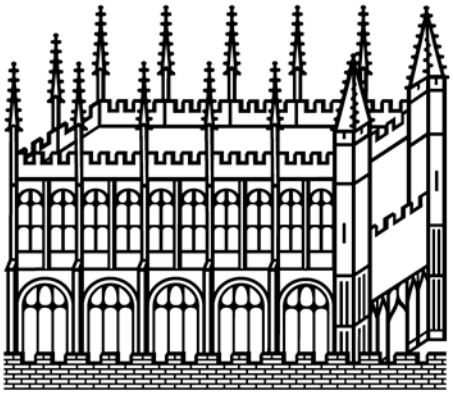

Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

1419 d. 569

600014908S

JANUARY, 1836.

NEW BOOKS

IN THE COURSE OF PUBLICATION

BY

J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

I.

SOME ACCOUNT of the WRITINGS of CLEMENT of ALEXANDRIA.

By the Right Rev. JOHN KAYE, D.D.
Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

8vo. 12*s.*

II.

A THIRD VOLUME of PAROCHIAL SERMONS.

By the Rev. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, M.A.
Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford, and Fellow of Oriel College.

8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* *(Now Ready.)*

Lately published, Vols. I. and II. 8vo. 1*l.* 1*s.*

III.

The CLERICAL GUIDE and ECCLESIASTICAL DIRECTORY;

Containing a complete Register of the Dignities and Benefices of the Church of England, with the Names of their present Possessors, Patrons, &c.; and an alphabetical List of the Dignitaries and Beneficed Clergy.

Edited by RICHARD GILBERT, M.R.S.L.
Compiler of the "Clergyman's Almanack," and the "Liber Scholasticus."

This Edition contains an account of the *present* value of the Archbishopricks, Bishopricks, Dignities, and all other Ecclesiastical Preferments, extracted from the Report of His Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Ecclesiastical Revenues. The Names of the Incumbents have been carefully corrected to the present time; and the Population of each Parish is inserted from the latest official returns. The Appendix will contain an account of the Ecclesiastical Patronage at the disposal of the King, the Lord Chancellor, Archbishops and Bishops, Deans and Chapters, Universities, &c.

Royal 8vo. 1*l.* 2*s.* *(Now ready.)*

IV.

The SOLDIER'S HELP to the KNOWLEDGE of DIVINE TRUTH.

A SERIES of DISCOURSES delivered in the Chapel of the Military Hospital, Chelsea.

By the Rev. G. R. GLEIG, M.A. Chaplain.

12mo. 6*s*. *(Just Published.)*

V.

A COMPENDIUM of the RUDIMENTS of THEOLOGY:

Containing a Digest of Bishop Butler's Analogy; an Epitome of Graves on the Pentateuch; and an Analysis of Bishop Newton on the Prophecies. For the Use of Students.

By the Rev. J. B. SMITH, B.D.
Of Christ's College, Cambridge; Head Master of Horncastle Grammar School.

12mo. *(Preparing for Publication.)*

VI.

SERMONS preached in HODNET CHURCH.

By the Rev. C. B. TAYLER, M.A.
Author of the "Records of a Good Man's Life."

12mo. *(In the Press.)*

VII.

SERMONS.

Preached in the Parish Church of St. Andrew the Great, Cambridge.

By the Rev. TEMPLE CHEVALLIER, B.D.
Late Vicar and Lecturer of St. Andrew the Great, Cambridge; Professor of Mathematics in the University of Durham; and Perpetual Curate of Esk, Durham.

12mo. 6*s*. *(Just Published.)*

VIII.

HOMERI ILIAS.

Chiefly from the Text of HEYNE.

With copious ENGLISH NOTES, illustrating the Grammatical Construction: the Manners and Customs, the Mythology and Antiquities of the Heroic Ages: and Preliminary Observations on Points of Classical Interest and Importance connected with Homer and his Writings.

By the Rev. WILLIAM TROLLOPE, M.A.
Of Pembroke College, Cambridge; and formerly one of the Masters of Christ's Hospital.

SECOND EDITION, revised and improved. In one large Volume, 8vo.

18*s*. *(Just Published.)*

IX.

A COMMENTARY on the ORDER for the BURIAL of the DEAD.

Considered as a Manual of Doctrine and Consolation for Christians.

By the Rev. WILLIAM GRESWELL, M.A.
Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford; and Curate of Disley, Cheshire.

In two Vols. 8vo. 18*s*.

X.

The LIFE of ARCHBISHOP LAUD.

In Continuation of the Series of LIVES of BRITISH DIVINES in the THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY, and printed uniformly with *Wiclif*, *Cranmer*, and *Jewel*.

By CHARLES WEBB LE BAS, M.A.
Professor in the East India College, Herts; and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

In small 8vo. 6*s*. *With Portrait*.

(*Preparing for Publication*.)

XI.

The OLD TESTAMENT;

With a COMMENTARY, consisting of Short Lectures, for the daily use of Families.

PART I., containing GENESIS and EXODUS.

By the Rev. CHARLES GIRDLESTONE, M.A.
Vicar of Sedgley, Staffordshire.

In this Edition of the HOLY BIBLE it has been the chief object of the Editor to furnish Families with an Exposition for daily Reading. The Scripture is divided into paragraphs of a convenient length, and the explanatory and practical matter is digested, under each portion, into one consecutive Lecture, so as to demand of the Reader no previous study or attention.

In 8vo. 9*s*. (*Just Published*.)

The OLD TESTAMENT *will be completed in* 8 *Parts, or* 4 *Volumes*, 8vo.

Lately published by the same Author,
The NEW TESTAMENT with a COMMENTARY. Printed uniformly with the above.

In two Volumes, 8vo.

Price in Cloth Boards, Gilt Lettered, 1*l*. 16*s*.; *or in Four Parts*, 9*s*. *each*.

XII.

A SECOND SERIES of PLAIN SERMONS.

By the Rev. F. W. FOWLE,
Rector of Allington, and Perpetual Curate of Amesbury, Wilts.

12mo. 5*s*.

Lately published, the FIRST SERIES. 12mo. 5*s*. 6*d*.

XIII.

The SECOND EDITION of

DISCOURSES on ELIJAH and JOHN the BAPTIST.

By the Rev. J. S. M. ANDERSON, M.A.
Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, and Perpetual Curate of St. George's Chapel, Brighton.

8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

XIV.

THE HISTORY of SECTS.

By the Rev. F. E. THOMPSON, M.A. Perpetual Curate of Brentford.

Small 8vo. (*Preparing for publication.*)

XV.

ECCLESIASTES ANGLICANUS;

Being a TREATISE on the ART of PREACHING, as adapted to a Church of England Congregation: contained in a Series of Letters to a young Clergyman.

By the Rev. W. GRESLEY, M.A.
Curate of St. Chads's, Lichfield; and Late Student of Christ Church.

8vo. 12*s.*

XVI.

DEVOTIONS for FAMILY USE.

By the Reverend CHARLES GIRDLESTONE, M.A.
Vicar of Sedgley, Staffordshire.

Small 8vo. 2*s.* (*Just published.*)

Also, DEVOTIONS for PRIVATE USE. By the same Author. 2*s.*

XVII.

A NEW EDITION OF THE

Rev. G. TOWNSEND'S HISTORICAL and CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT of the OLD TESTAMENT. With ANNOTATIONS.

In Two Vols. 8vo. (*In the Press.*)

XVIII.

The CONSOLATIONS of CHRISTIANITY,

Viewed in Connexion with the paternal Character of God, and with Human Life considered as a State of Probation: in FOUR DISCOURSES.

By the Rev. WILLIAM HULL,
Curate of Martham.

12mo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

XIX.

SERMONS, DOCTRINAL and PRACTICAL,
Preached Abroad.
By the Rev. RICHARD WILLIAM JELF, B.D.
Canon of Christ Church; Domestic Chaplain to H. R. H. the Duke of Cumberland, and Preceptor to H. R. H. Prince George; and Fellow of Oriel College.
8vo. 9*s.* 6*d.*

XX.

ETERNAL LIFE, the REVELATION of the BOOKS of MOSES.
By the Rev. JAMES ELLICE, M.A.
Rector of Clothall and Acton, Herts, and Chaplain to the Earl of Camperdown.
12mo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

XXI.

SPECULUM GREGIS; or, Parochial Minister's Assistant.
By a COUNTRY CURATE.

"He understands but little of the nature and obligations of the priestly office, who thinks he has discharged it by performing the public appointments."—*Bishop Burnet.*

"The readiest way of finding access to a man's heart, is to go into his house."—*Chalmers' Christian and Civic Economy.*

FOURTH EDITION. *Bound with Clasp,* 5*s.*

XXII.

ECLOGÆ OVIDIANÆ, with ENGLISH NOTES;
Being the Fifth Part of the Lateinisches Elementarbuch.
By PROFESSORS JACOBS and DOERING.
SECOND EDITION, with Additions. 2*s.* 6*d.*

XXIII.

THE SECOND EDITION OF
The GREEK TESTAMENT, with ENGLISH NOTES, Critical,
Philological, and Exegetical, partly selected and arranged from the best Commentators, Ancient and Modern, but chiefly Original. Adapted to the Use of Academical Students, Candidates for the Sacred Office and Ministers; and as a Manual Edition for Theological Readers in general.
By the Rev. S. T. BLOOMFIELD, D.D. F.S.A.
Vicar of Bisbrooke, Rutland.
In Two large Volumes. 8vo. 2*l.*

XXIV.

SERMONS.
By W. E. TRENCHARD, M.A.
Of Pembroke College, Oxford; and late Curate of West Monkton, Somerset.
8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

XXV.

THE FOURTH EDITION OF

A MEMOIR of FELIX NEFF, Pastor of the High Alps; and of his Labours among the French Protestants of Dauphiné, a Remnant of the Primitive Christians of Gaul. With a new Appendix.

By WILLIAM STEPHEN GILLY, D.D.
Prebendary of Durham, and Vicar of Norham.

Small 8vo. 6*s.* 6*d.*

The Appendix may be had separately for former Editions, price 6*d.*

XXVI.

GUIDE to the HOLY SACRAMENT of the LORD'S SUPPER.

By the Rev. G. R. GLEIG, M.A.
Chaplain to the Royal Hospital at Chelsea.

18mo. 3*s.*

XXVII.

TRACTS for the TIMES.

By MEMBERS of the UNIVERSITY of OXFORD.

Vol. II. For 1834-5. 8vo. (*Nearly ready.*)

Lately published, Vol. I. 8vo. 8*s.* 6*d.*

XXVIII.

SERMONS, partly Critical and Explanatory.

By J. PARSONS, B.D.
Honorary Associate of the Royal Society of Literature.

8vo. 12*s.*

XXIX.

A SECOND SERIES of SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY.

By the Rev. ROBERT WILSON EVANS, M.A.
Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge; and Author of the "Rectory of Valehead."

In small 8vo. *With Frontispiece*, 6*s.*

Lately published, the First Series. *With Frontispiece.* 6*s.*

XXX.

The FIRST and SECOND of LAW'S THREE LETTERS to BISHOP HOADLEY, in Answer to his Lordship's Sermon on the Nature of Christ's Kingdom, and his Notions of the Authority of the Christian Priesthood.

New Edition. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

*** This present Edition of these Letters is brought forward in answer to some opinions lately reproduced by Dr. Arnold in his Publications.

XXXI.

TWENTY-ONE SERMONS on Various Subjects, adapted to the present Time.

By the Rev. JACOB HENRY BROOKE MOUNTAIN, M.A.
Prebendary of Lincoln, Rector of Blunham, Beds., and Vicar of Hemel Hemsted, Herts, and Domestic Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester.

12mo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

XXXII.

HYMNS selected for PRIVATE and PUBLIC USE.

In Two Parts.

By the Rev. CHARLES GIRDLESTONE, M.A.
Vicar of Sedgley, Staffordshire.

Small 8vo. 2*s.*

XXXIII.

An EXPOSITION of the Book of REVELATION; (being Part of a Commentary on the New Testament;) with an Introduction and Notes, a List of Symbols, and Tabular Arrangement.

By the Rev. CHARLES GIRDLESTONE, M.A.
Vicar of Sedgley, Staffordshire.

8vo. 4*s.*

XXXIV.

THE THIRD VOLUME OF

MOSHEIM'S COMMENTARIES on the AFFAIRS of the CHRISTIANS before the Time of Constantine the Great; or an enlarged View of the Ecclesiastical History of the First Three Centuries. With Copious Illustrative Notes and References.

Translated from the Latin by ROBERT STUDLEY VIDAL, Esq. F.S.A.

8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

XXXV.

A COURSE of SERMONS for the YEAR.

VOL. II: containing Discourses from Trinity Sunday to the End of the Year.

By the Rev. JOHNSON GRANT, M.A.
Rector of Binbrook, and Minister of Kentish Town Chapel.

8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

Lately Published, VOL. I. 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

XXXVI.

THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE

PENNY SUNDAY READER; July to December, 1835.

Edited by the Rev. J. E. N. MOLESWORTH,
Rector of St. Martin's, Canterbury, and one of the Six Preachers of Canterbury Cathedral.

Small 8vo. 2*s.* 9*d.*

*** *This Work is continued in Weekly Numbers.*

XLI.

The COTTAGER'S MONTHLY VISITOR for 1835.

(*With Wood Cuts.*) Price 4*s.* in boards, or 4*s.* 6*d.* half-bound.

RELIGIOUS BOOKS FOR GENERAL READING.

IN UNIFORM VOLUMES, PRICE 6*s.* EACH, THE

THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY.

EDITORS.

The VEN. ARCHDEACON LYALL, M.A.
The REV. HUGH JAMES ROSE, B.D.

VOLUMES PUBLISHED:

I.

The LIFE of WICLIF.

By CHARLES WEBB LE BAS, M.A.
Professor in the East India College, Herts; and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.
Portrait. 6*s.*

II.

The CONSISTENCY of the whole SCHEME of REVELATION with ITSELF and with HUMAN REASON.

By PHILIP NICHOLAS SHUTTLEWORTH, D.D.
Warden of New College, Oxford; and Rector of Foxley, Wilts.
6*s.*

III. VI. VIII.

HISTORY of the REFORMED RELIGION in FRANCE.

By EDWARD SMEDLEY, M.A.
Late Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.
In Three Volumes. *With Fourteen Portraits.* 18*s.*

IV. V.

The LIFE of ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

By CHARLES WEBB LE BAS, M.A.
Professor in the East India College, Herts; and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.
2 Vols. *Portrait.* 12*s.*

VII. XII.

SCRIPTURE BIOGRAPHY.

By R. W. EVANS, M.A.
Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge; and Author of the "Rectory of Valehead."
2 Vols. 12*s.*

IX. X.

HISTORY of the CHURCH in SCOTLAND.

By the Rev. M. RUSSELL, D.D.
Author of the "Connection of Sacred and Profane History."
2 Vols. *Portraits.* 12*s.*

XI.

The LIFE of BISHOP JEWEL.

By CHARLES WEBB LE BAS, M.A.
Professor in the East India College, Herts; and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.
Portrait. 6*s.*

RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD, & WATERLOO PLACE.

Of the same Publishers may be had,

In 1 large vol. 8vo. 12s. boards,

SELECT DISCOURSES;

TREATING,

OF SELF-RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL;

OF CHRISTIAN LOVE;

OF THE RESURRECTION, AND A REWARD TO COME.

BY JOHN WORTHINGTON, D.D.

SOME TIME PREBENDARY OF LINCOLN.

New Edition, carefully corrected.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SCRIPTURE CATECHISM,

WITH A COMMENTARY.

THE

GREAT DUTY

OF

SELF-RESIGNATION

TO THE

DIVINE WILL.

BY THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

JOHN WORTHINGTON, D.D.

OF PIOUS MEMORY.

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR'S SON,

J. WORTHINGTON, CANTAB. A.M.

WITH THE

AUTHOR'S CHARACTER BY ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

NEW EDITION.

Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.—Luke xxii. 42.

——— *But yield yourselves unto God.*—Rom. vi. 13.

GLASGOW:

PRINTED BY ANDREW AND JOHN M. DUNCAN,

FOR C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1826.

BODLEIAN
D
16 MAR1954
LIBRARY

THE

GREAT DUTY

OF

SELF-RESIGNATION.

INTRODUCTION.

AMONGST all divine truths, none are more frequently, more powerfully, to be pressed and urged, than those that are wholly practical, that refer to spiritual obedience, "that pertain to life and godliness,"[a] τὰ πρὸς ζωὴν καὶ εὐσέβειαν, that tend to the real bettering of man, and transforming him into the divine image; such as are most powerful to the subduing our own wills, as divided from God's, and the bringing them unto a conformity to the will of God.

But alas! these great practical truths have been too commonly either sparingly, or but coldly and insignificantly, not fully, clearly, and vigorously recommended. The great noise and ado in the Christian world hath been about "the lighter matters of the law, mint, anise, and cumin;"[b] meats and drinks, wherein the kingdom of God doth not consist.[c] The great talk and zeal hath been about

[a] 2 Pet. i. 3. [b] Matt. xxiii. 23. [c] Rom. xiv. 17.

things less necessary, and more obscure and doubtful: men "doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,"[a] &c.

It pleaseth men to hear of speculative doctrines; and to be entertained with a luscious preaching of the gospel, made up all of promises, and these wholly unconditional. It gratifies them to hear what is done without them, rather than what is to be done within them, and the necessity of sincere and entire obedience to our Saviour's precepts urged upon them.

All would reign with Christ, but would not suffer with him. Many would hear only of Christ's dying for sin, of his being crucified for them: but to hear of their dying to sin and their own corrupt will, of their being crucified with him, and suffering their wills to be resigned to the will of the Father as Christ's was; to hear of making an entire oblation of themselves to God; "This is σκληρὸς λόγος, a hard saying, few will hear it:"[b] it is very unpleasing to flesh and blood; it is too spiritual a gospel for the carnal mind to relish.

But how unpleasing soever it be, it is not therefore to be forborne: for "if we should seek to please men, we should not be the servants of Christ."[c] If we should gratify and humour insincere people in their soft and delicate self-chosen religion, and their willing their own wills, we should not be faithful to their souls; whose grand interest and necessary concernment it is, to know and practise this first and great lesson in the school of Christ.

Self-resignation is a great part of "the doctrine

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5. [b] John vi. 60. [c] Gal. i. 10.

which is according to godliness."[d] They are ὑγιαίνοντες λόγοι, the "wholesome (or healing) words of our Lord Jesus Christ;"[e] "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple:"[f] and, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."[g]

This is ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία, "healing doctrine,"[h] that alone can cure the inward distempers of our souls; and therefore absolutely necessary to be taught and pressed with all authority.

It matters not, that the carnally minded and delicate Christian doth not relish it. We that are the ministers of the gospel, are to imitate careful and prudent physicians: who, when they come to their patients, do not ask them what they love best, and then prescribe them what is most pleasing to their palates, though most hurtful; but, informing themselves well of the case of the diseased, they appoint what they judge most proper for them, though it be no whit grateful or acceptable to them.

But howsoever the resigning their wills to the will of God be as loathsome physic to the carnal; it is to the truly spiritual both meat and drink, as it was to their great Master:[i] it is their constant diet, the savoury meat which their souls love, and live by: they esteem the forementioned and the like words of their Saviour's mouth, "more than their necessary food;"[k] to borrow Job's expression.

And this so little minded, so much neglected doctrine of self-resignation, is that which I design

[d] 1 Tim. vi. 3. [e] Ibid. [f] Luke xiv. 27. [g] Matt. x. 38.
[h] 1 Tim. i. 3. [i] See John iv. 34. [k] Job. xxiii. 12.

to treat of, and with all seriousness to recommend to " those that name the name of Christ."[a]

For the more distinct understanding whereof, we must know, that self-resignation doth relate either;

First. To the commands of God; particularly such commands as are difficult to nature, and grievous to flesh and blood, for to obey in lesser and more easy instances is no worthy proof of our resignation. And thus considered, it implieth an entire obedience to the preceptive will of God. Or,

Secondly. It relates to hard trials, great hardships and sufferings; such as God doth allot, and appoint, " to humble us, and to know what is in our hearts:"[b] and thus considered, it implieth a meek patience, and quiet submission to the divine disposals, or the providential will of God.

Yet I shall not speak to these two distinctly; but join them both together in this aphorism, wherein is comprised the grand fundamental mystery of practical religion, *viz.* That a Christian is to resign his will wholly to the divine will; to make an entire oblation of himself to God. In discoursing on which;

First. I shall present you with several weighty considerations, that do most effectually recommend to us this duty of self-resignation.

Secondly. I shall set down such helps, and directions, as are most proper for the attaining this most excellent temper.

[a] 2 Tim. ii. 19. [b] Deut. viii. 2.

SECT. I.

CONSIDERATIONS RECOMMENDING THE DUTY OF SELF-RESIGNATION TO OUR MOST SERIOUS AND DILIGENT PRACTICE.

CHAP. I.

That it is the law of our creation, both first and second. The consideration of God as a second creator shown mightily to enforce our engagement to this duty, upon a fourfold account.

SELF-RESIGNATION is the law of our creation; our necessary condition and property, both as we are creatures, and as new creatures; as we are made, and as we are renewed after God's image.

It is not a new thing, introduced first by Christ; it is not an institution peculiar to the times of the gospel, so that for almost four thousand years man was not obliged to it: but it is our unchangeable property, arising from our dependence upon God, and relation to him. There is a law written within us, that requires this; nor can any thing free us from our obligation hereunto. We were made by God for himself; and therefore must needs be under an eternal obligation to yield universal obedience to him. This is an "old commandment, which man had from the beginning,"[c] as St. John speaks of love; it is rooted in, and interwoven with,

[c] 1 John ii. 7.

his very being: all the duties enjoined therein are branches of the everlasting righteousness, and are of an eternal and unchangeable nature.

It is the character of angels; that they "do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word;" and that they "do his will:"[a] and the self-resignation of angels, their doing God's will in heaven, is the model of men's resignation and obedience on earth: for our Saviour hath taught us thus to pray; "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."[b] Angels and men are under the same moral obligation of religion; the same law, for substance, concerns both. Love is the sum of the whole law: and angels are to love God, with all their might, as well as men; and one angel is to love another as himself.

Religion obligeth every rational and understanding creature; and the quintessence of religion is resignation: and therefore it is impossible this could ever have not been, or should ever for the future cease to be, our duty. It was an ancient maxim of the Hebrew doctors; *Omnia sunt in manu Cœli excepto timore Cœli.* 'All things are in God's power, except the fear of God;' implying, that God himself cannot absolve and free men from the religious fear and observance of himself, and a most obedient regard to his holy will.

What the apostle St. John saith of love that it is an old, and yet a new commandment,[c] is true also of this high and holy commandment of self-resignation. It is a new commandment; not as if it were first brought in by Christ, for men were never free to will their own wills, "to walk in the ways

[a] Psal. ciii. 20, 21. [b] Matt. vi. 10. [c] 1 John ii. 7.

of their hearts, and in the sight of their eyes,"[d] but it is new, as the commandment of love is new, in that it was enlivened and enforced anew by Christ; had its power and virtue renewed and increased, and the engagement to it heightened, both by the doctrine and example of our Saviour: both tending to the advancement of self-resignation, in a way beyond any doctrine or example of life that ever appeared before, or since, in the world. And therefore it is also the law of the new creation; by virtue whereof its obligation is now doubled. And the consideration of God as our second creator mightily enforceth our engagement to this duty. For,

1. The relation of the new creature is more noble and honourable. *Ab eo tempore censemur, ex quo in Christo renascimur.*[e] In the second creation the image of God is repaired in the soul; and man, that was a disfigured and disordered thing by reason of his apostasy and fall from God, is restored now to that better and more excellent state. As he is a new creature, he partakes of the Spirit, and is heavenly and spiritual: which is far more than having a natural being, by which, as the apostle speaks, he "is of the earth, earthy."[f]

2. It is also a sweeter relation; there is a most dear love, to be admired rather than to be expressed, manifested herein. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"[g] "Abba, Father,"[h] comes more freely from the lips and heart of the new creature. Such may draw near to God with a filial freedom, and humble boldness.

[d] Eccl. xi. 9. [e] St. Jerome in his Epitaph on Nepotianus.
[f] 1 Cor. xv. 47. [g] 1 John iii. 1. [h] Gal. iv. 6.

3. It is a more advantageous relation: for "if children," saith the apostle, "then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."[a] And the "inheritance" they are heirs to, is "uncorruptible and undefiled, reserved in the heavens for them;"[b] such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,"[c] and the glory and advantages of which no heart can conceive: to which, "according to the abundant mercy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," they are "begotten again," as also "unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."[d]

4. The new creation empowers, capacitates, and enables us for this duty. To this purpose is that of the apostle; "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works;"[e] created unto entire obedience to the will of God, the foundation, and also the sum and abridgment, whereof is self-resignation.

These things might be largely insisted upon; but thus much is briefly intimated, that the obligation to self-resignation may appear more from the notion of a new creature, than from that of a creature.

[a] Rom. viii. 17. [b] 1 Pet. i. 4. [c] 1 Cor. ii. 9.
[d] 1 Pet. i. 3. [e] Eph. ii. 10.

CHAP. II.

That self-resignation is that which doth eminently distinguish a good man from the devil and the wicked: and that mere external performances do not distinguish between the one and the other.

SELF-RESIGNATION is that which doth eminently distinguish a good man from the devil and the wicked.

The angels that would not continue in resignation, that would have another will of their own, that rended their wills from the will of God; these were the evil and miserable angels: and still they are impetuously acted by a boisterous self-will, and are impatient of having it checked.

Quasi בלי עול *absque jugo*, ἄνομος. Belial is the devil's name; which word signifies *without yoke:* and the children of Belial are for a boundless lawless liberty; they "set themselves against the Lord and his Christ, saying; let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."[f] They "altogether break the yoke, and burst the bonds;"[g] are impatient of restraint.

Wicked men, in whose hearts the apostate spirit worketh, are υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας, "the children of disobedience:"[h] they are not for entire subjection to the divine will, though wise, good, sure, and perfect; but addicted to their own will, which is childish, vain, perverse, and boisterous; and all for gratifying their ἐπιθυμίας πολλὰς ἀνοήτους καὶ βλαβερὰς, "many foolish and hurtful desires and long-

[f] Psal. ii. 2, 3. [g] Jer. v. 5. [h] Eph. ii. 2.

ings."[a] They are all for "walking after the imagination and stubbornness of their own hearts,"[b] a phrase often used in the prophecy of Jeremiah, and for "fulfilling θελήματα, the wills of the flesh and of the mind:"[c] whereas the children of God are τέκνα ὑπακοῆς, "children of obedience;"[d] conformed, (not to their former lusts, but) to the will of God, as was David, who fulfilled all his will.[e]

And here it is fit to advertise and admonish Christians, that it is a piece of mystery-wickedness, a policy of Satan in all ages, to set up and magnify some pieces of outward religion, and put such a value upon them, as from them to denominate men good and religious: and so men are reputed saints, and the children of God, by such and such opinions and notions, such expressions, such observances, such things as may be performed by very bad men. So that on these different forms are founded different parties and sects; and each magnifies its own mode: and thereupon men are tempted and invited to associate and link themselves with one or other; because hereby they shall be reputed religious, and apologized for by those of that rank and way; and all others shall be unsainted and decried. But in the mean while the main thing is little minded, that which doth intrinsically and eminently distinguish the good from the wicked; and that is self-resignation, self-denial; that which our Saviour makes the essential character of a true Christian.

This doctrine of denying and resigning ourselves, the doctrine of the inward cross, of being dead to

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 9. [b] Jer. xxiii. 17. [c] Eph. ii. 3.
[d] 1 Pet. i. 14. [e] Acts xiii. 22, 36.

self-desires, and self-interests, is very unacceptable and grievous to Pharisaical and formal Christians: they would fain live to themselves, please themselves; being "lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud, incontinent, fierce, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;"[f] as the apostle speaks of some who hereby denied the power of godliness, whereof yet they had a form.

Now it is a good service done to religion, to endeavour, both by life and doctrine, to rescue it from these abuses, from being thought to consist in such outward shows; and to place the kingdom of God where it should be. It is for the interest of the "pure and undefiled religion,"[g] and for the advancement of real holiness, to lessen the credit of such appearances, *viz.* such a habit, tone, form of words, mere outward performances; to lessen the repute of any sort of mock-holiness, a mere outward profession and observance of only the externals of religion; be they such as are commanded and appointed by God, or be they mere arbitrary and voluntary tasks; which have a show of wisdom and holiness, but indeed are a holiness of their own framing, and a self-chosen righteousness.

Yet, this is not spoken to lessen the repute of what is external, with a design to make men regardless thereof; but only to awaken them from resting in these externals, to the minding of a greater strictness and holiness, a "righteousness" which "exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees:"[h] who were men that were very

[f] 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 4. [g] James i. 27. [h] Matt. v. 20.

observant of many of the outward parts of religion, and were strict as to several things that did not cross and prejudice their carnal interests; but yet notoriously loose as to what was most strictly and mainly required by God: and therefore our Saviour required his disciples to beware of strengthening that Babel, that false imaginary holiness of the Pharisees;[a] who, by their specious appearances of austerity, and the like, grew into a great reputation among the people, as if there were much of religion in them.

Among the externals of religion, some are of God's own requiring, and suitable to our state and condition here; as praying, reading, preaching, hearing the word, discoursing of it, &c. As for these, not to mention such as men do voluntarily impose upon themselves, we are not to value men as religious by any thing in the use of them which is common to the regenerate and unregenerate, and may be performed and attained to by the hypocrite or formal Christian; who may "make a fair show in the flesh"[b] and outward part of religion, and yet be unacquainted with the spirit and power of it.

That which is all in all, is the doing these things from a resigned heart: so to pray, as in praying to have a humble submission to the will of God; so to read, so to preach, so to hear, as to be willing to be formed into all that truth, "the good and acceptable will of God:"[c] this is that which doth distinguish the formal and real Christian. Others can perform all that is outward in religion; and in such a way as to have the praise of men:

[a] Matt. vi. [b] Gal. vi. 12. [c] Rom. xii. 2.

but to deny ourselves, to resign our wills entirely to the divine will; this is proper and peculiar to the inward and sincere Christian.

CHAP. III.

That self-resignation is the most acceptable way of glorifying God: and that he is honoured by no performances separated from this.

SELF-RESIGNATION, and a conformity to the divine will, is the most excellent, the truest and most acceptable way of glorifying God, and doing honour to him.

The greatest honour and respect we can express to an excellent and worthy person, is to endeavour to be as like him as may be; to imitate him in whatsoever accomplishment commends and represents him justly exemplary. And the most excellent way of honouring God, is to endeavour to be transformed into his likeness; to have our will the same with his, to will as he wills.

Indeed, the mere outward Christian thinks, that he doth God great honour and service, when he gives him the fruit of his lips in goodly expressions, and specious praises; when he gives him the fruit of a bodily worship, in multiplying external devotions and religious observances: hereby he thinks he doth highly please God, and oblige him to him; as if God were such a one as himself, and were apt to be taken with such words and shows, and did seek and passionately thirst after such praises and respects.

