of a natural man. Nor do I believe that Christ Jesus would have enforced those words, and have given them his sanction and confirmation, if they sprang from such a source; for he seldom favoured the precepts, doctrines, and commandments, of men. Hence I infer that, although Mr. Britton cannot allow Adam in his innocent state to be any thing more than a natural man, yet it is plain, from the word of God, that the Holy Ghost was in him, and influenced him with love and holiness, and inspired him; and that God, by his most holy Spirit, spake in him and by him. Nor do I believe that Mr. Britton, with all his supposed endowments, can come within a thousand leagues of that divine wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and love, that were in Adam.

13. We read in the Bible that Adam was created in the image of God: "Let us," said God the Father to God the Son, "make man in our image, after our likeness." The image of the Father and the Son is one and the same; for Christ is "The brightness of his glory and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3. And we read that the elect of God are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ. I should be glad if Mr. Britton would point out the difference between this image in Adam and the image in a true believer; for, if this glorious image be the same in both, and it be granted that every true believer hath the image of Christ stamped upon his soul

is a spiritual man, as Paul says he is, I should think that Adam, in his innocent state, must be very much like one.

It may be answered, that Adam was created in the image of God, and therefore in that sense it was natural to him; but his standing in this most blessed state was conditional, according to the tenor of the law of creation, or the covenant of works; which covenant he broke, and this blessed image was lost, and another obtained; and in that image, and after, that likeness, Adam begot a son, and all his children by nature bear the same, which image God despises; and therefore he has chosen his elect in a better head, and appointed them a better father, and has predestinated them to be conformed to this image; which comes not through Adam, but through Christ; not by natural generation; "Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and that by spiritual regeneration; and this image is now secured to us by a better covenant, established upon better promises, &c. All this must be granted; yet it makes no difference in the image. The image that was in Adam, and that in a real believer, seems to me to be one and the same most holy thing; so that, if the latter be a spiritual man, as was before observed, the former must be very much like one.

14. The way by which the apostle expresses it makes it one and the same, both in Adam and in all believers; and I believe that the image and likeness, in which Adam begot his sons, is the same thing which the apostle calls the old man of sin, which is the express image of the devil, and which is said to be put off when the new man, with the image of God, is put on. "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him," Col. iii. 9, 10. And again: "But according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii. 5. This word, renewing, seems to mean

restoring something to mankind which mankind had before. We read of renewing an altar, which means repairing of it, and making it look as it did when it was new, or when first built. So we read also of renewing the kingdom of Saul, which means reinstating him, and confirming him in his kingdom, and making it more public and more strong. Hence the apostles meaning seems to carry this in it: when Adam was first created, and appeared a new creature in the world, he appeared in the image of God; but sin entered, and death by sin; and so the divine image, with which the Holy Ghost adorned Adam, was defaced and lost; but God has chosen us in another head, and creates us anew in Christ Jesus; for, being chosen in him, and united to him in the purpose and covenant of God, the Holy Spirit comes upon us, and washes away the guilt and filth of sin, and in a measure blots out the devils image in us; and, by producing the abundance of grace, we are renewed, and the new man is formed; and this new man is, by every believing and transforming view of Christ by faith, renewed afresh, after the image of him that created man at the first. This seems to be the unstrained sense of the apostle. And, when Christ is speaking of the old man of sin, and the new man of grace, he says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." He does not say that he which is born of the Spirit, but that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit; nor does Christ say it is of a spiritual nature; the words express a stronger sense: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And, if this be true of every soul renewed, it is no less true in Adam, while he stood in the image of God.