But thus to judge of God, and deal with him, is really to dishonour him, as much as thou pretendest by this means to honour him. It is plainly called in Scripture a flattering of God. "They remembered God their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer: nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues."[a]

It was a good maxim of the Pythagoreans; Τιμήσεις τὸν Θεὸν ἄριστα, ἐὰν τῷ Θεῷ τὴν διάνοιαν ὁμοιώσῃς. 'Thou shalt then in the most excellent and becoming way glorify and honour God, when in thy mind thou art like God.' When in thine inward man thou art conformed to God's image and likeness, when thou art affected as He is affected, when thou willest as He willeth, when thou art willing to have that destroyed in thee which is contrary to the divine nature; then most of all dost thou honour and glorify God.

That which the Chaldee Paraphrast doth gloss on those words, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me,"[b] is very pertinent; *viz.* 'Whoso subdues and destroys יְצַרָא בִישָׁא the principle of inordinate affection in him, it shall be accounted to him as קוּרְבָּן תּוֹדָתָא a sacrifice of praise.' The mortifying of earthly members, the slaying undue desires, corrupt interests, and uncurbed affections, is more, infinitely more, pleasing, than all those costly and pompous services under the law, than the utmost that the lip-service and tongue-devotion can make show of.

That great bulk of rites and ceremonies, those burdensome services under the law, those multi-

[a] Psal. lxxviii. 35, 36. [b] Ibid. l. 23.

tudes of sacrifices of bulls, goats, lambs, &c. they did not, they could not avail, were but mean inconsiderable things, and vain cost, without the inward sacrifice of a heart sweetly, sincerely, kindly, and ingenuously affected towards God. This, this heart, such a temper of spirit, did "please the Lord better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs."[c] "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams,"[d] the best of the sacrifice.

"Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil;"[e] with multitudes of outward services and bodily austerities, with long fastings, prayings, and prophesyings in his name; with large discourses, glorious expressions, vehement disputings, or the like, these he shall have: any thing shall be given, rather than "the sin of the soul," the corrupt will, should be destroyed. But it is the walking with God in humility and resignation, which is that "good thing which God hath showed thee, O man; and which the Lord thy God requireth of thee."[f]

"The sacrifice of the wicked," those whose wills were opposite to the will of God, was "an abomination unto the Lord,"[g] in the time of the law. And now under the gospel state, wherein those legal and carnal ordinances are ceased, our more seemingly spiritual exercises of religion, our prayings, our fastings, our saying Lord, Lord, and naming the name of Christ, our great profession of Christianity, and all other religious outward observances, are but fruitless empty things, of no account

[c] Psal. lxix. 31. [d] 1 Sam. xv, 22. [e] Micah. vi. 7.
[f] Ibid. vi. 8. [g] Prov. xv. 8. and xxi. 27.

with God, utterly unavailable, except there be at the bottom of all a resigned heart.

As St. James saith, "if any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue;" so is it most true, if any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his will, which is more hard, "this man's religion is vain."[a]

CHAP. IV.

That self-resignation is the way to light, even in the greatest difficulties and perplexities; whether they be in reference to our duty, or in reference to our condition and state.

SELF-RESIGNATION is the way to light; and that in the greatest difficulties, and darkest perplexities.

There is a kind of divine oracle within the self-resigning soul, which speaks clearly and plainly; not darkly and ambiguously, as that oracle in Greece. There is a spiritual priesthood, which hath the *Urim* and *Thummim* (not upon the breast, as Aaron had;[b] but) within the breast: light and integrity go together.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant:"[c] or, as it is better in the margin, "and his covenant to make them know it:" that is, it is part of God's gracious covenant not to conceal from them, but to make them know his will. That which concerns them to know and practise, God will not hide from

[a] James i. 26. [b] Exod. xxviii. 30. [c] Psal. xxv. 14.

the sincerely obedient. God makes such "to know wisdom in the hidden part;"[d] or in "the hidden man of the heart,"[e] to use St. Peter's phrase.

That may safely be understood, and is most true of the self-resigning soul, which the son of Sirach doth affirm; "Let the counsel of thine own heart stand, for there is no man more faithful unto thee than it: for a man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen, that sit above in a high tower."[f]

But to speak more particularly: where this inward principle of self-resignation is, there are the fewest doubts and perplexities; or in case of such doubts, there are the speediest and surest resolutions.

Now the doubts and solicitudes, that perplex and disquiet Christians, may be chiefly ranked under these two heads; they are either about their *duty*, or about their *state:* and in both, self-resignation is the way to light, and affords the greatest advantages of knowing aright.

First. *Be the doubts and perplexities about our duty;* what we are to do: The self-resigning soul is in the best disposition to give a right judgment in this case; as also the best prepared to receive divine light, and the guidance of God's counsel.

1. *This soul is best prepared to receive divine light,* &c. Such a soul is wholly made for obedience and quiet submission to the will of God. It is brought up at the feet of Christ; sits there, with Mary,[g] in the posture and spirit, and all the becoming qualities of a willing and obedient disciple: and the teacher of souls will not neglect "to show" unto

[d] Psal. li. 6. [e] 1 Pet. iii. 4. [f] Ecclus. xxxvii. 13, 14. [g] Luke x. 39.

such "the path of life."[a] God will write his law in the humble and obedient heart; the laws and rules of life and obedience shall be written within it by the Spirit of the living God. "The meek shall he guide in judgment, the meek shall he teach his way."[b] The eternal characters of goodness and righteousness which are in the mind of God, are copied out and transcribed in the soul of a resigned Christian: "we have the mind of Christ,"[c] saith the apostle; and these letters are not dead letters, like those written with ink and paper; but they are living characters, as they are in God, and writ on living tables: they are "the law of the Spirit of life,"[d] an inward living principle in such souls.

Again, the self-resigning soul is still and silent before the Lord: lusts and corrupt interests, which make a continual noise and clamour in the unregenerate and unresigned, by their importunate solicitations, and fill them with din and tumult, are here quieted and silenced; and therefore such a soul is better prepared to hear God coming to it in the "still small voice,"[e] as once he did to Elias. Those soft and gentle whispers of the Spirit, *venæ Divini murmuris*, as Prudentius calls them, those inward manifestations of himself, are best discerned and attended to, in this solemn silence. When the wind is high, and beats upon the windows and doors of the house, it is hard to hear what is said within. All tumultuous and boisterous passions must be calmed, and the soul be in a state of due stillness and tranquillity, to hear what God speaks to it.

[a] Psal. xvi. 11. [b] Ibid. xxv. 9. [c] 1 Cor. ii. 16.
[d] Rom. viii. 2. [e] 1 Kings xix. 12.

And when this is the language of our hearts, as it was of Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;"[f] then it is, that we hear a voice behind us, saying; "this is the way, walk in it."[g] And thus shall "the path of the just be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."[h]

2. *The self-resigning soul is in the best disposition to give a right judgment, and to discern the will of God.* When men are unresigned, unwilling to be wholly God's, and have some design and interest to serve, contrary to the design of Christ and righteousness, and are passionately and eagerly carried out to it; it is no wonder, if they "err in their hearts," and "know not the way"[i] of God, the way wherein he hath declared he will have them to walk: for they are easily brought to fancy that to be right, which they strongly will; and to judge things to be thus, from their impetuous willing them to be so. And it is just with God to give them up to an injudicious and undiscerning mind, so that things appear to them, not as they are, but as they would have them to appear; not according to their own inward form and nature, but according to the lusts of their own hearts.

Lusts and passions cast such a mist before men's minds, that they cannot see their way; nor well discern between good and evil. And it is easy to observe, that the same men, when they are free from temptations, and from the power of passions, clearly see many things to be evil, and condemn

[f] 1 Sam. iii. 10. [g] Isa. xxx. 21. [h] Prov. iv. 18. [i] Psal. xcv. 10.

them; which at other times they will not be convinced are so, but pronounce the quite contrary concerning them.

Therefore the self-resigning Christian, having that subdued in him that would tempt him to judge amiss, is in the ready way to the clearest discerning the will of God. What is said of Christ, is, according to his measure, true of a faithful Christian; he is "of a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord;"[a] of a quick הריח 'scent or smell,' as the Hebrew doth import, he hath a more exact κριτήριον, 'faculty of judging' and discerning; his senses are spiritually "exercised to discern both good and evil."[b]

Such as "are not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of their minds, shall prove and discern what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."[c]

Unpurified reason and understanding is far from being a sure and safe guide and director about τὸ δέον, 'what ought to be done;' for it looks at what is profitable, rather than at what is honest. Though it may be quick enough to discern matters merely speculative and notional; yet it is very apt to miscarry in morals, or matters of practice. But "a good understanding have all they that do his commandments:"[d] a better light shines into holy and purged hearts; "they see light in God's light:"[e] the "day-star is risen in their hearts:"[f] Εὔχου δέ σοι πρὸ πάντων φωτὸς ἀνοιχθῆναι πύλας, 'the gates of light are opened to them,' as it is expressed by

[a] Isa. xi. 3. [b] Heb. v. 14. [c] Rom. xii. 2. [d] Psal. cxi. 10.
[e] Ibid. xxxvi. 9. [f] 2 Pet. i. 19.

Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Tryphon the Jew, telling the manner of his conversion by an old man, who gave him this counsel.

This is the privilege of the self-resigning soul, that knows no will of its own divided from the will of God, and would not will any thing, but what he doth will; such a soul shall "understand the fear of the Lord,"[g] and hath great and frequent occasions of saying, with David, "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel."[h]

Secondly. *Be the doubts about our condition, or state; what it is toward God, and in reference to eternity:* as St. James speaks, "From whence come wars and fightings?"[i] I may add; whence come those fears, anxieties, and uncertainties, that are to be observed in many about the state of their souls, those fears that have torment in them? "come they not hence, even from the lusts that war in their members? *scelera dissident,* one lust often wars against another; but all "war against the soul."[k]

Are not most of those tormenting fears and troubles in Christians to be resolved into the want of an entire self-resignation, as the proper and true ground? Men will not come off thoroughly to this. They would be indulged in something or other; and yet would be at peace and rest. They would be cured of their distemper; and yet are unwilling to have the root of it taken away.

Consider therefore; Is there not something of self-will that works, and is too powerful within thee? Wouldst thou not be unresigned, and please thyself in this or that thing? Dost thou not say,

[g] Prov. ii. 5. [h] Psal. xvi. 7. [i] James iv. 1. [k] 1 Pet. ii. 11.

with Naaman the Syrian, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing?"[a] and as Lot in another case, "Is it not a little one?"[b] If it be so; God, who seeth the heart, seeth all this; and he will not be mocked, nor be bribed to give thee peace, by thy making a great show of being subdued and resigned in other things.

But if by the power of God's grace our wills be entirely subjected to the divine will, we cannot have the least reason, upon any account whatsoever, to torment ourselves with anxious thoughtfulness about our state: we may be sure, that the outward hell shall not be our portion, if we are delivered from the hell within; and that we cannot miss of the heaven above, while we have a heaven within us, and are put into a fit disposition for it, by a free resignation to the will of God.

They to whom the doing God's will is connatural, and their meat and drink, "have eternal life," as in the Epistles of St. John the phrase is more than once; they, in a lower degree, live the life of souls in glory, are affected as they are, and have the disposition and temper of heaven.

Indeed it is as impossible for souls, whose sincere care it is "to purify themselves as God is pure,"[c] and only to will as he wills, to be in hell; as it is for impure, self-willed and disobedient souls, to be in heaven. It is as impossible for "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,"[d] and the like fruits of the Spirit, to be in hell; as it is impossible for "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation,

[a] 2 Kings v. 18. [b] Gen. xix. 20. [c] 1 John iii. 3. [d] Gal. v. 22, 23.

wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings,"[e] and such like works of the flesh, to be in heaven.

That soul cannot be miserable, and is uncapable of the hellish state, which is entirely resigned: for such a one "dwelleth in love;" and therefore "in God, and God in him:"[f] nor can the infinitely good God abandon and cast off any that "cleave unto him with full purpose of heart,"[g] and prefer his will above their chief joy. Thirstings and holy breathings after the enjoyment of God, godlike dispositions, and a frame of heart agreeable to the heart of God, cannot fail to be united to Him their original.

CHAP. V.

That self-resignation is the way to rest and peace. That those that have attained thereunto, find satisfaction and pleasure, both in doing and suffering the will of God. That it procures outward as well as inward peace: and that self-willedness is that which puts the world into confusion.

SELF-RESIGNATION is the way to true peace, rest, and joy; "joy unspeakable,"[h] as St. Peter, "Peace which passeth all understanding,"[i] as St. Paul calls it.

By the way observe, that neither words nor thoughts can reach spiritual excellencies: this is their sole privilege, that they can never be over-valued, over-praised. Other things we may easily

[e] Gal. v. 19—21. [f] 1 John iv. 16. [g] Acts xi. 23.
[h] 1 Pet. i. 8. [i] Phil. iv. 7.

speak too highly of; but we can never invent too magnificent expressions concerning these, we cannot raise men's expectations too high concerning them; they will ever prove better than they are reported to be. It will be said by the soul that comes to know these things by experience, as it was by the queen of Sheba; "Behold, half was not told me."[a]

But to return: self-resignation is the way to true rest, a holy rest; to *sabbatum cordis*, 'the sabbath of the heart,' as St. Austin calls it. If thou wilt enjoy the true rest, and keep the inward sabbath; thou must not "do thine own ways," nor "speak thine own words," nor "find thine own pleasure,"[b] to borrow those words of Isaiah; thou must "cease from thine own works;"[c] as St. Paul phrases it.

All desire rest, peace, and pleasure; but nowhere shall we find it, but in "yielding ourselves unto God."[d] And that it is to be found in this way, our Saviour hath told his disciples; "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls."[e] In taking Christ's yoke upon us, in bearing his burden, in a sincere, free, and entire obedience to his laws, in learning of him, who was meek and lowly in heart, a pliable and obedient frame and temper of spirit, we shall undoubtedly find the sweetest ease and tranquillity of mind.

As the soul groweth in resignation, it returns more to its rest; it comes to be more as it would be, by being more restored towards its original constitution, its first state. Man was made after

[a] 1 Kings x. 7. [b] Isa. lviii. 13. [c] Heb. iv. 10.
[d] Rom. vi. 13. [e] Matt. xi. 29.

God's image; and while his will was the same with the divine will, he dwelt in peace and joy: but when he would needs have a will of his own divided from the will of God; in falling from resignation, he fell also from peace and rest, into trouble, fear, shame, and confusion.

The resigned soul enjoys religion in all the sweetnesses and privileges thereof; it is prepared "to taste and see, how good the Lord is."[f] And the more a man is conformed to the will of God, and grows in obedience; the more he enjoys "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."[g] "To him that overcometh" (that overcometh his own will, those lusts that war against his soul,) shall be "given the hidden manna; and the white stone, with a new name written in it, known by him only that receiveth it:"[h] and "a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy."[i] Such a one hath meat which the world knows not of; and is fed with the food of angels.

They that have the Holy Spirit for their guide, shall undoubtedly have him for their comforter. "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."[k]

A man can have no peace, that lodgeth and cherisheth his deadly enemy in his bosom: nor can it be well with him, in whom selfishness, the morbific matter, and root of all distempers, abounds. Self-desires and lusts are the diseases of the soul, they are the corrupt humours that disturb the inward man; and till these be purged out, there can

[f] Psal. xxxiv. 8. [g] Heb. xii. 11. [h] Rev. ii. 17.
[i] Prov. xiv. 10. [k] Isa. xxxii. 17.

be no health, no soundness, no joy, no rest. Inordinate self-love breeds perpetual tumults and disorders in our breasts; for having many appetites to be satisfied, so long as any of them are crossed or not fully pleased, as they can never be, they must necessarily be very troublesome: but a sweet calm and composure of soul enters in with self-resignation; and it must needs so do, as it removes the cause of trouble and disquiet.

There is indeed pain in the first tearing off our wills from those things they cleaved and stuck fast to. As it is said of the milch-kine that drew the ark; their calves being shut up, they went lowing all the way that they went to Beth-shemesh:[a] so it is with souls in their passage to resignation; they then parting with what was dear to them, fondly beloved, and eagerly pursued by them, with that which was their life and nature. Yet they are no sooner arrived at this state, but "the bitterness of death is past:"[b] the bitterness of the death of the old corrupt man. The hour of travail is over; and they "remember no more the anguish, for joy"[c] that "the new man, created after the image of God,"[d] is born within them. They have broken through the difficulties in the way, are got out of the wilderness, over Jordan; and their feet are on the holy land, the land of righteousness and rest. Henceforth the ways of religion are not, as before, grievous; but "paths of peace," and "ways of pleasantness;"[e] flowery and sweet, rosy and soft ways. Religion is now become their temper, constitution, and life; and sin is grievous, strange,

[a] 1 Sam. vi. 12. [b] Ibid. xv. 32. [c] John xvi. 21.
[d] Eph. iv. 24. [e] Prov. iii. 17.

and hard to them. It is not so troublesome to them to be patient, as to be passionate; to forgive, as to revenge. Humility is more easy to them than pride; sobriety than intemperance; chastity and purity are more sweet than lust and sensuality: and the like may be said of the other graces and virtues. It is no longer well with them than while they are true to resignation; when at any time they fail here, they are sensible they take great hurt, they find themselves immediately ill at ease. To the self-resigning soul, Christ's commandments are so far from being grievous, that the inward voice of such a soul is; "I delight to do thy will, O my God,"[f] as David spake of old, the divine will is its just satisfaction, its full content, joy, and pleasure.

And as *jugum legis*, 'the yoke of Christ's law,' so *jugum crucis*, 'the yoke of his cross,' is not grievous to the self-resigned. He saith, with his Saviour, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"[g] Let God "feed him with wormwood,"[h] and "fill him with bitterness;"[i] yet his "meditation of God is sweet:"[k] his spirit is not imbittered against the divine providence; he is still and silent before the Lord: he "possesseth his soul in patience;"[l] and that also with joyfulness.

It is sweet and pleasant to a Christian, to find himself willing to be without that which he desired, and to suffer that which he was most averse to, and goes most against the hair; when, after his "requests made known to God by prayer and sup-

[f] Psal. xl. 8. [g] John xviii. 11. [h] Jer. ix. 15.
[i] Lam. iii. 15. [k] Psal. civ. 34. [l] Luke xxi. 19.

plication,"[a] and making known his troubles and difficulties to others with desire of their help, and other due means used, it appears to be the will of God, that he should have such trials, and continue in such circumstances. How sweet is such a temper of patience to the soul! it is far sweeter than the obtaining and enjoying of that we desire.

But as for the unresigned; his impatience and self-willedness makes his cup more bitter, and his cross, whatever it is, far heavier than it is in itself. To such a one even "the grasshopper is a burden,"[b] and a light affliction intolerable. He is sick for this or that, as Ahab was for Naboth's vineyard;[c] and will not be satisfied without it: he is soured with discontent; and his spirit is imbittered against providence. He would be carried through the world in a sedan, and is not able to bear being jogged or disturbed in the way; so distempered, crazy, and rotten is he.

I may in the close of this, add; that self-resignation is also the way to peace among men: and that it is self-willedness, which puts the world into confusions; and makes it so uncomfortable, so uninhabitable a place.

Men that are passionately carried out to please themselves, are neither themselves at rest, nor will they suffer others so to be. These create differences, heighten animosities, blow the coals of strife, are ready to set on fire "the course of nature,"[d] τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως, or 'the wheel of affairs,' and from the abounding of such comes complaining and crying in our streets.

[a] Phil. iv. 6.
[b] Eccles. xii. 5.
[c] 1 Kings xxi. 4.
[d] James iii. 6.

From this self-willedness it is, that we cannot sit down quietly "under our own vine, and our own fig-tree:"[e] and from hence it is, that the world is become a great *Akeldama*, or field of blood; and a vale of tears.

Those that "despise government," and "speak evil of dignities," are such as are "presumptuous" and "self-willed."[f]

They that make times perilous, are such as in the first place are called, φίλαυτοι, "Lovers of their own selves."[g]

The holy angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."[h] But these men are far from peace and good-will towards men; though they sometimes pretend glory to God.

CHAP. VI.

That self-resignation is the way to true liberty and freedom of spirit; and the contrary, to perfect slavery and thraldom.

SELF-RESIGNATION is the way to true liberty and freedom of spirit: which confirms the former consideration.

That which some call freedom and liberty, namely, "to walk in the ways of their hearts, and in the sight of their eyes," is in truth straitness, bondage, and perfect slavery. The apostle St. Peter saith, "of whom a man is overcome, of the same

[e] Micah iv. 4.
[f] 2 Pet. ii. 10.
[g] 2 Tim. iii. 2.
[h] Luke ii. 14.

is he brought in bondage."[a] Now he that lives to the pleasing his own will, is overcome of pride, envy, covetousness, unruly passions, fleshly or spiritual lusts; and therefore is in bondage to them. Wicked men are described as "serving divers lusts and pleasures;"[b] not one, but many lords; and these such as to be under the power of whom, is a most ignominious and shameful bondage.

But "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;"[c] free with a true and excellent freedom. And he makes men free by delivering them from their self-will; by bringing them to will as his Father, and he, willeth; by uniting their wills with those things that are intrinsically, immutably, and indispensably holy, things which are in their own nature good; by enabling them to act conformably to the idea of everlasting and unchangeable righteousness and goodness. But they that would have nothing unchangeably good or evil to them; that would live as they list, in giving indulgence to the flesh, and "fulfilling the lusts thereof;"[d] these affect such a kind of freedom, as God himself hath not; and therefore that which is utterly unworthy of so excellent a name, and is indeed the vilest and most intolerable slavery.

The commands of sin are most tyrannical and unreasonable. Never was poor Israelite so abused by Egyptian task-masters, as the soul of man is by sensual lusts: they command impetuously and cruelly; and one or other of them is continually putting it upon such offices and employments as are no less contrary to freedom, than to the excel-

[a] 2 Pet. ii. 19. [b] Titus iii. 3.
[c] John viii. 36. [d] Rom. xiii. 14.

lency and dignity of its nature. To be acted by hot and eager ambition, or greedy and unsatiable covetousness, or a vehement thirst after bodily pleasures; what a miserable bondage and servitude must it needs be to the free and heaven-born spirit of man!

But there is no such liberty as to be free to good, and enlarged to spiritual obedience. He that is so, hath an empire within him: he is in his own power. He hath victory over the world; both the good and evil things of it. His mind is unhampered, disentangled, and set loose; and it is lord over those whom it before obeyed. Solomon expresseth the excellency of the freedom this man enjoyeth in these words; "He that ruleth his own spirit (or passions) is better than he that taketh a city."[e] And what a glorious conquest is this! *Nulla est major victoria quàm quæ de cupiditatibus refertur.* 'There is no victory more glorious, than that whereby we become conquerors over inordinate affections;' as saith St. Cyprian: nor is there any victory so glorious.

To do good with a free and willing spirit, with readiness of mind, and without reluctance, is then the most glorious of liberties: and this is the happy consequent of self-resignation.

For the farther clearing of this grand truth, know, that God is not cruel, or over-severe, in his restraint of our wills. He doth not, like Rehoboam[f] and Pharaoh,[g] wicked rulers, affect to lay any unmerciful burdens and loads on men: nor doth he, as one ambitious to show his superiority and absolute sovereignty over us, give out his laws

[e] Prov. xvi. 32. [f] 1 Kings xii. 14. [g] Exod. i. 11.

and commands merely for his own will and pleasure. But be we possessed with this important truth; *that the business of religion is wholly for the good of man.* Therein God seeks not any advantage that may accrue to himself; for he is self-happy, all-sufficient, and an infinitely perfect being: but in all his injunctions he seeks the good, the well-being, the spiritual interest of his creatures. He "is not worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing,"[d] saith St. Paul. This free and noble speech, with what follows, the apostle spake at Athens, the famous University of Greece: and he spake it before the grave and strict judges sitting in Areopagus, a council made up of the more select and excellent persons. And what this great apostle here affirms, "That God doth not expect or require to be worshipped with men's hands," προσδεόμενός τινος, "as though he needed any thing;" this is the same with what Plato, that great philosopher at Athens, had discoursed of: for Clement Alexandrinus,[b] quotes this excellent speech of his; 'God made not the world' χρείας ἕνεκεν, 'for any need that he had of us, or angels; that he might reap the praises and venerations of men and angels, and thereby gain a certain rent and revenue, and more comings in from his creatures, and have a stock of glory still improving and increasing.' "My goodness," saith David, "extendeth not unto thee."[c] And to this purpose speaks Elihu, "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he at thine hand?"[c] *i. e.* What is God advantaged or benefited by thee? Nothing at all.

[a] Acts xvii. 25. [b] Strom. 2. [c] Psal. xvi. 2. [d] Job xxxv. 7.

We cannot profit God by our righteousness; though we may profit others thereby, and "do good to our own souls,"[e] as it is said of the merciful man. Nor can we hurt God by our self-willedness and disobedience: but we shall thereby most certainly "wrong and destroy our own souls:"[f] and because this pleasing our own will is no better than sweet poison, therefore the lover of our souls warns us of the danger of so doing.

In short thus: as God, most holy and wise, our Creator and Lord, is worthy and most fit to give us a law and rule to walk by; so "the law," that he hath given us, "is holy; and the commandment, holy, and just, and good."[g] He doth not in that law written on men's hearts, and more fully declared in the holy Scripture, command us any thing, but what it is absolutely better for us to be obliged to the observance of, than otherwise: nor hath he forbidden us any thing, but it is absolutely better for us that it should be forbidden, than that it should be allowed us, as would be easy to demonstrate, by enumerating the particular commands and prohibitions declared in the gospel: and therefore it cannot be doubted, but that the truest liberty consists in *the resignation of our wills to the divine will.*

This excellent and weighty truth is most clearly discerned by the self-resigning soul: for the spiritual man never feels himself so free, or so much master of himself, and in his own power, as when he is engaged in God's service. But the natural, that is, the sensual, man cannot receive this doctrine; and it is foolishness to him. He looks upon the

[e] Prov. xi. 17. [f] Ibid. viii. 36. and vi. 32. [g] Rom. vii. 12.

laws of his Creator and Redeemer as too nice and severe; and the entire observance of them, as unnecessary and troublesome strictness: as if the wisdom of God did not know better than he, the just bounds and measures, where man was to be restrained, and where he might be indulged: as if God did not best know, what belongs to human nature, and the ordering and regulating men's affections and actions: as if there were in the infinitely good God envy, ill-will, and an evil eye towards us, in denying us any thing that is for our good. But to suppose this, to have such an inward thought, is blasphemy in a high degree.

It becomes us therefore to have our minds deeply affected with these truths; that it cannot be liberty to be loose from God: that the substance of all he commands us, is in its own nature unchangeably good; and all his laws are such as it is most fit for us to be governed by: that both his commands and restraints proceed from his tender love and care of us.

Though souls, as yet unskilful and unexperienced in religion, do not understand thus much at first, but are apt to think, that God might have dealt less severely with them than he hath done; yet they come to be of another mind, when they are once grown up to good maturity in Christ. They then evidently see, that all God commands, or forbids, is out of the most tender goodness: and therefore what at first was grievous to them, becomes their choice: nor do they wish to be indulged in this or that which is forbidden; nor that they might be free from this or that which is commanded. They "esteem," with David, "all God's precepts

concerning all things to be right."[a] They do not think "the way that leads to life too strait or narrow;"[b] nor wish it broader than it is. They do not wish the yoke, or burden, of Christ to be more easy, or lighter,[c] than it is: all they wish is, that they were more strong to bear it; to obey more cheerfully, and constantly. They "choose the way of truth, the way of God's precepts;"[d] they choose it, as that which best tends in itself to their happiness and welfare. That which grieveth them is, that they are not so strong in obedience as they should be: and they pray for grace, to enable them to obey better; but seek not an indulgence, or relaxation. They know for certain, that the only way to have their wills, is to give and resign them to God: and that it is for their own advantage, not God's, that he calls for their hearts; that he requires them for this end, that he may fill them with true peace, rest, and heaven: that he commands them to quit and forsake their false selves, that they may enjoy their best and true selves: that he forbids them to gratify that which the world accounts self-love, because it is indeed no other than self-hatred.

The great foundation of men's backwardness to receive this doctrine, is their mistake of that which they call themselves; their generally valuing themselves by their body, and their reference to this present world: by which means they are chiefly carried out in their affections towards the things thereof; to the pleasing of the body, and satisfying its appetites, though never so unreasonable, and prejudicial to their soul's welfare.

The vulgar opinion is, that the body is the man;

[a] Psal. cxix. 128. [b] Matt. vii. 14. [c] Ibid. xi. 29. [d] Psal. cxix. 30.

and consequently, to love the body is for a man to love himself; and "to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof,"[a] is to make provision for himself. But the ancient and wisest philosophers, as also the primitive fathers, the Greek especially, those great lights of the church, would not so much as allow the body to be one half or part of the man: this was their sense, *Animus cujusque is est quisque*, that 'Every man's soul is the man;' that, Ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν οὐ τοῦτο τὸ ὁρώμενον, 'The man is not that part which is seen:' and the holy Scriptures put נפש 'soul' for the person very frequently.

Man is a creature that can think, reason, and understand: that which doth this, is the soul only; and therefore this is the true man. To do acts proper to a man, is above the power of body or matter: and therefore both in the holy Scriptures, and in the writings of philosophers, the body is called by those low names of a house and tabernacle, wherein the soul dwelleth.

Upon this account God, though he allows us to provide for the necessaries and due conveniences of the body, forbids us to love our bodies better than our souls, or equally with them; and permits us not to satisfy the cravings of our bodily appetites, to the hurt and damage of our souls. And all the declarations of his will, concerning us, are for the great end of restoring to the soul its dominion over the body and sensual part, and maintaining its dignity and superiority. And when it is able so to do, by cleaving to God, and willing as he wills, its slavery ceaseth; and it hath recovered true ampli-

[a] Rom. xiii. 14.

tude, largeness, and liberty. "I will walk at liberty," saith the Psalmist, "for I seek thy precepts."[b]

Adam, affecting to be loose from the will of God, thought to have gained more liberty: but he was sadly mistaken; for he hereby became a poor contracted and straitened thing. And David would once be free to gratify the unwarrantable desires of his heart: but by this licentious and false freedom he lost the true, he miserably sunk himself into a poor, narrow, and slavish spirit; and therefore he prays, that God would "renew a right spirit within" him; and that he would "establish" him רוח נדיבה "with a free spirit."[c]

CHAP. VII.

That self-resignation is the sum of the gospel commands. That all the ordinances of the gospel, and even faith itself, are in order to this.

SELF-RESIGNATION is the sum of the gospel commands: it is "the whole duty of man,"[d] כל־האדם *totum hominis*, the whole concernment of a Christian; the abridgment of all the laws of Christ. "If there be any other commandment," as the apostle saith of love, "it is briefly comprehended in this;"[e] Thou shalt resign thyself: thou shalt deny thine own will, and surrender it up to the divine will.