Furthermore. We are not to understand, by the image of God in man, any external form or shape; for, "To whom will ye liken God; or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Isa. xl. 18. Adam, like the Kings daughter, was all glorious within. Gods image consisted of the endowments of the mind; the divine adornings and embellishments of his soul. There was in him

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. A divine radiance shone through him, Hence man is called the image and glory of God, 1 Cor. xi. 7. He was created in righteousness, and true holiness, Col. iii. 10. The great commandment, in the law of creation, is love to God with all the soul. This law was his rule of righteousness, and it was spiritual; it reached to his soul, and threatened both body and soul with temporal and eternal death; it was holy, it was just, and it was good. Adams righteousness, therefore, must stand on an equal footing with this law. He therefore must love God with all his soul; he must be inspired, he must be holy, he must be just, and he must be good; and God said he was very good, otherwise he could not be strictly righteous in the eye of this law. Divest him of any one of these, even of inspiration only, and where is the image of God? God is a Spirit; and where is Adams righteousness? "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin," says Paul. Adam lost inspiration when he sold himself and us under sin; nor can we ever stand before that law till inspiration be restored again. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and nothing else, can make us free from either the law of sin, which is in our members or from the law of death, engraven on tables of stone. Adam was created in true holiness; and that which made him so was the divine influence of the Holy Ghost, which was divinely spread throughout all his soul; and that which made the temple holy was the same; and it is the same now, which makes the church a holy temple; and therefore it is called, "An habitation of God through the Spirit."

15. But it may be objected, from the following passage, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening spirit. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are

heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 45-49. There is not one word in all this quotation that affords any support to my opponents. Neither Paul, nor any other inspired penman, ever called Adam, in his state of innocency, a natural man, according to the present acceptance of that term, nor in any other sense. Nor was the whole and every part of Adam of the earth, or earthy; his soul was not of the earth, nor earthy; and much less the image of God in him. What the apostle is there proving is the resurrection, and nothing else; and we know that there is nothing raised at the resurrection but the body; and so says Paul, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," 1 Cor. xv. 44. And this he proves by the two heads, Adam and Christ. Adams body was a natural one, supported by natural food, and capable of suffering; and so was Christs body a natural one; he took part of the children's flesh and blood, and in all things, sin excepted, was made like unto his brethren, and lived upon natural food, and was capable of hunger, thirst, sorrow, and suffering. But, after his resurrection, ascension, and glorification, Christs body is a spiritual, a heavenly, and a glorious body. And then the apostle affirms that all who die in the Lord, though their bodies be sown natural bodies, yet they shall be raised spiritual bodies; and, though they have borne the image of fallen Adams body in frailty, mortality, and death, being subjected to this vanity, which came upon us all through Adams sin, yet are we subjected in hope: for at the resurrection these bodies will bear the image of Christs heavenly body; for, "Every one that is perfect shall be as his master." We shall see him as he is; our bodies shall awake in the likeness of his body: yea, we shall be changed. "He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body." So that this frail part of the creature shall be delivered from the bondage. of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. viii. 21.

I shall now attempt to make some excuses for my other offence, which is that of telling sensible sinners, struggling under the workings of unbelief, to ask faith of God. I believe I have had more success in my labours, by encouraging awakened sinners to be importunate with God in calling upon him, than ever Mr. Britton has had, or ever will have, unless God should make him acquainted with that invaluable blessing so essential to the ministry; I mean an unctuous experience of the power of godliness. But you have got a curious proverb among you, namely, that souls must be born again before they can cry. "Let God be true, but every man a liar;" and this proverb is a lie, both in nature and in grace. For Christ says, "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 is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." The cause of the womans crying, in the book of the Revelation, is not because she is delivered, but because she was in labour. "And she, being with child cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered, Rev. xii. 2. They that cry and complain of travail and sorrow after they are delivered, and when nothing ails them, must be the worst of hypocrites. Gods elect cry day and night unto him; and their bitterest cries are, when guilt stings them, when shame and confusion cover them, when the curse of the law and the wrath of God enter into them, when the fear of death and the dread of damnation overwhelm them; these want God to avenge them. God himself, speaking of Christ under the name of his type, Cyrus, says, "They shall come after thee in chains; they shall come over; and they shall fall down unto thee; they shall make supplication unto thee." With weeping and supplications doth the Lord lead such. But surely these chains and tears of grief cannot be the fruits and effects of our first love, when perfect love casts out fear and torment; for then our spiritual birth is made clear: at such times God brings out them that are hound with chains,

while the rebellious dwell in a dry land. And, although there is a most sweet and heavenly crying at times, yet it is not the voice of them that cry for being overcome, nor the voice of them in chains; but the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shout for the victory.