This is the great lesson in the school of Christ: "If any man," saith our Saviour, "will come

[b] Psal. cxix. 45. [c] Ibid. li. 12. [d] Eccles. xii. 13. [e] Rom. xiii. 9.

after me," will be my disciple, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."[a]

As Plato would have it written upon his school door; Μηδεὶς ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσίτω, 'Let none enter, that is unskilled in geometry:' so this is the most proper motto for the school of Christ; *Let none enter in here, that is not resolved on self-resignation.*

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"[b] This was St. Paul's first saying to Christ: and it is the first lesson to be minded by all his disciples. And as it is the alpha, so is it the omega also; it is both the first and the last lesson of Christianity. All is done, when this is done; and till this lesson be learned, all that we have done, or learned, signifies but very little. When we have well gotten this, we are ἀληθῶς μαθηταὶ, "disciples indeed:"[c] it is not the "saying, Lord, Lord, but the doing the will of God,"[d] will give us that title.

It is observable, that in Rom. xii. (a chapter as full and thick set with practical rules, as richly fraught with divine morality, and matters of Christian practice, as any one chapter in the Epistles,) I say, it is observable, that in this chapter the apostle, describing and inculcating the most excellent and becoming instances of practical Christianity, sets first, as comprehensive of all the particular duties mentioned afterwards, the duty of giving up ourselves as a sacrifice and entire oblation to God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies," that is, yourselves, (bodies being here put for the whole man, because of the decorous allusion to the bodies of beasts offered in sacrifice under the law,) "a

[a] Matt. xvi. 24. [b] Acts ix. 6. [c] John viii. 31. [d] Matt. vii. 21.

living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable service," ver. 1. In this general exhortation, together with the words in ver. 2. which are an illustration of it, is summed up whatsoever is particularly mentioned in the following verses, relating to the practice of the several graces required of a Christian in this world. From hence flow the particular duties hereafter expressed; and they are all contained herein, as in the seed and root. Plainly thus: if ye give up yourselves as an entire oblation to God, and so your will is resigned to his, and not conformed to this world; ye will "show mercy with cheerfulness, love without dissimulation," be "fervent in spirit;" ye will "rejoice in hope," be "patient in tribulation," and "continue instant in prayer;" ye will "distribute to the necessity of saints," and be "given to hospitality;" ye will "recompence to no man evil for evil," nor be "overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good;" ye will, "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men:" and so for all those other duties which concern a Christian's life in this world.

So that the root, the basis, and foundation of Christian practice is self-resignation; and from it may be expected every duty and act of a religious life. There is nothing difficult in Christianity, but this one thing; when our wills are once resigned, all other duties will flow as naturally from us, as streams from a fountain.

Let me add, that prayer and all other ordinances of the gospel are in order to this: the business of them all is to fasten and unite our wills more firmly and inseparably to the divine will.

And even the great and high grace of faith; this is wholly subservient to the attainment of self-resignation. The design of faith in the power of God is to encourage us to go forth against those Anakims, those "lusts which war against the soul;"[a] that at last all may be destroyed, in the mind and will of man, which is contrary to the will of God; and that we may be perfectly free to obedience. And as for faith in the goodness and mercy of God in Christ, as to the pardon of sin; the end of that is not merely that we may have a sense of our being forgiven: but it hath a farther aim, *viz.* that we, being delivered from anxious and tormenting fears about the pardon of our sins, may love God and Christ more, may obey more: and that our obedience may be more free, ingenuous, natural, and constant; as that which flows from love. Such an obedience being most acceptable to God, according to that noble maxim of a holy man; *Unus amator Dei melior est, deoque charior, quàm centum millia mercenariorum.* In a word, faith looks at the divine promises; that by these we may be "partakers of the divine nature:"[b] for to this end the promises were given, and to this end they are to be applied: and when we partake of the divine nature, our wills become one with the divine will.

[a] 1 Pet. ii. 11. [b] 2 Pet. i. 4.

CHAP. VIII.

That self-resignation is that wherein consisteth the power of godliness; and that, as it distinguisheth both from the insincere and the weak Christian.

SELF-RESIGNATION, as is manifest by what hath been said in the last chapter, is that wherein consisteth the "power of godliness;" it is the great instance, proof, and expression of it.

By the "power of godliness," I do not mean that only which is opposed to an empty form and slight appearance of godliness; but also godliness in its strength and vigour; that which is powerful, as well as sincere and real. To suffer no will to rule in us, but what is agreeable to God's will; to regulate all our inordinate desires and unruly passions, to cross their cravings, and to have the love of the world and all self-love overcome in us; these are the worthy achievements of those souls that are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;"[c] these are the mighty acts of those Christians who "quit themselves like men;"[d] these are the *magnalia*, the great things of religion.

1. Self-resignation is the only expression of that "power of godliness" which distinguisheth from false and insincere Christians. And these are, as the publicans and sinners, so the Pharisees, formal and merely outward Christians. To die to their own will, and "through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body,"[e] is death indeed to these;

[c] Eph. vi. 10. [d] 1 Cor. xvi. 13. [e] Rom. viii. 13.

and "the king of terrors,"[a] as death is called in Job. The separation of their hearts from the lusts they have cleaved to, is like the separation of soul and body to them: and their spirits and lives declare, that, as much as they may excel in some commendable things, here they are sadly short.

It is worth our observation, that these formal Christians, being desirous to maintain the reputation they have got among the people for their form of knowledge and godliness, and withal being inwardly conscious of their deficiency herein, love to represent some outward observances in religion as high and hard matters; some things that any carnal man may do, if he please, as well as they, as the great instances of "the power of godliness."

The phrase is very common both in their lips and books; but it is not likewise to be found in their spirits and lives. They are not able to hide their being actuated by, and under the power of, either sins of the flesh or of the spirit. They cannot so artificially ape a Christian, as not to bewray an inordinate affection to the world, either the profits, pleasures, or honours of it; and, in too many instances, a will unresigned to his, whose disciples and followers they pretend to be. And from what hath been discoursed it appears, that the power of godliness is but a word in fashion among them, a mere sound; named, but not known and experienced by them.

There is "a form of godliness," which may very well agree with the power of self-will: and men may discover a great zeal for this or that mode and way, for these or those opinions, and against some cer-

[a] Job xviii. 14.

tain sins; they may profess a great love to Christ, faith in his merits, and zeal for his honour; they may speak in such a strain of words as is wonderfully taking with the vulgar, have notable gifts in discoursing about the things of God, and in praying to him, and herein discover much life and affection; they may "strain at a gnat,"[b] and be very scrupulous in some small and disputable things; and yet be "self-lovers," seek, relish, and please themselves, be "covetous, proud, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;"[c] as also, envious, unrighteous, unfaithful, unmerciful, uncharitable: and such as are any one of these, for all their specious form, are perfect strangers to "the power of godliness."

Now I would offer that question of our Saviour, τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; "What do ye more than others?"[d] What excellent, what difficult thing, such as is worthy to be thought an instance of "the power of godliness," do ye? Ye constantly, it may be, frequent the public worship of God; ye hear God's word, and read the Bible and religious books frequently; ye pray in your closets, and with your families; ye "run not with the profane to their excess of riot:"[e] these are good things, and wo be to them that despise, or neglect, the external duties of religion; but if ye do no more than this comes to, what extraordinary thing do ye? may not any man void of the Spirit do the same?

Thou canst pray without the same form of words; thou canst dispute and discourse about matters of religion, and in such a way as is apt to

[b] Matt. xxiii. 24.
[c] 2 Tim. iii. 3, 4.
[d] Matt. v. 47.
[e] 1 Pet. iv. 4.

affect others; thou canst deny thyself in some things, which will not disadvantage thy more beloved sins; thou dost reform in some things, as to outward garb and deportment: but in all this, "what doest thou more than others?" Shall "the power of godliness" be placed in those things which mere outward notional Christians, and unregenerate persons, may be as ready and dexterous in as others? Alas! what are all these, and the like, to that which the Scripture calls "plucking out the right eye, cutting off the right hand,"[a] "selling all for the pearl of great price?"[b] What are these to the "mortifying of earthly members,"[c] to the "crucifying of the flesh with the affections and lusts?"[d] to the "destroying of the body of sin,"[e] to the "being dead unto sin?"[f] All which expressions are not to be looked upon as high metaphors, or hyperbolical schemes of speech; but as sober realities, and our necessary duty. And these are the things wherein that "power of godliness" shineth forth, which distinguisheth between those that are indeed alive, and those which have only a name to live.

Thou showest, that thou hast read much, and heard much, hast had good education, hast kept good company, and art of good natural parts: but how hast thou prospered in self-resignation? Art thou more "crucified unto the world?"[g] Hast thou more power over thy spirit? Is the power of thy self-will more broken? Art thou more free and ingenuous in thy obedience? God looks at the heart, the temper and quality of the mind.

[a] Matt. v. 29, 30. [b] Ibid. xiii. 46. [c] Col. iii. 5. [d] Gal. v. 24. [e] Rom. vi. 6. [f] Ibid. ver. 11. [g] Gal. vi. 14.

The difference between man and man is mainly within, in the influences and impressions of religion upon their spirits; in its bettering their inward frame, and by this means mending the outward conversation and course of life.

2. Self-resignation is likewise the only proof of "the power of godliness" in the second sense, that which differenceth strong from weak Christians; those that are grown nearer "to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,"[h] from others which, though they be sincere, are but weaklings and "babes in Christ."[i]

It is according as men excel more or less in self-resignation, that they are denominated stronger or weaker Christians. This fully appears by what hath been already said.

And who seeth not, that there is exceeding much in this consideration to recommend this great duty effectually to us, and to make us in love with it? For weak Christians, though ever so well-meaning, do not bring so much honour to religion as the strong do; nay, oftentimes they much discredit it. None can doubt but it is exceedingly more for the honour of our Lord, and his religion, to have his servants strong, healthy, and in good heart; than to have only a company of sickly, crazy, impotent persons to attend him; such as are always complaining of difficulties, and to whom every service that calls for any thing of self-denial, is grievous. It is much more for his honour, that his church should be an academy of persons strong and hardy, rather than a spiritual hospital, a spittal of distempered infirm things: that it should be an

[h] Eph. iv. 13. [i] 1 Cor. iii. 1.

orchard of well-grown, fair, and goodly trees, bringing forth much fruit, rather than a nursery of tender young plants, and little shrubs. It is not for the honour of Christ, the physician of souls, that his patients should be always feeble, querulous, infirm, sore and faint, pale and meagre, creeping by the walls, and at best but between sick and well: but that they should grow up to a healthy constitution, a good complexion, and sound temper; this conduceth greatly to his honour.

"Herein," saith Christ, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."[a] And though it be true, that God will not "despise the day of small things;"[b] and that Christ is far from insulting over the weaknesses of young Christians, where there is at the bottom simplicity and plain-heartedness, "an honest and good heart:"[c] yet will he not encourage, nor indulge them, in a lazy continuing in a state of weakness and childhood; but is displeased with those that, when for the time they might have been at strong meat, are yet but at milk;[d] that, while they should be "fighting the good fight of faith,"[e] and "running with patience the race that is set before them,"[f] shall lie on the ground complaining, discouraged, and disheartened.

I may add also; that according to the power or vigour of our godliness, our strength and growth in grace, we shall have more or less assurance of the goodness of our state here, and higher or lower degrees of glory in the life to come.

[a] John xv. 8. [b] Zech. iv. 10. [c] Luke viii. 15.
[d] Heb. v. 12, 13. [e] 1 Tim. vi. 12. [f] Heb. xii. 1.

CHAP. IX.

That self-resignation is the establishment of God's kingdom within us here; and is a necessary preparation and introduction to his kingdom of glory hereafter.

SELF-RESIGNATION is the establishment of God's kingdom within us here; and is a necessary preparation and introduction to his kingdom of glory hereafter.

1. *It is the establishment of the kingdom of God and Christ within us here.* No sooner hath a man obtained, by the grace of God, a power over his own spirit, but this glorious empire is set up in his soul. When selfishness is mastered, and our will brought into compliance with the divine will; then is King Jesus crowned and enthroned within us.

David in his troubles, and in his triumphs, was a figure and historical type of Christ. And as he met with many troubles and difficulties before he was established in his throne; so the spiritual David meets with many also.

These difficulties arise altogether from the opposition of our wills; while they rage, and "set themselves against the Lord, and against his Anointed,"[g] as the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and house of Saul did against David. "We will not have Christ to reign over us,"[h] is the inward language of the unresigned. But as soon as self-will is persuaded to yield, the kingdom of Christ is come into us. We may then cry, "Hallelujah; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."[i] A most joyful and high day is this; it is the day of Christ's inau-

[g] Psal. ii. 2. [h] Luke xix. 14. [i] Rev. xix. 6.

guration. The state and government of a resigned soul is, as Josephus observes of the Jewish polity, a theocracy.

2. *It is also a necessary preparation and introduction to the kingdom of glory hereafter.* Nay, it is the very constitution and essence of happiness; and without self-resignation there can be no such thing.

The happiness of glorified souls doth not consist in their being above the stars: for a soul not resigned to the will of God would be as far from heaven, though mounted to such a height, as if it were in the lowest abyss.

A good angel, while he converseth on earth, and is fulfilling the pleasure of God here below, is most happy; he carrieth his paradise and heaven always with him: and if such an angel might be supposed to repine and struggle with the will of God, and so not to continue in resignation; he would consequently not continue to be happy, though his residence were always in the mansions above.

This is a most fundamental maxim, and of great importance in practical religion; that happiness, as to the main, is to be transformed into the divine image and likeness, to partake of the divine nature, to have one will with God, to be free to obedience: and that the unspeakable and glorious joy of blessed souls ariseth chiefly from that harmonious agreement and consort which is between God and them.

Other notions of heaven are unspiritual and carnal; and argue men, not to have sufficiently "tasted the powers of the world to come;"[a] but to savour too much the things of this earth, and, as

[a] Heb. vi. 5.

St. Austin doth fitly express it, *Cum hoc mundo velle exire extra hunc mundum*, 'to desire to carry this world along with them, when they leave it.' And because it is absolutely impossible, that man should be in a happy state, while he is otherwise affected than God is; thence it is, that the infinite, sovereign, and perfect goodness requires our conformity to himself; and will have a participation of his holiness and image, the condition of attaining to a participation of his happiness; nor will dispense with "purity of heart,"[b] in order to the seeing of him: for without this, without the agreeableness of our wills to the divine will, we shall be wholly unqualified and unmeet for God's kingdom; and incapable of the happiness thereof.

CHAP. X.

That self-will is the root of all sin and misery.

SELF-WILL, or the not being resigned to the will of God, is, on the contrary, the root of all sin and misery.

(1.) It is the root of sin. Every lust and sin grows out of this root of uncurbed desire and self-will; which is "a root of bitterness,"[c] "a root that beareth gall and wormwood."[d]

It may be fit here again to observe; that in the large enumeration of those sins and evil dispositions which make times perilous, this is mentioned in the first place, "Men shall be lovers of their own-

[b] Matt. v. 8. [c] Heb. xii. 15. [d] Deut. xxix. 18.

selves."[a] This is mentioned first, as being the root and ground of all the rest.

It was well observed by St. Austin, *Civitas diaboli incipit ab amore sui*, 'The devil's city is founded in self-love and self-pleasing.'

Where self-will is set up, there the soul is impetuously carried out to all iniquity with greediness; so far as it is judged safe, and that such or such a sin is not prejudicial to another more beloved sin, or to any worldly advantage or interest.

The soul wherein self-will is set up, saith with proud Pharaoh; "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?"[b]

This is another "Abomination of desolation standing in the holy place;"[c] erected in the soul, which should be holy to the Lord: self-will; it is an inward and mysterious antichrist, "opposing and exalting" itself "above God;" it "sits as God in" the heart, that inward "temple of God, showing" itself "that it is God."[d] It is an anti-god; and will be obeyed in all things: it sets its threshold by God's thresholds, and its post by God's posts.[e]

In the Scripture, self-will, or the pleasing of our own will, is frequently put in the general for all sin. Thus going on in sinful and wicked courses is expressed by "walking in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;"[f] and men's wickedness is often styled "walking after the imagination of their own heart:"[g] as doing of sinful actions is called "doing thine own ways," and "finding thine own pleasure;"[h] and sinning against God is

[a] 2 Tim. iii. 2. [b] Exod. v. 2. [c] Matt. xxiv. 15. [d] 2 Thess. ii. 4.
[e] Ezek. xliii. 8. [f] Eccles. xi. 9. [g] Jer. xxiii. 17. [h] Isa. lviii. 13.

called "seeking after your own heart, and your own eyes."[i]

(2.) And as self-will is the root of all sin; so is it likewise the root of misery, both here and hereafter. It being the root of the former, it must needs be so of the latter also; sin and misery being inseparable. And as the happiness of heaven doth consist mainly, as we have showed in the foregoing chapter, in being transformed into the divine image, or the having but one will with God; so, by consequence, the hellish state doth chiefly consist in a perfect contrariety to God, and the soul's opposition to the divine will.

Therefore is the devil a most miserable creature, because he is made up of self-will: because the will of God is most grievous to him, he sets himself against it; and he goes about the world, soliciting and endeavouring to draw others from complying with it: and those with whom he prevails, he, by so doing, makes as miserable as himself.

If there were no self-will, there would be no hell, according to that of St. Bernard; *Cesset voluntas propria, et infernus non erit*, 'let self-will cease, and there will be no hell.'

To suppose self-resignation in a damned and miserable soul, and self-will in a happy and glorified one, is to suppose the greatest contradictions and inconsistencies. There can be nothing of self-resignation in hell, and nothing of self-will in heaven.

In speaking to the fourth and fifth considerations, it hath been shown; that it is impossible that those souls should be miserable, which are sincerely and

[i] Numb. xv. 39.

entirely resigned to the will of God: and, on the contrary, that those souls which will contrary to him, cannot but be miserable. And therefore I shall proceed no further upon this argument.

CHAP. XI.

That the love of Christ, in dying for sinners, makes the duty of self-resignation most highly reasonable; and lays the greatest obligation upon us thereunto.

In the *eleventh* place; the love of Christ, in dying for us, is most powerful to oblige Christians to this great duty of self-resignation. Christ's giving himself a sacrifice and offering to God in a way of atonement and expiation, layeth the strongest engagement on Christians to offer up themselves as a sacrifice to him in a way of resignation and obedience.

This improvement the apostle makes of this consideration, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge; that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them."[a] What could be more express than this, that "they should not live unto themselves;" not please themselves, gratify their own self-will and lusts; but please Christ, do his will, give him "the pre-eminence in all things:"[b] that they should not "seek their own," but "the things which are Jesus

[a] 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. [b] Col. i. 18.

Christ's;"[c] not mind and pursue their own ease, profit, and honour, chiefly and above all; but live unto Christ, to his honour and glory, and prefer his interest before their own?

The like inference the same apostle makes, "Ye are bought with a price; (*viz.* 'with the precious blood of Christ,'[d]) therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."[e] And what is the best way of glorifying God, hath been shown before in chap. 3.

The death of Christ is the great manifestation of his love. By the bitterness of his cup, by the depth of his sorrows and sufferings for us, we may make an estimate of the exceeding height of his dear affection. Behold and see, was there any sorrow like unto his sorrow? and therefore was there any love like unto his love? "Greater love hath no man than this," saith Christ himself, "that a man lay down his life for his friends."[f] But he laid down his life for us, when enemies.

Out of love he left heaven, the bosom of his Father, and the glorious attendance of the angels; and humbled himself to a mean, low, and afflicted life upon earth. Such was "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich."[g]

Out of love he died: he who was "Lord of all,"[h] "the Lord of glory,"[i] "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person,"[k] "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;"[l] a death of the greatest

[c] Phil. ii. 21. [d] 1 Pet. i. 19. [e] 1 Cor. vi. 20. [f] John xv. 13.
[g] 2 Cor. viii. 9. [h] Acts x. 36. [i] 1 Cor. ii. 8. [k] Heb. i. 3. [l] Phil. ii. 8.

pain and shame. And notwithstanding the pains and sorrows, both inward and outward, which he felt, were inexpressibly great; yet, after his resurrection, he would have gone into the garden again, gone over his agony again, drunk again that bitter cup which made his soul so sorrowful;[a] he would have gone to Calvary, and been crucified again; he would have "poured out his life unto death"[b] again and again, if it had so pleased God; had it been the will of his Father, that he should have repeated his sorrows and sufferings for the redemption of man: for he knew nothing but to be obedient, and perfectly resigned to the will of his Father.

This is that "love of Christ which passeth knowledge;"[c] love beyond compare, love beyond expressions or conceptions. And can there be a more natural, a more powerful engagement to self-resignation, than such a love? Did Christ so freely give himself for thee; and shouldest not thou most heartily, and willingly, give up thyself to him? Was all of Christ turned into a sacrifice for thee; and shouldest not thou make an entire oblation of thyself, without any reserve, to him? it is not only ingenuity, but justice, wholly to live to him that died for thee, and bought thee with so dear a price.

Did he suffer such inexpressible pains for us; and should not we be willing to endure some pain and smart; which at first will be in denying the solicitations of our fleshly mind, and in going about to cross our own will? And should not we also patiently undergo any sorrows the divine wisdom sees it meet to exercise us with; the worst we can

[a] Matt. xxvi. 38. [b] Isa. liii. 12. [c] Eph. iii. 19.

undergo in this world being far short of our Saviour's sufferings in our behalf?

CHAP. XII.

That the high and holy example of Christ layeth a mighty obligation on Christians to self-resignation.

In the last place, the high and holy example of our Lord Jesus Christ obligeth us very strongly to the practice of this duty of self-resignation.

There never appeared in the world so perfect and lovely a pattern and idea of the best life, as was the life of Christ. There never shined in the world such a light: nor was he in any thing a more bright and shining example to us, than in self-resignation: a famous instance whereof we have, not to name any other, in that one speech of his, in his agony in the garden, *viz.* "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup, (or, 'let this cup pass'[d]) from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."[e]

How bitter this cup was; how great, beyond all comparison, the last sufferings of Christ were, which began in the garden of Gethsemane, and ended in his death on mount Calvary, may appear;

First. *By those significant words that occur in the story of his sufferings and agony*, recorded in Matthew and Mark; that "he began," not only λυπεῖσθαι, "to be sorrowful,"[f] but ἀδημονεῖν, "to be very heavy," and ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, "to be sore amazed;"[g] even to "an agony,"[h] γενόμενος ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ,

[d] Matt. xxvi. 39. [e] Luke xxii. 42. [f] Matt. xxvi. 37.
[g] Mark xiv. 33. [h] Luke xxii. 44.

as it is in Luke: and both in Matthew and Mark is that expression; περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου, &c. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."[a]

Secondly. *By the great weakness of his body.* In his agony "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood;"[b] an extraordinary, unnatural sweat: it falling from him in thick, viscous, clammy drops; and this in a cold season[c] too. And so weak was his body at the same time, that "an angel" came down "from heaven to strengthen him."[d] This was a visible manifestation of excessive heaviness and a great colluctation within him; his mind so strangely affecting his body.

Thirdly. *By his prayers and tears.* He prayed thrice to this purpose; "Father, if thou be willing, let this cup pass from me:" And the third time he prayed ἐκτενέστερον, "with more earnestness and vehemence."[e] And when he prayed, he "kneeled down,"[f] saith St. Luke; "he fell on his face,"[g] saith St. Matthew; "he fell on the ground,"[h] saith St. Mark: he lay prostrate on the ground, and put himself into the posture of lowest humiliation. And his "prayers and supplications" were "offered up with strong crying and tears;"[i] as saith St. Paul to the Hebrews.

By all this (and more might be added) it appears, that this cup was an exceeding bitter cup; that his sufferings and sorrows were beyond all comparison: and yet he was willing to undergo them. Though there was that in his human, natural will, which

[a] Matt. xxvi. 38. Mark xiv. 34. [b] Luke xxii. 44. [c] John xviii. 18.
[d] Luke xxii. 43. [e] Luke xxii. 42, 44. [f] Ibid. 41.
[g] Matt. xxvi. 39. [h] Mark xiv. 35. [i] Heb. v. 7.

had a great antipathy against this cup; yet it was not overcome and carried away thereby: but the divine principle in him did bring this will into a due acquiescence; and by the power thereof he freely resigned it up to the will of his Father. He was most willing to undergo these direful sufferings, notwithstanding they were inflicted without the least demerit of his own; he being perfectly innocent, and "without sin."[k]

Now the consideration of his holy example lays a great obligation upon us to follow him, as in every other grace, so particularly in his resignation. For the gospel represents him not only as ἱλαστήριον, 'a propitiatory sacrifice;'[l] but also as ὑπογραμμὸν, 'a pattern and example.'[m] The gospel doth not only represent the doctrine of Christ to be believed; but also the life of Christ to be followed: nor shall any have him for their advocate and propitiation, but such as are willing to have him for their pattern and example; to copy out and imitate his humility, patience, purity, benignity, and self-resignation. None shall be benefited by his death, that are unwilling to live his life.

So far was it from being the intention of our Saviour's death, to make void or lessen the necessity of our being conformed to his life; that one of the great ends of his coming into the world, and clothing himself with human nature, was, that he might give us an example of living, and be a pattern for our imitation; as we may learn from 1 Pet. ii. 21—23. Matt. xi. 29. John xiii. 15, &c.

That God might the more plainly and familiarly

[k] Heb. iv. 15. [l] Rom. iii. 25. [m] 1 Pet. ii. 21.

teach us, how to be like himself, he was pleased "to manifest" himself "in the flesh;"[a] ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, "to dwell" or have his tabernacle "among us,"[b] to go in and out before us in our likeness; and thus visibly exhibit himself, and become the most excellent pattern of purity and holiness; that "as he" was, "so we" might be "in this world."[c] And I heartily wish, that Christians did more seriously consider, what a transcendent privilege and advantage it is, that they have the Spirit and life of Christ set before them in the New Testament, to show what a spirit they should be of, and what a life they should live. This is such a favour as the people of God had not vouchsafed to them in the Old Testament. There were several manifestations of God to the Jews; but they were all far short of this manifestation of his in the flesh: there was nothing in those for imitation; and for the forming of their lives into a conformity to his. And therefore if our lives be not better than theirs, we do not live as becomes Christians; nor are we faithful to this and many other great advantages we have above them.

But I fear we are too insensible of this privilege, and that we do not think sufficiently of this; that he who "was in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant,"[d] clothed himself with humanity, put himself into the lowest and hardest circumstances, "was in all points tempted like as we are;"[e] that so we might have a complete pattern and guide in those many varieties of conditions, difficulties, and temptations we may meet

[a] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [b] John i. 14. [c] 1 John iv. 17.
[d] Phil. ii. 6, 7. [e] Heb. iv. 15.

with; and be more particularly instructed, how to behave ourselves therein worthy of Christ.

This I know, and have observed, and I doubt not but others can testify the same; that such Christians as are most sensible of this extraordinary privilege, they that have high and dear thoughts of the life of Christ, which is the life of "God manifested in the flesh;"[f] they that have it most in their eye, and are most affected and enamoured with it; these Christians are most visibly bettered, and differ eminently from others; there is a more excellent spirit in them: they are more "poor in spirit," more "pure in heart," more "meek" and "merciful,"[g] more obedient, and resigned to the will of God, and every way more exemplary; more of "God is in them of a truth:"[h] they are greater ornaments to the holy religion which they profess; and more qualified with such a disposition as renders them more universally useful to mankind than other Christians.

And thus we have seen, what a many most powerful considerations[i] there are, that demonstrate the exceeding reasonableness of this duty of self-resignation; and strongly oblige and excite us to the practice of it.

[f] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [g] Matt. v. 3, 5, 7, 8. [h] 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

[i] Concerning which, more is said in the next section, chap. 1.

SECT. II.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE ATTAINING THIS MOST EXCELLENT TEMPER OF SELF-RESIGNATION.

CHAP. I.

That in order to the resigning our wills entirely to the will of God, we should frequently consider such principles as are most available to the effectual subduing them thereunto. Several such principles further enlarged on.

HOPING that what hath hitherto been discoursed, may have persuaded the reader to some desires after the attainment of this most excellent temper of self-resignation; we proceed now to direct to the use of certain means and helps thereto: some of which refer more particularly to active, some to passive resignation; and others to both alike.

First. Consider often, and labour to be fully possessed with the truth and power of such principles as are available, and have a proper tendency, to the effectual subduing our wills to the will of God.

This sort of principles hath been largely spoken to: but because we cannot insist overmuch upon so highly useful an argument, (nor indeed well speak sufficiently to it,) we will dwell a while longer upon it, and entreat the reader to fix deeply in his

mind the following truths; which, though they are the same for substance with some of the foregoing, deserve to be further and more particularly enlarged on.

1. *The will we are to submit to, is the will of our great Creator and Sovereign, Preserver and Benefactor.* It is the will of our Creator; of him who hath given us our being, and by whom we are whatsoever we are. Now man's receiving his being from God, and his dependence upon him for the continuance of it, doth speak it necessarily his duty to be ruled, ordered, and disposed by him; so that he can never be disengaged from willing agreeably to the will of God.[a] As God is our Creator, he hath a right to be our absolute Lord and Sovereign: and he being so, we must needs acknowledge, that we ought not to will any thing, nor do any thing, but what God allows; that we are not to take leave to do what we list, but what God likes best.

Again; It is the will of our great Preserver and Benefactor; who hath, ever since we had a being, laid new obligations upon us, in the continued care of his gracious providence, and by his renewed mercies and favours. We are nothing without God, we have nothing but from him; and therefore we should do and will nothing, but what he would have us. He, the overflowing spring of goodness, hath not "left himself without witness;" is always "doing us good, and filling our hearts with food and gladness;"[b] doth all that is fit for him to do, to please us: being not at all niggardly in the comforts of this life, but bestowing them in such

[a] As was shown in sect. i. chap. i. [b] Acts xiv. 17.

a proportion as is able to content moderate and modest desires; and being richly gracious, in affording us advantages and suitable means for a better life: and, therefore, if we have the least sense of what is worthy and ingenuous, we will acknowledge it most reasonable and becoming we should do all we can to please him, who hath done so infinitely much to please us. The apostle well knew the power of this argument, when he said, "I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."[a]

Nor can there be a more powerful argument than this to persuade to patience, to a quiet and meek submission to all the disposals of the divine providence; seeing for one cross we have many hundred blessings. *Ubi mali gutta est, ibi immensum mare beneficiorum Dei*, 'Where there is one drop of evil, there is a large sea of divine favours and benefits.' And this men would be forced to confess, if they were as curious and careful to consider the many mercies they enjoy, as they are to consider the few evil things they suffer; if they were duly sensible, that they are less than the least of the many mercies they possess, and that in all their sufferings God punisheth them less than their sins deserve. Holy Job thought it reasonable thus to argue, as prodigious and unparalleled as his sufferings were, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"[b] 'What! is God bound to be always heaping favours upon us? must we have nothing but sunshine, fair, and calm days? must we be fed with nothing but mar-

[a] Rom. xii. 1. [b] Job ii. 10.

row and fatness, taste nothing but what is sweet and dainty? If God gives us sometimes to taste of the sour and bitter, to drink of the waters of Marah; shall we repine and murmur, and think much of it? Far be it from us so to do.'[c]

2. *The will we are to obey, and submit to, is the will of the infinitely perfect Being, that is most holy, most good, most wise, and most powerful:* accordingly his will being most perfect, most holy, good, and wise; it is therefore infinitely more worthy to be followed than our own will, which is vain, foolish, and perverse, when not governed by his, and hath "many foolish and hurtful desires."[d]

If a child should be left to his own will, it would be his ruin: but it would be much more pernicious to us, not to be guided, governed, and restrained by the will of God. And therefore when God doth restrain and abridge us, as to some things which our will would be free and loose to, we have no cause to complain: as those that are come to be grown men, and to have a right judgment of things, do clearly see, that they had no cause to be froward and complain, when children, that their careful and wise parents would not suffer them to eat green trash, nor humour them in every thing they longed for.

God, who is the great physician of souls, seeth it fit, in his infinite wisdom, to restrain us from certain things; as a wise and careful physician doth his patient from what he knoweth would be his bane, however grateful to his appetite: and we being in as unsafe a condition as sick persons,

[c] See this more fully expressed in chap. 9.

[d] 1 Tim. vi. 9.

who, if left to their own wills, would hurt themselves, it is best and safest for us to be guided and governed by God.

And so for the other part of resignation; submission to God's disposals, and patience under afflictions: when it is the will of God we should be thus exercised, it is to be yielded to, and preferred above our own will; as being the will of a most wise and good God, the great physician of souls, who perfectly knows our frame, and what affliction is necessary physic for us.

God is not only to be considered as the great King and Sovereign of the world, and therefore his will to be received with all regard; but he is also to be considered as the wise physician of the world, that hath care of mankind as of sick persons. This world is a great hospital or pesthouse, a place for diseased and infected souls; and afflictions are his physic, which he prescribes and applies according to the several cases of his patients. The sick soul is not for this kind of physic; it would rather be pleased and gratified: but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; nor his will as ours. He will have his patients to submit to his method and way of cure, and not quarrel at his appointments: wherein he is wise and good also; it is an act of great mercy in him to do thus. It would be an act of cruelty in the physician to comply with his patient's humour, and to suffer his will to prevail and rule. And though "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous;" yet there is no true Christian but he finds, "it afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteous-

ness;"[a] and that "it is good for him that he hath been afflicted."[b]

I added, that it is the will of God most powerful, as well as most holy, wise, and good, that we are to submit to: and this teaches us, how vain and fruitless an attempt it is, to struggle with and resist his will. "Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker: let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth."[c] So that if we will not be persuaded to a compliance with the will of God, either from the consideration of his holiness, or his wisdom and goodness; let us dread the terrible effects of his power. How many instances of irresignation and stubborn self-willedness are to be found in Scripture, whom God made to know, before he had done with them, that it is impossible to oppose his will and prosper?

3. *The will we are to be resigned to, commands, for the most part, such things as are in their own nature good, and carry their own reason in them; and whatsoever things else are commanded, they are in order to such things.* The goodness and reasonableness of all God's primary commands, and our obligation to them, doth not merely depend upon his sovereign authority: though they are to be observed because God commands them; yet he doth not command them only *pro imperio*, to show his absolute sovereignty and dominion over us; but because they are intrinsically and essentially good, most agreeable to his holy nature, and greatly for our good and advantage: it being infinitely better for us, as we are reasonable creatures, to observe them, than not to be obliged to the observance of them.

[a] Heb. xii. 11. [b] Psal. cxix. 71. [c] Isa. xlv. 9.

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification."[a] This is the sum of all he wills concerning you. And judge in yourselves; Is not a life of chastity better than that of uncleanness? Is not temperance, and sobriety, better than surfeiting and drunkenness? Is not humility, and meekness, more lovely and commendable than pride and insolence? Is not justice, uprightness, and truth, better than injustice, falsehood, and oppression? Is not charity, and pity, better than hatred, cruelty, and hard-heartedness? Is it not more worthy and reasonable to love God above all, than to prefer any thing before him? He being the highest good, our infinitely best friend and Father, from whom ourselves and all we enjoy are. Nay, whose reason doth not tell him; that, as the former are most amiable and most becoming human nature, so the latter are as hateful and unworthy of us?

Is it not better, beyond all comparison, to love the soul which is spiritual and immortal, more than the body which is corruptible and but for a short time, and whose welfare depends wholly upon the well-being of the soul? And when we have sinned against the law written in our hearts, or more clearly and largely revealed in the Scriptures; is it not reasonable, and most becoming us, to repent; to be sensible of our unkind and unworthy behaviour towards God, to be grieved that we have offended the Father of mercies; and to amend our ways, and do so no more, as ever we would expect his favour, and the light of his well-pleased countenance, and those mercies which we most need, and which none but he can bestow upon us? And is

[a] 1 Thes. iv. 3.

not this better than to continue in disobedience, impenitence, and to harden our necks against God; and not to be affected with any ingenuous sense of our carriage towards him?

Thus we see, that repentance is most agreeable to the quality and condition of our state here. And so is also patient submission to the will of God in his disposals of us, both in respect of his wise goodness and his sovereign power; nor can any thing more become us: and nothing is more manifestly unreasonable, than to fret and repine at any of the divine providences.

As for the other things God commands, those which are our duty only by positive institution; they are but very few under the gospel: and they are only commanded for this end; that they may better secure "the weightier matters of the law,"[b] the primary commands, and fit us for a mindful regard and observance of them. And he who is infinitely wise and good, knowing best what is fittest to be required of us in order to so great an end; it cannot but be highly unreasonable, and unworthy, not to comply cheerfully with his will declared in these also, as well as in the other commands.

4. *The resignation of our wills to the will of God, hath the promise of a reward infinitely above the labour of any services he requires of us, and the pain of any sufferings he inflicts upon us.* Our services are due to God, as we are his creatures; and therefore it would be our duty to yield ourselves to his will without the consideration of any future reward. And besides, we have more than our services are

[b] Matt. xxiii. 23.

worth, and our labours and sufferings amount to. We are less than the least of the multitude of mercies we daily receive. And the very comforts and pleasures which arise from the sense of doing our duty, and from the being busied in that work and employment which is most agreeable to the primitive and proper constitution of our souls, are a great reward. But that God should confer upon us, upon the account of poor mean services, a reward than which nothing can be better; a reward so rich and glorious, beyond expression and apprehension; what a consideration is this! What we do and suffer in compliance with the will of God, is far from being above what the heart can conceive, or the tongue express: but the reward which God will bestow for this doing and suffering, is such as is "unspeakable," and "full of glory,"[a] and "passeth all understanding:"[b] it is such as "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."[c]

Again; Our services and sufferings are but for a short time; they are but for "our life," which "is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away:"[d] but God will reward them with an eternal reward; an "eternal weight of glory."[e] So that well might the apostle "reckon, that the sufferings of this present time," and consequently the services also, "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."[f]

Thou art not far from thy journey's end. Thou

[a] 1 Pet. i. 8. [b] Phil. iv. 7. [c] 1 Cor. ii. 9.
[d] James iv. 14. [e] 2 Cor. iv. 17. [f] Rom. viii. 18.

hast but a short life, a little time, to testify thy love to God here on earth: and he hath an eternity to reward thee in. Which therefore should encourage thy patience to persevere and hold out to the end: especially when thou considerest, that though thy reward be future, yet it is near; at least, part of it, and a considerable part too. For though there will be a further completion of our felicities at the resurrection of the just, and the great day of recompence; yet the souls of the faithful may expect to receive a very considerable part of "the recompence of reward"[g] before that day. And even in this life they have some earnests of that glorious reward, some foretastes of the "pleasures at God's right hand,"[h] some bunches of the grapes that grow in the upper and heavenly Canaan. And the more Christians endeavour to live the life of heaven, the more heavenly their affections and conversations are here; the more shall they have here of heavenly enjoyments. In which respects the Scripture sometimes speaks of those that are excellently religious, even whilst they are in this life, that they "have eternal life;"[i] and that they "sit with Christ in heavenly places."[k]

5. And lastly, *This resignation to the will of God is also highly conducing to our temporal good:* And that not only because it "hath promise of the life that now is," as well as of "that which is to come;"[l] but also because it tends in its own nature hereunto. Here I will particularly, yet very briefly, show, that it makes (1.) for our profit and advantage, as to our outward estate; (2.) for our ease,

[g] Heb. x. 35. [h] Psal. xvi. 11. [i] John vi. 54. and 1 John v. 13.
[k] Eph. ii. 6. [l] 1 Tim. iv. 8.

and quiet, in the world; and (3.) for our health and strength.

1. *It makes for our profit and advantage, as to our outward estate.* This it doth; (1.) as it engages men against pride, and to humility and modesty. By this means are avoided vast and needless expenses about attire and dressings, buildings, feastings, and a great number of pompous vanities; and also the great charges which men of aspiring and ambitious spirits are at, for the procuring of dignities, honours, and high places, and the supporting of their grandeur, that they may be the more esteemed, reverenced, and admired by the world. (2.) As it engageth to temperance and sobriety; against all sensuality, and a delicious, luxurious life: and so are avoided all expensive divertisements, sports and revellings, incontinence, and "making provision for the flesh to fulfil the the lusts thereof;"[a] which impair and consume men's estates, and bring not a few to a morsel of bread. The desires of temperance are cheap, easy, and soon satisfied. (3.) As it engageth to meekness, in opposition to wrath, malice, and revenge: and by this means quarrels, which often cost men dear, and abundance of expensive lawsuits are prevented. It usually costs men much more to revenge injuries than to bear them. (4.) As it engageth to labour and industry in lawful callings, in opposition to carelessness and sloth, which, as Solomon saith, "shall clothe a man with rags;"[b] whereas "the hand of the diligent maketh rich."[c]

2. *It makes for our ease and quiet in the world.* And this, (1.) as it engageth to meekness, or

[a] Rom. xiii. 14. [b] Prov. xxiii. 21. [c] Ibid. x. 4.

peaceable-spiritedness; which, as it is a grace most lovely in itself, so it makes those that are endued with it, lovely and acceptable to others, and wins and attracts good-will. (2.) As it engageth to mercifulness, both in giving and forgiving. None but a monster, and one prodigiously wicked and unworthy, will put affronts upon, and procure trouble to, those that are merciful in these two respects. (3.) As it engageth to justice, truth, and uprightness, in giving to every one his due; and not defrauding, wronging, or defaming any: all which plainly tend to the procuring of peace.

3. *It makes for our health and strength; the good habit and constitution of our bodies, as well as of our souls.* This it doth, (1.) As it engageth to sobriety; against excess, which both begets and feeds diseases and distempers. Incontinence and intemperance weaken both the body and the mind; shorten life, and make it painful and uncomfortable, while it lasts. (2.) As it engageth against heart-tearing cares, and such anxious solicitudes as waste natural strength, and prey upon the spirits. (3.) As it engageth against all inordinate affections, all fleshly as well as worldly lusts. These make men lean and sick; as Amnon's lust after Tamar made him.[d] (4.) As it begets cheerfulness and tranquillity of spirit; which hath a proper efficacy to the preservation of health. "A cheerful heart doth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones."[e] (5.) As it engageth to honest labour, in opposition to a soft and delicate life. Exercise hath a natural tendency to the making men hardy, strong, and healthful.

[d] 2 Sam. xiii. 6. [e] Prov. xvii. 22.

Would we then be fully, and in all things, resigned to the holy and good-will of God; let us observe this first direction, and labour after a great sense of the truth of the foregoing principles; and all those considerations that have been proposed to our view, as most powerful arguments to persuade to this duty.

CHAP. II.

That humble and fervent prayer is a necessary and effectual means to the obtaining the grace of self-resignation.

In the *second* place; Being humbled in a deep sense of thy irresignation and disobedience, wherein thou hast hitherto walked to the hurt and danger of thy soul, beg of God this high and holy temper of soul: this "one thing desire" thou "of the Lord;" and "seek after it all the days of thy life."[a]

Humble and holy prayer is one of the greatest helps to the obtaining of any grace or good thing from God. Let us then carefully apply ourselves to him for this great blessing; which is such a one as none but himself can give: and he who is our "Father in heaven, ('the Father of mercies,'[b]) will "give" this, and all "good things, to them that ask him."[c]

"If any of you lack wisdom," saith St. James, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."[d] Now the resignation of our wills to the

[a] Psal. xxvii. 4. [b] 2 Cor. i. 3. [c] Matt. vii. 11. [d] James i. 5.

will of God is the highest point of wisdom; and this sort of wisdom is particularly meant in the text, as appears by the foregoing verses.

But then our prayers must be fervent, and in faith.

First. *They must be fervent.* "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much:"[e] but not cold and languid desires, or faint wishes.

Nor are we to judge of the true fervency of prayer by the heat of the head, or fancy; but by the heat of the heart, and the ardency of our affections. "My heart," saith David, רחש 'boils,' or "bubbles forth, a good matter."[f] We are to judge thereof by the passionateness and earnestness of our desires: not by the loudness of prayer, nor by the length thereof, whether it be with, or without a form of words; nor by any thing obvious to sense.

All that is outward, is easy in comparison of that which is more spiritual, a heart affected suitably to every part of prayer. And there may be as much, yea more, of the spirit of prayer, when there are no words at all. There are times when "the Spirit maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered;"[g] with affections too quick and strong for expressions, and which would cool, if put into words. Thus Hannah, "praying before the Lord, spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard."[h] She "poured out" her "soul before the Lord:" and God, who "searcheth the hearts," and "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit,"[i] heard her.

These inward breathings of the soul are ever

[e] James v. 16. [f] Psal. xlv. 1. [g] Rom. viii. 26.
[h] 1 Sam. i. 12, 13, 15. [i] Rom. viii. 27.

very precious to God, and find favour with him. And when a soul prayeth out of a deep sense and feeling of its wants, and is full of affectionate breathings after God, and hath the most ardent and inflamed desires after spiritual things; this is true praying with fervency, and "in the Holy Ghost,"[a] as St. Jude speaks. And the silence of the soul is louder, and much sooner reacheth the ears of the Almighty, than the greatest loudness and volubility of speech.

If then we would obtain this best and most divine of all blessings; let us pray for it with the greatest ardour of affection: we may be assured, that God will never cast away so rich a pearl as this, upon those that declare themselves insensible of its worth, by asking it in a cold and formal manner.

And the more to excite and quicken our desires after it, we are to know, that if God accepts our prayers, and gives us this holy temper of spirit, he doth infinitely more for us than what Herod promised the daughter of Herodias:[b] if he gives us this empire over our own will, he bestows that on us which incomparably excels the greatest earthly kingdom: the kingdom of God, as hath been said,[c] is then within us here; and we are thereby made meet for his kingdom of glory hereafter. Who, that duly considers this, can be flat and heavy in his prayers for this grace?

Secondly. *Our prayers must be also in faith.* Thus St. James tells us, we must ask this spiritual wisdom; "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering:"[d] that is, we must believe that, as God is

[a] Jude 20. [b] Mark vi. 22, 23. [c] In sect. 1. chap. ix. [d] James i. 6.

able, so he is as willing and ready, to give us what we ask, "if we ask according to his will,"[e] as St. John qualifies it; and it is according to his will, and pleaseth him highly, that we ask spiritual wisdom.

This faith is the ground of all address to God: "He that cometh to God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."[f] And this he will assuredly be in his own time; which is always the best. God may sometimes make as if he did not hear; that we may seek him more diligently, and pray more fervently; that he may prove our patience, and our just valuation of his blessings; and that we may be the more thankful for them, when we have them, prize them the more, and improve them the better: but if we persevere in earnest and believing prayer, we shall undoubtedly in due time obtain, *Desiderata diu dulcius obtinentur*, says St. Augustin.

And all such spiritual good things as are necessary to salvation, we are "to ask, nothing wavering;" we are to pray for them with such a faith, as to assure ourselves, that God will give them, if we "ask aright:" his most gracious nature and promises assuring us, that he cannot deny them to such askers.

[e] 1 John v. 14. [f] Heb. xi. 6.

CHAP. III.

That in order to our being entirely resigned to the divine will, we must be willing to suffer God, and abide the power of his Spirit working in us.

THIRDLY. Having poured out thy soul before God in humble and earnest prayer, thou must be willing, *pati Deum*, 'to suffer God,' and abide the power of his Spirit working in thee.

To this purpose there is an observable passage in St. Austin on Psal. cii. 3. *Magni languores, sed major medicus*, &c. 'Be the maladies of thy soul never so great; yet there is a physician that is greater, and who never fails to cure: God is that all-powerful physician of souls, to whom nothing is incurable. Only thou must patiently suffer thyself to be cured. Do not thrust back his hand, when he begins to touch thy sores, and search the wounds of thy soul; he well knows what he is doing. Do not hinder, and resist, when it begins to pain; be not so delicate and tender to thine own hurt: but with a quiet patience endure for a while the anguish, when he cuts and lances; considering that the present pain makes way for thy future health and soundness.'

Let not Christ and the Holy Spirit have cause to say of thee, as it was said of Babylon, "we would have healed him, but he is not healed."[a]

Ut corpus redimas, ferrum patieris et ignes.

For the health and safety of the body, (in case of a gangrene, or other dangerous disease,) how

[a] Jer. li. 9.

do men endure a tedious course of physic, and much torment in surgery!

Ut valeas animo, quicquam tolerare negabis?

And for the health of thy soul, infinitely more considerable than a little longer life and ease of the body, which is all that physic or surgery can at any time effect, but can never secure, wilt thou not endure the pain of being cured of its diseases, which, let alone, will make thee eternally miserable?

Let us therefore be entreated, if ever we would obtain this divine temper of self-resignation, to take heed of "quenching the Spirit,"[b] and "resisting the Holy Ghost,"[c] as the Jews did, and paid dear for it: take we heed of stifling any of his convictions, and rejecting his motions: let us not seek to shift off, and put by, serious and awakening thoughts working in us, as the usual practice of sinners is, by diverting to the vain entertainments and false pleasures of the world and the flesh; nor endeavour to drown the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God, and to be heard with a reverent regard.

When Christ would "sit as a refiner and purifier" in the midst of us, "to purge us as gold and silver, that we may offer" ourselves "unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," we must "abide the day of his coming."[d]

But alas! I must needs observe by the way; there are but few of the Christian profession, who are thus patient, and will endure the refining and purifying work of the Spirit. Most would, with

[b] 1 Thes. v. 19. [c] Acts vii. 51. [d] Mal. iii. 2, 3.

Simon Magus,[a] have the Holy Ghost in his gifts; such as may make them seem some great ones, and procure admiration to them: but few would have the "renewing of the Holy Ghost,"[b] and the "sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience."[c] Many would be glad to have the Spirit to sit as a refiner upon their lips, that they may be able to speak spiritually; but few are willing that he should sit as a refiner in their hearts, to melt and consume their self-will, and purge out of them all secret inclinations to sin. Abundance have learned to talk parrot-like of the Spirit, and pretend greatly to things spiritual; who yet declare by their lives, as those mentioned in St. Jude, that they are altogether "sensual, having not the Spirit;"[d] that they have received no other spirit but that of the world.

It hath been a great and common fault, which hath been the occasion of a world of mischief to souls; that men have been valued as spiritual by the reputed gifts of the Spirit, such as the greatest hypocrites may have, rather than by the graces and fruits of the Spirit; such as those in Gal. v. 22, 23.

But to return to our present direction: would we have our wills fully resigned to the will of God, let us above all things beware of "grieving his holy Spirit;"[e] according to the apostle's caution. Let us take heed of rejecting him, when he offers to work this work in us; and not give him the least check or discouragement, but permit him to have his full scope and liberty of doing what he pleases

[a] Acts viii. 19. [b] Titus iii. 5. [c] 1 Pet. i. 2.
[d] Jude 19. [e] Eph. iv. 30.

within us, without disturbance. When Christ "stands at the door, and knocks,"[f] and "waits to be gracious"[g] to us; let us not refuse to open to him, nor seem not to hear him; but say with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."[h]

CHAP. IV.

That we are not only to suffer the Spirit to work in us; but ought also to work with him, in heartily opposing our self-desires. What endeavours we should use, shown in five particulars.

Fourthly. Thou must not be merely passive, and only suffer the Holy Spirit to do his work in thee; but thou must likewise work with him, in vigorously resisting and crossing thy self-desires. Thou must put on heroical resolutions, stoutly to oppose the impetuous desires of thy sensitive powers. "It is God that worketh in thee, both to will and to do:"[i] but yet thou must also "work out thy own salvation with fear and trembling."[k] Thou must "strive according to his working, which worketh in thee mightily."[l] Thou must be faithful to that lesser light and strength which is in thee; and then thou shalt have more light and strength: if thou be faithful in fewer talents,[m] thou shalt receive more. Here take these following directions.

1. *Deny the first solicitations, and resist the first motions of inordinate appetites; depress them at their first rising.* Quench lust, when it doth begin

[f] Rev. iii. 20. [g] Isa. xxx. 18. [h] 1 Sam. iii. 9. [i] Phil. ii. 13.
[k] Ver. 12. [l] Col. i. 29. [m] Matt. xxv. 21.

to smoke, ἀναθυμιω μένην ὀρέξιν. *Facilius est initia affectuum prohibere, quam impetum regere,*[a] as Justin Martyr phraseth it, before it bursteth out into a flame; for then it would be unruly, and too hard to master. Think not to ease thyself by giving some satisfaction to thy lusts: for by this means they will solicit and vex thee the more; and the yielding to commit a sin leaves a greater propension and desire to sin again. Thou shalt best silence the clamours and importunities of a temptation, by not listening in the least to them. As one act of mortification prepares for, and enables to, another; so, on the contrary, by once yielding to corrupt nature, thou art made less able to resist another time.

2. *As to those sins which either through constitution, or custom, thou hast the strongest inclination to, thou must show a more than ordinary roughness and severity against them.* It is not safe so much as to dispute, or argue, with temptations to such sins.

It was a good observation of Aristotle, that some passions are not to be vanquished λόγῳ ἀλλὰ βίᾳ, 'by reason, but force;' that is, not so much by the one as by the other; not so much by arguments, as by a holy violence and resolution. And there is not more need of taking this course against any temptations, than against those that solicit to the sin of uncleanness. *Duriora sunt prœlia castitatis,* 'The battles of chastity, are more sharp than any other:' as St. Cyprian saith.

The forementioned philosopher, in his ethics, observing that man is ζῶον εὐθήρατον ὑπὸ τῶν ἡδονῶν,

[a] Seneca, Ep. 86.

'a creature very apt to be taken and insnared by pleasures,' τὰ ἡδέα εἰσὶ βίαια,[b] adviseth; that for the attaining of virtue, the middle between two extremes, we should shun most, and keep farthest from, that extreme which pretends to most pleasure. Ἐν πάντι μάλιστα φυλακτέον τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ τὴν ὀδονήν. This is good advice: and there cannot be better given for the attaining the virtue of chastity, and the overcoming temptations to uncleanness, which of all other sins doth promise the most pleasure, than not to trust ourselves to enter into the least parley with them; but presently to fly from them, by diverting ourselves to other thoughts, and forcing our minds to other objects.

3. *As much as lieth in thee, shun whatsoever may probably be an occasion of thy being tempted; especially to such sins as thou art most inclined to.* Art thou prone to excess, either in meat or drink? Art thou apt suddenly to take fire, and to be inflamed with passion? Art thou of a lustful temper, or the like? Avoid, all thou canst, such places, company, and objects, as may be incentives to those appetites. Thus in order to the avoiding of the sin of uncleanness, the wise man adviseth, "not to come near the house" of the whorish woman:[c] and for the prevention of the sin of drunkenness, not so much as "to look on the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup."[d]

4. *For the better securing thy perseverance in the spiritual warfare, it is of good use, with humble dependance on God for the aids of his grace, to engage thyself in solemn vows; especially against those sins which have gotten most power and dominion over*

[b] Aristot. Eth. [c] Prov. v. 8. [d] Ibid. xxiii. 31.

thee. I cannot commend the obliging ourselves by vows, as the manner of some is, to certain tasks, which have not an immediate and special tendency to the mortifying of sin, and advancement of holiness. Such vows are found by experience to be both unprofitable and burdensome, to be insnaring and hampering; and rather to gratify superstition, and minister questions and scrupulosities, than godly edifying. But to vow against things unquestionably evil, and to the use of certain means that are necessary to "the destroying of the body of sin;"[a] and that first for a shorter space of time, and afterwards for a longer; and so, that time being expired, to renew these vows as long as we shall see it needful, and till we be well grounded and established in holiness; till religion become our nature, the temper and constitution of our souls, the joy of our hearts, our deliberate choice and settled practice; till we have gotten the complete mastery over those lusts, which we have been most carried away captive by: I say, to vow with such cautions, is found by experience to be of exceeding great benefit and advantage.

And when we have thus vowed, we should frequently reflect upon what we have done; and especially when we are solicited to sin, either by the tempter within or without. Let us then say with holy David; "Thy vows are upon me, O God."[b] "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."[c] 'Neither hopes nor fears, neither the terrors nor allurements of the world, shall dissuade me from a faithful obedience to them.'

[a] Rom. vi. 6. [b] Psal. lvi. 12. [c] Ibid. cxix. 106.

Vows prudently managed are of great use to secure us to religion; and this is the only end of them. *Vovere nihil aliud est, quam animum immobilitare, ne possit retrogredi.* 'To vow,' saith Cajetan, 'is nothing else but to fix the mind, and make it immoveable, that it may not start back from the practice of religion.' And as for those that are shy, or slack, thus to engage and devote themselves to God, which, I fear, in most proceeds from a too dear affection to some sin or sins, let them know, that God's vows are already upon them. They are under the obligation of the baptismal vow, 'to renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh; so as not to follow, nor be led by them.'[d] So much is implied in being "baptized in (or into) the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost:"[e] and besides, those that have received the Lord's Supper, have thereby virtually renewed their vow in baptism. In this other sacrament we make a profession; that 'we offer and present unto God ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto him:'[f] than which there is nothing more due or reasonable, considering the great love of God in giving his Son for us, the great love of our Saviour Christ in his death and sufferings represented in this sacrament, and the great blessings procured for us by the blood of that spotless Lamb. So that all of us, young or old, have already "bound our souls with a bond,"[g] as to vow is described, being under the

[d] See the Offices for Public Baptism.
[e] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[f] See the Communion Service.
[g] Numb. xxx. 2.

engagement either of one or both of these sacramental vows. And therefore in exhorting thee to oblige thyself by solemn vows to the duties of religion, I do not advise thee to a new thing; but only to repeat what thou hast already done: and if thou intendest to stand to the vows thou hast made, what should deter thee from reiterating them, whilst thou hast need of them?

But always remember, when thou vowest to the Lord, to do it with a trust and faith in his power and all-sufficient grace; and with a distrust of thine own natural ability to perform thy vows. And when at any time thou hast failed in the performance of them, be deeply humbled before God; and renew thy engagements, with a greater sense of thy weakness and falseness of heart: and be more watchful over thyself; and let thy falls make thee more narrowly look to thy feet for the time to come.

5. *Fasting is another means to be used for the mortification of the body of sin.* It is of great consequence, and necessary to the health of the inward man, "to keep under the body;" to humble, chastise, and "bring it into due subjection."[a] This was the practice of St. Paul himself; who had not such unruly passions and appetites to tame, as we have.

Religious fasting is of great use to the subduing of the body to the Spirit, and to the starving of corruptions by cutting off their provision; as the ungovernable beast is made tame by taking away his provinder: and there is a sort of devils, that "goeth not out" without "fasting" added to

[a] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

"prayer,"[b] and other means: but it is most especially of force for the casting out the unclean devil. According as we find we stand in more or less need of this remedy, we should oftener, or seldomer make use of it.

CHAP. V.

Of the great power and efficacy of faith in God; faith in his power and goodness.

Fifthly. The next direction I shall give in order to subduing thy will to the will of God, is that of our Saviour; "Have faith in God."[c] Have faith in his power and goodness: this will add life to thy prayers; this will animate and strengthen all thy endeavours.

Take heed of doubting whether "the Lord's hand be not shortened, that it cannot save;" whether his ear be not "heavy, that it cannot hear;"[d] or "his bowels of compassion shut up,"[e] that he is not ready to help.

Take heed of questioning, whether thine own will and selfish desires be not stronger than can be subdued; of entertaining suspicious thoughts, that after all thy endeavours to win the spiritual Canaan, there will be no arriving at "the rest," המנוחה in the LXX *κατάπαυσις*, as the land of Canaan is called:[f] (or the place of rest, בית ניחה as in the Targum,) but that at last thou shalt die in the wilderness; that there is none or but little hope of

[b] Matt. xvii. 21. [c] Mark xi. 22. [d] Isa. lix. 1.
[e] 1 John iii. 17. [f] Deut. xii. 9.

overcoming "the giant-like mind,"[a] γιγαντώδη θύμον, as the expression is in Ecclesiasticus, those "giants, the sons of Anak,"[b] that thou findest vigorous and strong within thee. For by this thine unbelief, or weakness of faith, thou greatly dishonourest either the power or goodness of God; who is able, and as willing as able, to save the soul that trusteth in him: and by this means will the chariot-wheels of thy soul be taken off; thou wilt extremely discourage and enfeeble thyself, and blunt the edge of those weapons wherewith thou art to encounter thy spiritual enemies.