If no souls are to cry or pray to God until they are born again, I know not where they would vent their grief, pour out their complaints, or ease their burdens; for in general all refuges but God fail them, and none care for their souls. But God tells them to call as soon as they feel their distresses. "Call upon me in the time of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Here they are commanded to call upon God for help as soon as their troubles come on; and they are to call upon him for deliverance, not after they are delivered; for when they are delivered they are to offer him praise and thanksgiving, which is glorifying him. Pray, was Paul born again when he called first upon God? Had the Spirit of love, of power, and of a sound mind, brought Paul forth when the Lord said to Annanias, Inquire for one Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth? Saul prayed when the commandment entered into him, when sin revived and he died: and it was after this that he is bid to arise and receive the Holy Ghost. The prevalent groans of Israel in Egypt; the prayers of Manasseh, of Jabez, of Peter upon the water, of David when the snares of death and the pains of hell got hold of him, when he found trouble and heaviness, and called on the name of the Lord; all those prayers, which were heard and answered, were not put up by persons born again. The scripture speaks of God begetting them, of his quickening them, and of the sorrows of a travelling woman coming upon them; and all this before the birth. And indeed God has declared it as his most general way of dealing with his elect, that he will make them pray to him in their greatest afflictions; and the answers which he promises to give are to be his acknowledgment of them, with a power to enable them to lay a claim upon him, and to confess their

interest in him. "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God," Zech. xiii. 9. To discourage poor sinners in calling upon God when they are alarmed or awakened to a sight and sense of their sin and danger, is throwing stumblingblocks in the way to the city of refuge: it is not telling them to fly from the wrath to come, but to fly into it. The description of Gods elect is that they cry day and night unto him, Luke xviii. 7. And the mark of hypocrites is, that they cry not when he bindeth them, Job xxxvi. 13. To tell sinners in soul-distress that it is in vain for them to call for mercy, is bringing the same heavy tidings to their ears that the devil brings to their hearts; and such are ministers of Satan, and are ignorant of the benefits of a throne of grace, and never knew what it is to cry to God from the heart. However, they are to come to Gods feast who were ready to perish; for it is the hungry soul that he will fill with good things, while he sends the rich empty away. No begging and praying, no blessing. It is the poor in soul that God lifts from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill, and makes them to inherit the throne of glory. Those who pray in secret shall be rewarded openly.

God, in his covenant, tells us what he will do for us; and has pointed out the means to be used in order to move him to it. He promises to cleanse us from all our filthiness and from all our idols; and to give us anew heart and a new spirit; and that he will cause us to walk in his statutes and judgments, and to make us his people, and that he will be our God: and that then we shall loath ourselves in our own sight for our sins, when he is pacified toward us; and that he will call for the corn and wine and will increase it, anti lay no famine upon us; yet, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them," Ezek. xxxvi. 37. To yield obedience these divine orders of God, according to the tenor

of the words, is for filthy sinners and idolaters, who feel the burden of sin, to ask God to cleanse them. Hard-hearted sinners, who feel their hardness, are to inquire of God to take away the stony heart, and to give them a heart of flesh; and sinners labouring under a spirit of bondage and the power of sin, are to inquire of God for a new spirit. These are the divine warrants of God; and all convinced sinners will venture upon them: nor will Mr. Britton be able to stop their mouths; and this he may see in those who have tried his experiment. "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be brought unto him," Luke xviii. 38-40. If it be a crime to bid awakened sinners to ask faith of God, what shall we say of our Saviour, who says, "If you that are evil can give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This is asking for a greater gift than faith. Let those, who tell us that none cry to God but those that are born again; and that none are to ask for faith but such as have already got it; let these, I say, inform us what this new heart and new spirit is, and how they felt themselves when their filthiness and their idols were purged away: and then we shall find them more inconsistent with themselves, and more full of self-contradictions, than ever I was.