If thy soul be upright in thee, if thou art sincere and hearty in imploring the aids of God's grace and the assistances of his Spirit, and hast faith to be healed, and delivered from the lusts that fight against thee; thou shalt undoubtedly "see the salvation of the Lord."[c] He will "teach thine hands to war, and thy fingers to fight:"[d] he will "gird thee with strength;"[e] and thou shalt be "more than conqueror through Christ that loveth thee."[f] Though thou "hast no might against that great company that cometh against thee;"[g] "against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers;"[h] yet if thou "waitest on the Lord," and "art of good courage, he shall strengthen thine heart:"[i] he will "strengthen thee with strength in thy soul;"[k] and "through him" thou shalt "do valiantly," and "tread down thine enemies:"[l] "he that is in" thee, will be "greater than he that is in the world:"[m] greater than "all that is in the

[a] Ecclus. xxiii. 4. [b] Numb. xiii. 33. [c] Exod. xiv. 13.
[d] Psal. cxliv. 1. [e] Ibid. xviii. 32. [f] Rom. viii. 37.
[g] 2 Chron. xx. 12. [h] Eph. vi. 12. [i] Psal. xxvii. 14.
[k] Ibid. cxxxviii. 3. [l] Ibid. lx. 12. [m] 1 John iv. 4.

world," *viz.* "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."[n]

Take heed therefore of all such reasonings, suggestions and principles, as tend to beget a despondency and fainting of spirit: but "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees."[o] "If thou canst believe; all things are possible to him that believeth."[p] Let faith say unto any mountain of difficulty, "Be thou removed; and it shall be done."[q] "Who are thou, O great mountain? before" this blessed grace, and in the exercise of it, "thou shalt become a plain."[r]

Thy self-will and lusts are therefore strong, because thy faith is weak, and thou in that regard makest but a faint resistance: if thou wert "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;"[s] if thou didst "resist, steadfast in the faith;"[t] thou wouldest see thine adversaries fly before thee.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."[u] We should "take unto us the whole armour of God;" but "above all, the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."[x]

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O faith. Who can recount the mighty acts and great achievements of those holy souls, who have strongly confided in the gracious power of God and Christ Jesus for the subduing of sin, as well as in God's mercy and Christ's merits for the pardon of it? These "through faith," that I may borrow those expressions of St. Paul, "have subdued king-

[n] 1 John ii. 16. [o] Heb. xii. 12. [p] Mark ix. 23.
[q] Matt. xxi. 21. [r] Zech. iv. 7. [s] Eph. vi. 10.
[t] 1 Pet. v. 9. [u] 1 John v. 4. [x] Eph. vi. 13, 16.

doms;" even the kingdoms of divers lusts and pleasures, and the kingdoms of the prince of this world, to which they were once subject: through faith they have "wrought righteousness;" even the righteousness of God, far excelling that outward, slight and partial righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees: through faith they have "stopped the mouths of lions;" the impetuous and ravening solicitations, and greedy desires of their selfish will: through faith they have "quenched the violence of fire;" or the lusts of passion, malice and uncleanness, which burned like fire within them: "out of weakness they were made strong, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."[a]

Now there are many μέγιστα καὶ τίμια ἐπαγγέλματα, "exceeding great and precious promises;"[b] scattered through the Scriptures, which are of sovereign force and virtue for the encouragement of our faith and hope in God, for the strengthening of us against his and our enemies: but there is abundantly enough in that one passage, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"[c] What could our Saviour have spoken more plainly and fully for our encouragement to a dependance on God for grace and spiritual strength, and to a quiet unsolicitous expectation of assistance from him? For this promise concerned not only those disciples that heard Christ preach then from the mount; but all his disciples and followers, all that shall believe on his name to the end of the world. It is said——"to them that ask him," without any

[a] Heb. xi. 33, 34. [b] 2 Pet. i. 4. [c] Luke xi. 13.

limitation either to a certain age or people, language or nation: and therefore we may be as much comforted from these words, as if we had been in the number of those in whose hearing our Saviour preached that best of sermons, wherein they were uttered. There is the same need of the Holy Spirit for us, as there was for them who were then present with our Saviour: and there is now in God, and ever will be, the same benignity and philanthropy, the same good-will, compassion, and love to men, that there was then, and in former ages: "With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning:"[d] He "is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."[e]

But this word of promise is so rich and precious, that it deserves a more particular consideration.

If ye then being evil.] Earthly parents are too commonly envious and niggardly, close, hard, and cruel to others; being all for themselves, and not caring for the good of others.

Know how to give good gifts unto your children.] As backward as they are to give to others, they cannot find in their hearts, when their children ask, to withhold from them; they will be free, open-handed, and bountiful to them: and such is the tenderness of their affection to their children, that they will not give them any thing that they know to be evil and hurtful to them; they will not "give them a stone for bread, a serpent for a fish, or a scorpion for an egg."[f]

How much more shall your heavenly Father.] He who, "being good," cannot but "do good;"[g] He

[d] James i. 17. [e] Heb. xiii. 8. [f] Luke xi. 11, 12. [g] Psal. cxix. 68.

who is "the Father of mercies,"[a] "the God of love"[b] and goodness, and "is love"[c] itself; He who best knows what is good, and is best able to bestow whatsoever is so; He who is as willing to do us good as he is able, and as able as willing, which no earthly parent is; He in whom is nothing of envy towards others, and who hath in himself all fulness; He who is infinite, almighty, and all-sufficient.

Give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.] So saith this evangelist, St. Luke; "give good things,"[d] saith another. Now the greatest good that Omnipotence itself and infinite goodness can do for us, is the giving "the Holy Spirit;" and with him spiritual light to know, and spiritual strength to do, his will, and to subdue our own wills, and whatsoever is contrary to him in us: to be endued with "the Holy Spirit," importing an accession both of light and strength, knowledge and power.

Our Saviour argues here from the less to the greater; from the drop of goodness and benignity in creatures, (and those sinful creatures too,) to that fountain-fulness which is in God. Whatsoever good those children may expect from their parents, that, and infinitely more, may God's children expect from him. And it is impossible to conceive, that the infinitely good God will be more wanting to his children's souls, than evil men are to their children's bodies.

All that στοργή, all those affections and tendernesses, which God hath implanted in all parents for the good of their offspring, are but a little drop to that ocean of love and mercy that is in himself;

[a] 2 Cor. i. 3. [b] Ibid. xiii. 11. [c] 1 John iv. 8. [d] Matt. vii. 11.

are but a dark and short representation of those inconceivable riches of goodness, and bowels of compassion, which are in him. *Nullus pater tam pater*, 'No father is so fatherly, so much a father, as God is,' said Tertullian. He is μητροπάτωρ, as Clemens Alexandrinus styles him out of Orpheus. The tendernesses of both a father and mother are in God. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget," (it is possible, but very prodigious,) "yet will not I forget thee;"[e] saith God.

God doth not take empty titles to himself; but fills up the utmost of whatsoever relation he is set forth by in the holy Scriptures. Whatsoever the wisest, most careful, and loving parents are to theirs, God is such, and incomparably more, to his children.

If the affections of ten thousand parents were in one father or mother, how secure would the child be of tender care! (who indeed is secure without such a supposal?) But all these in one person are far short of God's affection; who is the spring and original of all the fatherly tenderness which is diffused in the hearts of so many millions of fathers, as are in the world.

Let me add this; that the promise of the Spirit is the great promise of the gospel, and the great privilege of the evangelical dispensation or new covenant. Greater aids, and supplies of grace, for the subduing our corruptions, we are encouraged to hope for under the gospel: "The Holy Ghost being shed on us abundantly, πλουσίως, in a rich and

[e] Isa. xlix. 15.

plentiful manner, "through Jesus Christ our Saviour;"[a] as St. Paul speaks.

If therefore we be not stronger, if we be not better, it is because we resist, or at least neglect, the Holy Spirit. It is because we have not faith in God; not because he is unwilling to help and assist us: for what saith St. James? "The Spirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth to envy: but God giveth more grace."[b] He gives grace in such a measure, as to overpower that spirit that lusteth in us: so that for the περισσεία κακίας, "abundance of wickedness,"[c] there is περισσεία τὸς χάριτος, "an abundance of grace,"[d] which the regenerate and believing soul receiveth by Jesus Christ. For "it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;"[e] that "of his fulness we all might receive, even grace for grace:"[f] and this "grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."[g]

Thus you see what abundant encouragement we have, to have faith in God for the supplies of his grace and Spirit; and what reason we have to take heed of unbelief, if ever we would master our sinful affections, and bring our wills into compliance with the will of God.

There is a double unbelief we are to beware of, as very hurtful to our souls;

First. An unbelief in relation to the mercy of God, for the pardon of sin.

Secondly. An unbelief in relation to the power and goodness of God, for the subduing of sin.

And it is much to be lamented, that whereas

[a] Titus iii. 6. [b] James iv. 5, 6. [c] Ibid. i. 21. [d] Rom. v. 17. [e] Col. i. 19. [f] John i. 16. [g] Rom. v. 21.

the former sort of unbelief is much taken notice of and condemned in sermons and books, the latter is but little mentioned. If the evil of this were no less clearly and powerfully represented than the evil of the other, and men were as effectually warned to beware of this, as of that unbelief, it would, through the blessing of God, be an excellent means to make more sincere, strong, and healthy Christians: whereas, alas! the spirits and lives of the generality of professors do too plainly declare, that they had rather have sin pardoned than subdued; that they had rather sin should not be imputed to them, than that it should be destroyed in them.

But the complete faith is this, in opposition to that two-fold unbelief;

First. To believe that Christ came to make expiation for sin; so that it shall be pardoned to those that do truly repent: that is, to those that, being sensible of their sins, and affected with a godly sorrow for them, and a holy hatred and abhorrence of them, desire and purpose, above all things, to walk before God in newness of life: which conditions of pardon and non-imputation of sin are, by too many, either not at all, or but slightly insisted on, while they press the duty of recumbence and relying on Christ's merits for justification and salvation.

Secondly. To believe that, as Christ came to make atonement for sin, so he "was manifested" also "for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil;"[h] and to procure grace for us, whereby sin may have no more dominion over us. But this part of faith, I say, is little urged in com-

[h] 1 John iii. 8.

parison of the other; whereas it is of as great concernment to our eternal happiness to have faith in the power of Christ, as to have faith in his blood. Nay, as appears from what hath been said, to have sin mortified, and to be enabled to will after the will of God, is far more than to be merely pardoned for willing otherwise than God doth will.

Now their defect in this latter part of faith, is a great cause of Christians continuing so low and weak, lazy and faint, in a sickly and even bed-rid condition; and of their fancying, that they honour and please God by complaining of their impotence and infirmities; whereas the true way to please and honour him is, to get up and be doing, confiding in his omnipotent grace.

But I fear, I may also add another reason, why most of those that confess their sins, and pray for grace and strength against them, are still as impotent as if there were no grace or assistance promised; namely, their not being heartily desirous of grace, as well as their want of faith in the promises of it; their unwillingness, whatsoever they pretend, to have some lust or other mortified, and to be thoroughly purified; their secret fear of the searching and purging work of the Spirit, and of that light and grace that would disquiet them, and not let them alone in some sins to which they are fondly and tenderly devoted. It was one of St. Austin's confessions; *Ego adolescens*, &c. *petieram a te castitatem, et dixeram; da mihi castitatem et continentiam, sed noli modò. Timebam enim, nè me citò exaudires, et citò sanares a morbo concupiscentiæ; quam malebam expleri, quàm extingui.*[a] 'I,

[a] Confess. Lib. VIII. cap. 7.

when I was a young man, begged of thee, that thou wouldest endue me with the grace of chastity, and said, Give me chastity, but not yet: for I feared, lest thou shouldest presently hear me, and immediately heal me; and I was rather for having lust satisfied, than extinguished.'

If this be thy case, whosoever thou art that readest these lines, if this be the state and temper of thy soul; then in thy complaining of weakness, and that "the sons of Zerviah are too hard for thee;"[b] and in thy praying for the assistance of God's grace against them, thou dost no better than add sin to sin; the sin of false dealing with God, and wicked hypocrisy, to that of unbelief; "thy heart is not right in the sight of God,"[c] and thou "liest unto him with thy tongue."[d]

But to conclude this: let us "take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief;" and so we fall short of the spiritual Canaan, and "entering into the rest"[e] of God; as it befel the "Israelites that believed not:"[f] "whose carcases fell in the wilderness;"[g] and "none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward,"[h] entered into Canaan, but Caleb and Joshua,[i] men of another spirit, and that "followed God fully;"[k] who were full of faith, and encouraged the people to believe and prosper. And it is observable, that Caleb asked for the mountainous country, where "the Anakims were,"[l] and "the cities were great and fenced."[m] By the news thereof the evil spies dismayed Israel: but Caleb gave proof of the strength of his faith, in freely

[b] 2 Sam. iii. 39. [c] Acts viii. 21. [d] Psal. lxxviii. 36. [e] Heb. iii. 12, 18, 19. [f] Jude 5. [g] Heb. iii. 17. [h] Num. xiv. 29, 35. [i] Ibid. xxxii. 11, 12. [k] Ibid xiv. 24. xxxii. 12. [l] Josh. xiv. 12. [m] Num. xiii. 12.

choosing to expose himself to the hard and seemingly impossible service of gaining this country. And he was rewarded with success answerable to so great a faith; for we read, that he "drove thence the three sons of Anak."[a] Notwithstanding that it was commonly said; "Who can stand before the sons of Anak!"[b] he made it manifest, that faith could stand before them, and overcome them: and if, in fighting with the spiritual Anakims, we have Caleb's faith in the power and goodness of God, we may be most undoubtedly assured of Caleb's success.

Let the spiritual Israel therefore encourage themselves in the Lord their God; and they may be certain, that it shall be unto them according to their faith: his "grace shall be sufficient for them;"[c] and "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against them."[d]

CHAP. VI.

Of the wonderful efficacy of love to God and divine things.

Sixthly. Labour to be affected, as much as is possible, with the love of God and divine things. To faith add love: they are joined together in Scripture,[e] and should be joined in the hearts of Christians. And love, as well as faith, is called a breastplate,[f] whereby we may be secured against the assaults of temptations.

[a] Josh. xv. 14. [b] Deut. ix. 2. [c] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [d] Isa. lix. 19.
[e] 1 Tim. i. 14. and 2 Tim. i. 13. [f] 1 Thess. v. 8.

1. *We must labour to be affected with a strong and ardent love of God.* If "the love of God be perfected"[g] in us, as St. John speaks, we shall find self-denial and self-resignation as easy and pleasant as heart can wish. Love will make us think nothing precious that God would have us part with: it will make us, with great cheerfulness, part with a right eye, a right hand, our own will, if it offend us:[h] it will make us, without grudging, cross our own will, when it contradicts the will of our beloved. It will cause us to believe no suffering harsh that God shall inflict, no duty difficult which he shall command. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."[i]

"If you love me," is a familiar and potent form of speech with us, to persuade one another to the doing or forbearing any thing: and what human love doth work among men, that, and much more will be effected by divine love. This is a far more powerful and vigorous principle of action. And yet the effects of that love have been very strange and wonderful; the observation whereof hath caused them to be sung by poets, and copiously set forth in romances, which are imitations of true histories.

Solus amor est, qui nomen difficultatis erubescit, 'It is love alone, that is ashamed to mention difficulty,' saith St. Austin. Nay, love welcomes difficulties, and pleaseth itself in hard instances of obedience; because by them it showeth forth more of its reality, strength, and power: easy and ordinary performances being but mean and short signi-

[g] 1 John ii. 5. [h] Matt. v. 29, 30. [i] 1 John v. 3.

fications of a hearty love. And the greatest and bravest achievements, such acts as are most heroic, as self-mortification, and the denying of ourselves in what is most dear to us; these are the true and proper results and expressions of divine love, the worthy exploits of this holy affection.

Love makes the noblest champions in the holy war against sin, the world, and Satan; and animates a Christian to the greatest adventures. As for easy and common performances, ἀδάπανος εὐσέβεια, 'a cheap and costless religion,' and self-denial in small matters, *viz.* in such things as a man is but little inclined to, or such as are less for his pleasure and advantage, divine love is less solicitous about them: but it chooseth rather to awaken and animate the soul to the harder services of religion. It doth not think it quitteth itself in engaging against the weaker lusts, or in taking some of the slight outworks: but it sets itself against the most powerful corruptions; it plants its batteries against ὀχυρώματα, 'the strong holds,' the inmost fort where self-will hath ensconced herself. "The weapons of its warfare are not carnal, δυνατὰ τῷ Θεῷ, but mighty through God, (or, 'exceeding mighty,') to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, (or, λογισμοὺς, 'reasonings,') and every high thing" in the soul "that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."[a]

That "there is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets,"[b] is the voice of the cold and lazy sluggard: but this is no discouragement to the lover of God; it affrights him not. Nay, so far is divine love

[a] 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. [b] Prov. xxvi. 13.

from being cooled and disheartened by difficulties and oppositions, that it is rather enkindled and improved: by these it heightens itself into a holy indignation against whatsoever would attempt to draw it from God. "Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it:"[c] but, as water cast into lime, it increases, instead of lessening, its heat.

Love, though it be a soft and delicate affection; yet it is hardy and strong withal: "Love is strong as death." And it is as ingenuous and noble, as strong; for "if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned."[d] Neither the hard and evil things which the world threatens, nor the most tempting allurements of the world, or the flesh, can either affright or corrupt that heart, where divine love rules, from a faithful adhering to the will of God: but to the several temptations he meets with in the world, this is the constant resolute answer of every holy lover, as it was Joseph's, "how can I do this wickedness, and sin against God?"[e]

Yea, love enables a Christian to do his duty much sooner and better. That which is in others the effect of great severity to the body, long fastings, and other toilsome exercises often repeated, is done in a more compendious and effectual way by the power of love, in such Christians as are endued with a more than ordinary measure of it.

Now that this divine love may be enkindled in us, and the flame of it more and more increased; (1.) Let us very often lift up the eyes of our mind, and fix them upon those infinitely lovely perfections,

[c] Cant. viii. 7. [d] Ibid. 6, 7. [e] Gen. xxxix. 9.

glories, and excellences in God, with the mention and celebrations of which the holy Scriptures do so abound. Let us view these frequently in the Scriptures; and also in the works of creation and providence. Let us often consider with ourselves, how that all the lovelinesses and sweetnesses that are in creatures, are but so many drops from the fountain of them, that is, God; and that every love-attracting excellency, every thing which the world calls precious and desirable, is but a very weak resemblance of what is to be tasted and enjoyed in Him. And, (2.) Let us also as frequently contemplate those transcendent and inestimable mercies and favours, those numberless benefits and kindnesses which we stand obliged to God for; and above all, that gift of gifts, his Son, in whom he expressed to us a "love that passeth knowledge."[a]

Would we have the fire of holy love kindled in our breasts; let us, I say, dwell very much in the admiring contemplation of the divine excellences and the divine benefits.

The contemplation of the infinite perfections that are in God, will render all things contemptible, *videnti Deum omnis creatura est angusta*, compared with him: and consequently make them weak, unpersuading, untempting things. What Pythagoras, said he, learned by his philosophy, μηδὲν θαυμάζειν, 'to admire nothing,' we shall learn by this contemplation. When the soul hath inured herself to view the divine glories, how near to nothing is τὸ πᾶν, 'the whole universe' in her eyes! what a little spot and point! *Dejicit se de culmine generositatis suæ, qui admirari aliquid post Deum potest.*[b] When she

[a] Eph. iii. 19. [b] St. Cyprian de Spectaculis.

hath been upon the mount with God, and ravished herself with his astonishing beauty, she must needs be affected with such a magnanimity and generosity of spirit, as will courageously repel the strongest temptations she meets with, to withdraw her from a close union and conjunction of will and affection to him. And the consideration of the innumerable and transcendent blessings we receive from God, will work in us such an ingenuous gratitude, as will excite us to give up our hearts and our all to him.

The excellences of his nature, and the exceeding riches of his bounty, will represent him as most worthy to be known, νόου ἄνθει, 'with the flower of our mind,' as Zoroaster expresses it, with our highest apprehensions: and to be loved with the flower of our hearts; so that our sweetest and dearest affections will not be thought too precious for him.

Let us briefly reflect upon the power of worldly and sensual love; and see what this will do.

First. *The love of money.* How doth it oblige and enforce the men of this world to hard labours, dangerous adventures, anxious cares; "to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows;"[c] to deny themselves many of the comforts and contents of this life, to fare hardly, to live a toilsome and painful life; and in a word, to use the apostle's phrase, "to pierce themselves through with many sorrows!"[d]

Secondly. *The love of honour, dignities, and preferments.* How doth it put ambitious men upon restless labours, tedious attendances, servile offices,

[c] Psal. cxxvii. 2. [d] 1 Tim. vi. 10.

base flatteries and compliances! Such stop at nothing for the obtaining their ends. They devote and surrender themselves to the will and humour of their patron, as if he were their God, and they his creatures more than God's. They deport and address themselves to him, by whose favour they hope to be raised, in such a form of respect and devotion, as approacheth near to that regard and reverence, which is due only to the most high God. So full of zeal and observance is this civil kind of superstition.

Thirdly. *The love of beauty.* What a strange power and force hath it upon the fond man! To him no services, no sufferings, seem grievous, that his mistress wills him to undertake. With all submission and devotion he admires and adores this his soul's idol, this deity of clay; and that in such strains, as blasphemously resemble that most affectionate and humble devotion, which none but his Creator may challenge from him. He gives her his whole heart, and resigns his whole will to her will; complies with all her humours, yields an entire obedience to all her commands, be they never so unreasonable. He patiently suffers tedious delays and waitings; meekly bears her frowns, affronts, and disdains, her harsh language and hard usage, and all the other arts she hath of afflicting him; besides the troubles and hazards he sometimes meets with from his rivals. This love-bigot, such is his devotion, neglects himself, his rest, his food, his health, renounceth all his own contentments; and denies himself in whatsoever is for either his delight or advantage, if he understands it to be the pleasure of his mistress: he mortifies himself, pines and con-

sumes; and is "lean from day to day" for her, as lustful Amnon was for Tamar.[a] These, and such like, are the severe penances, mortifications, and austerities, that this man is wont to undergo in his idolatrous love-service: yea, and sometimes he sacrificeth his very life; which the poor wretch calleth love's martyrdom. Here is self-denial, self-resignation, with a witness. With what a deal of pains and trouble doth this poor creature purchase to himself misery! With much more ease, and less vexation, had his love been placed upon the best of objects, he might have been happy to eternity; he might have lived with God, who "is love"[b] itself, holy and unspotted love; and have reigned with Christ, the faithful lover of his soul, in a kingdom of peace and joy for ever.

By these instances we may discern the strange force of a degenerate and impure love; and what a degree of self-denial and self-renunciation it forceth those to, in whom it reigns.

And is the love of "uncertain riches,"[c] a little white and yellow clay, so powerful with men: and shall not the love of the true "durable riches,"[d] the glorious "inheritance in heaven," which is "incorruptible, and fadeth not away,"[e] be more forcible?

Hath the love of airy honour such power: and shall not the love of that "honour which cometh from God only,"[f] that glory and honour which God hath promised "to every man that worketh good,"[g] that honour of "shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father;"[h] shall not the love, I say, of such

[a] 2 Sam. xiii. 4. [b] 1 John iv. 8, 16. [c] 1 Tim. vi. 17. [d] Prov. viii. 18. [e] 1 Pet. i. 4. [f] John v. 44. [g] Rom. ii. 10. [h] Matt xiii. 43.

inexpressible honour as this, have as powerful effects upon us, and much more powerful?

Shall the love of a fading skin-beauty, the love of a little red and white, the love of withering roses, lilies, and violets, with which fond lovers paint the cheeks, hands, and veins of their mistresses, besides I know not how many more such gay embellishments of their foolish fancies, shall this impotent kind of love so potently command poor mortals? and shall not the love of God do much more? the love of Him who is beauty itself, αὐτόκαλον, 'the original beauty;' the first fair, as well as πρῶτον ἀγαθὸν, the 'first good;' Him whom angels, the flower and top of the creation, admire and adore with the greatest complacency and ardour of affection? Shall not love fixed upon such an object as this, inflame us with a holy resolution to undertake, or undergo, any thing, for the fulfilling and satisfying of his will? We considering withal, that his commands are, as hath been shown, in themselves most reasonable, most fit to be approved and observed by us, agreeable to the dignity of our souls, in their own nature most lovely, excellent, and worthy; and have moreover a mighty recompense of reward: which cannot be said of the commands of lust, and sensual, impure love; but quite the contrary: they being most vain and foolish, unreasonable and cruel; and obedience to them, of most pernicious and sad consequence. Nor is there any thing that God would have us part with, but what it is better for us to be without, better for our ease, peace, and pleasure; and more for our liberty, to be freed and disentangled from, as hath been

already proved. And so I pass on to that other branch of this direction, *viz.*

2. *That we should labour to be affected with a strong and ardent love* (as of God, so) *of divine things;* of virtue and holiness, the impressions of the divine image upon the soul; and all those spiritual excellences which fit and prepare the soul for heavenly glories, and the most blissful enjoyments in the other world.

Had we a worthy resentment of spiritual excellences, and a due sense of the beauty of holiness; they would even ravish our hearts, and *mirabiles amores excitare,* 'excite in us strange and wonderful affections to them,' as Tully speaks of virtue, and consequently secure us from the allurements and attractions of any earthly vanity whatsoever. But, till a man comes to admire and be enamoured with the divine graces and virtues, every thing which gratifieth sensuality, will be ready to get his heart, and to carry him away captive. By one unacquainted with the loveliness of holiness the least twinkling of this world's glory will be admired: and there can be no better way to put by and frustrate the attempts and temptations of the things below, than to be well acquainted and greatly affected with the things above; the things that are holy, heavenly, and divine. That of Plutarch was a most true and excellent observation; Οὐ μὲν οἷον παῦσασθαι ζηλοῦντας, &c. 'It is impossible for men not to have a great affection, and ambition for the things which the world admires and pursues, except there be a principle within them to admire virtue; whose beauty

and lustre alone would darken, and put out, all other glories and gaieties whatsoever.'

Be fully possessed then, with the importance of this truth; that the most sovereign way for a man to take off his mind and heart from the admired vanities of the world, and consequently to deny himself, is plainly this; to turn his mind and affections to better objects, to admire the uncreated and original Beauty, and to have a high esteem of the participations and impressions thereof in holy souls.

There is such a way approved by physicians for the stopping of blood, *viz.* When it issueth out one way, to open a vein elsewhere; and so to stay it by revulsion, and diverting the course.

Nor is that fable of the poets unfit to be applied here, which containing an excellent moral, tells us the means of defeating the Sirens, the most dangerous temptations of the world. Ulysses and his companions, as they sailed by them, stopped their ears with wax, that they might not hear them; and so avoided the danger. But Orpheus, by singing divine hymns, by celebrating the praises of God, and recounting his excellences and favours, is said to have overcome them; which was the more noble way of conquest.

In short; the affections will not be violently stopped or pent in, so as to hold long; something they will pursue: let them therefore run out upon better things; let them stream forth to the noblest objects.

But to prevent all mistake and scruple, I must add; that what is here said, doth not imply, that a Christian is to dam and stop up his affections from

issuing out to any thing in this world: but thus we are to consider; there are undue and forbidden, and there are due and allowed, objects of the affections.

As for undue objects, the pleasures of any kind of sin, the things which God expressly forbids in the holy Scriptures; we are to have no affection at all for them, but the greatest antipathy against them: there must not be the least tasting of the forbidden tree; though its fruit be never so fair and tempting.

As for due objects of the affections, and such as God allows; our care must be, that they be carried forth towards them in a due order, and in a due degree and measure.

1. *In a due order.* Our love must first be placed upon God and Christ, "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;"[a] and thence descend to inferior good things: things divine must have the precedency and priority in our care and endeavours, according to this rule of our Saviour.

2. *In a due degree and measure.* God, and the things above, must be most desired, loved, and delighted in. "Whom," saith the Psalmist, "have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee."[b] God alloweth us to give a lesser love to the lesser goodness; but the highest affection is to be given to the highest and original goodness.

I will conclude this direction with the agreeing advice of Taulerus, in his eighth Epistle; *Omnem diem inter amissos deputate, in quo, Dei amore, propriam non fregistis voluntatem.* 'Account that day

[a] Matt. vi. 33. [b] Psal. lxxiii. 25.

as mispent and lost, wherein ye have not subdued your own will by the love of God.' Which advice imports two things;

First. That a Christian is to make this great duty of self-resignation his daily business: that it is a lesson which he is to be every day learning; and an exercise in which he is to make continual progress.

Secondly. That the love of God is of most sovereign force, and virtue, to break and subdue a man's own will.

CHAP. VII.

That humility is a powerful means for the attaining of self-resignation; both as it implies obedience to God's commands, and as it implies patient submission to his disposals.

Seventhly. Endeavour after the deepest humility, and sink thyself into the greatest self-nothingness; if thou wouldest be truly resigned to the will of God. Humility is a most powerful and excellent means for the attaining of self-resignation, both as it implies obedience to God's commands, and submission to his disposals.

First. *As it implies obedience to the commands of God.* The humble Christian cannot think much of doing any thing God requires of him, or forbearing any thing he forbids him: for,

(1.) He considers, that there is an inconceivable, infinite distance between God, (who is Οὐσία ὑπερούσιος, 'the super-essential essence,' (as

he is called by Dionysius the Areopagite,) and him.

He considers, that God is infinite in essence and all perfections, in glory and majesty; that he is the Lord of all things, the Sovereign of men and angels: and, therefore, that it is most fit, he should have the pre-eminence in all things; and most unbecoming us to oppose his will, when he commands things however so ungrateful to flesh and blood.

He considers, that he himself is a limited, dependent, indigent being; that he is nothing but what he is by God, and can have nothing but what comes from him: and consequently, that it is the most unreasonable thing in the world, that his will should ever take the place of the will of God: the infinite superiority of God's, being most justly and plainly, inferring the precedency and superiority of his will.

He considers, that God is the inexhaustible fountain of life, the great ocean of being; whence all the rivers of particular beings flow, and whither they return again: whereas man is a poor, feeble creature; "altogether" (or mere) "vanity," and that "at his best state,"[a] as the Psalmist speaks; yea, "altogether lighter than vanity," where it is spoken of "men of high degree."[b] And even "the nations are," before God, "as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust," (as an atom that may stick to the balance,) "of the balance," as Isaiah speaks; nay, "All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing."[c] And what then should each particular man think of himself; he being so incon-

[a] Psal. xxxix. 5. [b] Ibid. lxii. 9. [c] Isa. xl. 15, 17.

siderable a part of that drop, that dust, that nothing, and less than nothing?

The humble Christian, having such a sense of his inconceivably vast and infinite disproportion and disparity to God, thence concludes; that nothing can be so unreasonable, as to expect his will should be humoured, or to take it ill to have it crossed by the will of God. He is deeply sensible, that nothing is so intolerable, as for the will and pleasure of a creature, in any thing, to control and overrule the Lord of life and glory, the Father of the universe, the great Maker and Preserver of all things: and that it is much more the greatest petulancy, the vilest sauciness, and most horrible presumption, for such a creature as himself to dispute and quarrel with the divine commands.

(2.) The humble Christian considers also that God, being self-happy and self-sufficient, cannot design his own advantage in laying his commands upon us, who are not able to gratify him by any services, but he being infinitely good, aims at our benefit in so doing: that God, in the business of religion, and the precepts he requires our observance of, seeks not his own, but merely our interest and welfare;[a] in that he needs not, nor is capable of receiving, any addition of happiness, much less from without himself, for God is self-sufficient, and all-sufficient: he is that living and ever-streaming fountain, which overflows in goodness to his creatures, and delights to fill the capacities, and satisfy the ardent desires and thirsts, of souls that pant and breathe after him: but he is not filled by them, and therefore he gratifieth, and means kind-

[a] See Sect. 1. Chap. vi.

ness to us, in all his commands: and his laws are to be numbered among his favours, even his most endearing and obliging ones: and the humble Christian being thus assured, must needs be strongly excited to perform a most hearty, ingenuous and cheerful obedience to all the declarations of the divine will.