But this is tauntingly called, bidding the dead to rise, Gods promise is to the dead. "Thy, dead men shall live, with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," Isaiah xxvi. 19. The voice of Christ in the gospel is to such: "The time cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." But then my wise opponent should consider that real servants of Christ are ministers of the Spirit, It is not they that speak, but Christ speaketh in them; and his word is not weak

but mighty, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. Where the word of this King is there is power. "Tabitha, arise!" Acts ix. 40, "When thou wast in thy blood, I said unto thee, Live," Ezek. xvi. 6. There is more inconsistency in hearing a man dead and bound, like Mr. Britton, hold forth the promise of eternal life, than in hearing a minister of the Spirit say, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14. The latter is an ambassador of God, speaking by divine authority, commanding and raising the dead: the former is the dead, in his grave-clothes, commanding and reproving the living.

Another of my offences is saying that the first thing that enters the soul under Gods teaching is light. And I believe the same now. "Every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd," John iii. 20. If light is not the first thing put forth, why is it the first thing hated? The Spirit is to reprove the world of sin; and, "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever maketh manifest is light," Eph. v. 13. The beginning of the good work in Paul was, a light shined round about him, above the brightness of the sun; the voice came afterwards. And the same stands first in Pauls mission and commission. "I have appeared unto thee, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. To the Gentiles I send thee; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me," Acts xxvi. 16-18. So God began at the first appearing of Christ: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and those that sat in the regions of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." And perhaps this is one reason why Christ is called the day-spring from on high that visits us.

But Mr. Britton says life, and not light, comes first to the sinner. It was not so at the conversion of Isaiah; light came first to him; he saw before he felt. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts," Isa. vi. 1-5. "All these things Isaiah saw first; the live coal, or coal of life, came afterwards. And so Paul; he first saw that Just One, and then heard the voice of his mouth, Acts xxii. 14. The light shone round about him; this collected his thoughts, and raised his attention; and afterwards he heard the voice of the Son of God; "And they that hear shall live," John v. 25.

But you avow that what I have said of Adam has established Mr. Fullers doctrine; for you say, If Adam was a spiritual man, then it is the duty of all Adams posterity to believe; if Adam had faith before he fell, then all his children ought to believe afterwards. I shall not labour to disprove the wisdom, nor the justice, that appear in this inference. But I have at times thought that there were scarcely any rational creatures without a faith of some sort or other. Milton says there was faith in angels, and in Adam too -

I made him just and right;
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all th' ethereal powers
And spirits, both them who stood and them who failed.
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have giv'n sincere

Of tree allegiance, constant faith, or love,
Where only what they needs must do appear'd,
Not what they would?

And he represents one believing angel reproving all the unbelieving ones that fell:

So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false unmov'd,
Unshaken, uneduc'd, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single.

The worst creatures in all the world are devils; and James says that they believe and tremble, James ii. 19. Next to devils in sin are hypocrites; and these have some sort of faith; for surely they would never cry out, "Who shall dwell with devouring fire? Who shall, dwell with everlasting burnings?" if they believed there were no such things. And even the worst of heretics have a faith; for, Paul says, God sends them strong delusions that they may believe a lie, 2 Thess. ii. 11. And though I never mentioned a word in my life, to my knowledge, about Adams having faith, yet I have no doubt but he had, because the Spirit of all grace was in him. He must believe that there was a God, because he had communion with him; and I think he believed the word of God. And what would be the effects of his transgression before he ate the fruit? for Paul says, "Adam was not deceived;" therefore he did it not ignorantly and in unbelief, but went voluntarily into it, with open eyes, against both faith and conscience. So did not Eve; the serpent beguiled her; she fell in unbelief, disbelieving the, positive denunciation of God, and giving credence to Satans lie: "Ye shall not surely die." Eves heart was the first

womb that conceived seed by the devil: and by this act Satan obtained the title of the Father of lies, and of a murderer from the beginning. Annanias and his wife both died in child-bearing by the same father. "Why have ye conceived this thing in your heart? Why hath Satan filled your heart?" They lusted or coveted after Mammon, and this brought them to a conjunction with Satan; then Sin was conceived, Satan filled their hearts, and, when lust had conceived, it brought forth sin; they lied, not unto men, but unto God: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death; they were both struck, dead upon the spot.

I shall take no notice of Robert Skilleter's poetry; that has its answer in itself. The author with respect to faith, is as lame as his performance; for neither the poet nor the poem have a foot to stand upon. Even in an empty profession he is but a novice, and in nature nothing but an idiot.

W. H. S. S. Nov. 1801.