Secondly. *Humility fits and enables us for self-resignation, as it also imports patient submission to God's disposals:* and that,

(1.) *Upon the same account that we have showed, it disposeth to active obedience; namely, because it makes us sensible of the infinite disproportion that is between God and us.* The consideration of which will necessarily convince us, that it becomes such despicable creatures as we are, "to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God;"[b] to lay ourselves down in the dust before him, instead of fretting and repining at his providence.

(2.) *Humility disposeth us to patience, in that it makes us sensible of our moral defects and imperfections, our sins and transgressions; whereby we are become obnoxious to God's displeasure.* The sense whereof will force us to acknowledge, that he is most righteous, whensoever he punisheth: and therefore we should "accept of the punishment of our iniquity."[c]

Murmuring and complaining thoughts arise from pride, and a too good opinion of thyself. It is self-conceit that makes thee misconstrue any of God's dealings as over-rigorous and harsh towards thee: for to the humble man, who is sensible of his manifold miscarriages, the same would appear

[b] 1 Pet. v. 6. [c] Lev. xxvi. 41.

most just, right and equal; nay, very gentle too, in comparison of his deserts. He having a deep sense of the evil of sin; how unreasonable, unjust and disingenuous, and therefore how unspeakably heinous a thing it is, to oppose the will of "the most high God,"[a] the supreme governor of the world, and "Judge of all the earth;"[b] to offend infinite goodness, and to return evil to him from whom we have always received good, and to whom our engagements are inexpressibly many and great: I say, the humble Christian, having a great sense of this, and being conscious to himself that he hath been this unreasonable, unrighteous, and disingenuous creature, will, under the sharpest afflictions he can suffer in this world, say with Ezra, "Thou hast punished me less than mine iniquities deserve."[c]

(3.) *Humility disposeth us to a submissive bearing of afflictions, as it makes us sensible of the exceeding shortness of our understandings, our great folly and utter disability to fathom God's counsels, and the reasons of his providences.* The humble Christian will cry out with the blessed apostle; "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!"[d] He knows, that infinite and unsearchable wisdom must needs administer the affairs of the world in general, and of every person in particular, in the best and wisest way: and therefore that there is very great reason for whatsoever sufferings he undergoes, although they may seem to his shallow capacity to be never so unreasonable.

[a] Psal. lxxviii. 56. [b] Gen. xviii. 25. [c] Ezra. ix. 13. [d] Rom. xi. 33.

Murmuring at any of the divine providences is a tacit charging of God, as with unrighteousness, so with folly; and a setting up our wisdom above God's.

4. *The humble Christian is likewise sensible of the great need he hath of afflictions:* that he needs them as medicines, to cure his spiritual maladies: that they are needful, as they are preventions of sin, and secure against many temptations; and as they are very instructive, much of God, and of himself, being to be learned in the school of the cross.

This man knoweth, that not to be corrected in order to his amendment, is the greatest of punishments; and that no judgment is so dreadful as sin itself, and to be given up to a hard heart and seared conscience: and therefore he accounts those straits, troubles, and difficulties, he ever and anon meets with, as expressions of God's unwillingness he should undo himself.

It is most certain, that the holy, wise, and good God, doth not desire the occasion of inflicting punishments, *viz.* the transgression of his laws: nor doth he directly and primarily will punishment: as neither doth any good and wise lawgiver. To do thus is not justice, but cruelty. Justice is wise and good; it hath ever the best of ends, namely, the discountenancing and preventing of sin and evil, and the cherishing and encouraging of goodness, and securing the authority of righteous laws. And the humble person considering, that God's design in afflicting him is to cure the greater evil of sin, by the lesser of suffering; and that afflictions are so necessary, as that he is seldom long well without

them: by this means is he the better enabled quietly to submit, when he suffers under them.

5. And lastly. *Humility enables a Christian both to obedience and patience, as it makes him capable of more grace:* and the more grace, the more power he hath, both to do and suffer the will of God. "Surely," saith the wise man, "he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly."[a] And St. Peter says, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."[b] As also St. James, "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."[c]

The high mountains are barren, but the low valleys are covered over with corn: and accordingly the showers of God's grace fall into lowly hearts and humble souls. The more poor in spirit, the more self-empty, the more earnestly we are desirous of spiritual things: and such shall be filled, according to Christ's promise; "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."[d]

You know the story in 2 Kings iv. So long as the widow had an empty vessel, the oil flowed; but when there was not another to be gotten, it immediately stayed. Thus, as long as God seeth an empty soul, that is ready to receive, and desirous of his grace, he is ready to communicate of his fulness to it.

A soul that is poor in its own eyes, void of self-

[a] Prov. iii. 34. [b] 1 Pet. v. 5. [c] James iv. 5, 6. [d] Matt. v. 6.

glorying, and acknowledgeth its own indigence, and withal, its utter unworthiness to receive the least favour from the divine bounty, is such a one as God looks for, to communicate to it more and more of his grace and spirit. "To this man will I look," saith God, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit,"[e] &c. "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; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."[f]

Humility disposeth to gratitude, and gratitude fits us to receive more from God: for a grateful soul will set a high value upon his blessings, and most gladly give Him the glory of his grace. The humble Christian thinks himself, with Jacob, "less than the least of all God's mercies;"[g] and consequently he will be heartily thankful for the least: and by being thus affected, he becomes meet for receiving the greatest, and cannot fail thereof. It is to be observed, that when Jacob was in this humble and self-abasing temper; then it was that he "saw God face to face at Peniel;"[h] then it was that he was honoured with the name Israel; and "as a prince had power with God and men, and prevailed."[i]

But, on the contrary, pride, or self-fulness, which is ever accompanied with unthankfulness, makes men incapable of receiving the divine grace: and therefore the Pharisees, who "trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised

[e] Isa. lxvi. 2. [f] Ibid. lvii. 15. [g] Gen. xxxii. 10.
[h] Ver. 30. [i] Ver. 28.

others;"[a] that were not sick, but whole and healthy, in their own conceit; these died of their diseases, notwithstanding the great Physician of souls was so long among them.

Now there are two graces which humility gives a peculiar fitness for; two of the first magnitude and greatest influence, of the greatest use and consequence in a Christian's life, *viz.* the love of God, and faith or trust in him.

It is evident, that humility hath a peculiar fitness to cherish and increase the grace of love: for the more sensible any one is of his great unworthiness and ill-deservings, the more he must needs love God for having so gracious a regard to him; the more will he admire and adore "the riches of his grace."[b]

And it is as evident, that humility affordeth the like advantage for the grace of faith, or trust in God: for the more sensible a Christian is of his own impotence, the more will he rely upon the divine power and goodness for the supply of his wants, having so many promises to encourage him. The sense of our own weakness will make us distrust ourselves; the more we distrust ourselves, the more shall we stay our souls on God, and confide in his wisdom, power, and grace.

Of how great efficacy both these graces are, to enable us to this duty of self-resignation, we have particularly showed before, in Chap. 5, 6.

[a] Luke xviii. 9. [b] Eph. i. 7.

CHAP. VIII.

That the serious observation of the great examples of self-resignation, which are recorded in the Scriptures, is of great use and advantage. First, of the example of ABRAHAM.

EIGHTHLY. Look to those lively patterns and examples of self-resignation set before us in the holy Scriptures. These are of singular use and advantage to be seriously considered, for they plainly show this holy disposition of spirit to be attainable; and that God requires herein nothing of us that is impossible.

Could they do thus; and cannot we do the like by the same divine help and power, which we have showed is attainable by us, as well as them? They were ὁμοιοπαθεῖς, "subject to like passions"[c] with us; they were flesh and blood as we are, and naturally as weak and infirm as ourselves: and God is the same in power, and goodness now, that ever he was.

This may commend to us the fulness of the Scriptures; that besides the best precepts and rules, we have the best patterns and examples recorded in them, of every grace and virtue: so that, by the guidance and assistance of the holy Scriptures, the Christian man "may be perfected; thoroughly furnished unto every good work."[d]

The best rules of the best life are laid down in the divinely inspired writings; and they are plain and intelligible, especially to those that have the "honest and good heart."[e] But examples superadded to rules, and patterns to precepts, make both

[c] Acts xiv. 15. [d] 2 Tim. iii. 17. [e] Luke viii. 15.

more instructive; and as well encourage as direct our practice. And we having upon record many worthy examples of self-resignation, this lesson becomes neither too high nor hard for us, to understand or practise.

How many precepts have we in Scripture to engage us to chastity and purity, meekness and patience, faith and charity; to a holy resolvedness in owning of God, and adhering to his ways, and unweariedness in doing good; and to every other grace and virtue? And have we not, besides others, the example of Joseph for chastity, Moses for meekness, Job for patience, Abraham for faith, Dorcas and Cornelius for charity, Daniel for a holy resolvedness of spirit in owning God, St. Paul for an unwearied zeal; and, above all, that example of all examples, for every thing that is holy, pure, and lovely, our Lord Jesus Christ?

Take we heed then, that we be not found *ingentium exemplorum parvi imitatores*, 'small imitators of mighty examples,' as Salvian expresseth it. And let it be our serious care, and holy ambition, to transcribe their virtues, to write after those fair copies they have set us; to be followers of those blessed souls, wherein they were followers of God and Christ.

But my present argument determining me to self-resignation, and to consider some examples hereof for your guidance and encouragement.

First. I will present you with that of Abraham; "faithful Abraham,"[a] as he is styled by the apostle St. Paul. There were ten trials, wherewith God was pleased to exercise this good man; as they are

[a] Gal. iii. 9.

collected out of his story by the Hebrew writers: the first and last, of which ten, were the sorest of all.

The first is recorded in Gen. xii. 1. His being called and commanded of God to leave his own country, his kindred, and his father's house; and to go unto a land that he knew not. Which command, as unpleasant and grievous as it must needs have been to his flesh and blood, he did not in the least demur upon obeying: but "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."[b]

The last was his being commanded to take his only son Isaac, and to slay and offer him for a burnt-offering; than which, there could not be a greater trial. We have this command in Gen. xxii. 2. Every word of which hath a singular emphasis, and deserves attention: "take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Take now thy son.] Not a beast for a sacrifice, not any of the best of his great store of cattle, was to be taken; but his son.

Take now.] Forthwith, without any delay נא is the same here with עתה saith Aben Ezra.

Thy son Isaac.] Not Ishmael, but Isaac; his, and his wife Sarah's, delight and joy, as the name signifies.

Thine only son Isaac.] He and Sarah had no

[b] Heb. xi. 8.

other to solace themselves in; nor were they ever like to have any other. And besides there is another observable thing mentioned; "He that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son: of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called."[a]

Whom thou lovest.] That is, very dearly and passionately; as being the son of their old age, their only son, and "a son of the promise."[b] These two go together, tender and the only one.[c] "The only one and the choice one."[d] To lose the only son is that which causeth bitter lamentation; and the mourning for such a one is used to express the most passionate and doleful mourning.[e]

And get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there.] Abraham himself must offer him. He might not command his two servants to do it: and they went no farther than till they came within sight of the place where he was to be offered.[f] The tender father must take his only son, whom he loved, and bind him with his own hands upon the altar; and take the knife to slay him: as his eyes must behold him bleeding, gasping, and burning; so must he be himself the executioner.

And offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.] This was the place where the temple was to be built by Solomon; the place of offering sacrifices. And it was three days journey from Abraham's habitation;[g] which might make the command yet more grievous. As often as, in that journey, he looked upon the wood, or the fire, for burning the

[a] Heb. xi. 17, 18. [b] Rom. ix. 8. [c] Prov. iv. 3. [d] Cant. vi. 9.
[e] Amos viii. 10. Zech. xii. 10. Jer. vi. 26. [f] Gen. xxii. 4, 5. [g] Ver. 4.

sacrifice; or the knife, that must do the execution; or the place where it was to be done, which he saw afar off; how could it be otherwise, but that his eye must most deeply affect his heart?

It follows in ver. 6. "And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together." What an affecting and heart-piercing sight was this! and herein Isaac was a figure of our blessed Saviour, who bore upon his shoulders the wood of the cross,[h] whereon he was to be offered up for a sacrifice to God.

It is hence to be concluded, that Isaac was now no child, or weak stripling; in that he was able to travel with so great a burden: such a quantity of wood as was sufficient to burn his body to ashes, could be no small weight. Josephus makes Isaac to be now twenty-five years old; but a Hebrew tradition, about thirty-three. The word נער is used of one that is of an adult age; as of Joshua, when about fifty-three years old;[i] of Benjamin, when he was thirty years old;[k] and of Joseph, when about twenty-eight years old.[l] And the two servants accompanying Abraham are called נעריו his young men, ver. 3. So that it should be rendered 'the young man,' not lad, ver. 5, 12. If so, (and for what end should they feign it?) he was in this circumstance also a figure of our Saviour, who was offered up at about the same age.

Now Isaac being at this time grown up to a good age and strength, it might make his father the more

[h] John xix. 17. [i] Exod. xxxiii. 11. [k] Gen. xliii. 8.
[l] Ibid. xli. 12.

unwilling to part with him; and considerably added to the greatness of his trial.

And those words of Isaac, which he spoke in a strain of sweet innocence and simplicity, "My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" ver. 7. they must needs cause a great colluctation within him, and yearning of bowels: no doubt, Abraham's affections did strangely work now; and he was pained at the very heart.

There is also one thing more, which we may take notice of, in this command of God: it is said, עלֵהוּ "Offer him there for a burnt-offering." This kind of offering was a holocaust; all of which was to be consumed by fire: so that there was not the least relic to remain of him.

This was the command: And was it not a most difficult one? Could there have been a sorer trial? But, behold the signal resignation and obedience of Abraham to the will of God: he, without the least delay or demurring, betook himself to the performance of the divine pleasure. It is said, ver. 3. that "Abraham rose up early in the morning," וישכם אברהם בבקר *et manicavit Abraham in diluculo:* or, as the vulgar Latin renders it, *consurgens de nocte.* It is likely, the command came secretly to him in a dream, or vision of the night; and at, or before, the first peep of day, he addressed himself to obey it. Thus he denied his natural, and very great affection to his son; and gave a most illustrious proof, that nothing was so dear to him, nothing so powerful with him, as the will of God. "Wisdom kept him strong against his tender compassion to-

wards his son,"[a] saith the author of the Book of Wisdom.

The completion of his obedience is set forth in ver. 9. "And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood."

By the way; not only Abraham, but Isaac too, was herein a rare example of resignation. To those words, "they went both of them together," ver. 8. the Jerusalem Targum adds, שפו בלב 'with a just and upright heart;' and Jonathan Ben Uziel, בלבשל ום 'with a quiet, humble, and submissive heart.' Yea, both the Targum of Jerusalem and Jonathan make Isaac speak to Abraham, that he would 'bind him strongly;' adding, that 'he meekly and quietly offered himself to become a sacrifice.' He was doubtless, as appears by what was said of his age and strength, able to have resisted his father, now stricken in years: but he expressed no reluctancy; he quietly and meekly suffered himself to be bound and laid upon the altar. And herein again, as in several other particulars, was he a figure of our Saviour; who, though he could have rescued himself from the power of the Jews and Romans, yet permitted them to take and bind him, to heap many vile indignities upon him, and at last to nail him to his cross.

It follows, "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." ver. 10. This God accounted to him, as if he did it; *completa voluntas pro facto æstimatur*, because he fully purposed in his mind to do it, and had it not been

[a] Wisd. x. 5.

for God's interposition, had performed his purpose. Therefore the Scripture reports it, as if he actually offered up his son; "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son."[a] "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar?"[b] says St. James. And hereupon, (as it follows, in ver. 23.) "he was called the friend of God." This is a title thrice given him in Scripture; *viz.* in this place, 2 Chron. xx. 7. and Isa. xli. 8. and implied in Gen. xviii. 17. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" Where Philo adds. τοῦ φίλου ἐμοῦ, 'my friend.' 'Shall I hide from Abraham my friend?' &c. And by this periphrasis, "the friend of God," without any mention of his name, is he described in the Alcoran, the Turk's Bible. He was eminently approved as such, for this high act of obedience.

I will conclude this great example of self-resignation with that in Isaiah, "Who raised up the righteous man from the east, and called him to his foot?"[c]

Abraham was sequacious, and obeyed God in all things; who had him at his call, as the falconer hath a well-manned hawk, and calls her to his hand. And shall not the spiritual seed of Abraham (for so Christians are) be sequacious, and observant of every call of God; though he call them to such trials as are very difficult and ungrateful? Let us walk in the steps of the faith and obedience of our father Abraham; in readily sacrificing our Isaac, our delight and joy, that sin which is most beloved;

[a] Heb. xi. 17. [b] James ii. 21. [c] Isa. xli. 2.

"the sin of our souls,"[d] that sin which seems to bring us most profit, and most delight and pleasure. By thus doing, we shall be owned as the especial friends and favourites of God, as Abraham was; and receive the reward of such, as he did.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Example of JOB.

Secondly. The next example of self-resignation shall be that of upright and holy Job: and he will appear to be a most memorable and eminent one, by these following particulars.

First. He was a great man; great for estate and riches. We read in Job i. 3. that he had "seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and a very great household," or store of servants; "so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east;" that is, of Arabia; which lay eastward from the land of Canaan.

He was great also for wisdom, and, by that means, for honour and esteem; of which there is a particular account in chap. xxix. "The aged men," when they saw him, "arose and stood up," ver. 8. "The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand upon their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth," ver. 9, 10. Such a reverence had they for him, for

[d] Micah. vi. 7.

the greatness of his wisdom and excellent accomplishments, that the ear that heard him, blessed him, ver. 11. "All gave ear to him, and waited, and kept silence at his counsel: after his words they spake not again; and his speech dropped upon them. And they waited for him, as for the rain; and opened their mouth wide, as for the latter rain," ver. 21—23. They received his discourse as a welcome and most desirable rain; and such especially was מלקוש 'the latter rain,' before harvest, for making the corn more plump and fair.

Secondly. He was as good, as great, and honourable. Such was his humility, that he did not despise the cause of his man-servant, or maid-servant, when they contended with him, as we read in chap. xxxi. 13. and his sobriety and moderation of spirit is to be seen in the same chapter, ver. 25, &c. His charity and compassion, xxix. 13, 15, 16. xxx. 25. xxxi. 16, 17, 19, 20, 32. His great chastity, xxxi. 1, 9.—So far was he from making his great estate to serve sensuality and lust. His integrity and honesty, xxix. 14. xxxi. 7, 38, 39. His readiness to employ his power and interest for the relief, and not for the crushing, of oppressed innocents, xxix. 12. xxxi. 21. And this he did boldly and resolvedly, xxxi. 34. His exemplary piety in keeping himself from the idolatries of the Arabians, xxxi. 26, 27. His pious solicitude for his children, in their yearly feastings, lest they might have offended God in the heat of their banquets, i. 5. And in xxiii. 11, 12. we have him expressing the great devotion of his soul towards God, in the constancy and universality of his obedience. "My foot," saith he, "hath held

his steps; his way have I kept, and not declined: neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips: I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Yea, God himself gives this character of Job, ii. 3. "That there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil."

Thus was this excellent person a great pattern of all kinds of virtue in his flourishing estate. And he was no less a pattern of self-resignation in his afflictions and trials: for,

Thirdly. This great and good man was sorely afflicted and tried by God. There were three messengers that brought him the tidings of sad calamities, which befell him in his possessions; his oxen, asses, sheep, and camels, with his servants, being carried away by the Sabeans and Chaldeans, or consumed by fire from heaven: but the fourth messenger brings the heaviest news of all, *viz.* that all his sons and daughters were crushed to pieces, by the fall of the house wherein they were feasting, i. 18, 19.

This was dismal indeed; to lose all his children at once, and that not by a natural but violent death: and to have them destroyed with a sudden destruction; and that also in the midst of their feasting and mirth. But besides, the more to aggravate his affliction, these several messengers came immediately one after another: while one was speaking, another came in; one wave, the more to overwhelm him, came upon the neck of the other; so that he had no respite, no time to

concoct his sorrows; no diversion, no time of breathing, to prepare himself to bear the next.

But, after all this, affliction comes nearer still, and more close to him. God permitted Satan to exercise his cruelty upon his body, which was stricken with "sore biles;"[a] and that all over, even from "the crown" of his head "to the sole of his foot," ii. 7. He was full of anguish in every part. There was nothing about him left whole and entire, but the skin of his teeth, xix. 20. or, the skin about his gums or lips: nothing was whole about him, but his mouth to complain with. To have one such bile is very painful; but to have such angry and noisome things all over the body, how exquisitely tormenting must it needs be!

And in this sad plight "he sat down" (not on an easy couch, or soft bed, but) "among the ashes," ii. 8. or, ἐπὶ τῆς κοπρίας, ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, 'upon a dunghill, without the city,' as the Septuagint hath it, where he had none to dress his sores but himself; nor any thing, that we read of, to help himself with, but some piece of an earthen vessel cast on the dunghill. Instead of using oils and salves, that were proper for the mitigation of his pain, and the healing his sores; he scraped them, or squeezed out the raging matter of them, with a potsherd.

He was so changed by his blains and botches, and in so squalid a condition, that his "friends knew him not," ver. 11, 12. His "brethren went

[a] The word for biles in this place is שחין which signifieth 'burning biles,' from the Chaldee שחן 'to be hot.' They were inflaming ulcers. And here is added also רע 'sore' or 'malignant.'

far from him, and his acquaintance were estranged from him: his kinsfolk failed him, and his familiar friends forgot him: they that dwelt in his house, and his maids, counted him for a stranger: he was an alien in their sight: he called his servant, and he gave him no answer: he entreated him with his mouth: his breath was strange to his wife, though he entreated for the childrens sake of his body: the young children despised him, and spoke against him: his inward friends abhorred him; and they whom he loved, were turned against him:" as he most pathetically complains, xix. 13—19.

His three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, when they first came to see him, "sat down upon the ground seven days and seven nights," ii. 13. and could not speak for astonishment at so strange a spectacle: and what they afterwards spoke, was both impertinent and highly uncharitable; instead of giving him any relief, it added more to his grief, and aggravated his torment: they were "physicians of no value," xiii. 4. and "miserable comforters," xvi. 2. as he told them.

And whereas he might have hoped, that the wife of his bosom, she to whom he had been so true and faithful, xxxi. 9. might have been some comfort to him; she, on the contrary, was not only estranged from him, but also a disheartener of his patience; and assisted Satan in his designs against him. Satan had touched his bones and his flesh: but that speech of his wife, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die," ii. 9. must needs smite him to the heart.

And now have I not set before you a most sad and piteous condition, full of such difficult circum-

stances as might be apt, any one of them, to make the duty of quiet submission to the will of God very hard and grievous?

For this rich and wealthy man to lose all his estate, and that estate which he had done so much good with, by acts of mercy and pity; and together with his estate, all his ten children by one sudden stroke: for this great and honourable person to be brought so low as to sit upon an ash-heap, to be debased to a dunghill: for this so greatly reverenced and esteemed person; and that had been so humble in the height of his honours, and employed his power for the relief of the oppressed; to be now the object of the greatest contempt, and vilified by the most vile: for so good a man, "one that feared God, and eschewed evil," i. 1. to be delivered up to the malice of the devil, who would be sure not to spare him, but to lay on hard enough: for such a man, I say, to be thus lamentably afflicted both by men and devils, foes, and friends too, and not to have so much as one comfort left him: who can sufficiently set forth the pitifulness of this case!

The Scriptures mention Job's wealth, greatness, and goodness; that the greatness of his sufferings, and his patient submission might the more appear. For one that had but little before, to lose that; that was low before, to fall lower; is not so sharp a trial, as, from possessing a great abundance, to be deprived of all, and that at once, to be immediately brought out of the extreme of prosperity into the extreme of adversity. And had he by a riotous course, like the prodigal in the gospel,[a] brought

[a] Luke xv.

himself to straits; or had he, by some heinous sin provoked the Almighty to inflict upon him some sore judgment; he would have had no such trial of patience: he might have thanked himself for what was come upon him. But for one who had always kept a conscience void of offence, both towards God and men, that walked in all the commandments of God, with a perfect and upright heart, to be so strangely and fearfully plagued; what a trial is here!

And behold now Job's resignation, and submission to the will of God; it was great to admiration, as great as his sufferings.

When the last messenger had delivered the heaviest tidings of all the four, (they came so thick one upon another, that he had not time to say any thing before; the latter coming while the former was yet speaking,) he had no sooner brought him the dismal news of all his ten children being slain at once, but Job put himself into the lowest and most humble posture, "rent his mantle," or robe, "shaved his head, and fell down on the ground, and worshipped; and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither;" namely, to the womb of the earth; to which, it is likely, in uttering these words, he pointed with his finger; "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord," i. 20, 21.

What more emphatical expression, of a humble and profound submission to the divine will, could have been uttered by the tongue of man?

Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.] I have as much still as I brought into the world with me, for "we

brought nothing into this world; and it is certain, we can carry nothing out:"[a] and that which I have lost, was not my own; it was lent me by God, who might call for it again, whensoever he pleased. I came into the world without it, and without it may I go again out of the world, and be never the less happy.

The Lord gave.] I acknowledge his goodness and favour, in what I once enjoyed; and that I so long enjoyed it.

And the Lord hath taken away.] I acknowledge and submit to the Lord's good pleasure, in stripping me of all these comforts and enjoyments. He doth not say, The Lord gave, but the Sabeans and Chaldeans hath taken away: but he looks beyond men, and all inferior causes, to God, and saith, "the Lord hath taken away." The Septuagint add here somewhat more; ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ ἔδοξεν, οὕτως ἐγένετο, 'as it pleased the Lord, so things are come to pass.'

Blessed be the name of the Lord.] To bless God when he bestows his blessings on us, is very easy: it is no hard thing to say, "The Lord hath given, blessed be the name of the Lord:" but to bless God even when he hath taken away, and deprived us at once of all our comforts; this is hard indeed, this is heroic: this argues an excellent spirit, more than thousands of thanksgivings in a prosperous condition: this is an admirable instance of self-resignation.

Not to murmur and repine at such exceeding severe providences, is a great expression of a resigned temper. How great an evidence then of

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 7

this temper is a heart borne up, in such miserable circumstances, in a thankful and praising frame? And that Job should now bless God, when Satan hoped, and was so confident, that he would curse him to his face; i. 11. this was a great foil and defeat given to him, such a disappointment as could not but vex him at the very heart.

There is also another expression of Job's not unlike to this; namely, his answer to that wretched speech of his wife: "He said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" ii. 10. As if he had said; 'What? Is God bound to be always heaping his favours upon us? Must we have nothing but sunshine, fair and calm days; without winds, or clouds, or rain? Must we be fed with nothing but marrow and fatness; taste nothing but what is sweet and delicious? Must we have all smooth, and flowery way in our journey? And if God for a while cloud himself, if he stop the streams of his comforts, that flowed so abundantly upon us; if he give us to taste of the sour, and "bitter, the waters of Marah;"[d] must we therefore repine and complain, or think evil of him, and grow weary of his service? Having received so much good from him, is it not equitable and fit, that we should bear some evil and hardship, when he sends it? Should not the memory of the many and long continued mercies more sweeten and endear our good God to us, than some present crosses and adversities em-

[b] Exod. xv. 23.

bitter our thoughts of him, and sour our spirits with discontent?'

Oh the height and excellency of grace in this holy man! He was *vir ante evangelia evangelicus*, 'a person of the true evangelical and Christian spirit, before Christ, or his gospel, came into the world.' How had patience its perfect work[a] in him! There could not be a braver spectacle, a more lovely sight on the whole earth, for God and angels to behold, than such a soul in the midst of such trials; "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" being "in the sight of God, πολυτελές, of great price."[b] If Seneca could say of Cato, *Ecce spectaculum, ad quod respiciat operi suo intentus Deus*, 'Behold a sight, which that God, who diligently observes the work of his own hands, may fix his eye upon;' well may it be said of holy Job.

This honourable elogium is given of him, ii. 10. "In all this Job sinned not with his lips:" and the like in i. 22. where it is added, "nor charged God foolishly." He did not speak unworthily of God, or his disposals; nor had he any unbecoming thoughts of him, or them: nay, he was so far from repining and fretting at the severest of them, that, as hath been shown, he took them gratefully at his hands.

As deformed and diseased a creature as Job was, as to his outward man; he was most sound, fair, and lovely within: though his body lay among the ashes and potsherds; yet was he, as to the inward constitution of his soul, "as the wings of a dove;" beautified with such inter-

[a] James i. 4. [b] 1 Pet. iii. 4.

changeable colours, by the sun shining upon her, that they are, as it were, "covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."[c]

In the song of Hannah it is said, that God "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill."[d] But here we have a far greater wonder: God exalted Job even when he debased him to the dust, and made him in his lowest estate a glorious person; more glorious to all ages, than ever he would have been, had there been nothing in his story, but that he was for his wealth and honour "the greatest of all the men of the east:" so that Job, even while he was of this "low degree," might "rejoice in that he was exalted;"[e] to allude to that of St. James.

Great afflictions, accompanied with an unconquerable patience, canonize men; and advance them to a peculiar degree of honour and glory above the rest of mankind. "Behold, we count them happy," μακαρίζομεν, 'we call them blessed' "that endure."[f]

St. Chrysostom speaks magnificently of Job's κοπρία, 'dunghill,' that it was παντὸς θρόνου βασιλικοῦ σεμνοτέρα, 'more stately than any kingly throne;' and of his τραύματα, 'sores,' that they were ἁπάντων λίθων τιμιότερα, 'richer than any jewels and precious stones;' nay, that they were τῶν ἡλιακῶν ἀκτίνων φαιδρότερα, 'more splendid and glorious than the very sunbeams:' and again, οὐδέ γε οὕτω λαμπρὸς ἐπὶ θρόνου καθήμενος βασιλεὺς, ὡς ἐκεῖνος ἐπὶ τῆς κοπρίας τότε καθήμενος ἐπίσημος ἦν καὶ περιφανής, 'that no king sitting upon his throne is so illustrious, as Job, then sitting upon the dunghill, was honourable and glorious.'

[c] Psal. lxviii. 13. [d] 1 Sam. ii. 8. [e] James i. 9. [f] Ibid. v. 11.

That very ash-heap, or dunghill, where the illustrious debased Job sat, was a throne of glory; no royal seat of majesty, or chair of state, was so glorious: here his patience was enthroned; here the humble greatness and majesty of his mind shined forth, and the spirit of glory rested on him.

What a pleasure was it to heaven, to see this champion come off so bravely, and baffle all the attempts and arts, that the devil could use to break his spirit, and force him to impatient and unworthy reflections upon God and his providence!

God said twice to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?" i. 8. and ii. 3. Hast thou השמת לבך 'set thine heart upon' my servant Job? Hast thou taken special notice of him? God seemeth to glory and make his boast of this excellent person, as a more worthy sight than any that presented itself to the view of observation in any part of the world. But he was much more worthy of esteem and admiration, after he had been proved by such sore trials; when "the trial of his faith" and patience was "found unto praise, and honour, and glory."[a] So great was his patience, so exemplary his resignation, that the holy Scripture sets a special mark upon it: "Ye have heard of the patience of Job:"[b] as also upon him, in that he is mentioned as one of God's three most peculiar favourites."[c]

And now, having given some account of his woful afflictions, and his great patience under them, we will speak briefly of the reward this his submission and resignation of himself to the will of God, was at last crowned with. After the apostle had

[a] 1 Pet. i. 7. [b] James v. 11. [c] Ezek. xiv. 14.

said, in the forementioned place, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job," it follows, "and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." And, in the book of Job, we find him most amply rewarded even in this life: we read, xlii. 7, 8. that he found such special favour in the eyes of God, that his three friends, who had added to the heavy weight of his afflictions, and "had not spoken of God the thing which was right," as Job had done, could not atone his wrath with a burnt-offering, without Job's praying for them, ver. 10. and it is said, that "the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends;" and that "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before," ver. 12. So that "the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses;" whereas, he had before but half this number of each of these, as hath been shown.

Thus, in his goods and possessions, which were either destroyed by fire, or carried away by his thievish neighbours, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and so were never to be enjoyed by him more, God gave him double: but as to his children, he gave him just the number he had before, *viz.* "seven sons and three daughters," ver. 13. These, it is likely, were not doubled, because (though they were taken away by death, yet) they were not utterly lost, but their "spirits returned unto God who gave them;"[d] they were still alive with God, where their father should again meet them, in the other life. But there is this said concerning the new

[d] Eccles. xii. 7.

daughters of Job, which was not said of the former; that "in all the land were no women found so fair as they," ver. 15.

Lastly. We read that, "after this, Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations," ver. 16. After which, the happy days he enjoyed here, concluded in an unspeakably more happy eternity.

And thus (as Satan said, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" i. 9. so) we see that his great patience, and exemplary submission to the will of God under the sorest and severest trials, was "not in vain in the Lord,"[a] but abundantly recompensed.

Before I conclude this example of self-resignation, I must take notice, that so great was Job's patience, that some of the Rabbins of old, and others of late, have imagined the account that we have of him, to be rather a moral fiction, a romance and parable, than a real history: so very averse are men to think any higher degrees of goodness attainable, than what they themselves are willing to come up to.

But that we may not doubt, whether it were a true history, besides other arguments, that in Ezek. xiv. 14, 20. doth evidently prove it so to be; it is here twice said, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should but deliver their own souls by their righteousness;" intimating that, if there were any hope or help for a nation, none were more likely to prevail than these three persons, most dear to God for their singular piety. And a like expression there is in Jer. xv. 1. "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind

[a] As the phrase is in 1 Cor. xv. 58.

could not be toward this people." Now Noah and Daniel, Moses and Samuel, being no imaginary, but real, persons, why should it be thought that Job only was so?

Let it be also considered that, in James v. 5, 10, 11. we are directed to the prophets, and to Job, as examples of patience. The prophets being no fictions, but such as really "spoke in the name of the Lord;" how should Job come to be joined with them, if there were never such a one in being?

If this story was a mere fiction, the argument to patience, which St. James useth in those words, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord," &c. might have been thus excepted against by those suffering Christians to whom he there speaketh, *viz.* 'What do you tell us of one Job; of his patience and reward? There was never such a person; there were never such things practised, as are said of him: and therefore how can what you have told us concerning him, signify any thing to our encouragement?'

But surely they were not exhorted to the imitation of one who never was, nor encouraged to a real duty by an imaginary and feigned reward.

CHAP. X.

Of the Example of ELI.

A *THIRD* example shall be that of Eli. He was both the high-priest and the judge, the chief in

both capacities, sacred and civil, and "judged Israel forty years," 1 Sam. iv. 18. but being greatly faulty, in not using his power to the restraining his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who had made the people "abhor the offering of the Lord," ii. 17. and had rendered the service of God, and the priesthood, despicable, by their covetousness, luxury, and uncleanness, ii. 22. and ver. 12—18. God sent this sad message to him, namely, That he would "judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not," iii. 13. or, as the words לא בחה בם properly signify, *non fuit corrugatus in eos*, he 'did not frown upon them.' He did not look sourly upon them, with a wrinkled forehead; so as to testify his great displeasure and indignation against their lewd courses; that "his two sons should die, both of them in one day," ii. 34. and that the dignity of the high priesthood should be taken from his family, and given to another, ver. 35, 36.

This sentence, though most righteous, was so severe, that it is said, "both the ears of every one that heareth it," that heareth of the execution of it, "shall tingle," iii. 11. And it was an irreversible sentence: for God saith, "I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice, nor offering, for ever," ver. 14. A dreadful expression of his great displeasure.

And now how was Eli affected with this message? His resignation of himself, and free submission to the will of God, is expressed, in that speech of his; "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him

good," ver. 18. or, 'what is good in his eyes.' As if he had said, 'Let him do, not what I, but what he thinks best. He is both infinitely wise and just, and knoweth better than I, how to dispose of all for his own glory. He is holy in all his ways; and therefore it is fit his will should take place.'

His heart did not "fret against the Lord," nor was he "cut to the heart," when this sad cutting message was brought him; which was no less than the "cutting off his arm, and the arm of his father's house," as it is expressed, ii. 31. and he gave proof of it: for, when he heard that his two sons were slain in battle, whose "dying both of them in one day," ver. 34. was the sign God gave of the approaching ruin of his house, he seemed to bear this unconcernedly in comparison of the following tidings. But when he heard that "the ark of God was taken," iv. 17. that sad word struck him backward, and made him sink down in a deadly swoon: then "he fell off from his seat, and his neck brake" with the fall, "and he died," ver. 18.

The good old man was so resigned to the will of God, as to his own concerns, that he could patiently bear the departure of the glory of his house: but the "departure of the glory from Israel," ver. 22. the taking the ark, which was the token of God's special favour and residence among them; this he could not bear.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Example of DAVID.

THE *fourth* example I shall propose of self-resignation is holy David; "a man after God's own heart,"[a] that did fulfil πάντα τὰ θελήματα, 'all his wills.' He was eminent for obedience to the divine commands: he "delighted to do the will of God; yea, his law was within his heart:"[b] he had "respect unto all his commandments."[c] And he was likewise eminent for a patient submissive temper under great trials and sufferings.

That was an exceeding great trial; when, with his household, and loyal subjects, he was forced to fly with all speed out of Jerusalem, for the saving his life from the bloody machinations of his own son, Absalom. We have the story in 2 Sam. xv. and xvi.

Absalom, his third son by birth,[d] but now his eldest, and therefore heir apparent to the crown, being impatient to stay for it till, the natural death of his father, designed first, by flattering civilities, to insinuate himself into the hearts of the people, and afterwards, by armed power, to force his way into the throne.

For his person; he was of a very lovely aspect and taking presence, so that "in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom, for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him," xiv. 25.

He had also a fair and smooth tongue, was of a

[a] Acts. xiii. 22. [b] Psal. xl. 8. [c] Ibid. cxix. 6. [d] 2 Sam. iii. 3.

winning and insinuating behaviour, xv. 2—5. so that he "stole away the hearts of the men of Israel:" ver. 6, 13. and having so done, it was an easy business to get himself chosen and proclaimed king: which was done by the men of Israel; and that in Hebron too, xv. 10. the very place where his father was first "anointed by the men of Judah," ii. 4. and "seven years and six months after, by all the tribes of Israel," v. 1, 5.

And now Absalom endeavours to confirm himself in his usurped dominion, by the best arts of power and policy he could imagine. He gains Ahithophel to be of his side, who was the king's counsellor; a man of that venerable esteem for his great wisdom, that his counsel is said to be, "as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God," xvi. 23. He is busy in preparing a great army against his father. The conspiracy is strong; and the people increase continually with Absalom.

This made David cry out in the third Psalm; "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me? many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God."[e] And that these many were not ἀλλόφυλοι, 'strangers,' the Philistines, Moabites, Amalekites, Amorites, and other heathens, but his own subjects; this was a more afflicting trouble.

That among these should be found Ahithophel, his friend and counsellor, that his head and hand should be in all this; this made it more afflicting still, as he complaineth, "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify

[e] Psal. iii. 1, 2.

himself against me ; then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company."[a]

That the general, he that headed the army against him, should be Amasa, the son of his sister Abigail; and therefore so near to him, as that David saith unto him ; " Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh ?" xix. 13. This was another aggravation of affliction.

But *lastly*. This made the affliction most sharp of all; that he who was at the head of all, and animated this rebellious body, should be Absalom : that the son should thirst after the father's blood; that he " which came forth of his bowels, should seek his life ;" as he complains, xvi. 11. καὶ σὺ τέκνον, ' And that he should be the son' whom he loved most passionately; even so passionately, that after his three years absence from court, it is said, xiii. 39. " the soul of king David longed," or, ותכל ' was consumed,' " to go forth unto Absalom."

And then, all this to befall him in his old age too; and after he had, by his valour and prudent conduct, saved his people out of the hands of their enemies : put all these sad circumstances together, and was not David in sore troubles and trials ?

But how doth he behave and acquit himself herein ? Doth he quarrel with providence, and the instruments of his trouble ? No : his disposition, and his carriage, is all composed of meekness and submission to the will of God.

[a] Psal. lv. 12—14.

Being sensible of the imminent danger he was in, he prudently provided for his security, by removing from Jerusalem. And this he and his servants did with all speed; lest Absalom should suddenly overtake them, and thrust (or, הדיח push) evil upon them, xv. 14. For his enemies were most quick and active in their preparations against him: which therefore he calls "the windy storm and tempest," in Psal. lv. a Psalm that refers to this occasion, as appears by ver. 14. Of his hasty flying he speaks, ver. 6, 7, 8. where he cries; "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo then I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

Being gotten out of the city in haste, he and his guard; they "tarried in a place that was far off," 2 Sam. xv. 17. to refresh themselves; not knowing whither to go, or where to be at rest; as he then told "Ittai, the Gittite," ver. 20. who was come to him, resolving to fare as he did.

Having made a little pause there, he "passed over the brook Kidron," ver. 23. a brook between the city and mount Olivet, "the country weeping, with a loud voice," ver. 23. at this sad procession: as also, when they were going up mount Olivet, "they went weeping as they went up, and covered every man his head," after the manner of mourners, "And David wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went barefoot," ver. 30.

In the midst of these hardships, and sorrowful sympathizings of the people, which could not but much affect his heart, having given order to Zadok the priest to return back to the city, with the ark

of God, which thus far accompanied him, desiring that that monument, of God's glory and presence, might not wander up and down with him in his desolate condition, but be placed again in the city of God, he thus expresseth the humble and quiet resignation of his spirit; "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it," the ark, "and his habitation," Jerusalem, "the city of the great King,"[a] as it is styled in the Psalms. "But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me, as seemeth good unto him, ver. 25, 26. *q. d.* 'Though I be brought to excessive straits; though I be deprived of all my glory in this my old age, after all the good services I have done for Israel and Judah: yet, "here am I, let him do as seemeth good to him;" not as seemeth good to me. Thy will, O Lord, shall be my will; thy pleasure I will rest satisfied with, and acquiesce in. Thou shalt choose for me, and to thy choice will I accommodate myself. Be it so as thou wouldest have it to be, O thou most Holy and wise, and the Lord of all; who "doest whatsoever pleaseth thee in heaven, and in earth."[b] My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; it is fixed, and resolved to drink of that cup which thou hast appointed me.'

His humble disposition of soul discovered itself immediately after, in his penitential behaviour, already mentioned, as he went up the mount; he "wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot," xv. 30. which were the most significant expressions of a great humiliation and submissiveness of spirit. And this meek frame

[a] Psal. xlviii. 2. [b] Ibid. cxxxv. 6.

of soul, in reference to God's disposals, did dispose him to a rare meekness and patience in reference to men.

There happened, a little after he was past mount Olivet, a very provoking occasion; for "Shimei, a Benjamite, threw stones at him, and his men;" and cast dust at him all along in the way; adding to this indignity, curses, and revilings of the king's person, xvi. 5—8, 13. Abishai, one of his three chief commanders, was so incensed at the horrid insolence of this "dead dog," as he called Shimei, that he prayed the king, he might "go over" to him, and "take off his head," ver. 9. But David was so far from permitting this, that he was more offended at Abishai's zeal for him, than at Shimei's injuries; and thus replied to him: "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse; because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David," that is, because the Lord saw it good to permit him to curse me, for my punishment, "Who then shall say, Wherefore hast thou done so?" ver. 10. Again; "Behold," saith he, "my son, who came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse: for the Lord hath bidden him," ver. 11.

David was not a person of a dull, phlegmatic temper, of a slow and stupid disposition; but of a vigorous, active spirit: he was sensible, what a barbarous act this was in Shimei, thus to insult over his king, and that, in his great distress: but being also sensible of God's providence, in permitting this wretched man thus to affront, revile, and

curse him, to correct him for his sins; he quietly and meekly submitted to it.

And David lost nothing by his humble submission: for God delivered him from the policies of Ahithophel, xvii. 14. from the powerful army of Absalom, xviii. 6—8. and brought him back, with joy and triumph, to Jerusalem, xix. 9, 10.

As for Shimei, God returned his wickedness upon his own head: and David found that true which he did but modestly suppose upon Shimei's cursing: "It may be," said he, "that the Lord will look upon mine affliction; and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day," xvi. 12.

And he that spoke before with such a humble resigned mind, "but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold, here am I; let him do to me as seemeth good unto him," xv. 26. found that God did delight in him, and therefore delivered him; as he himself expresseth it, "He delivered me, because he delighted in me."[a] God did what seemed good to David; seeing David was willing, that God should do what seemed good to himself.

I will add one passage more expressive of David's resignation. It is in Psal. xxxix. The particular occasion is not mentioned; but that he was in a most afflicted condition, we find by his prayer, "Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand," ver. 10. And he prayeth that God would "spare him, that he might recover strength," ver. 13. But yet he was patient, submissive, and quiet. "I was dumb, I

[a] Psal. xviii. 19.

opened not my mouth, because thou didst it," saith he, ver. 9. As in another case he saith, "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself," שויתי ודוממתי נפשי 'I have composed and stilled my soul,' "as a child that is weaned of his mother," or, על אמו 'toward his mother,' "my soul is even as a weaned child."[b]

See how this great man expresseth himself in words of greatest lowliness and humility. When he has to do with God, he is as "a little child;" a poor, low, contemptible thing in his own esteem; "a worm, and no man,"[c] as he speaks; though when he had to do with men, and was to fight the Lord's battles, who more a man than David? Who more courageous and stout-hearted? When he was but a stripling, he encountered and slew a lion and a bear, and the great giant Goliah.[d]

Now if David, a king, one of such height and dignity, one of so great fame and renown in the world, one of such incomparable courage and magnanimity, did with such meekness and subjection of soul, submit to the divine providence; and in such instances as these, wherein as a king, and as a father, he was most highly provoked and unworthily dealt with: is it not a shame for us, who are so much his inferiors, to be impatient and unresigned; and that in far less trials than his were?

[b] Psal. cxxxi. 2. [c] Ibid. xxii. 6. [d] 1 Sam. xvii. 36, 49.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Example of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

A *FIFTH* example of holy resignation is our Lord Jesus Christ; of all examples the greatest, the brightest, and fairest pattern of all: for none ever obeyed, none ever suffered so much as the holy and blessed Jesus; and "through sufferings" was this "captain of our salvation made perfect."[a] He is Ἀρχηγὸς, 'the Captain' and brave leader of the noble army of martyrs; such as all self-resigning souls are: for, to give their "body of sin to be destroyed,"[b] their self-desires to be burnt, their own wills to be consumed by the flames of divine love; what is this less than martyrdom?

I choose to mention our blessed Saviour next to David, though he was indeed far before him in obedience and submission, because he is the spiritual David, and by the prophets called by the name David;[c] David being an historical type and figure of Christ, both in his troubles and triumphs; and therefore the second Psalm is applicable both to David and Christ: and because there are some memorable conformities between them as to this particular of resignation. For,

1. Christ had his Judas, as David his Ahithophel: one near to him, and that "did eat of his bread,"[d] conspired and "lifted up his heel against him."[e]

2. Israel, whom God calls his son,[f] dealt as unworthily with Christ as Absalom did with David.

[a] Heb. ii. 10. [b] Rom. vi. 6.
[c] Jer. xxx. 9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. Hos. iii. 5.
[d] Psal. xli. 9. [e] John xiii. 18. [f] Exod. iv. 22.

3. David, as we have shown, being conspired against, "fled with his servants out of Jerusalem; passed over the brook Kidron; went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up:"[g] his "heart was sore pained within him, and the terrors of death were fallen upon him; fearfulness and trembling came upon him, and horror overwhelmed him;"[h] as he complained upon this occasion. At which time it was that he expressed his humble resignation to the will of God in those words, "Behold, here am I; let him do to me as seemeth good unto him."[i] And Christ, the spiritual David, beginning to undergo his last and greatest sufferings, went out of Jerusalem; where his enemies were conspiring to destroy him, and Judas helping to facilitate their cruel enterprise: he, "with his disciples, passed over the brook Cedron," the same with Kidron, came to "the mount of Olives," the same with mount Olivet; and in a garden there, "he began to be sorrowful;" "to be sore amazed, and very heavy;" told his three disciples, that "his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death."[k] Here he wept; he "offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears:"[l] and, "being in an agony, his sweat was as it were drops of blood."[m] And here he expressed his humble resignation to the will of his Father, in these words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done,"[n] or, as it is in Luke, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from

[g] 2 Sam. xv. 14, 16, 23, 30. [h] Psal. lv. 4, 5.
[i] 2 Sam. xv. 26.
[k] John xviii. 1. Matt. xxvi. 30, 37. Mark xiv. 33. Matt. xxvi. 38.
[l] Heb. v. 7. [m] Luke xxii. 44. [n] Matt. xxvi. 42.

me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done."[a]

We also find applied unto Christ, those words whereby David expresseth his resignation, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God."[b] And in Christ they were verified in a far more eminent degree. There was no comparison between David's resignation and our Saviour's; his cup was much more bitter. His sufferings were not such as are common to men, but were of an extraordinary nature; being designed for an extraordinary end, *viz.* the making atonement and expiation for the sins of the world: He "bore our sins in his own body on the tree; was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities."[c] And he was a person far from deserving the least of sufferings by any the least default: for he was "holy, harmless, and undefiled:"[d] He was spotlessly innocent, and ever lived in most perfect obedience to the will of God.

Yet, notwithstanding the unspeakable greatness of his sufferings, and his non-desert of them, he did not in the least complain of his Father for giving him up to them; but entirely submitted to, and acquiesced in, his will and pleasure. "The cup which my Father hath given me to drink," saith he, "shall I not drink it?"[e] "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."[f]

And the resignation of his soul was also expressed by the most wonderful meekness and charity he discovered towards his bloody enemies; even in the

[a] Luke xxii. 42. [b] Heb. x. 7. Psal. xl. 7, 8.
[c] 1 Pet. ii. 24. Isa. liii. 5. [d] Heb. vii. 26. [e] John xviii. 11.
[f] Matt. xxvi. 39.

midst of their unsufferable abuses and barbarous cruelties. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth."[g] Wherein also David was a type of our Saviour; *viz.* in his behaviour towards the reviling Shimei already mentioned.

But the resignation of our blessed Saviour, which was of all others incomparably the greatest, I shall no further enlarge on here; because I have before discoursed on it,[h] and shall have yet further occasion to speak more of it hereafter. I will only add; that this is the copy we are to eye most, though we are "encompassed about with a great cloud of" other "witnesses,"[i] and noble examples of this virtue.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Example of the apostle SAINT PAUL.

THE *sixth* and last example I shall mention, is blessed Paul. He was a "follower of Christ,"[k] as he styles himself. And he imitated him in nothing more than in self-resignation.

The very first words he spoke at his conversion, did speak the great preparedness of his soul for this grace: "Lord," said he, "what wilt thou have me to do?"[l] "There then shined round about him a light from heaven,"[m] "above the brightness of

[g] Acts viii. 32. [h] See sect. 1 chap. xii. [i] Heb. xii. 1.
[k] 1 Cor. xi. 1. [l] Acts ix. 6. [m] Ibid. ver. 3.

the sun :"[a] but a more glorious light shined into his heart: and as *that* light struck his body down to the earth, so did *this* his soul; and humbled it to the lowest degree of self-abasement, and submissive compliance with the will of God.

"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" was as well the language of his heart, as the voice of his lips. And whatsoever the will of God was, that he should either do or suffer afterward, he was most pliable and yielding to it. He would will and do nothing but according to the will of Christ. "To him to live was Christ."[b] His own proper will was swallowed up in Christ's will; so that he did not so much live, as "Christ lived in him."[c]

None of the holy writers speak more frequently, or vigorously, than St. Paul, of the necessity of what he calls his "being crucified to the world," and having "the world crucified unto him;"[d] our "crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts;"[e] our "mortifying through the Spirit the deeds of the body,"[f] as being the only way to eternal life; our "putting off the old man, who is corrupt according to deceitful lusts:"[g] by all which expressions is meant the subduing our own will, and every inordinate affection, whatsoever is contrary to the will of God, and opposite to self-resignation.

These things this excellent apostle doth inculcate and press with all seriousness; and in expressions of greater significancy, of a more spiritual force, and fuller energy, than any forms of speech that occur in the Old Testament.

[a] Acts xxvi. 13. [b] Phil. i. 21. [c] Gal. ii. 20.
[d] Ibid. vi. 14. [e] Ibid. v. 24. [f] Rom. viii. 13. [g] Eph. iv. 22.

And what he thus teacheth and exhorts to, he was an eminent example of, the practice of. He himself was "crucified with Christ."[h] He "suffered the loss of all things;" and "accounted" all other gains and advantages "but loss and dung, that he might win Christ; that he might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."[i]

He professed it most reasonable and becoming that, if Christ "died for all, they who live, should not live unto themselves," to the pleasing their own wills, "but unto him;"[k] that "the love of Christ," with a sweet force, "constraineth us"[l] hereunto: and that "the mercies of God" powerfully engage us "to present our bodies a living sacrifice," to make an entire oblation of ourselves to him, "which is our reasonable service."[m]

And his practice, his behaviour, was fully agreeable to these his professions. At his first conversion Christ said of him, "I will show him, how great things he must suffer for my name's sake:"[n] but the hardships he was to endure, did not at all startle him. After this, "the Holy Ghost witnessed in every city, saying; that bonds and afflictions did wait for him: but," said he, "none of these things move me; nor count I my life dear unto myself," and what is dearer than life? "so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."[o] And therefore he went to "Jerusalem," where he was

[h] Gal. ii. 20. [i] Phil. iii. 7, 8, 10. [k] 2 Cor. v. 15.
[l] Ver. 14. [m] Rom. xii. 1. [n] Acts ix. 16. [o] Ibid. xx. 23, 24.

to expect very great afflictions, δεδεμένος τῷ πνεύματι, 'bound in the spirit;'[a] constrained by a holy violence. Being come to Tyre, he could not be persuaded by the disciples there, "who through the Spirit" told him that he would incur much hazard by going up to Jerusalem; and therefore said to him, "that he should not go."[b] Nor was he wrought upon afterwards by those other disciples at Cæsarea, who endeavoured by their tears, added to their earnest entreaties, to stay him: but his answer to them was; "What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."[c] And by the steadfast purpose of his soul to be resigned to the will of God herein, he did at last win them over to the same resignation: for "when he would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."[d]

What severe trials he was exercised with, how many and great things he suffered, we have an account of, 1 Cor. iv. 11, &c. 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5. and xi. 23, &c. in which place are mentioned together above twenty instances of his sufferings.

So far was he from living a self-pleasing life, that, if he pleased himself in any thing, it was "in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake."[e]

So far was he from impatience and shrinking at those disposals of providence, that he "rejoiced in his sufferings, while he filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church."[f]

[a] Acts xx. 22. [b] Ibid. xxi. 4. [c] Ver. 13.
[d] Ver. 14. [e] 2 Cor. xii. 10. [f] Col. i. 24.

But there is one passage in St. Paul's writings which I had chiefly in mine eye, when I thought him, next to our blessed Saviour, most worthy to be presented as a pattern for Christians to follow: and it is a passage which expresseth the great progress he had made in self-resignation, both as to the active and passive part of it; both as it consists in a free and entire obedience to difficult commands, and in patient bearing hard trials and sufferings.

This passage is that in Phil. iv. 11—13. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed; both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Of which words I may say, as Ausonius of the Emperor's words, *O mentis aureæ verba bracteata!* 'Oh plated,' or, rich and most excellent, 'words, expressing a golden,' or, most beautiful and goodly, 'mind!' Yea, such is the preciousness of this wisdom, "to know how to be abased, and how to abound, to have learned," in every condition, "to be content;" that it "cannot be valued with pure gold, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire;"[g] "the price of it is above rubies."[h]

"To know how to abound, and to be full;" so as not to "deny" God,[i] not "to forsake God,"[k] or forget him in fulness; "not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches;"[l] not to make the abundance of these outward things to administer to pride and haughtiness, luxury and sensuality; but, on

[g] Job xxviii. 16, 19. [h] Ver. 18. [i] Prov. xxx. 9.
[k] Deut. xxxii. 15. [l] 1 Tim. 6. 17.

the contrary, to be humble, to trust in God, and to acknowledge him in all his gifts, to be moderate in abundance, and strictly religious; this is no easy thing, it is a lesson that few will learn; but St. Paul had learned it.

"To know how to be abased, how to want," and to be kept short; to look upon others full portions in this life, without coveting or envying what they have; to bear adversity, to endure afflictions, losses, and difficulties of all sorts, without impatience and murmuring at the allotment of providence; to be quiet and meek, and, much more, to be cheerful and rejoice under all; not to love God the less, nor trust in him the less, nor to flag, or be discouraged by this means, in his service; this is also a difficult and uneasy lesson: but holy Paul was likewise herein instructed. Καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν, "We glory in tribulations,"[a] saith this great apostle; and yet glorying is not mere joy, but joy exalted to its utmost height. And how full is that expression he useth, ὑπερπερισσεύομαι τῇ χαρᾷ, &c. "I do more than abound with joy," or, I rejoice with a superlative joy, "in all our tribulation."[b] Oh! what a mighty proficient in the school of Christ was this blessed person!

Yea, he further saith, that he had "learned to be content," not only in some conditions, but "in whatsoever state" he was: he "knew how to be abased," and "to suffer need," not only in some circumstances, but "every where," and "in all things." Here was "the power of godliness" indeed: here was "the kingdom of God, not in word, but in power."[c]

[a] Rom. v. 3. [b] 2 Cor. vii. 4. [c] 1 Cor. iv. 20.

And after all this, he ascribes nothing to himself, but gives Christ the glory of all: "I can," saith he, "do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." He was able to do all this through the power of his grace, which was sufficient for him.[e]

This is somewhat of the much that might be observed concerning this blessed apostle; who, in resignation and submission to the will of God, was one of the best copies, and nearest the original, that ever was drawn by the finger of God, the Holy Spirit: and next to the life of Christ, the fairest picture of purity and holiness represented by the four Evangelists, the life of St. Paul is most largely set forth; above one half of the Acts of the Apostles being spent on his character. Nor was it out of any vainglorious design, or from any undue love or valuation of himself, that he entreated others "to be followers of him, as he was of Christ;"[f] but from the inward sense of the great sweetness, peace, and comfort, and the many advantages he found in the imitation of Him; and from the absolute necessity of this duty. These great reasons induced him to propound himself as a pattern; particularly to the Corinthians,[g] to the Thessalonians,[h] and to the Philippians,[i] where he saith, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you."

To conclude this eighth direction: Take heart now, Oh feeble and fainthearted Christian; take heart and courage from these great examples. Up, and be doing; "be strong in the Lord, and in the

[e] 2 Cor. xii. 9. [f] 1 Cor. xi. 1. [g] Ibid. iv. 16. xi. 1.
[h] 2 Thess. iii. 7, 9. [i] Phil. iii. 17. iv. 9.

power of his might."[a] Wait upon God, and apply thyself heartily to him; that thou mayest be clothed with the same spirit, "and endued with power from on high."[b] As Elisha said of old, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"[c] so rouse up thyself, and say, Where is the God of Paul, the God of Abraham, Job, David, and the rest? The same God who wrought effectually in these to such an exemplary resignation, will be mighty in thee also; if thou hast the same spirit of faith, the same sincerity and singleness of heart: "He that is mighty"[d] will magnify thee; will do great things for thee, and in thee. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;"[e] what he was heretofore to St. Paul, and to others like him, he will be unto thee to-day, and to all believing souls for ever; such as walk in the same spirit, and in the same steps. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?"[f] Nor "hath God forgotten to be gracious;"[g] but his tender mercies are the same, and the arm of his strength the same. "The same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him."[h] Only take heed of "being wearied, and fainting in thy mind."[i] "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."[k] Thou shalt then be enabled "to run with patience the race that is set before thee:"[l] though a long and a hard race, thou shalt run it, "and not be weary;" thou shalt walk in the most difficult

[a] Eph. vi. 10. [b] Luke xxiv. 49. [c] 2 Kings ii. 14. [d] Luke i. 49.
[e] Heb. xiii. 8. [f] Isa. xl. 28. [g] Psal. lxxvii. 9. [h] Rom. x. 12.
[i] Heb. xii. 3. [k] Psal. xxvii. 14. [l] Heb. xii. 1.

paths of obedience, "and not faint."[m] The "arm of the Lord shall awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old;"[n] as it did in the days of the forementioned worthies: and thou shalt be "strengthened," as they were, "with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering;" and that "with joyfulness."[o]

CHAP. XIV.

That the consideration of Christ crucified is a very effectual means for the crucifying of the old man.

NINTHLY. Let thy mind dwell much upon the meditation of Christ crucified. Bring thy self-will and inordinate affections to mount Calvary, and there nail them to the cross of Christ. As Christ "blotted out the handwriting," or, χειρόγραφον, 'bill,' "of ordinances, that was against us," and "which was contrary to us," *viz.* the Jewish law, the Mosaical rites, "and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross:"[p] so should a Christian do with the "law in his members,"[q] or "the law of sin and death:"[r] the nailing it to the cross of Christ, is a most effectual means to take it out of the way.

The cross of Christ is a proper instrument for the "crucifying of the old man," and "destroying the body of sin;"[s] and the consideration of Christ crucified a powerful engine, "mighty through God

[m] Isa. xl. 31. [n] Ibid. li. 9. [o] Col. i. 11. [p] Ibid. ii. 14.
[q] Rom. vii. 23. [r] Ibid. viii. 2. [s] Ibid. vi. 6.

to the pulling down of strong holds," to the beating down all those fortifications sin hath raised in the soul, "casting down imaginations," all carnal reasonings and affections, "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and obedience to Christ."[a]

St. Paul speaks his own experience of the success he found in the serious consideration of Christ crucified, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world;"[b] that is, the vanities and hurtful allurements of the world, whether they be those of its riches, honours, or pleasures, are become lifeless and untempting to me, have no energy, or force, to persuade me to an eager pursuit or fond embracement of them: I am so little affected towards them, so mortified to them, as to place no part of my happiness in such things.

Now, the meditation on Christ crucified is a means greatly available to the subduing our self-will, and irregular appetites; in that,

1. *His dying on the cross; as the Scripture declares, that it was to make atonement and expiation for sin; so it affirms, that it was also designed to root out and destroy it.*

This is asserted in many texts, particularly in—

1 Pet. ii. 24. "Who his own self bore our sins," that is, bore the punishment of our sins,[c] "in his own body on the tree; that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

2 Cor. v. 14, 15. "For the love of Christ con-

[a] 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. [b] Gal. vi. 14.

[c] See the like phrase in Num. xiv. 19. and Ezek. xviii. 20.

straineth us, because we thus judge; that if one died for all, then were all dead," dead spiritually, dead in sin, as it is said of the prodigal,[d] and dead judicially, dead in law, liable and obnoxious to death, which is "the wages of sin;"[e] "and that he died for all; that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."

1 Pet. i. 18, 19. "Forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation," ("your vain conversation," in opposition to the "being holy in all manner of conversation," ver. 15.) &c. "but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot."

Gal. i. 4. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver," or, ἐξέληται, 'pluck,' "us from this present evil world," *i.e.* from the evil of sin and wickedness, in which "the whole world lieth,"[f] "according to the will of God and our Father."

Titus ii. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," that is, 'following and pursuing goodness and holiness with inflamed desires and earnest endeavours,' as Theophylact, upon the place, explains it.

Rom. viii. 3, 4. "For what the law could not do, 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; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

2. *Christ's dying on the cross was designed to be*

[d] Luke xv. 24. [e] Rom. vi. 23. [f] 1 John v. 19.

an exemplary pattern of our crucifying the body of sin. As his resurrection is a figure of the spiritual resurrection of Christians, their rising up to a life holy, heavenly, and divine; so his death on the cross is a figure and representation of that spiritual death that is to pass upon the old man. And because this is a necessary important truth, as well as pertinent to the point in hand, I shall observe three passages of Scripture to this purpose, and descant a little upon them.

First, that in 1 Pet. iv. 1. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin."

The suffering in the flesh, which the apostle here tells us we are to imitate our Saviour in, is not to be merely understood of suffering afflictions in the body; but of resembling the suffering and dying of Christ, in dying unto sin. This appears from what next follows; "he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin." He that hath suffered pain and smart in the flesh; in the mortifying of his sinful life, and the deeds of the body, or, "he that hath suffered," or died, "to the flesh." Some Greek copies leave out the particle ἐν, and read, ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ, the same with that phrase, "dead to sin,"[a] he "hath ceased from sin;" as he that is dead, ceaseth from the actions that belong to the natural life.

This also appears from ver. 2. "That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God;" not live any longer in the gratification of those fleshly appe-

[a] Rom. 6. 2.

tites that captivate and enslave the greater part of mankind; but, on the contrary, live a life of entire obedience and conformity to the will of God.

A *second* passage to the like purpose is that in Phil. iii. 10. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death:" which last words are a key to the foregoing; and this conformity to the death of Christ implies, that it hath in it something of pattern and exemplary consideration, to be spiritually resembled and imitated by a Christian.

There is a knowing of the power of Christ's resurrection and sufferings *without* us, as they refer to God the Father, the purchasing of his favour, and procuring the pardon of our sins, and reconciliation with him: for Christ was "delivered" to death "for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."[b] And besides this, there is a knowing of the power of Christ's death and resurrection *within* us; there is something to be done and transacted in us, that is answerable and bears conformity thereto. There is κοινωνία τῶν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ,[c] 'a partaking of his sufferings' in a spiritual sense; when we are enabled, by the power of God, to suffer the pain and agonies that accompany the "crucifying of the flesh,"[d] or, "our old man, the body of sin;"[e] and to die unto sin, as he died for it. And there is a partaking of Christ's resurrection in a spiritual sense, wherein we are enabled to rise to a new and heavenly life; when we seek,

[b] Rom. iv. 25.
[c] Phil. iii. 10.
[d] Gal. v. 24.
[e] Rom. vi. 6.

and savour, "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."[a]

This is that excellent knowledge of Christ, for which the apostle "counted all things but loss and dung."[b] And well he might; for had he rested in a mere speculative, historical knowledge of the death and resurrection of Christ *without* him, and been impatient of the energy and power of both *within* him; had he not so known Christ dying and raised again to life, as to be spiritually crucified with him, and to rise with him to newness of life, such a knowledge would not have availed him in the end.

A *third* passage is that in Rom. vi. 4, 5. "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory," *i. e.* power, as in John xi. 40. "of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life: for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." By this likeness of Christ's death, and likeness of his resurrection, it appears; that there is a lively resemblance of both, which a Christian is obliged to endeavour after. And what it is "to be planted together in the likeness of his death" is thus expressed in ver. 6. "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:" which is further pursued in ver. 10, &c.

2. *The death and sufferings of Christ are very powerful to engage and enable us to the great duties of crucifying worldly lusts, and mortifying corrupt affections; as they are effectual to work in us the*

[a] Col. iii. 1, 2. [b] Phil. iii. 8.

most heart-bleeding sorrow for sin, and a most vehement hatred and detestation of it; and to raise up the soul to the greatest degrees of love and ingenuous gratitude.

First. *To work in us the most heart-bleeding sorrow for sin.* Who can seriously consider Christ crucified, Christ bleeding on the cross, bleeding from the sixth to the ninth hour, (from our twelve o'clock to three,) his bleeding head crowned with sharp thorns; his bleeding hands and feet, nailed to the cross; his bleeding side, pierced by the soldier's spear: I say, Who can consider this, and not bleed within? Who can "look on him" that was "pierced,"[c] and not be inwardly pierced himself; not be κατενύγησαν τῇ καρδίᾳ, "pricked to the heart,"[d] as they in the days of the apostles were, at the preaching of Christ crucified?

And when we consider, that "he was wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities;"[e] or, as the words are rendered by some, 'of our transgressions and iniquities:' when we consider that we have "killed the Prince of life,"[f] that we have "crucified the Lord of glory;"[g] that our sins nailed him to the cross, wounded him to the heart, and put him to all the grief and pain he underwent: how can it be, that our hearts should not be "wounded within us?"[h] How can we forbear to express our sorrow for sin, in some such words as those of Jeremiah, "My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart:" "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!"[i]

[c] John xix. 37. [d] Acts ii. 37. [e] Isa. liii. 5. [f] Acts iii. 15.
[g] 1 Cor. ii. 8. [h] Psal. cix. 22. [i] Jer. iv. 19. ix. 1.

And can we consider his agony in the garden, the exceeding sorrowfulness of his soul, his extreme heaviness and sore amazement, his "strong crying and tears," and his "sweating as it were great drops of blood;" and not be melted into holy mournings and relentings for our sins, and for all our unkind and unworthy behaviour towards Christ, who thus suffered for us? How hard is that heart, which the so great and dolorous sufferings of our Saviour cannot break and dissolve!

At the passion of Christ, besides other prodigies, it is said, "the rocks rent."[a] And are our hearts harder than rocks, not to be affected with remorse at the consideration of Christ crucified?

It is St. Jerome's observation, *Omnis creatura Christo morienti compatitur; sol obscuratur, terra movetur, petræ scinduntur, velum templi dividitur, sepulchra aperiuntur: solus homo non compatitur, pro quo solo Christus moritur,* 'When Christ died, all creatures were his fellow-sufferers; the sun was eclipsed, the earth shook, the rocks were cleft in sunder, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the graves were opened: man alone, for whom only Christ died, suffered not with him.'

Certainly, if the consideration of our Saviour's sufferings, for our sakes, cannot prevail to melt our hearts into a holy sorrow for our sins; nothing, nothing, will ever do it.

And if it hath such a peculiar and sovereign efficacy to work a heart-bleeding sorrow for sin; it will consequently be very effectual to the disengaging us from it, to the taking us off from all those vanities and lusts, which were formerly most dear

[a] Matt. xxvii. 51.

and pleasing to us. If we are grieved at the heart for our self-will, self-love, and manifold disobediences, we will not continue "to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."[b]

Secondly. *The death and sufferings of Christ are effectual to work in us the most vehement hatred and detestation of sin.* It appears from thence, how hateful and abominable a thing sin is to God, who is original rectitude, and infinite purity. For how could he demonstrate a greater antipathy and displeasure against sin, than in "being pleased to bruise," and "put to grief,"[c] the τοῦ ἐμοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, 'Son of his love;'[d] so Christ is styled according to the Greek; and to give up "the brightness," or, ἀπαύγασμα, 'beam,' "of his glory, and the express image of his person,"[e] to inexpressible sorrows and sufferings; to the end he might make expiation for it? If sin was a slight inconsiderable thing; if it was not a thing of a most odious and vile nature, a high injury to God, and of sad and dismal consequence to man, he would not have required such a sacrifice for it.

This consideration must needs be most forcible to the working in us a detestation of sin, whatsoever grace and favour it hath found in our eyes. Suppose, we ourselves had seen Christ in the last scene of his sufferings, and had from the garden of Gethsemane, where he was in his agony, and sweat as it were drops of blood, accompanied him to the high priest's house, thence to the judgment-hall before Pilate, and thence to mount Calvary; in which places he was reproached, spit upon, scourged, and at last nailed alive to the cross: and suppose him

[b] Rom. xiii. 14. [c] Isa. liii. 10. [d] Col. i. 13. [e] Heb. i. 3.

to have spoken thus to us, "Behold your King,"[a] as in another sense Pilate spoke of him. 'Behold your Lord and Saviour. See the wounds which your sins have given me: see how they have torn my flesh, and despitefully used me. But the unseen wounds, the inward sorrows of my soul, are such as the heart of man cannot conceive; neither hath the eye seen, nor the ear heard, what may compare to them. Thus have your lusts dealt with me; and in all this see their cruelty.' Suppose, I say, we had beheld our blessed Lord in his direful sufferings, and heard him thus expressing himself to us; do you think we could still cherish and entertain, hug and embrace, those enemies of his, who put him to all this shame and torment?

If we have an inward knowledge and feeling of Christ crucified, it will, most undoubtedly, inflame us into a just indignation, against those lusts which sucked the life-blood of Christ, which slew and "crucified the Lord of glory."[b] We shall say, 'away with them, away with them, crucify them,' as the Jews cried concerning him.[c] 'They are not worthy to live. Let these "murderers of the just one"[d] die the death; but let Jesus live, and let the life of Christ be manifested in us.'

How can that be any longer sweet to thee, which made Christ's cup so exceeding bitter? How canst thou delight in that, which made his "soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?"[e] How can that be thy pleasure, which was his pain, and put him to grief; such grief, that there was no sorrow like unto his sorrow? How canst thou glory

[a] John xix. 14. [b] 1 Cor. ii. 8. [c] John. xix. 15.
[d] Acts vii. 52. [e] Matt. xxvi. 38.

in that, which, "put him to" such "an open shame?"[f]

Thirdly. *The death and sufferings of Christ are powerful to raise up the soul to the greatest degrees of love and gratitude.* We have already showed,[g] that there never was a love like to the love of Christ; comparable to that love he expressed in "giving himself an offering and a sacrifice to God for us."[h]

Now, not to part with our lusts for him, who parted with life itself for us; not to put ourselves to some smart and pain, in "crucifying the lusts of the flesh,"[i] in "denying ourselves, and taking up the cross and following him,"[k] who hath, to amazement, denied himself, and taken upon him the greatest of sufferings for our sakes: this would be an instance of the unworthiest and vilest ingratitude, and the greatest unkindness imaginable done to Christ: this would be more grievous to him, than all his sufferings from the Jews and Romans; it being a frustration and disappointment of him in the great design, which we showed he had, in submitting to those sufferings.

But a soul truly sensible of the love of Christ in "giving himself for us,"[l] cannot think any thing too dear and precious to part with for him, nor look upon his commands of self-denial and self-resignation as grievous and unsufferable.

I will add, that the particular circumstances of Christ's last sufferings have a special force, to the enabling a Christian against such and such particular sins, as prevail most among men, and which

[f] Heb. vi. 6. [g] See sect. 1. chap. xi. [h] Eph. v. 2.
[i] Gal. v. 24. [k] Matt. xvi. 24. [l] Eph. v. 2.

are the most fruitful sprouts and branches that grow out of that cursed stock of self-will: as,

1. *Self-esteem.* An over-dear valuing a man's self, his fame and regard in the world; a seeking the praise and respects of men, and being disturbed at their disrespects: of how great efficacy must it needs be to the subduing this corruption, "to consider him who endured such εἰς σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον, contradictions of sinners against himself,"[a] so Simeon prophesied of him, that he should be:[b] and, to say nothing of his being despised by his friends, that he was "without honour in his own country, and among his own kin."[c] And, we read, that "his friends said, he is beside himself:"[d] how he was exercised with all manner of scorns and derisions, all sorts of abuses, reproaches, injuries, and indignities, that the wit and malice of his enemies could devise, to render him base and despicable before men!

He was called by them a blasphemer,[e] an enemy to Cæsar,[f] or, a traitorous person; a seditious stirrer up of the people;[g] and all this about the time of his last passion: as before, they called him, a deceiver,[h] a Samaritan,[i] or heretic, and Beelzebub:[k] how they would have possessed the people with a belief, that he had confederacy with "Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," see in Matt. xii. 14. See also Mark iii. 30. where their saying, "he hath an unclean spirit," is called "the sin against the Holy Ghost."

And now, as an expression of their contempt,

[a] Heb. xii. 3. [b] Luke ii. 35. [c] Mark vi. 4.
[d] Mark iii. 22. John vii. 3—5. [e] Matt. xxvi. 65.
[f] Luke xxiii. 2. John xix. 12. [g] Luke xxiii. 5.
[h] John vii. 12. [i] Ibid. viii. 48. [k] Matt. x. 25.

"did they spit on his face;"[l] that sacred face, which the glorious angels delighted to look upon; which Abraham,[m] and "many prophets and kings,"[n] and "righteous men desired to see."[o] What indignity like to this! Then "they struck him on the face;"[p] adding farther contempt, accompanied with pain, to the disgrace of having his face besmeared with their filthy spittle: and having "blindfolded him,"[q] they "asked him, saying; prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is it that smote thee?"[r] thus contumeliously did they use "the Anointed of the Lord:"[s] and as in the last passage they mocked at his prophetical, so did they afterwards at his kingly office, "putting on him a scarlet," or purple, "robe;" and platting thorns into the form of a crown, and "putting it upon his head," and "a reed," for a sceptre, "in his right hand;" and then "bowing the knee before him," and "saying, Hail, King of the Jews!"[t]

These are some few instances of the many dishonours, and disgraceful indignities done unto him. St. Luke having mentioned some of their reproaches, &c. chap. xxii. adds, ver. 65. "And many other things blasphemously spoke they against him:" implying, that it was not possible to recount all those jeers, scorns, reproaches, abuses, and indignities which they offered him.

I might add also, that the kind of death he suffered, was as ignominious as painful; the death of slaves, and vile offenders: and to add to the disgrace, they "crucified him between two thieves,"[u]

[l] Matt. xxvi. 67. [m] John viii. 56. [n] Luke x. 24. [o] Matt. xiii. 17.
[p] Luke xxii. 64. [q] Ibid. [r] Matt. xxvi. 68.
[s] Acts iv. 26. [t] Matt. xxvii. 28, 29. [u] Mark xv. 27.

at Golgotha, or Calvary,[a] the "place of a scull,"[b] so called from the sculls of men lying there; it being a place where vile persons were executed, and interred.

Yea, even when he was bleeding upon the cross, they did not forbear to deride and revile him; expressing their scorn both in words and gestures. Nor were they that did thus, οἱ πολλοὶ, 'the many,' the vulgar people, or rude rabble only; but "the chief priests, with the Scribes and Elders."[c]

Now consider this, O Christian, how it fared with Christ, thy great Lord and Master; what affronts, what dishonours and reproaches he endured; and how undisturbedly, how unconcernedly he bore them, how he "despised the shame,"[d] how little he cared either for the applause, or contempt of the world; how he chose rather to be reputed and dealt with as the most abject and basest of men, than to be glorious in the world, and to shine in its vain honours: and will not this prevail with thee to set thyself against thy pride and self-esteem? Surely it is not possible that thou, who art infinitely beneath thy blessed Saviour, shouldest set a high value on thyself, and affect the praises of men, or be greatly concerned at the contemptuous behaviour and affronts of the world; when thou seriously considerest, how Christ was used, reproached, contemned, and despised, and with what calmness and sedateness of spirit he bore it. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."[e]

[a] Luke xxiii. 33. [b] Matt. xxvii. 33. [c] Ibid. xxvii. 41.
[d] Heb. xii. 2. [e] Matt. x. 24, 25.

2. *Self-pleasing.* Is there not enough in the consideration of Christ crucified to cure also this distemper of soul?

As for that lust of self-pleasing, the *love of ease and pleasure, an averseness to endure hardships, and a studious care to gratify the cravings of our fleshly appetites.* Let us consider, that Christ, out of dear compassion towards men, left his "Father's house,"[f] so he calleth heaven, where was all fulness, and all joy; and humbling himself to become man, "took upon him the form of a servant:"[g] he endured cold and heat, hunger and thirst, wearisome labours, long fastings, and faintness: he "bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows;"[h] and, as hath been shown, endured inexpressibly worse griefs and sorrows than any of ours. Now how can we consider this, and be any longer dearly affected to our carcases; solicitous for the pleasing of our appetites, and pampering our bodies; curious about meats and drinks, and studious for that which is most delicious and grateful to the flesh?

And as for the impure pleasures of the world; no consideration can be more powerful to extinguish in us all desires to them, than that of Christ upon the cross: *cum me pulsat turpis aliqua cogitatio, recurro ad vulnera Christi, et sanabor.*

3. *Revenge* and *hatred.* Who can harbour these lusts in his soul, when he considers, that Christ laid down his life for his enemies: and that almost the last words he spoke on the cross, amidst that shame and torment they put him to, were a prayer for them? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[i]

[f] John. xiv. 2. [g] Phil. ii. 7. [h] Isa. liii. 4. [i] Luke xxiii. 34.

4. *Covetousness*, or *the love of money*. Who that considers, though Christ "was rich, yet he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich;"[a] and that it was this lust that betrayed "the Prince of life"[b] to his merciless enemies; can find it difficult to mortify and subdue his inclinations to it?

To conclude this direction; to the serious Christian the word of the cross of Christ, to borrow that expression in Heb. iv. 12. "is sharper than any two-edged sword," to the destroying of all his evil and corrupt affections. But I fear, by most of us it is not considered as it ought. Christians generally consider the sufferings of Christ only as they were designed to expiate sin, and in reference to what he hath done for them; not to the extirpation of sin, not to the "crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts:"[c] and hence it is, that their consideration hereof is no more available to this great end.

CHAP. XV.

That the frequent consideration of the great recompense of reward is a mighty help to the attaining of self-resignation.

TENTHLY, and lastly. In order to the attaining of self-resignation, let us "have respect unto the recompense of the reward"[d] as it is said of Moses, let us "not cast away our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward;"[e] but, with an eye

[a] 2 Cor. viii. 9. [b] Acts iii. 15. [c] Gal. v. 24. [d] Heb. xi 26. [e] Ibid. x. 35.

of faith, frequently look upon the promise of eternal life; that prize which is set before us, "an incorruptible crown,"[f] "the crown of life"[g] and "glory;"[h] and "the inheritance that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven"[i] for all obedient and resigned souls.

It is said of Jesus, that "for the joy which was set before him, he endured the cross," as exquisitely painful as it was, "despising the shame;"[k] all the mockings and insultings of his enemies over him, and the vile ignominy and infamy of his death. And in conformity to him, a Christian may be enabled to endure the inward cross, in being crucified to the world, in dying to sin and his own corrupt will, by eyeing steadfastly the joy and glory set before him; by often contemplating the future reward, which is infinitely above all the labours that accompany self-resignation, and the pains and sorrows that attend it.

The great apostle of the Gentiles, who was acquainted, not only with the greatest sufferings from the world, and the labours and pains of mortification and self-denial, but also with this blessed reward; (having been "caught up into paradise," where he saw and heard "unutterable things:"[l]) he, I say, having well weighed both, doth thus pronounce; "I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared," bear no proportion, "with the glory that shall be revealed in us."[m] If the sufferings be laid in one balance, and the glorious reward in the other, the glory will unspeakably outweigh them: for it is "a

[f] 1 Cor. ix. 25. [g] James i. 12. [h] 1 Pet. v. 4. [i] Ibid. i. 4.
[k] Heb. xii. 2. [l] 2 Cor. xii. 4. [m] Rom. viii. 18.

far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ;"[a] in comparison of which our heaviest afflictions are but light, and our longest " but for a moment."

That God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,"[b] is the first principle to be believed in religion ; without which all our motions and endeavours therein will be weak and feeble. And the end of our faith and obedience being much in our eye, the excellency and infinite desirableness thereof will sweeten all that sourness, and take away all that unpleasantness which may be in the means.

A firm belief, and frequent fixed thoughts of the heavenly reward, would fill our hearts with joy and strength ; and carry us with great ease through whatsoever difficulties lie before us, in the way of entire obedience and self-resignation : none of the divine commandments can be grievous to the heavenly-minded ; no trials over-burdensome.

The serious believing thoughts of the glory to be enjoyed, will put such life, spirit, and vigour into us, as will cause us " to run the race that is set before us," not only " with patience," but with delight and joyfulness : so that we " shall sing in the ways of the Lord," as the expression is in Psal. cxxxviii. 5. and glorify him even " in the fires ;"[d] we shall be enabled to submit to God's will under great afflictions, as without murmuring, so with thankfulness.

They that grudge to give God more than some good words, the fruit of their lips, or some good wishes, or intentions ; or some formal ceremonious observances, or reformation in lesser and easier

[a] 2 Cor. iv. 17. [b] Heb. xi. 6. [c] Ibid. xii. 1. [d] Isa. xxiv. 15.

matters; and yet think they do as becomes those that "seek the kingdom of God:"[e] surely these have a very mean esteem of, and miserably undervalue, the glory and felicities of the life to come. They never spent so many thoughts on heaven, as to have any true and worthy conception of the heavenly happiness: otherwise, they could never imagine the doing and suffering, no more than this comes to, to be fit to be recompensed with such a reward; or that God will ever reward such a shadow of religion, with so real and substantial a happiness, their withering leaves of outward profession, with such a crown of glory as shall never fade.

What great matters do some men make of their lip service, or a little labour in the outward part of religion, a little time spent therein; as if their outward observances, and customary formality were a worthy "seeking of the kingdom of God and his righteousness!"

I do not speak against the outward duties of religion, they must be done; but against the doing no more than what is outward; against the leaving undone that which is the main, the inward, substantial part of religion.

To go one day in a week to church, and walk easily home again; to spend a little time every morning and evening in praying to God with thy lips, when, it may be, thine heart is far from him; and further, to spare some time for the reading the word of God, or hearing it read; how inconsiderable is such an outward, formal profession!

And so to refrain from some outward sins, which

[e] Matt. vi. 33.

are gross and scandalous; and yet to keep those which bring any pleasure or profit with them; to reform in some lesser matters, but yet not to part with thy Herodias, for all that God's word and his ministers can say; what a worthy exploit is this, that thou shouldest think this is doing enough for a crown, a reward of glory?

Is this "to strive to enter in at the strait gate?"[a] No; there must be another striving than this. All this is short of striving with "the body of sin," with thy self-will, thy enormous passions, inordinate affections, "the sin of thy soul."[b] All this is short of "denying thyself," of "crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts,"[c] of breaking off from every sin, of parting with every thing for the "pearl of great price."[d]

To think to have heaven for a song, to do so little for God's kingdom, plainly argues men to have very low thoughts thereof; that it is but a poor prize, which is not worth taking any pains for. And, oh! with what delight, and how unweariedly do those men think of vanity, and employ their hearts day after day about this present life; seldom, or never, bending their souls to study eternity, and busy them about the life to come!

On the contrary, they that frequently affect their souls with the thoughts of that bliss which is promised in the gospel, to those who "deny themselves," and "take up their cross, and follow Christ"[e] in spiritual obedience and resignation; can never think much of any pains or trouble this may put them to.

[a] Luke xiii. 24. [b] Mic. vi. 7. [c] Gal. v. 24.
[d] Matt. xiii. 46. [e] Ibid. xvi. 24.

If the devil can prevail and persuade, as he doth, by those airy and imaginary satisfactions he promiseth; what influence would God's promises of "fulness of joy," and "pleasures for evermore," and "an everlasting kingdom," have upon all those that duly consider them!

How will men deny themselves, what labours will they undergo, what hardships will they suffer, for some worldly advantages, which fall far short of a kingdom; for some petty principality and dominion over others; for a preferment that hath some little authority in it, or brings in some profit! But had any such ambitious ones hopes of a kingdom, how would they be transported with all excesses of joy! What difficulties, dangers, and painful labours would they go through, and think them nothing! And can we grudge to do, or suffer as much, were it necessary, for an infinitely more glorious kingdom than any in this world, if we really believe it attainable by us?

If we were promised a great earthly reward, upon condition we would abstain from such and such things as are very pleasing and grateful to us; would we not do it? And shall not the eternal blessedness, which God, who is as faithful as he is able to perform, hath promised, be of like power and force with us? Nay, shall it not be of far greater force, proportionable to the quality of the reward? When all that we can do, is but very little, and utterly unworthy to be compared with this glorious reward; is it possible, that we should do less than we can, for the obtaining of it, if we considerately and believingly thought of it?

"Know ye not," saith the apostle, "that they

who run in a race, run all; but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things: now they do it, to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."[a] If they, in the Isthmian Games, were so careful to observe an accurate diet, for the preparing and enabling them to those exercises; if they were temperate and continent in all things, denying themselves in their sensitive desires; if they were willing to weary and spend themselves in the race, to endure blows and wounds in their combat; and thought no diligence, no labour, no pains nor hazards too great, for but a flowery or leafy, a fading and corruptible crown, a short and perishing reward; would not Christians endure much more hardship, run their "race with patience,"[b] "fight the good fight of faith,"[c] deny themselves and their fleshly desires, while an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory"[d] is in their eye? If the men of this world think no pains too great for "uncertain riches,"[e] which, while they enjoy them, are imbittered with many fears and anxious cares; would not the "lively hope"[f] of eternal life, and "treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal,"[g] engage us to greater labours and self-denials? Would it not more enravish our hearts, more strongly affect us, and make us more intent, earnest and industrious? Surely it would.

Awake, awake then, O thou delicate and lazy Christian! rouse up thyself, and, as it is said in another sense, "stir up the gift of God which is in

[a] 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. [b] Heb. xii. 1. [c] 1 Tim. vi. 12. [d] 2 Cor. iv. 17.
[e] 1 Tim. vi. 17. [f] 1 Pet. i. 3. [g] Matt. vi. 20.

thee."[h] "Get thee up unto mount Nebo,"[i] to allude to that of Moses, and take a fair view of Canaan, that pleasant and "glorious land."[k] See what a goodly heritage is reserved for thee; and how great that goodness is, "which God hath laid," or, צפנת 'stored,' "up for them that fear him."[l] Eye the fulness of the reward; keep it in thy mind, believe it with thine heart: and then how cheerfully wilt thou travel through the wilderness of this world to the land of Canaan before thee! Yea, this will make the very wilderness a little Canaan, or land of "rest"[m] and "delight,"[n] to thee; it will make it a little Eden, "the garden of God."[o] Nor wilt thou then grudge at it, if God shall "lead thee" a long journey in "the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee," to know what "is in thine heart,"[p] as it is said of Israel in the figure and letter, whether there be in thee an obedient will, a resigned, patient, submissive temper, as to his commands and disposals. Thou wilt not be difficultly persuaded to believe, that Canaan will make an abundant recompense for all thy travels and wearisome labours. And if, in the meanwhile, God feeds thee with "the bread from heaven,"[q] sustains thee with manna in the wilderness: hereafter to feed with angels, "to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;"[r] and here to be provided for with "angels food,"[s] as manna is called, to the full: to have hereafter that glorious and unspeakable joy, "the joy of thy Lord,"[t] an eternity of pleasures;

[h] 2 Tim. i. 6. [i] Deut. xxxii. 49. xxxiv. 1. [k] Jer. iii. 19. Dan. xi. 16. [l] Psal. xxxi. 19. [m] Deut. xii. 9. [n] Jer. iii. 19. Ezek. xxviii. 13. [o] Deut. viii. 2. [q] John vi. 41. [r] Matt. viii. 11. [s] Psal. lxxviii. 25. [t] Matt. xxv. 21, 23.

and withal here "peace which passeth all understanding,"[b] inward pleasures and delicious satisfactions from reflections upon the doing of thy duty; "the peaceable fruit of righteousness,"[c] which thy "sowing to the Spirit"[d] will yield thee in this life: to be crowned with glory in heaven, and on earth "to be crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercies:"[e] Art thou not well dealt with, and kindly used by him? These foretastes of happiness, and earnests of the great reward, these *aureolæ* 'little coronets' for the present, and the assurance of a massy crown, "a weight of glory,"[f] in the other life, methinks should be of force to endear obedience, and greatly to sweeten patience to thee; to remove all apprehension of difficulty and harshness, in what God will have thee either to do or suffer.

If there be any generosity in thee, thou canst not but be very angry with, and condemn thyself, whensoever thou feelest any secret grudging and repining at what God would have thee undertake, seeing he hath proposed such a reward to animate thee to it.

If there be any ingenuity in thee, thou canst not but blush, and be ashamed, at that little thou either sufferest or doest for the kingdom of God.

Thy obedience would be due to his commands, and thy submission to his wise, righteous, and good will, though there were no future reward for thee. But will God bestow on thy obedience and thy patience (the two parts of self-resignation) so glorious a reward? Will he reward an obedience for a short

[b] Phil. iv. 6. [c] Heb. xii. 11. [d] Gal. vi. 8.
[e] Psal. ciii. 4. [f] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

time, and that far short of perfection too, and a momentary suffering of affliction, with an eternity of bliss, with a glory so transcendently and astonishingly great?

And is that great reward so near? This present life is but short; thou hast but a few days to continue here; there is but a step between thee and eternal life: there is between this and the other world "the valley of the shadow of death,"[g] a darksome passage, but a very short one: and then thou shalt enter upon possessing "the reward of the inheritance;"[h] which, at "the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ,"[i] shall be grown up to its full proportion.

Canst thou seriously consider these things, and think any thing too dear and precious, which God would have thee to part with, and deny thyself in? Or call any thing grievous, which he commands thee to do, or whereby he tries thy resignation to his will?

[g] Psal. xxiii. 4. [h] Col. iii. 24. [i] Titus ii. 13.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA