

ESSAYS

ON

ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES

OF

CHRIST;

OR, THE

Economy of the Gospel Dispensation

AS EXHIBITED IN THE

PERSON, CHARACTER, AND OFFICES

OF

THE REDEEMER.

BY THE LATE

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E S S A Y S
ON
ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES
OF
CHRIST.

NINTH SERIES.

VOL. V.

B

NINTH SERIES.

ESSAY I.

Creator—The Beginning of the Creation of God.

THIS must ever be considered as one of the most glorious characters of the Redeemer. It is a character which is the property of Jehovah alone, and is as far above that of every creature, as self-existence is above all derived and communicated being. He alone must be supremely, and eternally, the suitable object of our adoration, and praises, and confidence, who himself, being self-existent and uncreated, is the Creator of all things which exist. Creation is the object of faith: by "faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. xi. 3.)

As nothing passes before us which can bear any proper analogy to creation, so there is nothing, in all the objects around us, that can give us any original idea of it. We can easily conceive of formation, and of bringing into order what already exists; but the production of something out of nothing, of being out of non-entity, which is the proper idea of creation, is a subject of pure revelation, and must therefore be an object of simple faith*. No one can effect this but He who is himself self-existent, self-sufficient, and omnipotent; who exists by a necessity of nature and being, and is therefore from everlasting to everlasting the same, in his eternity, as well as in all his

* See Ellis on Divine Things.

other perfections, or the properties of his essence. He is far above all our conceptions, and must therefore be most of all adorable, as these most of all discover his eternal Godhead in the work of creation. But is this our Jesus? Is this character applicable to him, in every respect, and in its fullest extent? No doubt it is, if we receive the testimony of Scripture. This name is therefore among the first of those which relate to his essential Divinity; for if he be the Creator, then he must be GOD OVER ALL.

In order to illustrate this essential article of our faith, and to shew how intimately it is connected with our hopes as sinners, we will prove that the name is frequently applied to Christ both in the Old Testament and in the New; and the inferences arising from this consideration will be found to unite themselves most closely with the ground of our faith, hope, and consolation. Blessed Jesus, let thy Holy Spirit prepare our understandings and our hearts to receive and welcome so necessary, and at the same time so inconceivably glorious, a truth; that we may be prepared also to glorify thee aright, and to rejoice in thy salvation!

Let us first take a view of its application to Messiah *in the Old Testament*.—The very first word of the Old Testament is referred by the Jerusalem Targum to the Messiah, and considered as relating, not to any point of time when creation was effected, but to Him whose name is “The Beginning.” (Col. i. 18.) The word בראשית is translated by them בחוכמה, *by the Wisdom, or Messiah*; which at least shews the views that the ancient Jews entertained concerning it. Reference seems also to be made to this name of the Messiah in the Book of Proverbs (viii. 22): “The Lord possessed me,” not “*in the beginning of his way,*” but ראשית דרכי, “*as the beginning of his way,*” the head of his way or work of creation. This will then concur with the language of the Apostle,—God, “*created all things by Jesus Christ;*” not as a mere agent, but as a co-operator in the great and divine work,

which was effected by the אלהים, or Three Persons in one Godhead, the Triune Jehovah.

The great contest which was maintained between Jehovah, God of Israel, and the worshippers of false gods, appears to have been as to this very point; who was the supreme Creator, and therefore the absolute Proprietor and Governor of all? Very soon after the fall of man, the generality of mankind having no idea of simple creation, the first step in idolatry seems to have been the exalting the agents in nature into the place of Him who was the first cause of all causes, who created them out of nothing, who gave them their influence and powers; and who, therefore, of necessity, had all nature, and all the powers of nature, under his command and controul. If we consider the nature and kind of those miracles which were wrought throughout the old dispensation, especially in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, we shall find that they were calculated for this very purpose, to shew that Jehovah was the God of their vainly imagined gods, and could controul them at his pleasure. Nearly the first miracle was wrought upon that which they had exalted into a god on account of its beneficent influence, the water of the Nile, which was turned into blood, to shew that the whole was under His own almighty power, and all its benign influence from Himself alone. It would lead us into too large a field of discussion, were we to consider minutely under this view every miracle which was then wrought for the deliverance of the Israelites, or for their preservation afterwards in the wilderness. But when the Lord controuled the current of the waters; when he brought water out of the rock; when he commanded the air to bring the locusts upon the Egyptians, or to drop down the manna for his people; when by fire from heaven he consumed Nadab and Abihu, or guided his people by the pillar of cloud and of fire; the design was to preserve his people from idolatry, by discovering to them that those agents in nature which they were

inclined to worship, were all under him—that fire, light, air, the earth, the heavens, the waters, were all in his hands, as they were all the works of his hands. In reference to these miracles, we find the Lord Jehovah thus encouraging the faith of his people in future generations, and assigning the same motive for the display of his Divine power. “I will open rivers,” says he, “in the high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.” (Isa. xli. 18—20; compare xlii. 5; and xlv. 5—7, 12—18.)—If then we look into the New Testament, we still find that this very Jehovah, God of Israel, who thus led them through the wilderness, is none other but the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the *Angel Jehovah*, the *Angel of the Covenant*. It was he whom they tempted; he who wrought these miracles on their behalf; he whose character, attributes, and power, were declared by them, and who thus proved that he was Jehovah-Aleim, the *Creator*. (See Acts vii. 35—38; 1 Cor. x. 9.)

2. The title of *Creator* is also frequently connected with that of *Redeemer*, and other titles of Messiah, in the language of the Prophets. “Thus saith Jehovah, that created thee, O Jacob; and he that formed thee, O Israel; Fear not; for I have redeemed thee.” (Isa. xliii. 1, and see ver. 7.) Again: “Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. I am the Lord, your Holy One; the Creator of Israel, your King.” (ver. 14, 15.) Again (Isa. xlv. 1, 2): “Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee;” but this is (ver. 6) “the King of Israel, and his Redeemer.” And (ver. 24), “Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that

maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." He who commands his people to "look to him and be saved, from the ends of the earth," is also the "Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth." (Compare Isa. xlv. 22, with ver. 18, &c.) He who came as a shepherd to "gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom," can surely be no other but the Lord Jesus Christ; but he is "the Jehovah-Aleim of Israel." (Compare Isa. xl. 11, with ver. 10.) And he is "the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth," &c. Of him also all those glorious things are spoken throughout the whole chapter, (compare especially ver. 26 and 28.)—Many similar passages might here be produced, but these will be sufficient as a specimen of the rest; and to shew that the promised Messiah was contemplated by the ancient Prophets, and by the faith of the Old Testament church, in all the glory of his Divine person. But if there be any darkness or obscurity upon the interpretation of such passages as these, from the prophetic Scriptures, the language of Prophets is abundantly confirmed by the language of,

3. *Evangelists and Apostles.*—Here the glory of our Redeemer shines forth in all its clearness. The darkness of every former dispensation is removed, and the Sun of Righteousness shines out without a cloud, in the brightest effulgence of his Divine glories. Here we are plainly told, that He who is the Word "was in the beginning with God, and was God: All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made." (John i. 1—3.) And again, "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him." (Col. i. 16.) No testimony can be more decisive than this; nor can any words be of plainer import. (Compare Eph. iii. 9.) The Apostle has not scrupled to apply to him the striking passage of the prophetic Psalmist in the 102d Psalm;

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands,” &c. (Heb. i. 10—12.) It is in this view that he is called in the Revelations (chap. iii. 14), “The Beginning of the creation of God;” the word *αρχη* signifying, not the first in time only, but the Author, the Prince, the Source, the Ruler, “*the Beginning, the Head, the efficient Cause.*”—(Parkhurst.) And in this view, it corresponds with the passages before cited from Gen. i. 1, and Prov. viii. 22.

Here there is no ambiguity, no uncertain deductions, no conclusion from doubtful premises, or from intricate reasoning; but plain declarations of inspired writers, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, in which it is declared that Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the once crucified Man of Sorrows, was the Creator of all, by his own power, and for *his own glory*. This is evidence, the force of which it is impossible to resist but by invincible prejudice or determined unbelief. It would be needless to spend time in proving what is the meaning of these passages of inspired revelation, since their language is so evident and clear. We must either believe the doctrine of the Divine glory and creating power of Jesus, or we must deny the testimony itself. We must either disbelieve that this is the testimony of God, or we must acknowledge that the Redeemer is the Creator of the world. But in the acknowledgment of this, what a glorious view opens to our faith, what encouragement to our adoring and admiring confidence! Here the ground and foundation of all our hope is laid sure and immutable; and, though we shall never be able, through eternity, fully to understand, and much less fully to celebrate, the glory of Immanuel, God our Saviour, we must eternally contemplate and admire this mystery of godliness, and shall acknowledge it as the only security to us of the eternal enjoyment of all our blessings. There cannot be a more indubitable proof of the essentially Divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as one in the Godhead. If we only ascertain

the fact, there can be no doubt of the doctrine; for He who is the Creator, must be the Mighty God: but who, that believes the Scripture, can disbelieve or doubt the fact, which is there so constantly and unequivocally asserted? The glory of creation belongs only to the self-existent and self-sufficient Jehovah; for who besides can bring forth existence out of nothing? "HIS GLORY HE WILL NOT GIVE UNTO ANOTHER:" and surely then he will not give the glory of creation, which is his most distinguishing glory, to any creature; however high and eminently exalted. This glory, however, he hath given to Christ Jesus; and therefore he is not another, but one in the Divine Nature. Who can resist the force of this evidence, unless, through pride or obstinacy, he be wilfully blind and perversely prejudiced? I will adore thee then, thou Blessed Jesus, as the glorious Creator of all, and therefore "God over all, blessed for ever."

But who, then, can cease to wonder that he should condescend to assume and bear on earth such a character, and should execute such an office, as Mediator *in the nature of his brethren!* If we look by faith to the throne of glory, and contemplate the adorable Jehovah; while our minds are lost in the dignity of his infinite, eternal, and inscrutable perfections; when we behold there the adoring seraphim, the angels with veiled faces, offering their lofty but still unequal praise;—if we then turn our eyes to the Child of Bethlehem, the humble Man, the Man of Sorrows; if we consider his poverty and contempt, his reproach and ignominy; if we view all the agonies of the garden, and the sorrows of the cross,—surely we must say, How hath he made himself of no reputation, how hath he emptied himself!* Though he was rich, yet he hath indeed become poor! And for whom? for us! for man, for rebels, for worms, for me! Oh the wisdom, the love, the grace, which are displayed in the person of the condescending Saviour! Never let me meditate upon it, but with adoration, gratitude, and praise.

* *ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε.* Phil. ii. 7.

But when we consider that this was He who created all things, who stretched out the heavens alone, and laid the foundations of the earth by himself; before whom the morning stars sung together; in the consideration of his voluntary condescension we not only contemplate the most astonishing mystery of love, but we behold *his infinite ability to save*. The value, the merit, the efficacy of his atonement must be beyond all our calculation. The sacrifice of his cross must be acceptable, and altogether precious, to the Father, the sacrifice and offering of a sweet-smelling savour. The righteousness he wrought out and brought in, must be, like himself, everlasting. What a virtue must there be in all that he performed; what a certainty in all for which he engaged; what a faithfulness in all that he has promised! This may well give a firm security to my faith, and an unshaken confidence to my hope. When such love, such grace, such merit, unite in the person of my Saviour, I may fly to him, with assurance of shelter and protection, from all the guilt and consequences of my sins. Though my guilt be great, it cannot be so great as the value of his blood, the merit of his righteousness, the efficacy of his atonement, or the unbounded virtues of the sacrifice of his cross. I need not fear to bring all my sins and all my pollutions, and to lay them by faith beneath that stream which flows from the pierced side of my crucified Redeemer; and I shall be pardoned, I shall be justified, I shall be accepted, I shall be sanctified, I shall be purified from all. "Though my sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, wherever applied by the Spirit of his grace, and that shall be wherever applied to, in the exercise of faith. He who is the Almighty Creator can also, and will surely, fulfil every promise; he has fulfilled every engagement of the eternal covenant, even to the death upon the cross: and now upon the throne he is ruling and ordering all things, as well as interceding, for the benefit and salvation of his people. His power in the new creation,

in the new world of his church, is equal to his display of power in the old creation, and the world of nature. He has all power to call, to regenerate, to sanctify, to preserve, and to perfect his redeemed in glory. Upon this ground he encourages their believing dependence upon him: "Look unto me, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else." The Apostle assumes a similar ground of encouragement; that "He is able to save to the uttermost, because he ever liveth," as Jesus the SON OF GOD. His power also to overcome all our enemies, both for us and in us, must be sufficient; for if he triumphed over them upon the cross, how much more shall he triumph in their total destruction upon the throne? He will carry on his people to final and everlasting victory, and bring them to that happy place where no enemy shall enter, where there shall be no fear of enemies, though the gate shall never be shut. My soul must be safe in his hand: there I may rest in peaceful satisfaction for pardon, for grace, for preservation, and for glory. Let me therefore rest it there, in confidence upon this almighty Saviour; by whom, and for whom, all things were created: to whom be the glory of all for ever and ever.

But not only is he able and willing *to save my soul*; but, as the great Creator of all, who hath engaged to be the Saviour, I may, with the most perfect security, trust all my concerns in his hands. It is this very view which the Lord Jehovah offers to the Israelites as the ground of their encouragement to trust in him through all their trials and dangers: "Thus saith the Lord *that created thee*, O Jacob! and he that formed thee, O Israel! Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. xliii. 1, 2.) And again; "I am the Lord your Holy One, *the Creator* of Israel, your King." (ver. 15: see also xlii. 5, 14, 16.) And again; "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; there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa. xl: 28—31.) When the humble believer has ventured to trust his soul in the hand of his Redeemer for everlasting salvation, he often finds still greater difficulty in trusting him with all his earthly concerns, when trials, difficulties, or wants press all around him. But not only are the power and wisdom of the Redeemer engaged for his good, but all his various characters, works, and offices are undertaken on his behalf. And all his promises ensure his preservation and supply of all that is good. These, uniting with his almighty power and infinite wisdom for the benefit of his people, what need they fear? If he be with us, if he be ours, our God and Saviour, all things must be ours. (1 Cor. iii. 21.)

He who created all things, must have the power to direct all things. The order of nature is his; the conduct of providence is his; the hearts of his people, and the hearts of all, are in his hands. With him it is as easy to reverse as to carry on the order of nature; for what we call the order of nature, is only his constitution, his appointed order of causes and effects, which depend upon his sovereign will. What therefore can he not do? Miracles are with him the same as common acts. The rising sun would appear to us as great a miracle as any ever wrought, if it were not the daily operation of his hand. He therefore encourages his people to trust in him in all their distress, by an allusion to his conduct toward the Israelites in the wilderness, and by a promise of renewing towards them the same miracles of his power and grace, if needful for their preservation and supply. "When the poor and

needy seek water, and there is none" (like the thirsty Israelites of old), "and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water," &c. (Isa. xli. 17-20.) What a powerful reproof to our prevailing unbelief! "I shall one day perish," says the trembling believer, "by the hand of this mine enemy. If the Lord would make windows in heaven, then indeed I might hope for supply in the midst of so many wants, difficulties, dangers, and distresses." Thus he sinks under his trouble, and is ready to despair in temptation. He doubts the faithfulness and certainty of the Divine promise, and dishonours the faithfulness of his Lord. "But who art thou, O strong mount? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." Such puny creatures, with our narrow and contracted span of intellect and ability, are ready to limit the power and wisdom of the Divine mind by our own. We judge of probability, and what we esteem possibility; but that which is impossible with men, is possible with God. We have nothing to do but with the Divine promise; and there we may rest secure: "Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" "In hope of eternal life," says the Apostle, "which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." He has promised to his sheep eternal life, and that they shall never perish: and who then will doubt his faithfulness; or who will give way to those faithless doubts which insinuate that they may? Therefore, "hearken to me," says he, "O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb, and even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made" (I am your Creator naturally and spiritually; by me your were born into this world, and new-born into the world of grace;

and therefore) “ I will bear, even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Isa. xlvi. 3, 4.)

What glorious expectations, then, may the humblest believer form, as united and interested in the covenant love of such a Saviour! Instead of indulging gloomy doubts of unbelief, to the dishonour of Christ and the discomfort of the soul, faith may take its stand upon the promise of his word, and in the midst of conflict anticipate the song of victory and triumph, in the midst of afflictions and distress may solace the soul with the confidence of almighty power, unchangeable care, and everlasting love. Faith may take its flight from the region of sorrow and darkness, to the region of everlasting peace and joy; from this scene of conflict and enemies, to the happy place where no enemy shall enter; from this world of infirmity and death, to the everlasting hills, the mounts of glory; and contemplate that great goodness which the Lord hath laid up for them that fear him, which he hath wrought out for them which trust in him before the sons of men,—that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory which awaits his church above. “ He who hath promised, is able also to perform.” The humble believer cannot extend his faith and hope too far, when he surveys his privilege in the line of those promises which are exceeding great and precious; for “ 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.” Nothing can be too great for his power, or too large for his all-sufficiency, who, by the same word of power by which he makes a worm, can create an archangel; and therefore can, when he pleases; lift the poor from the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill; to set him among princes, and to make him inherit the throne of glory. (1 Sam. ii. 8.)

The littleness, the nothingness, the emptiness, and insufficiency of his people, are no obstacles to the purposes of his love and grace towards them, when his promises are to be realized. It is his power and truth we are to look

to ; and not the objects, however insignificant and mean, to whom the promise has respect. Their guilty state, their ruined situation, was not sufficient to prevent the exercises of his love: his mercy triumphed over all their guilt and the condemning sentence of the law, when, by the sufferings of his death, and the righteousness of his life, he justified them from all things. Who but He, whose power is almighty, could have stopped them in their course of sin, changed their corrupted nature, and given them a new heart and a right spirit? The exercises and acts, indeed, of this new nature, in the present state, are mixed with the corruption of the old ; but he who has begun the good work, is able and will complete it, to the day of his glory. His work already wrought is an earnest of what he can and what he will do for them : for " he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which worketh in us." (Ephes. iii. 20.) He who has new created, is able to prepare for, and to bring to, the glory which he has provided. The Apostle, therefore, argues the certainty of the fact, from the greatness of the love already displayed ; " for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. v. 10.)

Soon, may the believer say, soon all my troubles shall cease, all my infirmities be no more, all my enemies be vanquished, and, above all, all my sins be destroyed for ever. I shall be brought into that life eternal which he has promised, which he possesses, which he preserves for his people ; for " now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know, that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) Is this the hope of my soul, through the infinite and almighty power of Jesus my Friend and Saviour? Then let it be my ambition to live worthy of such a Redeemer, and of such exalted views and expectations, till they are realized above.

Often let me review my need of such a Saviour, through

the miserable fall and depravity of my nature; for this will tend to keep me in my proper place of humiliation and dependence. Let me continually contemplate his love and condescension, to prevent that lukewarmness which is so natural to this earthly state, to warm my heart with the view, and to animate me in obedience to his will. Let me frequently behold his character, his office, his works, and his engagement; for this will make him precious to my faith. Let me frequently direct the eye of faith to the ground of encouragement which his promise affords, to reprove my unbelief; and then direct it still forward to the glorious objects of expectation, and contemplate, from the misery of this present state, what I am to be at his appearing and coming. This will teach me what I ought to be now,—that I ought to be more like him now, living above the world, above the meanness of its highest enjoyments, and above the power of sin. Let it then be my only concern to glorify him and to obey his will. And in doing this, I may safely trust to him the keeping of my body and my soul, and all my concerns on earth and for eternity. He stands engaged to accomplish all my hopes; and to prevent all my fears; and most assuredly, contrary to the gloomy apprehensions of unbelief, he will accomplish all his promises. The almighty Creator will be the faithful Redeemer, and will consummate all his works towards his redeemed in their everlasting salvation.

ESSAY II.

The Holy One of Israel—The Holy One of God.

THE Holy One, the Holy One of God, and the Holy One of Israel, are titles which are frequently given to the Redeemer, throughout the Old and New Testaments. Thou wilt not "suffer thine Holy One," says the Psalmist, "to see corruption." (Ps. xvi. 10.) But the person to whom the Psalmist refers is declared, by the Apostle (Acts ii. 27), to be none other than the Lord Jesus. In Acts iii. 14, the same person is called, by way of eminence, "*The Holy One and the Just,*" which can be no other than the Holy One of Israel, to whom the Prophets so frequently refer, and who is always considered as the God of Israel, the Redeemer. "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour." (Isa. xliii. 3.) And again (ver. 14), "Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." He who is the God of Israel in his Divine nature, is therefore the Holy One of Israel in his mediatorial person, and the Holy One of God.

The testimony of an enemy is sometimes considered as decisive; and we have therefore recorded, in the New Testament, the constrained acknowledgment of the great enemy; "I know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." But, in addition to this, we have the testimony of the Father, who, in fulfilling the prediction of the prophetic Psalmist, has proved him to be the person there spoken of, by raising him from the dead. Emphatically, therefore, and in distinction from any one on earth, who may possibly be alluded to under the same title, he is THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL and OF GOD; titles which, at

the same time, are expressive of his Divine glory, the excellency of his mediatorial character, the authority of his mission, and the subjection of his enemies, and which contain within them much which may afford direction and consolation to his believing people.

In entering upon this character, that we may more accurately conceive of its extent, it may be proper to inquire, *What is holiness?* Holiness in man consists in a conformity to the nature and the will of God; but we must inquire what it is in God; for this also it is in Jesus, as God. Holiness in God, is justice, truth, and goodness, in the abstract: or, as it is explained by some, it is the love of order; *i. e.* of that order which is suitable and fitting to his nature, and to every relation in which a holy God can stand to any creature in his vast, universal, and infinite empire. We can form an abstract idea of the thing, or that such a thing is, and must be; but what it is—what that suitability, fitness, or order is—we are altogether incapable of conceiving, excepting so far as he hath revealed it. Proud man, indeed, is often presuming to assert what he conceives it to be fitting and proper for the infinite Jehovah to do; but thereby he is only shewing his ignorance, his folly, and his pride. It will often be found that his ways are not our ways, nor are our thoughts his thoughts; but as the heavens are high above the earth, so are his ways high above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. He often sees it right to do what we should not have done in the order of his acts, and to refuse to do what we should have conceived he must have done; so incompetent are we to judge of what is suitable to him: yet all his ways are righteous; and, where we can the least understand, just and true is the Lord. A holy God is therefore essentially, and in his very nature, whatever he hath revealed of justice, truth, and goodness, in his word. In him all these are pure and unmixed, complete, uniform, and infinite. In man, holiness is the imitation of these his dispositions and his character, according to the several relations which he sustains; but as we can

only know this by his word, the clearest definition of holiness in man is a conformity to his will and commandments. In both these respects the title belongs to the Lord Jesus, the Holy One, the Holy One of God, and of Israel.

Let us see how it belongs to him,

(1.) *As God.*—Upon this ground, and in allusion to this character, the Prophet, or rather the Lord by the Prophet, encourages the hope of his people of old: “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith Jehovah, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” (Isa. xli. 14.) “Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.” (ver. 16.) “That they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of Jehovah hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.” (ver. 20.) Passages to this effect might indeed be multiplied without end in the Prophets. It is also in reference to his Divine glory that he is called “*The Holy One.*” (1 John ii. 20.) “Ye have an unction from *The Holy One.*” Holiness is therefore in him, as God, essentially and fundamentally; by necessity of nature, as in union with the Divine essence. This is indeed the peculiar glory of the Divine nature; and that which above all must be the object of our love and praise, of our delight and confidence. For this he is adored and celebrated by the host above. In that sublime vision of the Prophet, when he beheld the Lord sitting upon his throne, surrounded by the adoring seraphim, covering their feet and their faces with their wings, the subject of their praise is this, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord.” (Isa. vi. 3.) “Yet this,” says the Apostle, “was the vision of the glory of Jesus.” (John xii. 41.) The same is represented, in New Testament prophecy, to be the subject of their adoring praise, where the cherubic emblems are described as giving all glory to him, to whom all glory is due; “They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” (Rev. iv. 8.) As such, therefore, in an eternal and invariable union of nature and of will with

the Father and the Holy Ghost, he must will that which is holy, suitable to the rule of right order, of justice, truth, and goodness, as it exists in the one infinite and spotless essence of the Godhead. And his eternal mind, in all its motions and volitions, must move and will, according to his own revealed discovery of righteousness and of goodness in his word.

“The Lord is, therefore, righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” He must be so in all his operations; for the works of the Holy One must be like himself. In the original creation, as he viewed the various works of his hand, “he saw that they were good;” and when he had completed his highest terrestrial workmanship, in man, formed in his own image, he saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.

He is also, in his Divine nature, communicatively the Source of all holiness. All the holiness which creatures do, or shall possess and enjoy through eternity, is derived from the unmeasureable abyss of God’s holiness, the fountain of all holiness and purity.

This he is especially suited to become to us, because his own holiness is essential and underived, and is therefore perfect and unchangeable: in this, as in every individual perfection, he is “from everlasting to everlasting the same.” The title, therefore, of *The Holy One* implies much more than that he is holy, as other upright creatures are; for it leads us to contemplate him as essentially and unchangeably so, and the Source of all supply to the creatures of his hand. As the term, however, may apply not only to his Divine nature, but to his mediatorial person as Immanuel, it leads us to a different view of the same important subject. In this view, the Apostle asserts that our great High Priest was eminently and emphatically “holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” (Heb. vii. 26.) Here, then, we must contemplate him, not in his Divine nature only, but in his human nature; nor in his human nature alone, but in the union of both—God and man in one Christ. And as such,

2. *He is also necessarily and absolutely holy; holy by nature, as no other man was or could be.*—The peculiar manner of his miraculous conception was designed for effecting this important purpose, which could never have been effected in the natural order of human birth. Hence his human nature was formed in an extraordinary manner; so that, though he was true and very man, he was not conceived or born as other men; but deriving his flesh from the Virgin Mary, his mother, he was produced immediately by the work and operation of the Holy Ghost. “The angel said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke i. 35.) Hence it is said, “she was found with Child of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. i. 18); and the Babe of Bethlehem is called the Holy Child Jesus; holy in his origin and nature, as well as in his acts; and therefore holy in all his acts, because perfectly so in his nature. Upon Him, also, in his human nature, the Spirit of holiness rested without measure; for “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” (John iii. 34.) Anointed, therefore, with this oil of gladness above his fellows (Psa. xlv. 7), above all who held the distinct offices which were united together in him, he appears as “the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

By such an unction of the Spirit, and by such a peculiar indwelling and union of the Spirit, he must be eminently the Holy One. But as the human nature in the person of the Saviour is taken into union with the Eternal Word;—“the Word was made flesh;” “God was manifest in the flesh;”—in him, therefore, necessarily “dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” He is, as such, the author of his own holiness, which is from himself, even from his own self-sufficiency: his divinity fills his humanity with all grace and holiness, preserves it from every stain and defilement, adorns it with all its glories, and will throughout eternity shine through it on the eternal throne. What

a Holy Saviour is the Lord Jesus! how suitable to be the object of our unwavering confidence and faith! In all his acts, therefore, his holiness is pure, unstained, and unsullied, without the least mixture of defilement. In the best of saints, pollution mingles with all they do, or think, or say; their unholiness is much more than their holiness; yea, unholiness is their very nature; and all their holiness derived from, and dependent upon, the continual indwelling and influence of his Holy Spirit. But he is "the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot: he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:" he was altogether lovely in the sight of God, as in the sight of his people.

Unmoved by provocation, unstained by temptation, uncontaminated with the evil customs or ways of men; not all the allurements of the world, nor all the assaults of satan could ever defile his heart, his thoughts, or his ways. In the midst of all, He is still the same humble, meek, upright and Holy Jesus, insomuch that his enemies could find no reply, when he put the question to them, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46.) The judge who condemned him, acknowledged that he found no fault in him. (Matt. xxvii. 24.) "I have betrayed," said the traitorous Judas (Matt. xxvii. 4), "the innocent blood;" and the Apostle Peter calls him, "the approved of God" amongst them. (Acts ii. 22.) But he is not only without sin, or unstained, but through the holiness of his nature, his holiness of conduct is absolutely perfect, not only in all its parts, but to its highest degree. Though the real believer is renewed in every part, in every part that holiness is incomplete, as well as mixed with corruption; but the Holy Redeemer in his human nature, and mediatorial character, possesses the fulness of all Holiness. "In him," says an old writer, "is the fulness of the fountain, in his people the fulness of the vessel; in Him is the fulness of the root, in them of the branches; in Him the fulness of redundancy, in them of (communicated) sufficiency: they enjoy some of the drops, He himself is the ocean." He indeed must be holy without measure, who hath the Spirit without

measure; and as that Spirit is the Eternal Spirit, and He himself is the Eternal God, so his holiness is undecaying, and eternal. It cannot be subjected to loss, as was that of man in his original state; nor to any decay, variation, or fluctuation, as ours in the present state. As it is sustained by his own infinite self-sufficiency, it must therefore be eternal: He has been the Holy One of Israel for ages past, and is and will be so to-day and for ever.

The fulness of the Godhead, which is in him, is said therefore, to dwell in him. (Col. i. 19.) It is not a transient guest, but a rightful and perpetual inhabitant, in the purity of his human nature. In us it ebbs and flows; but he is the full sea, where no such changes are known, where all is infinite, all is immutable, all is eternal. But if as Mediator in the person of Immanuel, all fulness is in him; if he be the fountain, or if he be the root, it is with the express design that we may receive from him: and it is the glory of his character, that this, as all his mediatorial fulness, is communicative to his people. There is not a drop of this living water, but what comes from him: in him we must be placed, united to him, and by that union deriving from him, that we may bring forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. (Phil. i. 11.) It was he who created man in his Divine image: it is he who creates him, in righteousness and true holiness, in the image of him who created him. He alone is our Sanctification, who alone can make his people holy; so that we are holy in him, and holy before him, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called. The most holy parents cannot transmit their holiness, nor can the highest angel communicate from his store; but His grace and virtue flow out from him to his people, to the lowest of his members, or to the topmost shoot of the tree. He quickens to spiritual life: he supplies, for spiritual fruitfulness, those fruits of the Spirit, which are in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

What a glorious Saviour is this! my Jesus corresponding with my wants! He is holy in himself, essentially holy in

himself: therefore he is infinitely lovely; but how much more so, as he is all this to and for me! He can make such an unholy sinner perfectly holy in the sight of God, as in union with himself, as one with him: He can make such an unholy sinner, holy in principle and in practice now, and at last perfectly like himself: but all pretended holiness in nature's garden, that is not derived from him, is but like the apples of Sodom, beautiful without, but full of corruption within; it is an imitation, an image without life. The very spring and source of all is in Him, and the constant supplies must be received from him: the highest believer, after all his exercises of grace, is still equally dependent upon him, and would wither and die away without his gracious influence; and by him all is enlivened, quickened, and invigorated as he pleases. In every means of grace, this must be especially remembered: to Him our eye must be directed; from Him alone we must expect the effectual blessing for which we are waiting in his ordinances, and thus shew that he has all the glory, while the abundant grace redounds, through the thanksgiving of many, to the glory of God. But while we remember that all grace is derived from Him, we cannot set before us a more beautiful pattern for imitation than his own holy character. In Him we have an absolutely perfect example, the pattern of every Christian grace and virtue, the mark set before us. His life is recorded, that we might lay it before us, as the golden example, according to which we are to write and work. He has left us "an example, that we should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Pet. ii. 21, 22.) "Take my yoke upon you," says the Redeemer himself, "and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt. xi. 29.) This is the measure, the standard to which we are to aim. What room for daily pressing forward! Well may we say with the Apostle, "Not that I have already attained;" but may add, "I press forward toward the mark, forgetting the things that are behind, and reach forth to things that are before; if I may apprehend that

for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 12, &c.)—My Christian brethren, is this what we are daily proposing to ourselves, in the Christian life? Is this the daily pattern of our imitation? We are not then inquiring what are the customs, the fashions, or the ways of the world, but what would my Lord have done in such and such a situation? What is the path he would have trod? there let me follow him. How shall I be more like him? Whatever direction we may need for our daily conduct, we need only look at Him, and we shall find in his spirit, temper, and conduct, a sure directory. (Heb. xii. 2.) Let us then endeavour to copy his holiness, and to encourage and promote the same, in the heart and in the practice of others all around us. Holiness is the beauty of Christ's character. It is for this, that he is so lovely to the Father, and so precious to his people. He shines in all the beauty of holiness: and how beautiful is the Christian character, and profession, when it is thus adorned with practical holiness! This is the excellency of any character, and is therefore the most glorious gift of Christ. If indeed we could make our children holy, we should do more than if we could bestow upon them all the riches and honours of the world; and if we were convinced of this, surely we should be more diligent in the use of the means, in which the Lord Jesus can, and in which he usually does, bestow the blessing, and which he has promised to bless for this purpose. If we ourselves would be holy, we must learn our own unholiness, and our total inability to change our miserable state. We must use the means and ordinances of his appointment, and above all we must go to Christ, look to him in the prayer of faith, and be daily comparing ourselves with him, that we may learn what is the rule and mark at which we are to attain; for though without him we can do nothing, abiding in him and receiving grace from him, "we can do all things;" can "bring forth much fruit" of practical holiness, by his grace, to his glory. (John xv. 1—3.) In Him we shall grow up in all things, who is the Head of vital influence. (Eph. iv. 15.) Thus we shall increase

more and more ; grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ; be more and more like him ; be changed into the same image from glory to glory, while we more and more glorify Him, by attributing all without reserve, to his own power and sovereign grace. The wicked indeed very often revile and scorn the very name of holiness : a saint, once sanctified in Christ Jesus, is the object of their derision ; so it was of old. " They think it strange," says the Apostle, " that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Pet. iv. 4) ; and so it is still. But in as far as holiness is the image of Christ, and to be holy is to be like Christ ; to hate the believer for his holiness, is in fact to hate and dishonour Christ himself, who will soon arise to plead his own cause, to the awful confusion of the scorner. Yea, not only is it necessary that we should not be scorners of holiness, but that we ourselves should be made holy, sanctified in heart and nature, and so in temper and in practice. Without this, we shall remain " earthly, sensual, and devilish ;" which is not the character of his people ; and when we appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, however now we may deride every pretension to holiness, it will be to our eternal confusion to be found without it. " Verily, verily," these are the words of our Lord himself, " I say unto you, ye must be born again." The promise of the new covenant is a new heart : the Apostle, therefore, speaks of being renewed in the Spirit of our minds. The change, though imperfect, is real and universal : all his people, who are the objects of his love, are therefore by his grace made like himself. Though he loved them and redeemed them, while in a state of sin (Rom. v. 6—8), yet it was not his design that they should continue in that state. No : He gave himself for them, " that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Tit. ii. 14.) For this purpose he gives to them the Spirit of holiness, whose first operation upon the heart is to *convince of sin* ; and his constant work is the renovation of the heart into the love and the prac-

tice of holiness. Thus the humble believer, accepted and justified in Christ, is brought to love a holy God; yea, to delight at the remembrance of his holiness. With holy reverence he contemplates his character; with holy delight he engages in his worship; with holy love he studies his word; and in his house he longs to behold all the holy beauty of the Lord, that he may worship in the beauty of holiness; for "Holiness," says he, "becometh thine house for ever." And how shall a sinner enter into a holy heaven, into the presence of a Holy God, a Holy Saviour, and a Holy Spirit, while the love and the defilement of sin are upon the heart? No: there is an essential difference between the sinner and the saint, effected by the sovereign power and grace of Jesus, by the work and constant abiding of his Spirit. The believer longs for its increase, that it may be more evident to the glory of his Lord now in time; and he looks forward as the consummation of all his desire, when it shall be completed without deficiency or mixture in the kingdom of glory. And let us not deceive ourselves with vain words; for without this essential change by Divine grace, a Holy Saviour will be our eternal terror, and not an eternal salvation. He forms his people for himself, by the renovating influences of his Spirit now, and makes them to delight in that which will be their eternal enjoyment above.

His people therefore now love, and praise, and admire him, for his holiness. Holiness is always admirable, even as it appears now in his people, with all that mixture of sin and imperfection; but how glorious must it be in him who is the Holy One! We find the church, therefore, continually praising and adoring the God of holiness. "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Ex. xv. 11.) "Exalt the Lord our God," says the Psalmist, "for the Lord our God is holy." And such is the triumph of the church above. (Rev. iv. 8, 10, 11.) Let him then excite our reverence: let us fear to use his name in vain; that fearful, that holy

name. As such he deserves our highest love : holiness is spiritual beauty ; and when we love him for his holiness, we evidence the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. We may love his bounty, his kindness, his goodness, his compassion ; but to love the Lord for his holiness, is a temper of mind which can be infused by the operation of his own Spirit alone. Those who fancy they love a Saviour, but hate the Holy One ; who would be partakers of the blessings of his salvation, but have no desire of the holiness of that salvation ; are certainly deceived, and ignorant of the very nature of that salvation which he bestows : but those who love the Lord Jesus for his holiness, are certainly partakers of his holiness. The holiness indeed of his character is the security of his people, both as to the perfection of his sacrifice, and the faithfulness of his engagement. In and through it he himself is perfectly acceptable, the Father looks upon him in his holy person with infinite delight and pleasure ; and as such he is equally endeared and acceptable to him in all his work, in the bitterest sorrow and sufferings of his cross : yea, there he is peculiarly acceptable ; for “ therefore,” says he, “ does my Father love me, because I lay down my life for my sheep.” (John x. 17.)—No animal upon whom there was any blemish, might be offered to the Lord in sacrifice under the Law (Mal. i. 7, 8), as an emblem of the unblemished purity of Him, who, once in the end of the world, hath offered himself an offering and a sacrifice, to put away our sin. What a valuable atonement, what a suitable sacrifice is the immaculate person of Jesus our Redeemer ! When such a holy Jesus himself became the sufferer ; his atonement, accepted of the Father, must be infinitely meritorious : surely it shall save me from all my unholiness ; and when this offering is mine by faith, I may rejoice in the confidence of infinite blessings. A Holy Saviour will also be faithful to complete his own work, to fulfil his promises, and to bring his people to himself. He cannot fail the expectation and faith of his people, because his truth and faithfulness cannot fail, and his promise must stand fast for ever. Without

this the holiness of his character would be impeached : he must, therefore, accomplish all his purposes of grace ; he must persevere and finish his work ; and since he has said, " I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish," he must bring them all around his throne, and put them into possession of those mansions, which he is now preparing for them. If then he has put the desire into the heart, he will preserve and perfect that desire in enjoyment. Bless him then, O believer, for the least genuine evidence of the work of his grace. When completely like him, then you will be completely happy, in the full enjoyment of his salvation. There nothing shall enter which defileth, or that maketh unclean : all that are with him shall be like him ; and seeing we look for such things as these, " what manner of persons ought we now to be, in all holy conversation and godliness ; looking for, and hastening unto, this coming of the day of God ;" for these words are true and faithful.

ESSAY III.

Surety — Day's Man.

THE title of *Surety* bears a near analogy to that of *Mediator*; or rather, it is one specific part of that comprehensive office. We before considered the title of *Mediator* in its most extensive sense as belonging to Him who carries on every concern between God and man; who is the only *Medium* of all communication between God and sinners, and between sinners and a holy God; established as the *Head* of creation and redemption, in nature, providence, grace, and glory, the *Fountain* and communicating *Origin* of all. The office of *Surety* is one well known amongst men: it was of old usually entered upon by the striking of hands, and is therefore thus referred to in the *Book of Proverbs* (vi. 1, 2): "My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thine hand with a stranger, thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth:" and *Job*, in the midst of his affliction, thus humbly supplicates, "Put me in a surety with thee: who is he that will strike hands with me?" (chap. xvii. 3: compare *Prov.* xvii. 18. and xxii. 26.) It implies a solemn engagement or undertaking to fulfil a certain obligation for another, which obligation naturally rested upon the party undertaken for; but is thus voluntarily assumed to himself by the *Surety*, and which being fulfilled, and legally acknowledged, all the benefits result to the party for whom it is undertaken, who thus, in the eye of the law, is considered as fulfilling and accomplishing the obligation in his *Surety*.

The office, as it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, is particularly to be referred to the terms of the everlasting

covenant of grace, on behalf of his people: therefore he is called "*the Surety of the better covenant.*" All those terms he engages to fulfil for the glory of the Eternal Jehovah, in the salvation of sinners: and in consequence of this, all its blessings are committed into his hands to bestow, and to ensure their engagement in the souls of all the redeemed for ever. This is, therefore, one of the most glorious characters of the Redeemer, and one admirably suited to be the foundation of the faith, the hope, and the consolation of every believing sinner. For our glorious Surety hath indeed accomplished his undertaking; and in him his people do, and shall eternally enjoy all its glorious benefits. We may therefore consider the character, as branching forth into two leading ideas:—

1. The undertaking of the ever blessed Redeemer, for, and on behalf of, us poor sinners towards God; in doing all that could be required for the promoting of his glory in our salvation.

2. His undertaking, for and on behalf of a holy God towards his redeemed, that all the blessings of the covenant shall be eternally communicated to them.

1. The undertaking of the ever-blessed Redeemer, *for, and on behalf of, us poor sinners towards God; in doing all that was necessary to the glory of God, in the salvation of sinners.*—It was for this cause that the adorable Jesus came into the world. "When sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, then said I, Lo! I come to do thy will, O God." What that will of God was which he thus engaged to do, he tells us in John vi. 39, 40: it was the redemption, and ultimately the final salvation, of his people. If He who was in the form of God humbled himself; if he was made under the Law, and if he endured the cross; it was not for himself, but for us: our state required his condescension to redeem and save: our state, and the everlasting love he bore to his people, induced him to undertake the act of mercy, and to endure till he had accomplished it. A knowledge of our state will indeed make this Saviour appear suitable and glorious, and render him exceedingly pro-

scious to our souls, by believing. May the contemplation now be sweet and enlivening, by the kind teaching of his own gracious and almighty Spirit!

The life and blessings which were promised to obedience (for the threatening and the curse attached to disobedience implied such a promise to obedience, of the continuance of life and blessing) are now forfeited by transgression; the first surety having fallen, and all his posterity in him. Sin has entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passeth upon all men, because all are sinners. (Rom. v. 12.) In whatever light, therefore, we consider man, he is wretched and helpless, as under a covenant which he has violated, and a curse which he has justly merited, but can neither evade nor avert. As a debtor, he has nothing to pay; as a transgressor of the Law, he has no satisfaction to render; and as a rebel, he is under the sentence: but, without payment, the debt subjects the debtor to imprisonment; without satisfaction, transgression must be punished; and a rebel, without an act of grace, is exposed to the penalty of death. But behold the infinite and sovereign love of God our Saviour, in his everlasting compassion and love to his church. He interposes, undertakes the cause of his people, and becomes, in the engagements of eternity, the Surety of that better covenant, to secure the salvation of those whom he also covenants to redeem.

In the eye of the Law, the debtor and the surety are but one: when his mediation is accepted, he legally bears his person, and becomes responsible for every demand upon him; and in the fulfilment, the debtor is legally entitled to the benefit of his surety acts. Nothing can more clearly represent the nature and design of the undertaking and work of Christ, who thus, according to the arrangement of the everlasting covenant, sustains, in law, the person of the sinner, bears all his guilt, and becomes responsible for every demand which justice could make upon him, that the full benefit of his whole work may be enjoyed by all who are thus legally united with him. This is the great,

the peculiar, truth of the Gospel, in which his substitution for his people is continually held forth; his work is represented as undertaken and executed for their benefit; and his dying upon the cross is described, not only as a confirmation of his character and doctrine, not only as an example of patience and obedience, but the sacrifice for sin, and the substituted offering instead of the sinner. In this the language of Prophets and Apostles concur: "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"— "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him." Jehovah laid on him the iniquity of us all: "For the transgression of my people was he stricken," that he might make his soul an offering for sin, that he might justify many, as he bare the sin of many. (Isa. liii.) "He was cut off, but not for himself," but to finish transgression, and make an end of sins; to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. (Dan. ix. 24—26.) Thus says the Apostle, "He, his own self, bare *our* sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) And again, another Apostle; He became "sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) "And hath delivered us from the curse of the Law, by becoming a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) The whole tenor of the Apostle's argument in Rom. v. 15—21, rests upon this very truth, that as sin and death entered by the disobedience of the first Adam, so righteousness and eternal life are received by the obedience of the Second Adam, the man Christ Jesus. This presents the blessed Jesus in a character, which, as it is absolutely needful for us as sinners, is exactly suited to our state; in which, therefore, he is most glorious, and will be most precious to his believing people. It presents him to us in a covenant relation, which secures all we need; and when faith beholds him in it, and rests upon him, in the confidence of his having fulfilled all his undertaking, the most certain ground is laid for the assurance of pardon, life, and salvation, to

the believing sinner. This wonderful undertaking and work of Christ Jesus divides itself into two parts, *obedience* and *suffering*—both of which were due on the part of man—both of which are completed in the person of the Surety; obedience to satisfy the demands of the Law, and suffering to accomplish the sentence which man had merited by transgression.

1. By the absolute purity of his nature, by the perfect holiness of his life, and by his complete fulfilment of all the will of the Father, he wrought out, and brought in, an everlasting righteousness; so suited to the honour of the Divine perfections, and to the demands of the holy Law, that infinite truth, justice, and purity can require and desire no more, since the Law is thus magnified and made honourable. As, therefore, “such an High Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb. vii. 26), our Jesus is, in nature and in act, the Holy One and the Just; the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot; the eminently *Righteous One*. And as this was the voluntary undertaking and obedience of him, upon whom the Law otherwise could have no demand, and who was, therefore, by his own voluntary act, as well as by the will of the Father, in the fulness of time made under the Law; it was a righteousness which extended beyond the benefit of him who wrought it; a righteousness which could be wrought for others, and become meritorious for their justification and salvation. “He for us, therefore, paid the ransom by his death; he for us fulfilled the law in his life; so that now in him, and by him, every true Christian man may be called a fulfiller of the Law*.”

From the legal and covenant union which there is between Christ and his people, this righteousness, thus wrought in the person of the Surety, being designed as the fulfilment of all the covenant terms, and, being in every respect suited to, and adequate to, the terms of

* Homily on Salvation.

that covenant, could be imputed to them, and, as imputed by the free act of the eternal Jehovah, becomes experimentally theirs by faith; for, says the Apostle, "it shall be imputed to us, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 24, 25.) Here then is, in the person of the Surety for his people, a complete fulfilment of the preceptive part of the Law, a righteousness every way answering its demands, without defect or defilement. Yea, as this is the obedience of IMMANUEL, the GOD-MAN, it must partake of the dignity and honour of his Divine nature, and is therefore, in its excellency, infinitely above the aggregate obedience of all creatures. It must, therefore, be more glorious to the Law, than the unsinning obedience of all creation could be. Hence also it is called the righteousness of God, which is by faith; and he who is a partaker of it, is made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, who is, according to the purpose of the eternal Jehovah, "the End of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth," and so our Righteousness, the Lord our Righteousness.

In this holiness of nature and of act, the Father looks upon him with infinite and uninterrupted complacency as Mediator; and in every character and office which is connected with that fundamental office, as well as in every act which he performs in it. "Behold," says he, "my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," &c.; for "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake." (Isa. xlii. 1, 21.) "This is my beloved Son," says the voice from heaven on his public entrance upon office, "in whom I am well pleased;" *always* well pleased, well pleased with his person, his work, his undertaking, his sufferings, his exaltation, his completing the redemption, and consummating the salvation, of his redeemed. Oh, glorious Redeemer! may my delight in thee ever correspond with the delight of the Father: let me be found in thee, not having mine own

righteousness, which is of the Law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. On this account the Apostle gloried in the Gospel, that therein the righteousness of God was revealed from faith to faith. (See Rom. i. 17, &c.) And again, therein “the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference.” And such is the efficacy of this Divine righteousness, that through its completion in the person of Christ, and by its imputation to the sinner, God is just when he becomes the justifier of every such sinner believing in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 21—26.) Here every doubt and difficulty is solved; here every fear is anticipated, which may arise in the mind of the penitent sinner, inquiring the way to God, and the ground of pardon and acceptance. The whole is out of self in Christ Jesus: and thus secured in him, whosoever believeth in him is justified from all things; to him there is no condemnation, he shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. Yes, humble, trembling, penitent, notwithstanding thy guilt and wretchedness, it is the free gift of God in Jesus Christ our Lord; notwithstanding all thy unworthiness, by the grace that made it thine, his righteousness is thine by faith, and thou shalt enjoy all his salvation.

2. The debt of punishment, which was due to the government, the law, and the justice of God, could never have been exacted, but to the eternal destruction of the offender. Who could undertake the payment of the vast amount? How solemn the undertaking, when the wrath of God and the severity of justice hung over the guilty, to interpose in order to save; yea, to give himself, to bear the whole even to the uttermost, to deliver me! Here surely it was eminently true, “he that becometh surety for a stranger shall smart for it.” The blessed Jesus himself undertakes the work; himself endures the penalty and bears the curse, when he offered himself up an offer-

ing and a sacrifice to God. Yes, he endured that immensity of wrath which, without his suffering, must have fallen upon us, never to be exhausted throughout eternity. Let the Prophet describe his undertaking, and the design of his bitter agony; and he will tell us, that "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we were healed," when the Lord made to meet upon him, like so many floods pouring themselves into one mighty overwhelming stream, "the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 4—6.) This it was that rendered his condescension into our nature so necessary, that "He who was rich," for our sakes might become poor; that "He who was in the form of God" should take upon himself the form of a servant. For this he became the Child of Bethlehem; for this he was cast out from the womb, and took part of the same flesh and blood, of which his children were partakers, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver those who were under its power. The Apostle gives us this reason for his condescension, that "being made of a woman, he might be made under the Law." (Gal. iv. 4.) The Law could otherwise have no demand upon him, except as he took the place of sinners; and as such he invited it, as it were, to spend all its sentence upon him; that those for whom he sustained and suffered, might obtain eternal deliverance and redemption. It was in this character that the Lord Jehovah called his sword to awake against the Man that was his Fellow. If we follow him to the garden, and behold the bitter cries, the bloody sweat, but the patient acquiescence; it is on this account that the cup cannot pass away from him, except he drink it. If we behold the cross, the thorns, the nails, the spear; if there compelled by the unequalled, unparalleled scene of suffering, we exclaim, "Behold, and see if any sorrow were like unto his sorrow, in the day when the Lord afflicted him, in the day of his fierce anger!" It was on this account as bearing our sins, and in this character as the Surety of the covenant, that it pleased the

Father to bruise the Son of his eternal love. Tell us, ye who deny the necessity and the value of his atoning sacrifice, why it is that the most innocent is the greatest sufferer? why the holy Lamb of God, well pleasing to the Father, and never more so than in the bitterest agony of his death, endures the utmost severity of his wrath, and is compelled to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In any other way, or upon any other ground, it is impossible to account for it; but the Apostle will give us a decided answer: it was, that "by the grace of God he might taste death for every man;" for "it became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings." "It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Heb. ii. 9, 10, 17.) He himself declaring, that the very design of his coming was to give his life "a ransom for many." (Matt. xx. 28.) Here he stands to pay that ransom: here the Law demands, and justice enforces the demand to the very uttermost. But behold the mighty Redeemer is able to endure; and there he does endure, through all, till he could exclaim, "It is finished:" there, upon that cross, the full amount is paid, the full discharge proclaimed; and there he took away the handwriting that was against us, which was contrary to us, nailing it to his cross; for now, "by his one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," and obtained complete and eternal remission, and the fulness of the Spirit, to apply all the blessings of his salvation. (See Heb. x. 14—18.)—Blessed Surety! he has done for me what not all the creatures upon earth, not all the angels in heaven, could have accomplished; he has borne all the curse, that I might have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of Divine grace. Still, therefore, he appears in the same character, though before the throne; and when the heavens

were opened to the eyes of the admiring Apostle, he beheld, in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it has been slain (Rev. v. 6); intimating, that still he bears the impress of his wounds, pleading them as he appears upon the throne, the Prince and the Priest of our profession: and though the Advocate and the Lord, still it is remembered that he is the Propitiation for our sins. How infinite the debt of love we owe to such a Saviour! Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, but to Jesus, our Surety and our Friend: for the love of undertaking in the everlasting counsel, for the love of his condescension in our nature, and the agony of the cross; for the love in bestowing all still from his throne above; we are under an infinite debt of obligation to the Lord our Saviour. We are not our own, being thus bought with the immense price of the blood of Jesus: let the love of Christ, therefore, constrain us. Never was love, never were sufferings, never can blessings be like his. His love was not the love of the worthy, but of rebels—of the ungodly. (Rom. v. 6.) His sufferings were not the common sufferings of human nature, but the wrath of God for us; the very sting of all sufferings, the curse which is the bitterest of all. The glories of all the world, or, if possible, of ten thousand worlds, can bear no comparison with the blessings he bestows—blessings which will endure when the heavens and the earth are in eternal ruin. The great goodness which he has prepared, is what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive it. It is an exceeding great and an eternal weight of glory: and for whom? for me, a miserable sinner, redeemed for it by his own precious blood, and brought to it by his own unbounded grace. Let this blessed Surety have my love, my confidence, my service, and my praise. To reject his person and his work, through ignorance, pride, or corruption, is of all guilt the most awful, and will be found the most overwhelming. The state of a sinner who has never embraced Christ, by faith, as his Surety, is the same as though he had never become the

Surety; still as without Christ, he is without hope. As this blessing is, therefore, received by faith, without this faith the sinner is still in a state of nature and of wrath; nay, of worse wrath than that of the Law; the wrath of the Lamb. I cannot however, believe on Christ for salvation, unless I see and feel myself totally lost and helpless without him; and hence so many in their ignorance reject the only Saviour, and remain under the Law. But if under the Law, as transgressors, the sentence must fall upon the guilty; if then it fall on us, what can we do, whither shall we fly? who can endure? who can sustain the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never can be quenched? None but almighty power could endure and overcome; and therefore the Almighty Jesus undertook, and the Almighty Redeemer has sustained, but oh, what bitter agony and suffering, in order to the mighty triumph! What however will all this avail us, if we reject or despise it? Now from his throne he invites the condemned, and the perishing to come near and receive his blessings: let not sin so bind our heart, or so delude our understanding, as to prevent the application of penitence and faith; for if so, it will eternally ruin our immortal souls. May the Holy Spirit of Jesus so melt our hearts under sin, and convince us of our need, that we may remember with gratitude, and embrace with faith and joy, the ransom, the atonement of his cross, and, in union with the Surety of sinners, through him obtain eternal deliverance. Then washed with his blood, redeemed unto God, and clothed with his everlasting righteousness, the eternal benefit of his Mediation and Suretyship must be ours: for as my Surety he stands forth also, to overcome every enemy for me, and to remove every impediment, in the way of pardon, life, and salvation. He engaged to conquer, as well as to atone; to triumph, as well as to suffer; and thus in the very first promise, he was prophetically exhibited, as “the Seed of the woman, who should bruise,” or overwhelm, “the serpent’s head.” This was the very promise of the covenant, the suretyship of which he undertook, that when he should make his soul

an offering for sin, he should see his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord—i. e. in the salvation of his people—should prosper in his hands, &c. ; that he should divide a portion with the great, and divide the spoil with the strong. (Isa. liii. 10—12.) In the confidence of victory, he assumes, in the prospect, the language of triumph: “O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” (Hos. xiii. 14.) And when he died upon the cross, and rose again from the grave; by death he conquered him that had the power of death. He made a shew of all his enemies, triumphing over them upon the cross; and there the captives of the mighty were taken away, and the prey of the terrible was delivered, &c. (See and compare Isa. xlix. 24—26; Col. ii. 15; Heb. ii. 14.) Behold then the Mighty Conqueror ascend on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts, to give unto men (Psa. lxviii. 18); while with the voice of conquering triumph, he exclaims, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors! and the King of Glory shall come in.” But who is this King of Glory? In his Divine nature, the LORD OF HOSTS; in his mediatorial character, as Immanuel, *the Lord mighty in battle*. Here is the completion of his work, and the vast security of my hope: my Surety engaged in eternity, and in the fulness of time became man, to accomplish his covenant engagements; and now he hath paid the debt of obedience, and of suffering; atoned for sin, satisfied the law, and honoured the righteous government of God—has overcome every enemy, and every impediment that obstructed his own way, and that lay in the way of my pardon, justification, and salvation. What then shall we now say, to the accusation of every enemy! “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is

written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter; nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 33—39.)

Nothing now remains, but that the benefit should be applied and received into the hearts of his people. But how is this to be accomplished? This, I apprehend, may be considered as another part of his mediatorial character, and surety engagement,

2. *On behalf of a holy and faithful God, that all the benefit of his redemption should be communicated to his people.*—It is for this purpose, viz. that the grace of the covenant should be bestowed, that he himself is exalted upon the mediatorial throne: "Him hath God exalted with his own right hand, as a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins." In the view of this he triumphed, when about to ascend to his glory; and in his last prayer to his heavenly Father, entreats that he would glorify his Son, because he had given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life, to as many as the Father had given him. (Compare Acts v. 31; John xvii. 1, 2.) This he entreats, because from that glorious throne alone, could he exercise that covenant and mediatorial power, for the benefit of his redeemed. When therefore exalted on high, his first work of power in his glorified state, as a proof of his exaltation, was the gift of his Holy Spirit, in all its necessary influence upon his church, as the spirit of life and glory. Hence the covenant promise was fulfilled: by the rod of his strength, sent from Mount Zion, his enemies are spiritually brought under, and his people made willing in this day of his power. (Psa. cx. 2, 3.)

The application of these redeeming blessings to his

people, by the power of his Spirit, is as necessary for the final salvation of every chosen vessel of grace, as the acquisition of them by his atoning blood. The promise of this Spirit constitutes the only security that any sinner should ever receive and enjoy the blessings of salvation; but those whom he predestinates he also calls, and whom he calls he also justifies, and whom he justifies he also glorifies. Hence his people are actually brought to repentance, are enabled to believe, are directed and influenced to return, are actually sanctified, and constantly preserved. By his mediatorial government and continued intercession, he also secures the continual communication of all the blessings of the covenant to his believing people. He who hath loved them unto the death of the cross, will see that all its purchased ones are brought to himself, and all its blessings are communicated and enjoyed. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ." He the Head is in possession, and his people may be considered as actually possessing in him; and thus he secures the full enjoyment to them throughout eternity. When brought to himself by his grace, his Spirit becomes the Spirit of adoption, whereby they are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father." He witnesses with their spirit, seals them to the day of redemption, and becomes the earnest in their heart of the final blessedness. "Justified by faith, they have peace with God" in Christ Jesus our Lord: they have access into his grace, and stand therein, and rejoice in hope of that glory. How should their hope, or their salvation fail in the hands of such a glorious Redeemer; who stands engaged to complete his purpose, and the covenant engagement of Jehovah, in the eternal glory of his redeemed? For, says the Apostle, "if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Rom. v. 10.) He is their Surety, to bring them to eternal glory: "Father, I will," says he, "that they whom thou hast

given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John xvii. 24.) His work shall not be in vain : he hath accomplished all for them, and will accomplish all in them, and finally complete all his promises to them. He loved them from everlasting, and equally loves them through time, and will do so throughout eternity ; and therefore he has said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands."

As he stands engaged to save all his purchased seed, his truth and faithfulness secure the accomplishment of it, till all the ransomed and redeemed of the Lord "return, and come to Sion, with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; when they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. xxxv. 10.) O blessed Jesus ! be thou the Surety to thy servant for good. (Psa. cxix. 122.)

Let us then commit our persons and our cause into his hands alone. Sinners, you must ; or you never can find salvation ; never can you render the atonement, the satisfaction, or secure the honour of the Law, in the bestowal of mercy and forgiveness ; and if God be not just in salvation, he must be just in condemnation. Hence there is no other name under heaven, whereby we must be saved ; and all other dependence will delude the hope of the perishing sinner. — Penitent sinner, you ought to rest on Him alone : He can perform what none else can do for you : He hath completed the work of redemption, and is able to save even to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. Such a Saviour presented in the word of the Gospel, demands your attention, your faith, your love, and your dependence. And blessed be God, thou most guilty, unworthy, helpless sinner, you may rest your soul, and all its eternal concerns, safely and without reserve in his hands. He invites you to look to him and be saved ; and promises, that whosoever comes to him, he will in no wise cast out. Why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith ? — Believer, stand and rejoice

in the security which his undertaking, his work, his promises afford thee. The faith which he has given you, and whereby you do rest in reliance upon him, is itself the proof of his everlasting love, and your covenant union with him as your Head and Saviour. Hence you know, that he hath stood in your place, undertaken your cause, paid your debt, and transfers his righteousness to you. You are a sinner, but in his righteousness you shall appear righteous: you are unholy, but in him, justified from all things, you shall be presented, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, before the Throne. Your Surety makes it sure. (Heb. vi. 16, &c.) Not only has he opened the way, to render our return possible, but he has made all the perfections of God most glorious in the pardon and salvation of a believing sinner. He now loves to give the grace, to prepare the heart, to bestow the blessings, till glory surrounds all his redeemed people. This grace he has given you, which has enlightened your mind, humbled you under your fallen, guilty, and corrupted state, and led you to fly for refuge to Jesus, and look to him for righteousness, sanctification, and salvation: why then shouldst thou doubt? He who has given the desire, will satisfy the desire of grace: be not discouraged with the sense of your own unworthiness; you stand in Christ Jesus: he hath completed the redemption (Isa. xlv. 23): God has accepted it, faith receives it, and God will acknowledge the faith and dependence of his people, in the bestowal of all the blessings. All those blessings then shall be yours: there can be no further legal demand on the believing sinner, who has done all in the person of his Surety. Come then to him as your sins arise, for pardon, righteousness, strength, and victory. Come with all your temptations, trials, weaknesses, and fears: he is the Surety of the better covenant, to secure the fulfilment of all its promises, which rest not on your worthiness, but are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. The humble penitent and the believing soul shall find the word of truth unfailing. (Rom. viii. 1; vi. 14.) His eternal engagements, his designs of love, shall be eternally completed; and through all

their weakness, infirmities, corruptions, and want of zeal in the Christian warfare, he will conduct his redeemed and ransomed people, till they triumph over all, and till he has brought them to the kingdom of his glory, where neither sin, nor sorrow, nor enemies, shall delude, oppress, distress or injure them more ; and where he will magnify his grace and truth, by placing in their hand the palm of victory, and clothing them with the robes of eternal glory.

ESSAY IV.

Help — Helper.

WHEN the king of Syria, jealous of what he supposed to be the secret information of the prophet Elisha, had determined to seize upon him in the city of Dothan, he sent horses, and chariots, and a great host; and they came by night and encompassed the city about: and when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city, both with horses and chariots; and his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? But behold the views of faith; Elisha answered, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw, and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha." (2 Kings vi. 14—17.) Such is the change which takes place, when faith enlightens the mind of the believer, and opens his views upon the things which are unseen; those glorious realities which are as surely taking place in the invisible world of spirits, as those which, because more obvious to our senses, strike upon and engage our attention. When the believer, contemplating his present situation, his weakness and infirmities, his enemies and dangers, is ready to tremble, nothing but the views of faith can relieve or console the mind; but in every character of Jesus, as presented to the eye of faith, there is a suitableness to our state, to our fears, and to all our wants. He is the Helper of the poor, and of those who have no helper: his wisdom, power, and covenant care are the security of his church, and will eternally supply a sure ground of confidence to faith, till

triumphant over all. As in him are all the sources and treasures of might and power, of grace and blessing, he is said to be our Help; and our Help is in him, is laid upon him: and as the mighty Helper, in discharging the office which he has thus undertaken, he stands engaged to apply and to communicate that help, to call, to sustain, to preserve and bless his people. In this exercise of his grace and power we are now to contemplate him.

When man sinned he was immediately driven out from the presence of Jehovah, and entered upon a wide and desert wilderness, exposed to difficulties and to dangers, without any one to guide or to deliver him in this world of darkness and of misery; so that he became the prey of sin, of satan, and of every enemy. It is true he does not see this; because he is naturally ignorant of spiritual things; and therefore satisfied with the enjoyment of present and sensitive good: he remains at ease in the bondage of corruption, under the controul of satan, till he sink down to everlasting ruin. But when enlightened with the rays of Divine grace, he discerns innumerable dangers all around him; he is neither able to set out in the way of the Lord, nor to keep himself in the way, nor to secure himself from the enemies that beset it. The hope of obtaining a happy issue, and finally obtaining the life and glory to which he aspires, is often beclouded with doubt, and sometimes almost lost in despair. Sin, satan, the world, and self, (the most dangerous enemy of all, by the power of natural depravity) oppose his course through earth to the kingdom of his desire; and where shall he look? where secure an unfailing assurance of deliverance through and above them all? All his inquiries must have been vain, had not the blessed Jesus undertaken to be the Helper of his church. On him their help was laid in the counsels of eternity, when he was constituted the great and eternal Head of redemption. As such he sets himself forth in his word, invites the needy to fly to and trust in him, and promises, with all the faithfulness of Divine truth, with all the grace of infinite compassion, and with all the abi-

lity of almighty power, to take them under his protection with a never-failing, a never-ceasing care. His Divine nature, in union with ours, presents to our faith a Person completely suited to the mediatorial undertaking and office.

In his Divine nature he is the essential Fountain of all being, and of almighty power and might. And as all creation has derived its nature, its faculties, and its powers, as well as its being, from him ; so must the powers and faculties of every creature be under his direction and controul to accomplish his pleasure. When, therefore, our Helper is the Lord our God, in him our help must be secure. If, indeed, he were not so, to rest upon him would be but a vain, an idolatrous confidence, and subject the believer to the curse which is denounced by the Prophet: "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and which maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord: for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited." (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.) But "blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is: for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the years of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Ver. 7, 8: compare Psa. cxlvi. 3—6.) When God is our salvation, when the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song, then "we may trust and not be afraid." (Isa. xii. 2.) This renders him suitable for, and this sustains him in, his mediatorial undertaking and office. When we behold the blessed Jesus entering upon his work, we see him pledging all his attributes, all the perfections of his nature for its accomplishment, and, by his office, devoting all for the help and salvation of his people; for when engaging to act in such a character, all his Divine abilities are pledged for the fulfilment of all his designs. He looked, and there was none to help; and when there was no intercessor, he placed himself

in our place and stead : “ Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him.” (Isa. lix. 16.)

Now, then, he has finished the atonement, brought in the everlasting righteousness, completed the redemption, and, as exalted upon the throne, will complete all his designs of mercy.—How glorious is my Redeemer ! I fly to him for help : he encourages my reliance, and promises the continual exertions of his arm. I admire and adore his love, and have every reason to trust his ability and his truth. Let me only secure him as my friend, and I may renounce all confidence besides, and trust in faith the promise which he has made to his believing people. I secure as my aid his own infinite wisdom, his omniscient and omnipresent eye, his almighty arm, his covenant grace, and his unchangeable truth and love. With such a Helper, what though I am helpless in myself, in him I shall be safe : though not sufficient to do or to think any thing of myself, in and by him I shall be enabled to do all things. Jesus, Almighty Saviour, be thou my Helper, and I need no more. Let us contemplate him in his Omnipresence and Omniscience ; and in him we may boast an *Helper ever present*, suited to every season of difficulty or of necessity. In this view, how encouraging is the language of the Psalmist ! The Lord Jehovah is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in the time of trouble. “ They that know thy name will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast *never* forsaken them that seek thee.” (Psa. ix. 9.) The whole Book of Psalms is, indeed, an illustration of this view, and a constant discovery of the Psalmist’s faith in the ever-present help of the God of Israel. To him he flies : “ O God, be not far from me ; O my God, make haste for my help.” (Psa. lxxi. 12.) In him he places his trust and confidence : “ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble ; therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” (xlvii. 1.) In thankfulness for former deliverances, he pleads them as an en-

couragement to his faith for future aid. "Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my Help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." (xxvii. 9.) Again; "Unless the Lord had been my Help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence." But "when I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." (xciv. 17, 18.) The language of the Psalmist is beautifully expressive of the believer's sentiments and experience, in the various exercises of his mind, and the various steps of the Christian life. None but the Omnipresent, Omniscient Jehovah can be the Helper of his church of innumerable believers, scattered through the earth. Who else could attend to all their various wants, at the same time, in the different parts of the world, and be equally present, equally attentive to them all? No; it is the infinite Jehovah, upon whom our Help is laid, who hath undertaken the office, and who is able and faithful to execute it in the preservation of all his people. If we contemplate his unchangeableness, the faithfulness and truth of his very nature, we shall behold in him an *ever-constant* and *never-failing Helper*. Under the character of the Angel Jehovah, he is therefore represented by the Psalmist as constantly surrounding those who fear him, and securing their defence as surely as the encampment of innumerable hosts spreading their tents all around. (Psa. xxxiv. 7.) Similar to this is the original promise of protection which the Lord Jehovah, as the Leader of Israel, gave to Joshua, when he appointed him as the captain of his chosen people, to bring them into the land of promise. "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee: be strong and of a good courage." (Jos. i. 5, 6.) "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou discouraged: for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest." (Ver. 9.) The idea seems to be that of one whose power is secure, standing by another; who is unable to observe his enemies, dangers, wants, and perplexities, in order to direct, de-

send, and to deliver him. And the Apostle has told us, that though this promise was directly given to Joshua, it is as really given to every Christian soldier, fighting under the banner of the Captain of salvation,—to every believer in Christ Jesus who is fighting the good fight of faith. He has therefore directed us to draw from it this comforting and animating conclusion : Since the Lord hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee ; therefore “ we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper ; I will not fear.” (Heb. xiii. 5, 6.)

The same continued care over his church, the same unremitting constancy of supply, is beautifully represented by the Prophet Zechariah (iv. 1—7), by two olive-trees standing beside a candlestick of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and pouring into it by seven golden pipes a constant supply of oil, from its own living sources, to replenish it with an unfailing sufficiency for the lamps which are burning around it. And this is so explained by the angel who directed the Prophet, and answered his inquiries, as designed to lead us to a sense of our entire dependence, for the constant supply of grace, upon the fulness of Christ and of his Spirit, and a confidence in the all-sufficiency of that supply from that ever-living Fountain. (ver. 14.) “ This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” Read the whole chapter in this view, and it will be found an admirable illustration of the doctrine of Divine influences. As such, therefore, we must contemplate Him, as containing in himself infinite fulness, the all-sufficient, yea, the infinitely sufficient Helper of our souls. As he is always present in every time of need ; as his ability, his grace, his truth, and faithfulness are unchangeably the same ; so, in the unfathomable and boundless fulness of his perfections, his sufficiency must extend, not only to the full extent of all our wants, but infinitely exceeds them all. Contemplate, O believer, his Divine nature, his mediatorial character and offices, the work which he has undertaken, and the work which he has performed. Then look

at the promises of his word, and see if any thing can be wanting, or if any thing can be added; if there be not in **Jehovah** our Helper all we can wish, desire, or need; and an infinite fulness yet remaining, beyond all that we can ask, or think, or enjoy.

Like dying Jacob, the believer shall in the end bear his testimony to his fulness, faithfulness, truth, and grace, when he has fed him all his life long, and redeemed him from all evil. (Gen. xlviii. 15, 16.) Then his blessings shall extend "to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills;" and eternity shall never exhaust that fulness which shall eternally flow from him into the glorified spirits of all his redeemed. Let then this delightful consideration be brought home by faith into my heart, and applied to the various necessities which I feel in my Christian life and warfare. This is the gracious use which the believer is encouraged and directed to make of a doctrine so full of the most animating consolation. I feel the power of numberless infirmities which distress and dismay my soul; but, weak in myself, I am strong in him. He makes me to feel my weakness, that I may see my need, and learn to value the grace and strength of my Redeemer. He says to me, "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak" in myself, "then am I strong" in the strength of my Lord and Saviour. (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.)

I feel my corrupted nature; I lament the rising of my sins; guilty fears oppress my mind, and their power disturbs and dismays my soul. But He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I look to him and am helped: none can help me in this situation but He who can assure me my sins are forgiven me. Who can give me the confidence that sin shall not have dominion over me, but He who, when I was sinking into the pit of destruction, stretched forth his hand

and delivered me? "He sent from above; he took me; he drew me out of many waters," (Psa. xviii. 16.) He brought me also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my going." (Psa. xl. 2.) This was the help he afforded in my ruined state of nature, and still his blood cleanseth from all sin; still as the Advocate with the Father, the righteous Saviour, the Propitiation for sin, he secures to me the continuance and the repetition of the same blessings. Still I may take up the language of the Psalmist, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." (Psa. ciii. 1—3.) This is the help that the helpless sinner needs; this is the aid He graciously and continually vouchsafes to his believing people, and which he will supply against all the power of sin, and against all the consequences of sin in guilt and condemnation. It was He who found the ransom, and He will therefore secure the deliverance of his redeemed. In my Christian course, I am continually experiencing the power of temptations, the assaults of spiritual enemies, and opposition both from within and from without to my spiritual progress. Who then can deliver me? When wrestling against flesh and blood; and not only so, but against principalities, and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world; how often am I ready to faint, inclined to yield the contest, and about to fail? In myself I have neither inclination nor strength for the warfare. If there were not a Helper provided, in whom all the fresh springs of grace and strength were treasured up; if it were not for the promises of his aid, what encouragement could I derive, what incitement to go forward? When faith is low in its exercises; when it cannot rest upon the Saviour, or rely upon his word; the ground of hope fails, and discouragement presses down the soul. But to be able to say, "The Lord Jehovah is my Helper;" and to remember that He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;"

is then sufficient to revive the sinking spirit, to re-animate the dying hope, and to excite again to the Christian warfare. Behold, my soul, the promise of his grace: "Fear thou not," says he, "for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish," &c. (Isa. xli. 10, 11.) "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel," &c. (Isa. xlii. 16: compare lix. 19—21.)

My soul, hear again the language of the Apostle: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man;" "but God is faithful," which implies his covenant engagement for that purpose, "who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

In the Christian life I have duties to perform; but where shall I look, when of myself I can do nothing,—when I feel that I am not sufficient of myself "to think any thing as of myself?" The real believer is desirous of living to the glory of God, and therefore of acting agreeably to his calling, and suitably to the duties of his station. He would live in the exercises of faith and love; he would be lively in devotion, earnest in prayer, and ardent in praise; he would be patient in trial, diligent in duties, and active in services, in the elevation of holy joy, and the ready performance of willing obedience; but when he would do good, evil is present with him, and he feels a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. In himself, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing: who then shall deliver him from the body of sin and death? who shall set him free from the bondage of corruption, and confirm him

in the glorious liberty of the children of God? Never will he be better; never will he obtain any aid but by looking unto Jesus; and out of his fulness he must receive grace for grace: for he alone of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. The living branch must be united to the living Vine: it must abide in the Vine if it ever become fruitful, for separate from it the branch itself will soon wither and decay. The stream must be constantly supplied from the ever-flowing Fountain, or the stream itself will be dried up; but the branch, abiding in the Vine, will bring forth much fruit; and the stream, constantly supplied from the Fountain, will flow unceasingly, and spread its different currents to refresh and beautify the surrounding fields. Hence the Apostle was taught both "how to be abased and how to abound: every where, and in all things," says he, "I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry; both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 12, 13.) Is not the Lord Jesus still the same in himself? and is he not still the same to all his people? Are not his promises as really given, and as faithful and true to us, as they were to the Apostle? If we were living more by the faith of the Son of God, we should have a more abundant discovery of his glories and his grace, and should thus bring them more into exercise and enjoyment. Let the prayer of faith be continually entreating the supplies of grace from Him who is full of grace and truth; in whom all fulness dwells, and who is the Head and Root of his believing people; and the promise of God secures the supply in rich communication to the glory of his name, and to the comfort and safety of our souls.

While in this body I must feel the effects of sin, in varied afflictions which lead down to the gates of death and of the grave. I know not what or which of the multiplied diseases and afflictions which sin has introduced, may seize upon my frame; nor when they may receive their commission from the great Disposer of all, from Him who hath the keys of death and of the grave. But Jesus has taken

away the sting of all, and can turn, by his presence and his grace, the bitterest sorrow into joy; death into life, and the grave into the gate of heaven. Though I go down to the grave, there has my Jesus been before me: there has he triumphed and passed through, and carried the gates of death to the hill of Sion. He who is the Helper of his people will not fail them at that moment when they most stand in need of his sustaining power. When all other helpers must fail, must withdraw for ever, then he will stand by and conduct through the gloomy vale: His rod and His staff will be their stay and their support; and when flesh and heart fail, He will be the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever.

Read his promise, O humble believer! In the exercise of faith embrace it with holy delight: trust it with confident assurance: "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." (Isa. xliii. 1—3, &c.) Oh, let me then adore and trust that blessed Jesus who is the Helper, the only Helper, but the all-sufficient Helper, of helpless sinners! How absurd is the conduct of the man, and how dangerous his state, who ventures to live without Christ; without seeking an interest in Christ; without placing himself under his eye and care, in the most implicit dependence and submission! Daily are we reminded of our own weakness and insufficiency, and of our state of sin and misery. We have wants, which none but Jesus can supply; sins, which none but Jesus can pardon; enemies, which none but He can subdue; fears, which none but He can allay; trials, afflictions, temptations, and distresses, under which none but He, with his almighty power and

grace can support. Never can we meet affliction or death with peace and joy but through Him; nor shall we ever be able to stand before a holy God with acceptance; but as in Him: yet these are circumstances into which we must all and every one ultimately be brought. Why then should the sinner neglect the only Saviour, the only one who can effectually help us, in this trying season? If the sinner comes to Him, his promise assures him that he shall not be cast away: His grace is ready, and His fulness all-sufficient. But if the sinner reject him, and, with guilty unconcern, neglect to secure an interest in his care and blessings, nothing in heaven or in earth can ever deliver from the sentence of the law, the curse of sin, and the wrath of God. In the Christian course through life, here must the believer be continually seeking the supplies he needs; and to run the Christian race aright, he must be looking off from all besides, to look to Jesus.

He who is the first refuge of the enlightened and convinced sinner, must be the only refuge to the end. It is the security and happiness of the church to go up out of the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved. While this is thy great duty, believer, and while the promises of his word encourage thee to its exercise, be persuaded it is your only way of safety, and the only means of consolation. The people of God are, therefore, directed to cast all their cares on Him who careth for them; to be "careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, to make their requests known unto God; and the peace of God; which passeth all understanding, shall keep their hearts and minds by Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 6; 7.) Dismiss then, O believer, your unbelieving fears; by a simple faith, and cheerful dependence upon the wisdom, care, and love of the Lord your Redeemer. As a child, holding by the parent's hand, will be encouraged to pass through scenes of difficulty and darkness; while the confidence of a parent's wisdom and care allays its fear, excites its confidence, and gives it assurance of getting safely to the end; so let your faith rest on Jesus amidst all the darkest scenes of earthly sorrow,

fears, or afflictions. Be assured His wisdom and love will conduct you safely through all ; will lead you in the right way, and bring you to the right end. This was the view which influenced the mind of the Psalmist, and excited his lively faith, his holy resolution, and his confident expectation of a finally happy issue in whatever path the Lord might lead him. He is celebrating the care and love of the God of Israel under this very character, and has presented to the faith of the believer the grounds of his confidence, and the various benefits he may expect from him as such, through life, to the kingdom of eternal glory. Let the believer read it with the same exalted faith, and say, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore." (Psa. cxxi.) Let, however, the humble believer recollect that he communicates his help in the use of his appointed means. Here alone he promises to be found ; and here alone, therefore, may we expect to find him. "Wait on the Lord ; be of good courage, and he will strengthen thine heart: but wait, I say, on the Lord." If then you feel your need of Divine grace and help, under a consciousness of your own total insufficiency ; if you know where only your help is laid up, here you will be found in the application of faith ; for "Blessed is the man," says Jesus the Divine and Heavenly Wisdom, "that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." (Prov. viii. 34—36.) Realize then, O be-

liever ! by faith, your privilege and your security : and when depressed with enemies, difficulties, and dangers, turn your eyes to him who is able to deliver. He has graciously encouraged your trust and confidence. What covenant love, what infinite wisdom, what almighty power, what constant care, what abounding grace, is treasured up in Jesus ; and for the very purpose, that he might be the faithful, the effectual Helper of his church ! His promise secures the whole, in all their unfailling exercises, to promote and effect the eternal salvation of his people. How then can His promise fail ; the promise of Him who cannot lie, the promise of the God of truth, the promise of the Infinite, Eternal, Almighty Jehovah ; a promise made, not for our worthiness, but of his own grace, and therefore not to be prevented, in its fulfilment, by the demerit of the objects ? He delights to magnify his grace in bestowing his blessings upon the unworthy, when suppliant at his feet. His ability to perform is beyond a doubt ; and who can suspect his faithfulness or truth ? Let not then a sense of unworthiness discourage the exercise of my faith ; since it is not upon this I plead, when supplicating at the Throne, but upon the infinite atonement, righteousness, and redemption of the Saviour, together with the promises of his grace made through him, and secured by the faithfulness of the Promiser to the most unworthy who fly to him for refuge.—Whatever may be my sin and guilt, He is able to deliver me by the merit of that precious blood that cleanseth from all sin, and through which we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sin. Whatever are my trials and distresses ; however intricate and perplexing ; still he is able to become my effectual Helper, to the very end. He bids me in all to trust in him, to cast my burden upon him, and he will sustain me, &c. The omnipresent, the omniscient, the almighty, the infinite Jehovah can never be at a loss for means to effect deliverance, or to supply with grace and consolation. His help shall never fail, till I am got beyond all my sins and fears, beyond all my afflictions and distresses, beyond all my difficulties,

and dangers ; and then though I shall not need the same help that I stand in need of here below, He will be my Eternal Helper, my eternal security, my source of everlasting blessedness, in the world to come : for “ who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter : nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. viii. 35—39.) And will Jesus become such a Helper to me ? Let his word be my rule of judgment ; and has he not there promised to become such to all who fly to and trust in him ? Let faith then take the encouragement ; let it look to, and rest upon, him, through all the fears that conscious guilt would introduce into the mind. Through all the afflictions, trials, or temptations, which attend me through life, let me still continue waiting upon him, in the firm reliance of faith, who giveth power to the faint, and to them who have no might, increaseth strength. For though “ the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fall, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run and not be weary ” (Isa. xl. 29—31), and shall continue their heavenly progress to the end ; and by his help, and in his strength, shall never faint.

ESSAY V.

Gold.

LET us now view the Lord Jesus Christ, represented by that which is most valued upon earth; which engages the attention of men, which excites their ardour, the desire of which carries them through toil, difficulties, and dangers; and which, when obtained, procures for its possessors, honour, dignity, and respect, and all that this world can bestow. To this, the Lord Jesus Christ is compared; though he is infinitely beyond it, in his personal excellencies, and in the benefits and advantages which result from the knowledge and enjoyment of him and his salvation. Under the character of Wisdom, He is frequently, in the Book of Proverbs, compared and preferred to the finest gold. In the same manner He is represented in the Book of Job (xxviii. 12—19); “Wisdom cannot be gotten for gold; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold,” &c. &c. Considering Wisdom as a personification of Him who is the Essential Wisdom of the Godhead, and the communicative Wisdom of his people we may apply to Him, in its fullest sense, this interesting allusion. Yet the gold or the precious stone, can never equal his glories, or his value to my soul. What can be compared to Him, who is all my salvation? With Him are unsearchable riches; and if a partaker of Christ, I have more in Him, than all the riches which all the mines on earth could supply. Thus the church on earth, in figurative language, celebrated his glory, and his value. My beloved

is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, כְּתָמָּוּ, the word is doubled כְּתָמָּוּ, as the gold stamped with the royal image, תָּמָּוּ the gold of purity and solidity. As though the sacred writer had said, there is nothing here beyond gold to which I can compare Him. But that is not enough: I double the description, to intimate his superior excellency and glory, who is far, very far, yea, infinitely beyond its brightest splendour, its perfect purity, its utmost solidity and durability.

The most evident and obvious excellency of gold, as that which first strikes our attention, is,

1. *Its splendour, arising from the solidity of its parts.*

—When unmixed and unalloyed, it is the most *solid* of metals, and therefore the most bright and resplendent. It is used for the purpose of beauty and ornament, and is spread over other things, to give them a splendour and a glory. And when the bright sun shines upon the burnished gold, it is the most dazzling spectacle upon earth. In this respect, it justly, though inadequately, represents the glories of Immanuel either in his Divine nature or his exalted and glorified manhood. When heavenly things are to be represented by earthly things, it is only by such allusions that we can form any idea of their grandeur. Thus the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, is described, as being “pure gold, like unto clear glass, the gates of pearl;” “and the street was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.” (Rev. xxi. 10—21.) These, however, are but feeble images, by which to describe the external glory of the once crucified but now exalted Lord. When he appeared to the persecuting Saul, the brightness of his glorified human body was above the brightness of the mid-day sun. And in a more familiar discovery of his personal glory, to the Apostle John, the brightness of his countenance is resembled to the sun, when he “shineth in his strength: and when I saw him,” says the Apostle, “I fell at his feet as dead.” (Rev. i. 16, 17: compare Heb. iii. 3, 4.) If this partial discovery

to the eyes of mortals was such as to overwhelm them with the insufferable blaze of brightness; if they were not able to sustain even this half-veiled manifestation, what shall be the glory of his presence, where he unveils himself to the eyes of adoring angels and the spirits of the just made perfect? We have, however, at present no better, nor more apposite allusions; for it is indeed "what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive." Not all the dazzling glory of the cherubim of pure gold, in the holy of holies, in the Jewish temple; nor indeed all the awful glories of Mount Sinai, when the Lord descended upon it, veiling his splendour, which he discovered to Moses, from the eyes of common observers, in clouds and darkness, and thick darkness; can equal the majesty of his Divine nature, shining through his glorified human nature in the full blaze of infinite perfection, blending and uniting together, to attemper itself to the limited power of the highest order of angelic nature, or casting forth its magnificence all around to astonishing and admiring hosts. Here, in figure and in reflection, he is revealed as the glory of Jehovah; there he appears as indeed the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. (Heb. i. 3.) And when he comes on the throne of his glory, he shall come invested with that glory of the Father with all his holy angels, and then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. But that supreme and ineffable glory none can behold and live. The mortal must put on immortality; the earthly tabernacle must be changed; the dying body must become like his own glorious body, and the feeble power of flesh and blood must be formed for the inconceivable vision, before they can enter into that city, "where the glory of God doth light it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." New faculties must be prepared for those new discoveries of Divine glories, when all the majesty and brightness of Jehovah shall shine in the God-man Christ Jesus, upon the eyes of his adoring ransomed saints, in the world eternal.

2. The solidity and weight of gold is also attended, not only with splendour, but *also with durability*.—Gold is the hardest of all known bodies; and it is indestructible by fire or air, and therefore will not rust nor consume. It will endure the fire so that not a grain of it is lost, and “the strongest heat will not change its metallic qualities.” How true, but at the same time how weak, an emblem of the glory of our Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! If we contemplate his essential Godhead, “with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” And in his person, as Immanuel, though “he humbled himself,” and veiled his glory, by an act of voluntary humiliation for a time, it was but for a little time that he was made lower than the angels in human nature, that in that nature he might be crowned with glory and honour throughout eternity. (Heb. ii. 9.) In this complex person, uniting the human and the Divine nature in one Immanuel, we behold him as the purest gold, tried in the furnace of Divine indignation; enduring the fire of the Father’s wrath, which would have consumed us, yet still retaining the same glory; yea, rising still brighter and more illustrious. Oh, what a furnace was that through which he passed in the garden and upon the cross, when the Father made to meet on him the iniquity of us all; when he bare our sins, and carried our sorrows; when he became a curse for us; when it pleased even the Father to bruise him! But Oh, the amazing power and dignity of our Divine and Almighty Saviour! Through all, and over all, he triumphed, that he might be our all-sufficient Redeemer; and therefore he is highly exalted in our nature, and hath received a name above every name, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The purest gold can bear no comparison to the rising Saviour, when he burst the tomb, the Conqueror over death and the grave; or when he ascended on high,

leading captivity captive, and took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The flames of justice and of wrath tried him to the uttermost, in his almighty power, his covenant love, and the purposes of his grace; but after all he appears more resplendent in dignity and excellency, and is more evidently glorious to the eye of faith. Now he lives, and now he reigns, Head over all; and is, to his believing people, the Man more precious than gold, even the Man more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir. Here faith delights to contemplate his infinite and eternal excellencies; and the glorified spirits of his redeemed will dwell on the contemplation with increasing delight, through the same eternal duration.

3. *The excellent uses to which gold is applied may justly represent the infallible excellency of the Redeemer, in the blessings of his salvation.*—“Money,” says the Wise Man, “is a defence.” (Eccles. vii. 12.) “The rich man’s strength is his strong city.” (Prov. x. 15.) “The ransom of a man’s life are his riches.” (xiii. 8.) Yea, “money answereth all things.” (Eccles. x. 19.) To this sentiment the hearts of the worldly wise readily assent; nor can there be a doubt that that is the most valuable of all *earthly* properties, by which we are enabled to procure whatever else we need; and this is gold. There is not, in a proper state of society, any comfort of life that depends on property but what it will procure. Yea, if a man be rich, it will often procure for him, not only the useful conveniences and comforts of life, but the respect and attention of all around him, while poverty, and neglect, and even contempt, are often too nearly allied. “The rich man hath many friends.” All are ready to attribute to him the respect which he chooses to demand; yea, the credit of wisdom and superior understanding is very easily acquired by him who has the lustre of riches with which to adorn them. If, then, man possessed nothing but a mortal body, if his supreme happiness were in present things, his great earnestness and ardour in the pursuit of riches would be justifiable; for what could he

possess better? To obtain and to enjoy this would be his supreme object, his highest good. Of man, merely as mortal, it might truly be said, without any limitation, "Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun, all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God." And the surest evil under the sun, is a man "to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul, of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof." (Eccles. v. 18, 19; vi. 2.)

But man has an immortal spirit: he is formed to converse with, and to enjoy, spiritual things. The things of this world can never satisfy his thirst for immortality. He must possess still higher blessings, or be miserable; and what gold is to the natural sense, such is the Lord Jesus Christ to the immortal spirit: what the one is to the natural man, the Lord Jesus Christ is to the spiritual man: what the one is in the natural world, the other is in the spiritual world. If I have Jesus, I have all my soul can want. He can bless me, and make me truly happy; and, clothed with his righteousness, I shall be honourable and beloved of God: He can secure and defend me from every evil, make all things in friendship with me, and fully satisfy the desires of an immortal soul, without any deficiency or failure through time and through all eternity. It is only the ignorance and the carnality of man that prevent his valuing the Lord Jesus Christ, his grace, and his blessings; for while sin is in the heart, while the mind in its carnal state is formed to relish only earthly things and sensual objects, there can be no apprehension of the nature and excellency of spiritual things, and consequently no value for the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the glory of the spiritual world. It is therefore the great aim of the enemy of souls

to engage the attention of the natural man to the things of time, and to the various objects of sense which surround him, and to lead him to estimate them so highly, and, alas! so falsely, as to place all his happiness in the enjoyment of them. Hence amongst these things which are lost—*i. e.* among the perishing things of earth—the god of this world blinds the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) Thus deceived as to their true state, ignorant of their real wants, and mistaken as to their true enjoyment, the world at large are careless of Christ, and unconcerned as to the possession of him and his salvation. But, while the sensual world, deluded with imaginary bliss, pity and despise those who value Christ, they are themselves truly the objects of pity, since they are ignorant of the only Saviour and only Blessing of the human race. The humble believer compassionates the miserable fallacy that deceives their mind, and confirms them in errors so fatal to the happiness of an immortal soul, and so dangerous to their eternal welfare; and, with the kindness and philanthropy which conforms him to his benevolent Master, earnestly supplicates the Spirit of the Lord to enlighten their understanding, and lead them to the knowledge of that only good thing for the sons of men. The richest man on earth soon finds that there are several things which all his wealth cannot procure, and without which he has no power of enjoyment. It can give him neither health of body nor peace of mind, nor restore them when they are declining. It fails to help in matters of the greatest importance, and especially at the time when help is most needed. Go, ask through all the world, amidst the various things which the stores of gold can procure, where is the place of happiness? And each will answer for itself, “It is not in me.” “It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof,” &c. (Job xxviii. 12–28.) But what gold cannot purchase, the Lord Jesus Christ can bestow; even that without which we must be poor indeed. Riches can

procure food and raiment, and the luxuries of each. They can supply all bodily conveniences and comforts. They can secure our temporal possessions, and adorn our temporary habitations. They can do still more; they can, in ordinary cases, conciliate the favour, the esteem, and the respect of men; and, by rewarding, can retain their homage and their services to administer to our wants and our gratifications. But in the most important seasons of trial, affliction, or necessity, they can afford no aid, no support, no consolation. But here is the peculiar excellency of the Friend of sinners, and of the blessings which he bestows: they are suited to the seasons of trial, to support, and to carry through all; yea, to turn all into blessings. The peculiar benefits which he bestows are of a nature suited to the power and the duration of an immortal spirit, being spiritual and eternal. He can give me the pardon of all my sins, peace with God through the justification and acceptance of my person, the consciousness of Divine love and favour, the joys and consolation of his Spirit, the calm of soul in the season of trial and affliction, the hope of everlasting glory that can sustain even in the hour of nature's dissolution, and the satisfactory assurance of an unalienable title to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. These are true riches which never fade and never fail; riches which can never lose their value, and of which the true believer shall never lose the enjoyment. In comparison with these, how do all earthly things, in their highest glories, fade and vanish away before the eye of faith! Hence we see that the poor and humble believer is often happier than the richest of the sons of men: for he has joys and pleasures, and an unfailing source for their supply, which the world knows nothing of; a source undefiled with sin, which supplies him with gratifications free from guilty fears and gloomy apprehensions, and which do not terminate with the present system of things, but are suited to that glorious system which shall be the felicity of eternal ages, into which he is speedily advancing, and where they shall be perfectly

matured. The first blessing of pardoning mercy and justifying righteousness, which the Lord Jesus Christ bestows, opens the way to all besides. (Rom. v. 1, &c.) So that all things are theirs who can say Christ is theirs. (1 Cor. iii. 21.) Sense values earthly blessings, because they are present, and suited to the gratification of the body; the instrument through which alone, in the present state, the immortal soul can act or enjoy. But spiritual blessings, though unseen, are infinitely preferable in just estimation; and when faith beholds them (and it is the great work of the believer to live by faith, and not by sense), they appear so to the believing mind. But these are all treasured up in Christ Jesus, that they may be given to the believing sinner, and are secured to the enjoyment of faith, by the precious and never-failing promises of his word. Whatever, then, we may be destitute of, let us seek to have an interest in Christ, nor ever be satisfied without the knowledge of its attainment. The Apostle surely was not mistaken in the sentiment which he entertained of the incomparable value of the Saviour, when he accounted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; nor was he unwise in his determination when he resolved to suffer the loss of all things, that he might win Christ, and be found in him.

A small piece of gold will purchase immense loads of other things, which, though great in their bulk, are, perhaps, little comparatively in their value. And one grain of the grace of Christ, if we may be permitted so to speak, is, in its excellency and utility, infinitely beyond all the riches, the treasures, the glories of the world; and gladly would the dying sinner, enlightened by the light of truth, sacrifice all, and give up all that he ever possessed in this world, for its enjoyment; for it is the salvation of the soul for eternity. But in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is full of truth and grace; in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead; and he that is in Christ has a right, by union with him, to all his communicable excellencies and blessedness. We need not

fear to overvalue the excellency of such a Saviour; for all without him will in the end be as nothing: it will leave its unhappy possessor under guilt, under fear, under the terror of conscience, the curses of the Law, and the wrath of God; but to have Christ will turn every thing into blessedness. Then let us rejoice in Christ Jesus, but have no confidence in the flesh: let Him who is all our salvation be all our desire. Of him we may say, what never can be said of gold, or of all the wealth of India, There is not a want but He can supply for body and soul, for time and for eternity. And blessed be his adorable name, whatever he is, he will be to his people. If, then, we are asking how to obtain him and his inestimable benefit, it is our felicity that he freely gives what we stand so much in need of, and for which we have nothing equivalent to present, nothing that is suitable to offer, for its attainment. "Ask," says he, "and ye shall have:" Come, and I will not cast you out: Believe, and ye shall be saved.—Poor needy sinner, fly to this rich Repository of all grace and gracious blessings, and he will enrich thee with all his fulness of ineffable and eternal delight. "I counsel thee," says he, "to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. iii. 18.) You need not wait to bring with you any thing that may recommend you to his bounty; for his blessings are gifts, free gifts. There is with him the gift of pardon, the gift of righteousness, the gift of grace, the gift of his Spirit, the free gift of eternal life, the inheritance of the saints in light. All that is requisite is, to see your need, and to apply in the prayer of faith. He will not cast you out: he will not send you empty away, without the blessing you need: "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will," that is, upon the ground of his irrevocable will, "he heareth us." Ask, then, to have an interest in himself; for "he that

hath the Son of God hath life ;" yea, hath in him all things that are good.

4. Gold is also made use of *to cover and adorn other things, and thus to make them shine with its own splendour.*—The vilest wood, thus covered, will shine in this borrowed lustre, with the most dazzling beauty. Is there not here, my soul, a true representation of the infinite advantage which I derive from union with Christ, from putting on Christ, from having his righteousness imputed to me by my heavenly Father, and wrapt round about me in the exercises of faith? So shall I shine arrayed in all his glories, who is the Lord my righteousness. However guilty, however black and uncomely, however defiled and deformed, I shall be comely in that comeliness which he puts upon me. Thus the church rejoiced of old, and thus may every believer rejoice now; "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." (Isa. lxi. 10.) Thus arrayed, I shall appear glorious and beautiful, even in the eyes of infinite purity; and thus he shall present me without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. (Ephes. v. 26, 27.) I shall be "complete in Christ Jesus." The Lord God will not behold iniquity nor spot in me: he will not see iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel, since he sees nothing but that which adorns and covers them,—the beauty, the glory, the radiancy of the Lord Jesus Christ, their garment of everlasting splendour. Oh, let me then be found in Christ, not having on "mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith!"

Gold, therefore,

5. *As it is most valuable, is invariably most valued.*—So is, or ought to be, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his Divine perfections, his mediatorial excellency, and his infinite blessings.

He is the Beloved of the Father, his own Elect, in whom the eternal Jehovah delighteth; his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased. He has found an eternal, ineffable, delight in his person, in his union with him in Godhead, in the union of his Divine nature with his manhood, and in his characters, offices, works, and benefits which he bestows upon his people. He is most glorious in the sight of angels, who worship and adore him, and who eternally will contemplate the wonders of his mysterious person, still discovering new wonders in infinite succession.

He is glorious in the sight of all his redeemed people. Faith discovers his inconceivable excellency; and therefore "He is precious to them that believe;" precious in his person and character, his undertaking and his work, and in the infinite fulness of his blessing, so suited to, and so all-sufficient for, the wants they feel, or the desires that arise in their renovated and sanctified spirits. The grand distinction between true believers and others, is the admiring views which the former entertain of the Lord Jesus; and the grand chorus above, in which all the redeemed shall eternally join, is the ascription of all wisdom, and power, and honour, and glory to the Lamb. (Rev. v. 8—14.) Let our hearts be in union with them now. They will, they must be so, if our faith is, as it ought, directed by the discovery of his word, and realizing the beauties which it presents to us. And while faith admires and triumphs in the fulness of the Saviour, it brings into the heart also a joy that is unspeakable; it draws down all his blessings upon the soul of the believer, and anticipates the heavenly felicity. Not all the riches of the world can give that happiness which is thus secured to the believer, in the fulness of Jesus, communicated to faith.—O believer, sit loose to earth, and raise thy hopes and expectations far, far above. Such a faith in such a Saviour, and such inestimable blessings, will indeed teach thee and enable thee to overcome the world; for what can so elevate thy soul, and lift thee up above present allurements, as views like these? Dost thou indeed believe the glorious

things the word of Divine Truth speaks of thy Saviour and thy Lord? of Him who is the fountain of thy blessings, on whom thy hopes depend? How little, then, will all things here appear? Even gold, which answereth all things, is vile in the comparison. Let the poorest believer here find a ground of confidence, a motive for quiet satisfaction, in all the dispensations of Providence. What though obscure, and little, and poor, and mean upon earth, if thou art interested in Christ Jesus, and hast union with him, of whom are all things, and in whom is all fulness; if faith unites thee with him, by faith thou art rich indeed, rich towards God, rich for eternity. How exceedingly precious is this Jesus to thee now! what blessings, what consolation, what support, what joy, does he not supply to thee by the way! But how infinitely precious are those blessings which he has given thee to expect in him and from him, hereafter and through eternity! What is it of which he has made thee an heir, to which he has given thee a title, by uniting thee eternally with himself in the bonds of his everlasting covenant, and now in time by the quickening influence of his Spirit? Thou art "an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ." Think of this, and shake thyself from the dust. Encourage thyself for the Christian race and warfare: "gird up the loins of your mind: be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Thou art not called to give up much for thy Divine Master even of earthly good. To sacrifice thy lusts and corruptions to him ought to be thy delight and ambition; but if thou wert called to give up all on earth for Christ, what is it but to give up dung and dross for pure and sterling Gold? Only then be concerned to know, to love, to enjoy, and to serve him. Then shalt thou lay up the rich abundance of spiritual blessings, more precious than the gold of Ophir. (Prov. viii. 17-21; Job xxii. 21-30.) O believer, keep looking at Jesus while thou art looking off from all besides. Realizing your need, and comparing with it his glory, his suitableness, his fulness of everlasting blessings, every thing else will fade

and die away. The fine, the durable gold, shall perish in the general conflagration ; but then his glory shall shine forth more bright and more splendid. You know, indeed, but little of his glory on earth ; the highest exercises of faith discern his infinite perfections but darkly : but when you see him as he is, they shall excite thy eternal adoration ; while they enrich thee with all the spiritual felicities of his love, and invest and adorn thee with all the lustre of his beauties for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

ESSAY VI.

Strong Habitation.

FOOD and clothing, shelter and covering, are articles of the first necessity to the body, in the present system of things. Without the first we must soon die, and without the others we are exposed to every inclemency of the seasons, and must pass a miserable and wretched existence. Hence, as spiritual things are always represented by earthly, the suitableness of Christ, and the provisions of his grace to the necessities and consolation of his people, are frequently presented to our view under this allusion. He hath prepared for them the food of their souls, the Bread of heaven, and the rich provision of a feast; he is the covering of their souls, his righteousness is the wedding-garment, with which they are clothed and ornamented, and himself is their peaceful and secure habitation, to which believing souls may continually resort. Thus the Psalmist supplicates the protection of the Lord (Psa. lxxi. 3), and the humble believer is represented as making the Most High his habitation. (xci. 9.)—Many ideas will here present themselves to our view, similar to those that occur under the title *The Refuge*: but the peculiarity of the present title is the idea which it raises in the mind of domestic peace and tranquillity, of pleasantness and order, security and ease; in a word, the beautiful idea of *an home*. While we see how the Lord Jesus Christ answers these purposes to his believing people, if we can rest upon him in faith, and realize him in all his benefits, as ours, the meditation will be sweet and refreshing, affording a delightful foretaste of that rest and joy, which fill and crown the mansions of the blest.

An habitation must be,

1. *A place of security.*—Without this it can scarcely be called an *habitation*, or a *home*; for it ought to afford a sufficient shelter from storms and tempestuous weather, and secure us from the nightly depredations of thieves and robbers. We look to it in the wintry season as the place where we expect to find ourselves in safety and at ease, though the stormy winds may blow all around us. We pity those who are exposed to the fury of the blast, when the bleak north, or the piercing east, pour forth their treasure of hail and snow, and cover over the path of the wandering and perplexed traveller. We retreat into our habitation; and, encircling the bright and cheering blaze of the comfortable hearth, we congratulate ourselves upon our protection from the inclemency of the season, and our shelter from the howling storm, which beats upon it, and spreads its terrors all around.

Every man's habitation, in a well-regulated state, is protected by the laws, and is under the guardianship of the equity, the justice, and the power of the state. There the peaceful inhabitant sits under his own vine and under his own fig-tree, none daring to make him afraid. In this happy nation, the security of the subject is often represented by the proverbial saying, that every man's house is his castle. These views may afford a just emblem of the security of the believer in Christ Jesus, as to the preservation, peace, and salvation of his immortal soul. When the penitent sinner is, by faith, got as it were experimentally into Christ Jesus, he finds a secure and peaceful shelter, from every storm which sin brings over a disordered world. There the storms of guilt and wrath can never enter; nor can they injure the man who is in Christ Jesus. He is the secure retreat, the peaceful habitation of his people. When sin is forgiven, peace with God disarms them of all their power and terror; softens down their furious blasts, or stops them in their destructive current. The stormy tempest beat heavy on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Shelter of his people, that it might never reach to

them, disturb their peace, nor destroy their souls. It may be said of his church, as of the Kenites of old ; Let then the inhabitant of the rock sing, " Strong is thy dwelling place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock."

But that which shelters them from the storms of wrath, is also a secure defence from every enemy ; no thief nor robber can enter this habitation of rest, to hurt, to injure, or destroy their souls, or rob them of the rich treasure of Divine love and favour ; which their heavenly Father, in covenant mercy, hath bestowed upon them. Here in Jesus is security, absolute and unailing—the wall of fire : the glory of Jehovah is their defence. The church is therefore represented as thus triumphing in their safety : " We have a strong city ; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." (Isa. xxvi. 1, &c.) Trust ye then in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. In the wintry storm, or in the summer sultry heat and rains, how miserable would the man be, who was constantly exposed, without a suitable habitation to which to resort ! But how feeble a representation is this, of the destitute and dangerous state of the man who is out of Christ, unsheltered by his covenant love, or the arm of his almighty power ! What can such a sinner do, what peaceful hope or quiet satisfaction can he find, in the storm of affliction, death, and judgment ; when the fiery law beats in tempests, and the thunder of its curse rolls in tremendous sounds of judgment all around him ? If a sense of guilt now alarms and terrifies the convicted sinner, what can he do, or how can he sustain himself, in the views of eternity and at the bar of God ? There none will ever stand with confidence, but those who are found in Christ Jesus ; who have received Christ by faith, who are interested in him, who are washed with his blood, and clothed with his righteousness ; who are vitally united to him, and therefore partakers of the benefit of all he hath done, of all that he hath received, of all the glorious characters and offices he bears, for the salvation of his people. To hear the awful sentence, " DEPART, YE CURSED ; I never knew you," will indeed appal the soul ;

but this must be the solemn, the dreadful fate of all who are out of Christ. O my soul, how should I endure that sound? O my reader, how wilt thou bear to hear that awful sentence? But the Law brings us all in guilty; and there is no other name under heaven, whereby we must be saved, but the Lord Jesus. Fly then from the just sentence of the Law, and the wrath of a holy God, to Jesus: let neither pride, nor love of sin, keep thee from him: look unto him, and thou shalt be saved. Let faith receive and rest on Jesus, and thou shalt hear the gracious declaration, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins:" those storms shall never more strike upon thee to thy destruction. "Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." (Isa. xlv. 22.) O blessed Jesus! be thou my Habitation by faith: there let me defy every storm, and glory over every enemy. Secure in thine almighty power, and everlasting love, I flee to thee, as the strong hold of my refuge, and trust my soul, and all my concerns, and all my salvation unto thee. (See Psa. xlviii. 12—14.)

2. An habitation is the place where *provision is made for the accommodation, comfort, and supply of the family.*—This supply will generally be regulated according to the ability of the master of the house. If he be opulent and wealthy, there will be no deficiency in the accommodation of furniture or of food. All will be provided that may promote conveniency, that may gratify an elegance of taste, or that may secure the enjoyment of ease, if not the pleasures of luxury and refinement. All will be prepared, as to provision, which may not only be absolutely necessary, but which may satisfy the appetite with delicacies and with abundance. Thus the blessings treasured up in the heart of Jesus, for his people, are represented by the richest luxuries of a feast; "A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (Isa. xxv. 6); prepared by Jehovah, God of Hosts himself, for the enjoyment of all people. For this purpose, Wisdom hath builded her house, hewn out her seven pillars, killed her beasts, mingled her wine,

and furnished her table, and sent forth her maidens to invite the simple to turn in, and to partake abundantly of her soul-reviving dainties. (Prov. ix. 1—6.) Under the same figurative allusion, our Lord represents the blessings provided for sinners, in the Gospel. (Matt. xxii. 1.) “Behold,” says the all-bountiful Redeemer, “I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage.” What rich provision hath the Infinite Saviour made, out of the infinite fulness of his heart, for all the family and household of faith! To be in Christ, is to be invited to all; all that he can give, all that the immortal soul can want or enjoy. The blessings of pardoning mercy, the richest enjoyment of Divine favour, all the graces and consolations of the Eternal Spirit, all the sweetest manifestation of the Divine presence, the peace of God which passeth all understanding; the joy that is unspeakable and full of glory; the hope that anticipates that glory, till the table of everlasting love shall be spread in the glorious mansions of the blest above, and covered with the immortal provisions of everlasting glory. These are all in Christ Jesus, treasured up in him; for in him it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. (Col. i. 19.) In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (chap. ii. 9); so that we are complete in Him, having nothing that we can want but we find it treasured up in his infinite, inexhaustible, eternal fulness; and why is it laid up there but that, according to the purpose of the covenant of eternal mercy, “out of that fulness we might receive, and grace for grace.” (John i. 14—16.)

Let not then the humble and the poor believer repine at the present trifling inconveniency that may attend his earthly habitation, or even at the failure of his earthly tabernacle. He is but a stranger and a pilgrim here: earth is not his home; this body is not his dwelling-place: he lodges here at best but as a traveller at an inn, as a way-faring man for a night. If his accommodation here be comfortable, it is well: let him thank the God of providence for the bounty and liberality of his hand for the

kind and abundant provision he hath made for the happiness of this lower world, which he dispenses to his people as he pleases, and as he sees may promote their good. But if it be not so, he shall soon arise and be away: he is going from stage to stage through the wilderness; and he only awaits the happy morning, the rising day of immortality, and he shall leave all its inconveniences for ever. What though our houses here on earth be poor and mean, badly accommodated, badly provided; of how little consequence is it to the Christian pilgrim? There is a brighter dwelling-place in the skies, a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; mansions prepared for him by the Lord, his Redeemer, his glorious Forerunner. Interested in Jesus, he hath a title to all the blessings he hath obtained and provided; and very soon he shall get through, and enter upon his inheritance, which shall be incorruptible, undefiled, and shall never fade away. That he hath been poor in this world, will be no disgrace to him there, no bar to his taking possession; since he hath been rich in faith, and is a rightful heir, by union with his Elder Brother and Redeemer, of the promised inheritance. Whatever may be the glory or extent of earthly possessions, the body itself in which we hold these possessions is but a tenement of clay, a tabernacle frail and vile, put up in order to be taken down, and soon to die and turn back again to dust. But faith, the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, points us to a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God; to a better country, even an heavenly one. (Heb. xi. 1, 10, 16.) Well, then, might the Apostle exhort the afflicted believers of his time to gird up the loins of their mind, to be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. i. 13.)—Let us contemplate the believer's privileges as united to and in Christ, in the view of the Apostle; and it will wonderfully support us under all the troubles and sorrows of life, and greatly encourage our heart as we are passing through the trying

scenes of an earthly pilgrimage: "All things," says he, "are yours." Paul, Apollos, or Cephas,—all ministers and instruments, all means and ordinances of the church,—are intended for your good; all the gifts and graces with which he endues his ministers or fills his ordinances: "The world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours:" why? "for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 21—23.) Into what a richly furnished and well provisioned habitation does the believer enter, when, by faith, he enters into Christ Jesus? When faith unites him with and in Christ Jesus, then under his eye and care, and interested in his everlasting love, he feasts upon the atoning sacrifice which his love has made, and on all his rich redeeming blessings even here below in faith. While he dwells securely under his care, he feeds on all the enjoyment a spiritual mind can desire; and in him, as his eternal habitation in the heavenly world of glory, all the effects of sin shall be for ever done away, and the bounteous provision of redeeming love afford eternal and increasing felicity. O Lord, increase our faith on earth; and let it feed more abundantly upon the provision of thy grace, till we eat and drink with thyself, what thy love hath prepared for thy redeemed in glory everlasting!

3. Men delight to adorn their habitations, wherein they constantly reside, that they may not only be *suitcd for residence, but for pleasure*.—It is a great recommendation to a dwelling-house, that its situation is beautiful, cheerful, and elegant; and that it commands a pleasant and extensive prospect. On this account the Psalmist commends the holy city of God, the emblem of his spiritual church: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Sion; on the sides of the north, the city of the great King." (xlviii. 1, 2.) This, however, is only a type of him, who is himself "Beauty and Glory" (Isa. iv. 2); who is represented by every thing beautiful and glorious upon earth, but "in all things hath the pre-eminence." And what can equal that prospect which opens to the eye of faith, when

the believer stands secure in Christ Jesus? Not the view into an earthly Canaan, from the top of the Mount Pisgah, with which the eye of the Jewish lawgiver was delighted, and his mind revived; but over the everlasting hill of promise into the heavenly Canaan. The eye of faith penetrates through the veil of death, and looks beyond its darkest shades, where the passage has been opened, by the rising and ascending Redeemer, to "that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away;"—"to the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory." Faith beholds the city of the New Jerusalem, where there is "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it; and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." (Rev. xxi. 23—27.) The habitation, says the believer, in which I dwell, shall never decay nor fail: it is a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. There shall I dwell in Jesus, and with him through eternity—This was the subject of my dear Redeemer's last address and supplication to his heavenly Father for his church, when he was about to lay down his life for it; and his prayer is heard and answered, and shall prevail on behalf of his redeemed people for ever. "I pray," says he, "that they all may be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as *we* are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, &c. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me," &c. (See John xvii. 21, 22.) Is it possible for words to give us a more accurate and interesting view of that union which subsists between the Lord Jesus Christ and his redeemed people, and the security and happiness which they must enjoy eternally in him? In him they are safe; and,

dwelling in him by faith, they realize that security: they find the rich provision of his house continually spread before them, and take the most unbounded prospect through life, and through the veil of death, into mansions of everlasting light and glory. There let me dwell, and, in humble but believing confidence, survey the goodness with which he favours his chosen, and triumph with his inheritance.

4. An habitation or house is a place *where all the family have a right to enter when they please, and have that free access and admission which is not allowed to strangers.*—A poor perishing sinner, who feels his need, is indeed exhorted to come to Jesus for life and salvation, and is promised the privileges of adoption by faith in Christ Jesus; and when he comes as a humble beggar to the door, he shall not be sent empty away. When once admitted, among the family and household of faith, he has a right to enter at all times to realize its security; to feed upon its rich provisions; and to delight himself with its glorious and everlasting prospects. The state of the believer is, therefore, thus described by the Apostle, “Through Jesus Christ we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father;” and are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. ii. 18, 19.) And again (chap. iii. 12); “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him:” there they are made “to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” and are “filled with all the fulness of God.” (ver. 18, 19.) They are, therefore, represented as entering in and finding salvation, and with free access going in and out to find pasture. (John x. 9.)—The servants of a family have a right to many of the privileges of the house; but the children of the family are privileged with a liberty which neither strangers nor servants enjoy. They expect, and justly expect, all the blessings and advantages which the house affords: they come to their father with all their wants and all their desires: without suspicion or

fear they participate of all the comforts and gratifications which the head of the house hath provided. The provisions indeed are often prepared only on their account, to render them comfortable and happy; nor does an affectionate parent find any delight in them, but as communicated to his children around him. Yea, the ungrateful and rebellious prodigal, when returning to a sense of his folly and his duty, is welcomed by a kind parent, and restored to the best privileges of the family. Such is the grace of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: he runs to meet the backsliding but returning prodigal; rejoices over him as though restored to life from the dead, and employs his servants to clothe him again with the best robe, the robe of a Redeemer's righteousness; to set before him the fatted calf, the sacrifice of atonement for sin once made upon the cross; to assure him of covenant and everlasting love, by putting on his finger the ring of covenant mercy, and to prepare him again for his heavenly course, by the application of the precious promises of the Gospel, which, as the shoes upon the feet, enable him to tread down every difficulty, trial, or temptation, that, as the thorn in his path, would otherwise obstruct his passage. Then faith may come to Jesus at all times, with all its necessities and wishes; nor shall the believing sinner be ever cast out of his Father's habitation, nor ever denied the enjoyment of its blessings as far as his infinite wisdom sees to be for his good. It is the covenant habitation of his family, unto which they may continually resort. (Psa. lxxi. 3.)

5. And it becomes, or ought to be, *the place of family order, harmony, love, and peace.*—There the members of the house expect to find domestic happiness and peace: one interest alone should govern the whole; and every heart that dwells therein should be aiming to promote the general good, and the felicity of all. In a place where different persons take up their habitation, who are unconnected with each other, different interests may arise, different parties may be formed, and various contentions may agitate the uncomfortable lodging; but the united family will dwell

together in union and in peace.—This allusion is therefore frequently used in Scripture to represent the union and harmony of the church, the family of Jesus. All believing sinners meet in Christ: they are united to him as their one Head; they are under him as their one Lord and Saviour; they look to him as their one Portion and Hope, and therefore, as members of the same family, are, or ought to be, united in Christian love. This would be the case in a much greater degree, if they did but constantly reflect that, as in a well-ordered family, so each, in the appointment of God, has in the church his proper station, employment, and duties: that these are regulated by the providential disposal of the great Master: that all are as necessary in their several stations, as the different members of the body are in the natural body; and all have their proper use and benefit for the preservation and comfort of the whole: and that, as the weakest member of the body has its proper place, and must not be despised by the most honourable; so, in the family of Jesus, none must despise another because his situation or usefulness in the church appears to be of an inferior order, for all will in the end be found to have been arranged by a plan of infinite wisdom and everlasting love to the whole. United in Christ Jesus, each shall be found to have been useful to his glory, and all for each other's good. When thus an habitation is formed with every circumstance of security, and provided with sufficiency and abundance, so that no pinching poverty, nor even the cares of a too rigid economy, corrode the mind: when social harmony and order is preserved, and love and kindness pervade the family circle, how sweet, in the secure, the peaceful, the plentiful habitation, are the comforts and enjoyments of domestic life? This indeed, even in the present state of things, can never take place, or long continue, without an union in Jesus, without the love of Jesus influencing the heart of all, or without enjoying even present comforts in and with him. Then indeed the happy family on earth will be an emblem of that state to which the believer is admitted

in Christ Jesus : it will bear a resemblance to that heavenly state where believers shall all be admitted near *their God and Saviour* ; not like a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home. This is the believer's privilege now ; faith realizes it in part ; and, if more in exercise, it would bring more of the sweet anticipation into the heart, till the family of faith shall be removed to the eternal habitation in the heavens. For the dwelling of the believer in Jesus is not like the tenure of a temporary lodging, but like the constant residence in an abiding dwelling-place : all which we can trust in, all that we enjoy on earth, all the possessions we acquire, are at best but the temporary lodging of a pilgrim hastening on his journey to the land he has in view. He is continually reminded that he must be up and going forward. The various providences and changes of life are thus continually recalling to our recollection our transitory and uncertain state below : they frequently and solemnly charge us to " arise and depart, for this is not our rest, because it is polluted." But when by faith the penitent believer gets into Jesus, there he finds a resting-place that shall never fail him. It is the very same in which he shall find his eternal rest above, though at present in a land afar off. There has been no other resting-place or secure habitation to the people of God from the beginning, nor shall be through eternity. The believer, therefore, never changes his hope, his confidence, or his reliance : he never seeks nor wishes to hear of any other place to dwell in : in the storms of trial, affliction, death, or judgment, he flies to the same place for security and ease. Thou, Lord, says he, " hast been our dwelling-place in all generations : before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world," &c. (Psa. xc. 1, 2.) He, therefore, " that dwelleth in this secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and shall say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust." (xci. 1, 2.) In this confidence the Psalmist again rejoices : sheltered here, he would fear no evil in life or in death ; yea, even in the

presence of his enemies, he found the table of everlasting love abundantly provided. And when goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life, he assures himself that he shall dwell in this house of the Lord for ever (Psa. xxiii. 4—6.) Thus also the Apostle did triumph in the prospect of eternal joy and security beyond the changing scenes of life: "We know that, if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and "in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." (2 Cor. v. 1, 2.) And what is this hope, in its fullest extent and felicity? It is to be "absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (ver. 8.) The prophetic Apostle takes a view of that delightful dwelling of the Lord with his people: "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men; and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people: and God himself shall be with them, and be their God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," &c. (Rev. xxi. 3, 4.) There is "the throne of God and of the Lamb, and his servants serve him; they see his face, and his name is upon their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the *Lord God* of the holy Prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." (xxii. 3—6.) "And behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." (ver. 7.)

What then can be of such importance to the sons of men, as to be assured of an interest in Christ Jesus? Without this, all the glories of earth will soon be absolutely nothing, passed and gone, to appear no more for ever; but with this, all its sorrows are trifles, soon to be changed into everlasting joy; and faith even now anticipates the approaching scenes with a joy unspeakable and

full of glory.—But even to thee, my fellow-sinner, these joys are open: Jesus is an open door; enter by faith, and thou shalt find the security and the provisions of his house. While this is infinitely important to thy present peace, and especially to thine eternal welfare, he invites thee to himself; he engages to receive thee; he promises to bless thee. Fly into this Refuge: let faith rest upon his promise; and while he fulfils his promise, in the abundance of his pardoning and saving grace, be thankful and gratefully obedient. There, my soul, find thy refuge, thy rest, and thy constant dwelling-place: shelter thyself, by faith, in Christ Jesus. He is almighty to save, and all-gracious and unchangeable in his love. In him, though storms may arise around thee, no storms can hurt thee; nor can any enemy, in this shelter, injure thee. Here thou shalt find abundant blessings of pardoning mercy, justifying righteousness, sanctifying and comforting grace. The glorious prospect will stand open before thee into the eternal world, the glorious habitation of the just in the heavenly Canaan; and soon thy present joys shall terminate in the full enjoyment of all their felicity, when exalted with them into his presence and at his right hand. Let faith realize the prospect with gratitude, thankfulness, and love.—Seek no other refuge, O my soul! none other can afford thee either protection, provision, or peace: none other can be needed in all thy trials or temptations. Glorify the Lord thy Redeemer, as thy constant and unchangeable hope and confidence in all; and let him be thy strong habitation, to which, in every time of danger or of want, thou wilt continually resort.

ESSAY VII.

Faithful Witness.

“I COME,” says the adorable Redeemer, “to bear witness to the truth.” Through the whole of his life, therefore, his life itself, and the doctrines which he taught, were one continued testimony to the truth of God, confirmed afterwards by the influence of his Spirit upon his Apostles, who taught the very same truth as was before delivered in the personal ministry of our Lord, and was transmitted to us as it now stands recorded in the sacred Scriptures, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but in which the Holy Ghost instructed them. We need, then, look no further than to the declarations of our Lord himself, to answer that important question, What is truth? Here we find the full display of all the great truths of God, which concern the salvation of man; and at the same time, we must fix upon our minds the firm and unshaken persuasion, that whatever we find in the teaching of our Lord is the truth itself, the truth of God; and that “heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of his words shall fail.”

There are some who, desirous of invalidating the great leading doctrines of the Gospel, profess that they are willing to rest the proof of every doctrine upon the personal testimony of Christ himself; rejecting the testimony of his Apostles, though inspired by the very Spirit that rested upon Christ, as a mere human reasoning upon, and explication of, his divine teaching. Though we must object to such a conclusion, yet the believer in those doctrines need not fear to rest the decision of their truth upon this testimony alone, fairly examined and candidly

submitted to. It is true, in the discourses of our Lord Jesus, we do not find those doctrines so fully stated, so clearly explained, so amplified by reasoning, and the necessary deduction from them, as in the writings of the Apostles, who were sent forth for the very purpose, under the Spirit of Christ, to explain the doctrine of the Lord, and to instruct mankind in the knowledge of salvation. But every doctrine which relates to the state of man, the divine person of the Saviour, the way of salvation, the regenerating and preserving Spirit of Christ, the hope and expectation of the believer, is there decidedly affirmed, and can leave no doubt in the mind of the candid inquirer what is the truth of God. Let us but go to this Divine Teacher, sit humbly at his feet, inquire with humility and a child-like disposition; and we cannot err, nor be doubtful, as to the great doctrines which belong to our holy religion. He himself, however, has taught us the need of the illuminating influence of his Spirit, to open the understanding and clear away the darkness from our minds, without which the laboured researches and the reasonings of men may only confirm the prejudice of the carnal mind. We must therefore come in dependence upon his grace and illumination, while, with humble fear and firm reliance upon the faithfulness of our Divine Witness, we implicitly believe and receive whatever he hath spoken. For the partial admission of his truth is as injurious to ourselves as it is dishonourable to him, and will bring down the judgment of a holy God, perhaps in the judicial blindness and infatuation of a corrupted heart, and the wilfully perverse reasoning of a darkened understanding.

When we consider the character of Jesus, as the Faithful Witness, we might point to the display and confirmation which the truth derives from his person, his works, and his instructions. But as to the evidence derived from his person, this is fully considered under his title as *The Truth*. To this also may, with more propriety, be referred the testimony of his works: we shall, therefore, under the present character, principally confine ourselves

to the testimony of his words, or personal instruction. This instruction may be considered as branching itself forth into the truths and doctrines which he taught, the invitation or promise which he has given, the awful threatenings he has denounced, and the prophetic declarations whereby his character and testimony were originally confirmed. Here will open a vast field of information, confirming the faith of the believer, and glorifying the great Christian Teacher. We may consider the faithfulness of his witness, or testimony,

1. *In the truths and doctrines which He taught.*—And this again, may branch itself forth into his instructions, as to, (1.) The covenant engagement in the work of redemption, the person and will of the Father, the undertaking of the Son, and the personality and office of the Spirit;—(2.) As to ourselves, the state in which man is found as a fallen creature, and the method of his recovery;—and (3.) As to himself, his character, his work, and the suitability and fulness of his salvation. These are subjects of infinite importance to the hopes and happiness of man; and on this, the testimony of Jesus will give us the most decided and unequivocal information, to the most certain confirmation of our faith.

(1.) *The covenant engagement*, in the work of redemption between the Eternal Three, is no doubt the primary cause of all the hope and the salvation of sinners. Let us shortly hear the testimony of our Divine Teacher upon this most interesting point. The Father is represented by him as having a will, or certain determination, for the salvation of his people;—a will which he himself came to do, to perform, to fulfil, while the Spirit testifies of both; viz. the will of the Father, and the fulfilment of it in the person of Messiah, the Christ; and applies the salvation of Jesus to the heart of his redeemed. There are, therefore, according to the testimony of our Lord Jesus, as well as by the declarations of the Apostle, “Three which bear record in heaven, and which Three are One” in nature and in design: the language of the Redeemer on earth is correspondent

with his covenant engagement as represented by the Psalmist (xl. 6): "Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God." Then he fulfilled this prophetic declaration: "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." And in the fulfilment and application of the glorious plan, the Spirit Jehovah lifts up the standard against the overflowings of the power of the enemy; and, resting upon the Redeemer without measure, rests also on his covenant-seed for ever. (Isa. lix. 16—21.) These views are beautifully stated in those incomparable chapters, the 5th and 6th of St. John's Gospel. The mission of the Father, and his own voluntary and perfect acquiescence in it, are most clearly stated in chap. vi. 32—40; where, comparing himself to Bread, he says, "My Father giveth you the true Bread from heaven; for the Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the Bread of Life," &c. And again; "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me; and this is the Father's will that sent me," even the salvation of all his people, "that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." But without the influence of his Spirit, no sinner can ever know his own state, return to God, or embrace the blessings of his salvation. Hence he tells us expressly, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" and this is in fulfilment of the prophetic promise, "They shall be all taught of God." (ver. 44, 45.) And again; "It is the Spirit which quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (ver. 63, 64.) As his people, therefore, are the gift of the Father to him, they are and shall be effectually brought to him by his Spirit; "for all," says he, "that the Father giveth me

shall come to me." (ver. 37.) He calleth, therefore, his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out: he gives unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands. (John x. 3, 28, 29.) For this purpose he prays the Father, who gives this other Comforter to dwell continually with and in his people. (xiv. 16, 17.) He teacheth them of all things. (ver. 26.) He reproves of sin, by enlightening the mind, and displaying the spirituality, holiness, and extent of the Divine law, and the consequent sinfulness of transgression; of righteousness, by displaying the complete redemption of the Lord Jesus; and of judgment, in the everlasting triumph of the Redeemer over sin, and death, and hell. (xv. 7—10.) Hence he guides them into all truth (ver. 13), glorifies Christ, and reveals him and his blessings to his people. (ver. 14, 15.) We have chosen this passage from the Gospel by St. John, because that Evangelist decidedly recorded, more than all the rest, the discourses of our Lord, as a discovery and illustration of the doctrines which he taught. Nor is it possible to find plainer assertions or clearer testimony to these solemn truths, in any of the sacred writers. The effects of his instruction, when he enforced upon the Jews these very humbling doctrines, were also similar to those which are now produced whenever the same doctrines are preached. Many were offended at him, and went back and walked no more with him. He will, however, be found the Faithful and True Witness. Let us, therefore, rather imitate his faithful disciple, who with holy indignation replied to the inquiry, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John vi. 67—69.)

(2.) Let us hear the testimony of this Divine Teacher, *as to ourselves, or as to the state of man.*—He knew, we are told, what was in man; and he hath given us a faithful testimony as to his guilty, ruined, and helpless situation. What can more explicitly depict the total fall and depravity of human nature, than the declaration, that "that

which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6); only fleshly and sensual; that out of the heart of man proceed (as its natural fruit) evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; "all these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark vii. 21, 22.) His inability to help himself out of such a miserable situation is strongly implied, when he is represented as perishing (John iii. 14, 15); as condemned (ver. 18); as lost (Luke xv. 4—7); as dead (John v. 25.) In consequence of this, he not only stands in need of some spiritual assistance to aid his own endeavours in the work of reformation; but of the regenerating grace and power of the Holy Ghost, to turn his very heart to God. Here the testimony of the Saviour is most decisive, confirmed by the strongest asseveration with which he was accustomed to claim attention to the most important points of his instructions. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3—5.) And without any figure, he tells us that no man can come to him except the Father, which hath sent him, draw him; or except it were given unto him of the Father. (John vi. 44, 63—65.) That this is to be referred to the sovereignty of his grace, he plainly informs us, when he says, "I know whom I have chosen" (xiii. 18); and again, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit," &c. (xv. 16.) In this sovereign disposal of the Father, He, who knew with the most cordial and unreserved acquiescence the mind of the Father, cheerfully expresses his submission. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. xi. 25, 26.) Upon this subject the Apostle has enlarged in Rom. viii. 1—9; but no words can ever express more clearly the great doctrine of human depravity, the need of regenerating grace, the sovereign

communication of that grace, and its sanctifying effects, than the various parts of our Lord's discourses, to which we have now referred. But not only are we taught the need of the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit, for the renovation of our fallen nature, but the necessity of an atonement; a ransom, a sacrifice for sin; in order to a sinner's pardon, justification, and salvation. He expressly tells us, he came to lay down his life "a ransom for many," (Matt. xx. 28); that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but should have everlasting life; and that for this purpose the Son of Man must be lifted up upon the cross, as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness (John iii. 13-15);—that he giveth his life for the sheep, lays down his life for the sheep; and that, therefore, the Father loveth him as Man and Mediator, because he lays down his life and taketh it up again. (x. 11, 13, 17.) In what manner can this possibly be understood, but as referring to the atonement for sin, in the blood of his cross, and teaching us, according to the language of the Apostle, that we have redemption only through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of Divine grace, that God hath set him forth as the propitiation to declare his righteousness in our forgiveness. (See Eph. i. 7; Rom. iii. 25, &c.)

If man then be in this state, if this be the only way of his salvation, through the atonement of the Redeemer, then its blessings must be freely given and received by faith; and therefore, "It is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." (Rom. iv. 16.) With this testimony of the Apostle, the testimony of the Saviour also agrees: "He that believeth shall be saved. Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. He that believeth is not condemned. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 15, 18, 36.) And yet from

the regeneration of the heart by the Spirit of grace, he tells us that the fruits of holiness must necessarily flow forth in the temper and the life; for make the tree good, and its fruit will be good. (Matt. xii. 33.) Every good tree will bring forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. From their fruits, therefore, must arise the evidence of the state in which professors of his religion really are: and the tree that does not bring forth good fruit will "be hewn down and cast into the fire." (Matt. vii. 16—23.) These are the grand doctrines and foundation truths of the Gospel, which, being so contrary to the pride and corruption of man, excite in general his decided enmity and opposition, against which the human mind is continually cavilling, and which the pride of reasoning often tempts him to deny. They stand, however, revealed in the clearest manner as the doctrines of the Lord himself; and they are connected with, and enforced by, the doctrine of his resurrection from the dead, of a final judgment, and an eternal world. (Matt. vii. 22, 23; John v. 28, 29.) In all he will be found the Faithful Witness: his doctrine will be found the truth of God; and it is our wisdom to submit our understanding to his testimony, and our heart to his command; and to receive, as little children, the instruction of this great Prophet of the house of God.

3. *As to his own person*,—His actual character, the nature of his work, his design in accomplishing it, the all-sufficiency of his grace and power, and the blessings of his salvation; here also we have his own testimony in the most decisive manner. "I am one," says he, "that bear witness of myself" (John viii. 18); and "if I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true" (John v. 31); for "I know whence I came, and whither I go." (viii. 14.) As to his *person*, therefore, we cannot have clearer testimony, nor one more decisive of his Divine nature and union in the essence of the Godhead. When he calls himself the Son of God, it was in such a manner that the Jews well understood his meaning: nor does he endeavour to deny the charge, or to lower down his pretension, when they accused him of thereby

making himself equal with God. (John v. 17, 18, &c.) At another time he himself decidedly claims this equality, and declares, "*I and my Father are one*;" and at another time he asserts his title to equality of worship, that "all men must honour the Son, *even as they honour the Father*." (John v. 23.) The Apostle has not more fully declared his Divinity and Godhead, when he tells us that "He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God." We need not wonder at the expressions of subordination which we find him at other times using: we shall easily perceive that they are not at all inconsistent with the claim of equality in Godhead, if we consider his complex person as Immanuel, God and man in one Christ, and the character of subordination which he assumed in the covenant of redemption. If he acknowledge his subordination in his human nature or mediatorial character, while he asserts his Divine equality as one in Jehovah, these can never be considered as inconsistent positions. As man, he is indeed inferior; as God, he is one with the Father; as God-man, and Mediator also, his office, or the character which he voluntarily assumed, is that of submission and obedience, to do the will of the Father in the salvation of his people. Hence arose those different, but not contradictory, assertions of our Lord: "My Father is greater than I." As Man and Mediator, "*I and my Father are one*," as a person in Jehovah. This view corresponds with the universal and invariable language of Scripture: this from the whole concurring testimony of Scripture, with the testimony of our Lord himself, we must assert to be the truth of God; while those who deny it have no other reason for a denial, but that exceedingly absurd one, that they cannot understand it.

When, again, the Lord Jesus Christ represents his actual character in which he appeared on earth, we find that it is exactly the same which he is described as condescending to take in the counsels of eternity. Not only is he the Teacher, but the Mediator, the Redeemer of his people; and as such he presents himself to us under different

allusions. He is the Door of our access to God; He is the Way in which we come near to God, as our Father; He is the Light to enlighten a dark world; He is the Life of his people; He is the Bread from heaven, the means of supporting and sustaining that life. The work which he performed in order to this, as before stated, was to give himself a ransom, to lay down his life; and the great design of all this work of his love and condescension was, that they might live before him, or that they might have everlasting life. And as to his all-sufficiency for this work, as it relates to the glory of God, he himself appeals to the Father, that he had finished the work which was given him to do; and proclaims upon the cross, "It is finished!" as it relates to the salvation of man. And when about to ascend on high, where the heavens have received him till the time of the restitution of all things, he informs us that he has received all power in heaven and in earth; and that the Father hath given him (as Mediator) power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as were given him. (John xvii. 2.) When we put together these declarations of the Lord Jesus, what a Divine, what a Glorious Saviour, is here presented to our faith! What man, what prophet, did or ever could so speak of himself as the Lord Jesus Christ spake? His own testimony leads us into the most adoring views of his person; claims our worship, our trust, our confidence, and our love; but He is the Faithful Witness. Let him, then, be my Teacher; and while I implicitly submit to all his instructions, let him who is all my salvation be all my desire!

Having considered the truth to which this Faithful Witness bore his testimony on earth, there are two or three other views which will deserve somewhat more of our attention. As this, however, is the principal design of his bearing the name, upon the rest we shall dwell but little. We may however, observe that He is a Faithful Witness,

2. *In all the gracious invitations and precious promises which he hath given.*—While in the former part of this

character, we have seen him conveying wisdom and instruction to the inquiring mind, in this he will be acknowledged as bringing consolation to the humble penitent, and to the tried and fearful believer. While the character of a Saviour is that in which the Lord Jesus appears most suited to the necessity of sinners, when he comes into the world as such, the language of his lips corresponds with the grace and gentleness of his character. He came to seek and to save the lost, the perishing, the guilty; and He is therefore continually found encouraging sinners to come to him for pardon, life, and salvation. "This man receiveth sinners," was the malicious but absurd accusation of his enemies against him, though it was the very design of his taking that humble nature in which he appeared. It was the glory of his ministry, and of the office which in it he sustained, and the fulfilment of all the purposes of his condescension. He, therefore, never casts out any who come to him, and has assured the humble penitent, by his faithful promise, that he never will. He has left on record the most gracious invitations to perishing sinners, attended with the most encouraging promises of acceptance, and the bestowal of every blessing. "Come unto me," says the compassionate Redeemer, "all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matt. xi. 28.) "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) The acceptance of the returning penitent by this gracious Saviour implies the gift of all the blessings of salvation, from pardon to everlasting glory, with all that is needful by the way. "For he that cometh unto me," says he, "shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (ver. 35.) And when he has fed and guided his people through all the wilderness, then he has engaged to conduct their steps to his Throne above, and bring them all to the full enjoyment of his salvation; for this is the will of the Father towards all his redeemed and believing people.

And as he has fulfilled that will in their redemption, he will fulfil it also in their eternal glorification ; “ For this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and *I will raise him up at the last day.*” (ver. 40.) While his promises, therefore, encourage the humble sinner’s application to him, whatever may be his guilt or his necessity, the faithfulness of his character should confirm the faith of the believer, while resting upon his word, for all the grace he needs. The Apostle has beautifully represented the security which thus arises to the believing soul : “ The Son of God, Jesus Christ,” says he, “ was not yea and nay ;” for “ all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us.” (2 Cor. i. 18—20.) He will be found that Faithful Witness who will never deceive our confidence, and in whom we can never trust in vain. This indeed is the great work and business of faith, to take the word of Christ as our dependence, to give him the glory of his truth by believing and trusting in him, and expecting from him all which he has promised to bestow. In this we cannot be mistaken, since he is infallibly faithful and true. Without the promise of his word faith would be presumption, and the expectation of any blessing for a sinner totally unfounded ; but not to trust nor expect when and what he has promised is the most unreasonable unbelief,—the most dishonourable to Him, and the most ungracious to our own souls. His exceeding great and precious promises have secured to the believer every supply : nothing can be wanting to those who are interested in them. O for faith to believe so as to give him glory, so as to bring down the abundant blessing into sweet enjoyment in our own experience ! Lord, increase our faith ; since thy promises are infinite, and thy truth and faithfulness unchanging !

There is, indeed, another view of the character of Christ as the Faithful Witness which ought to engage our attention, since he will be found as true,

3. *To all his awful denunciations against sin and sin-*

ners, as to his promise towards the believing penitent.—Has he declared, that he that believeth not shall die in his sins, and shall be damned; that the unbeliever shall perish; that he will at last reject the fruitless and insincere professor, as well as the profligate and the profane sinner? (Matt. vii. 21—23.) Such then shall certainly hear the awful sentence, “Depart from me, ye cursed”—“I know you not”—“I never knew you.” (Matt. xxv.) The faithful Saviour will be glorified in his justice, as well as in his grace; in his judgments upon those who reject his salvation, as well as in his blessings upon those who believe in and love him. His threatenings are as true as his promises, and eternity shall prove his faithfulness in both. Oh, let the guilty sinner shake off his unbelief, and flee for pardon and forgiving mercy to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ! then shall he find his faithfulness in rescuing him from his guilt and danger, and introducing him to the peace and privileges of his Gospel: but if he continue in impenitence and unbelief, he shall as surely perish, for the mouth of the Lord Jesus hath spoken it.

In one other view, and which will close our present meditation, he has indeed already manifested himself to be the Faithful Witness in confirmation of all beside; viz.

4. *In his prophetic declarations.*—Parts of these, which were intended as proofs of his Divine mission, and as evidences of the truth of his doctrine and his promise, were speedily accomplished in the conduct of his providence. They are, consequently, the most decided proofs that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ the Son of God, and afford us the most decisive assurance of the fulfilment of all which he hath spoken. The prophecies to which we now refer are those especially which related to the destruction of Jerusalem; and how remarkably and exactly these were fulfilled in the event, the testimony of history gives us the most decided proof. This was accomplished by the Roman power, under the standard of the Roman eagle. The temple itself was entirely destroyed, notwithstanding every effort of Titus to preserve it from the fury

of his soldiers. The state and polity of the Jewish people were entirely dissolved, and they themselves scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. (See Matt. xxiv. and the parallel passages.) The dispersion of this once highly favoured people, for so long a period, and in so humiliating a manner, is a proof of the indignation of the God of Israel resting upon them for some remarkable iniquity and disobedience. This, we know, is none other than the long-predicted refusal of their eminent Prophet and their anointed King. Thus they themselves are the continually living monuments of the truth of that Christianity which they deny, and of the faithfulness and glory of that Messiah whom they reject. These declarations are connected and wrought as it were together with the prophecies of his future coming. (See Matt. xxiv.) They are a confirmation of the truth of the latter, a standing assurance and a faithful unequivocal pledge of their accomplishment in due season. Then shall he come again in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, to vindicate his truth and faithfulness, to fulfil all his words of threatening and of promise, to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not his Gospel; but to the salvation of his people, in whom he will be glorified and admired for ever.—What thankfulness is due to thee, thou great Prophet of the house of God, for all the instructions which thou hast afforded us! The words of my heavenly Teacher, concerning my state, or the way of my salvation, are the words of truth unfailing. They shall stand for eternity; and by them I shall stand or fall in judgment; and yet, how awfully are they neglected by the generality of men! The whole, indeed, of the Scriptures of Divine Truth, which testify of Jesus, are able to make us wise unto salvation, by faith which is in him. (John v. 39; 2 Tim. iii. 15.) Yet, alas! how often is the sacred volume treated as the most useless, and how often does it appear as the most neglected, furniture of the house, if indeed it be found there at all! But in this sacred volume, the words of Jesus himself are words of peculiar grace and beauty.

The grace of his compassionate heart is poured forth from his lips; and never man spake like this Man. While, then, sitting at his feet, let me not, like Pilate, inquire, "What is truth?" and then retire without waiting for an answer: let me not thus lose the opportunity of instruction and information from this heavenly and infallible Prophet, but humbly learn and patiently do his will. The blessed Redeemer is worthy of our faith and confidence: he has proved himself true in all that he has yet accomplished, in fulfilling his own engagements, even to the cross, in magnifying the grace and mercy of his character towards all who come to him, and in those prophetic declarations which have been fulfilled in their season. These are standing proofs of his faithfulness, and demand an implicit confidence in all that he hath spoken. If, then, I believe the faithfulness of his words, a lively faith will become influential and practical. If I believe the truth of what he hath spoken of my state as a sinner, I shall be humble, penitent, and abased. If I believe what he hath spoken of my helplessness, and the need I stand in of his almighty grace and the influence of his Spirit, I shall be found a humble supplicant at his throne, in all prayer and supplication. If I receive the testimony which he hath borne to his own person, I shall confess his Divine glory; reverence, adore it; and honour him even as I honour the Father. When I view his amazing condescension, and hear his testimony as to its design, the glory of God in the salvation of perishing sinners, how shall I admire his grace, love his person, and fly to him for pardon and for eternal life! while the completeness of his work, which he proclaimed *finished* upon the cross, and all the fulness of the blessings of salvation, which are therefore treasured up in him, will claim and obtain my continued reliance; and, establishing my faith, will encourage, in the prayer of faith, the unbounded confidence and expectation of all the blessings I can need, through time, to life everlasting. If I fear his denunciations, I shall yet rejoice in his promise; I shall tremble at sin, and fear to

remain in my sinful state; and never will my heart be satisfied without conformity to his design, and, like the believers of old (Heb. xi. 13), persuaded of and embracing his promises. By that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, I shall declare myself a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth, and tend forward to the heavenly mansion, where he already ever is to prepare them for his people. (John xiv. 1, &c.) We must, however, give an account how we have used the faithful words of this Divine Witness; nor will ignorance of them be any excuse, since his light has so shined around us in his word. Has that word then been received in that living faith which has conformed me to its design? Has the work of his Spirit, which he declares to be absolutely necessary for my entrance into the kingdom of heaven, been wrought in my heart? Have I seen my need of him and his salvation, and fled to and believed on him, that I might not perish? In a word, have I experienced the quickening influence, and been born again of his Spirit? and am I living as one endowed thus with the principles of a spiritual and heavenly life?

Oh, thou blessed Teacher! how infinitely indebted am I to thee for thy faithful testimony! Let me know, and value, and use the privilege I thus enjoy, as the means of spiritual and saving knowledge, till I know the truth, and the truth makes me free. My blessed Redeemer has obtained, by the merit of his blood, all the blessings that I need; and the truth to which he bore witness in his life, he has confirmed by his death, and by his glorious resurrection. Every poor sinner has the sweetest invitation, and therefore the greatest encouragement to come to him, and every penitent believing sinner to trust in him: neither of them can want beyond what his promises engage to supply. He has provided all the blessings of life and salvation for his people. His truth displays them, and presents them to the faith of the poor, the guilty, and the needy, in his word; and the

hungry thirsty spirit shall not seek for them in vain. In life, in death, and throughout eternity, "not one good thing shall fail, of all that he hath spoken, till all come to pass,"—the eternal destruction of his enemies, and the eternal salvation of his redeemed: and his believing people will prove him eternally to be *The True and Faithful Witness*.

ESSAY VIII.

Israel.

"THIS name," says Bishop Lowth (on Isa. xlix. 3), "in its original design and full import, can belong only to Him who contended powerfully with God on behalf of mankind, and prevailed." Other eminent writers and commentators also, on the same passage, assert, that the name cannot there be applied to the Prophet himself, but must have referred only or principally to the Lord Jesus. It might be rather read thus; "Thou, my servant, thou, in effect, art Israel;" that is, In Thee the name receives its full meaning and import. In this view of it, the title affords us fresh matter of admiration, love, and praise. It will present to us additional discoveries of the glories of the Redeemer for faith to exercise itself upon, and lay additional ground of consolation for the humble penitent and the admiring believer. There is indeed no name of our blessed Saviour but what is rich in meaning. If he assumes the name of his people, it is to mark out his infinite condescension, or his intimate union with them; but when we consider the original design of this name, it appears to have been given as a name of most eminent dignity to the wrestling Jacob, but prevailing Israel. In each and in all of these views, it is verified in the Lord Jesus Christ, who became the lowest on earth, but was and now is the highest in the heavenly world; in whom God is indeed most eminently glorified in all his attributes, and in his most righteous government; and through whose intercession and victory his people shall eternally be saved. We will consider the name in both these views; as a name of condescension, and a name of glory: in both of which it will

tend to endear the Saviour to our hearts still more, and make him more precious to our faith. The name may be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ,

1. *In reference to his taking the same human nature with his people, and becoming their Redeemer, Kinsman, and Brother in the flesh.*—This was the great mystery of godliness, that God should be manifested in the flesh! This was an act of the deepest condescension, that the eternal Son of God, the Lord of glory, should consent to take the form of a servant; that the Lord from heaven should become the Second Adam, in all things like unto us! The Apostle celebrates and admires this act of grace; for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, became of the same nature, that he might call them brethren, and assumed even their flesh and blood. (See Heb. ii. 11—18.) If then he has not refused to take the nature of his brethren, we need not wonder when he condescended to take the name of his church, to evince his love and affection towards it. This part of the present subject has, however, frequently occurred, and will occur again in the consideration of the Redeemer's titles: we shall therefore pass on to another reason for his bearing this title, which may be,

2. *To mark out that close spiritual union which subsists between him and his people; by which they are one with him, and he with them.*—This union is represented by the closest connections on earth; the father and his children, the husband and the wife, the branches and the vine, the head and the members. They are one body united with him; and not only this, but “they that are joined to the Lord are one spirit,” which implies a much closer union, and what is beyond all comparison or conception.

As he therefore bears the name of his church, so they also are spoken of under his name (1 Cor. xii. 12); being as it were but parts of his own body. (Eph. i. 22, 23; 1 Cor. vi. 17.) This doctrine of union our Lord has beautifully expressed in his last intercessory prayer to his heavenly Father (John xvii. 20, &c); and in a manner which

gives us the idea of an union infinitely closer than any upon earth. He considers it the same as that which subsists between himself and the Father: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."—They shall therefore all be gathered together in one (or summed up) in Christ, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, and obtain the inheritance to which they are appointed in him. (Eph. i. 10, 11.) The title may also be applied to him,

3. As *He is the Representative of his people*.—Such he was on earth, and such he is now before the Throne. His people are therefore considered as suffering, dying, rising, and possessing in him: they are buried with him, they are raised up together with him, quickened with him, having all their trespasses forgiven: he has triumphed for them; they triumph in him, and therefore they are complete in him. See the whole of that beautiful passage.—Nothing can give us a more encouraging view of the state of a believer as in Christ. The Lord Jesus, his Representative, has borne all for him, appears for him now before the Throne; has been accepted on his behalf, and therefore he is also accepted in the beloved. As the high priest on the great day of atonement bore the name of all Israel on his breast-plate, so Christ our Redeemer bears on his very heart before the throne of God, the name of all his people, inwrought by the hand of infinite wisdom and almighty love, never, never to be erased; that it may be an everlasting memorial of his love to them, and his work of suffering, sorrow, and redemption for them. Oh, what an encouraging consideration!

Blessed be his name, He has completed the work of redemption. This is what I plead: sin and guilt are all that I

have: I have nothing to bring to deserve his favour; but righteousness and grace are his gifts: He also has conquered for me, and calls me to partake of his triumph, and gives me all its benefits. Why has he prevailed? Not on his own behalf, but on the behalf of his people; and when the Lord spake to him, and commanded his triumph, He then spake with us, and thus all his covenant promises in Christ Jesus are yea and amen. Blessed be the riches of His grace, His wisdom, and His love. Have I fled for refuge to Jesus? Do I, in humble penitence and cordial faith, rely upon this Saviour? That faith is the effect of his eternal love; it is the gift of his Holy Spirit; it is the effect of His Spirit dwelling in me, and by it I dwell in Him, as by his Spirit he dwells in me. What a wonderful union, and how happy its effects! He condescends to bear my name, as my representative, that I may be viewed only as in Him. "Now then, we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh." And having a great High Priest, which is entered into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we may hold fast our profession, and, satisfied of his sympathy as well as of his power, may "come boldly to the Throne of Grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." O, how sweet the confidence of a believing sinner, when thus coming to a Throne of Grace, in Jesus his Head, his Saviour, and his Friend!

These views may no doubt justify the attributing of this name to Him; and yet perhaps none of these come up to the design of its being thus given to Him. We must rather consider it as given to Him, because of the likeness which He bears to him to whom it was first given, in those circumstances for which it was given.

We find the fact thus recorded in Genesis (xxxii. 24—30): "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day; and when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out

of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go: for the day breaketh: and he said, I will not let thee go: except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? and he said Jacob: and he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a Prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name: and he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? and he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." There is a reference again made to the same circumstance in chap. xxxv. 9—15: "And God appeared to Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him: and God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply: a nation, and a company of nations shall be of thee; and kings shall come out of thy loins: and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it; and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place, where God spake with him, Bethel."

We cannot be at a loss how to apply this passage, in reference to this title of the Redeemer. We see Him in his human nature wrestling, like Jacob, with God, for himself, and for his people; prevailing for the blessing; obtaining the unchangeable promises of life and glory, and thus becoming the true Israel, the Prince with God, the Conqueror and the Blessor. Well might the Lord Jehovah say of him, "Thou my servant, thou art Israel, in whom I will be glorified." The Prophet Hosea notices this historical circumstance in a very remarkable manner, in which he seems to consider Jacob as a public person, acting as the

representative of all Israel; who by his victory was triumphant, and to whom, as being in him, the promises given to him belonged. He is speaking of Jacob as a people; and he refers to them the action of their father, and attributes to them the blessing which he obtained. "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God; yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel, and there HE spake with us. Even the Lord God of Hosts; the Lord is his memorial." (Hosea xii. 3—5.)—What a beautiful view of our Jesus! This is his character, this his triumph, this his glory; and this may be our confidence in Him. He came from his throne above, into this world of sin and sorrow, and took the nature of his brethren, that he might become their Redeemer and Saviour, to procure peace with God, and those blessings which had been forfeited and lost by offending man. How often, while sojourning on earth, and engaged in this arduous work, did he spend whole nights in wrestling prayer, and in supplication to his heavenly Father? This was his frequent, his constant exercise; but in the close of his work, he enters on the most trying conflict. Then behold him in the bitter agonies of the garden, bathed in blood, uttering his strong crying and tears. Behold him on the bleeding cross, when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Surely the good old Patriarch, wrestling through the gloomy night, until the very break of day, was but a type of Jesus. He would not let the angel Jehovah go, till he had blessed him; nor would the mighty Redeemer cease his work of suffering, nor his powerful supplication, till he had obtained the victory, and the blessing for his people. "Now is my soul troubled," said the blessed Redeemer, "and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." (John xii. 27, 28.) And again, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Then upon the cross, he blotted out "the

handwriting of ordinances, which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. ii. 14, 15.) But when he had endured the conflict, and the sorrow,—after the long night of his death and burial, behold he rises in the morning, to proclaim his victory, and receive the promise of its reward. Then, on the morning of his glorious ascension, he ascends on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts to give unto men. (Psa. lxxviii. 18.) He commands the eternal doors to unfold, to give him entrance as the King of Glory, the Lord Strong and Mighty, the Lord Mighty in Battle, the True Israel, the Prince with God. (Psa. xxiv. 7, 8, &c.) In the same dignified and exalted character, we behold him now wrestling in his glorious intercession before the Throne: for "if any of us sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 1, 2.) Of the nature of his mediatorial intercession, he has given us a specimen, in the exercise of it upon earth, where we see him present his supplication, and rejoicing in its success. "Keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me, through their word; that they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us," &c. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 11, 15, 17, 20, 24.) This office, and this employ, the Lord Jesus Christ is carrying on above, that he may secure the effectual calling of his people to himself, their sanctification and preservation, and bring them to the full enjoyment of all the blessings of eternal salvation. In the exercise of this office, "Him,

the Father heareth always." He is therefore represented, sitting before the Throne, as a lamb that hath been slain; presenting the continual memorials of his bloody sacrifice, the atonement of his cross, and thus rendering all his pleas effectual on the behalf of his redeemed. Prevailing in his own person as the Mediator, his people are considered as in him triumphant and exalted; and as the Israelites, in their wrestling Israel, prevailed to obtain the promised blessing; and when the Lord spoke his word of truth and promise to him, he then, in fact, spake it to them; so in the blessing and the promise to the Lord our Redeemer, he spake them to us. In Him the promises receive their first and most glorious accomplishment; but in Him are we complete, even we who are found in him by faith, and live by union with and upon him. Thus, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" and therefore, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath thus blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him." (Eph. ii. 5, 6; i. 3.)

This is the glorious character in which the Lord Jesus is now exhibited to our adoration, faith, and confidence; the wrestling, the ever-prevailing Israel, the Prince with God, who effectually pleads the cause, and manages all the concerns, of his redeemed and believing people, for time and eternity. In Him the victory is complete, in Him all the blessings are deposited; to Him the promises are given, to Him they can never fail; and in Him all the promises of God to his people are yea and amen, to the glory of God by us. This is the result of his victorious wrestling, his powerful intercession: and the condescending but perfect union with us which is marked out in the name, in connection with that all-prevalent intercession, affords a sure ground of the most gracious consolation to his people, for it secures *his sympathy* in all their fears, sorrows, and distresses.

When we behold him bearing our nature, we are led to expect this exercise of kindness and of sympathy: for if both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one nature, so that he is not ashamed to call them brethren, and if in all things he was made like unto us, he must be a merciful and faithful High Priest: and having himself "suffered, being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted." (Heb. ii. 11, 17, 18.) He must be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; having in all points been tempted and tried like as we are. (iv. 15.) As the church is his spiritual body, he is as sensibly affected with every sorrow or pain which her members feel, and with every injury they sustain, as the natural head is affected with the various pains and afflictions of the earthly body; yea, he compares them to that part which is most sensible of the least injury, the apple or pupil of the eye: he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye. The care and sympathy which he manifested to his church of old, when he led them through the wilderness, is but the figure of his constant care over his church and all his people, as leading them through the wilderness of this world to the Canaan which is above, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." (Isa. lxiii. 7—9.)

As in him they are indeed the objects of Divine favour; viewed as parts of himself, they are accepted in the Beloved; and, being perfect in his righteousness, adorned with his comeliness, and viewed as in his perfect merits, they can want nothing, for they are *complete* in him. He of God is made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: in him there is no condemnation; yea, all things are theirs, since they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. (1 Cor. i. 30; Rom. viii. 1; 1 Cor. iii. 21.)

This is a Saviour suited to the wants of such needy sinners; but when he hath become sin for us, and we

become the righteousness of God in him, what else can be needed to secure the Divine favour and everlasting love? what has the humble penitent more to do, than to come to Christ, and accept of him in all his characters, offices, and fulness in the exercise of faith? And what can the believer do more than live by faith upon him, deriving all grace out of his fulness, and resting upon his loving-kindness and faithfulness? He, as one in their nature, is interested in all their concerns; he feels all their wants, their fears, their distresses, their trials, and temptations; and surely his pity will lead him to relieve them, and in his own due time completely to deliver them. If he bare long with them in their natural estate of sin and guilt, surely he will have compassion upon their unallowed and lamented sins and infirmities. If he call them to bear long in a state of trial and temptation, it must be in his infinite wisdom for their good. It is only, "if need be they are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found to praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." But "all things shall work together for good to them that love God, and who are the called according to his purpose." Realize this view, O believer! and what will be the effect? Surely it will promote this patient acquiescence in all his ways, and this holy confidence in him in all thy sorrows and trials, to his glory. You may expect his constant love and care, and every blessing from his hand, as being thus united with him, who hath prevailed with God for you. When the humble penitent comes and commits his cause into the hand of this all-prevalent Intercessor, he may realize his safety. His person is safe as in union with his adorable Redeemer and Mediator; all his concerns are safe under his direction; all his prayers shall be accepted, and all the blessings of salvation shall be poured down upon his soul. This is the glorious consolation which arises to the believer in meditating on the union of the Redeemer in his nature;

and his mediatorial intercession before the Throne: this affords a most abundant encouragement to the prayer of faith and the expectation of hope. Let us use the privilege continually, and be thankful. "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will (*i. e.* no doubt, his revealed word of promise), he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him." (1 John v. 14, 15.) This confidence is grounded upon his own promise; for, says the Redeemer, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John xiv. 13, 14): and again; "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (xvi. 23, 24.) What can be more affectionate and more encouraging than such words as these, sweetened with all the affection of our kinsman Redeemer, and confirmed by the solemn pledge and faithfulness of him who is Immanuel, God with us? The Apostle, when representing the union between Christ and his church by the nearest union amongst men, has given us the most endearing views of the love and grace of Jesus to it. He loved his church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones: a paraphrastic expression to denote the intimate and particular union which exists between the Lord Jesus and his people. (Eph. v. 25—30.)

Let the oppressor, then, beware how he attempts to injure them; for their enemies are considered by him as his enemies. He says to them, as David of old said to Abiathar,

“ Abide thou with me ; fear not ; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life : but with me thou shalt be in safe-guard.” (1 Sam. xxii. 23.) Since he hath taken their nature, and united himself thus with his people, he hath also taken a name belonging to them, to express the closeness of this union. To distress them, is to distress Him ; to oppose them, is to oppose him : “ Saul, Saul,” said he, “ why persecutest thou *me* ? ” And in the great day of judgment he will consider the treatment which they have received, as in every respect terminating in himself : “ Forasmuch as ye did it to the least of these, ye did it *to me* : and inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these my brethren, ye did it not *to me*.” He cannot injure them himself, who are his body ; and though others may attempt it, yet they shall not prevail. “ I give unto my sheep,” says he, “ eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hands,” &c.

Let us but take a view of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for his people hitherto, in his work of sufferings and redemption, in his victory and exaltation, and what he is now doing before the throne ; and surely we cannot doubt but he will supply all the need of his people according to his own riches in glory. He is both able and willing to save them to the uttermost ; and while his ability is all-sufficient, his mercy is everlasting, and his love is unchangeable. In the mutability of their present state, they may often give him reason to depart from them, and to cast them off for ever ; but though he corrects, he will not cast away : he will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their sins with stripes ; nevertheless his loving-kindness will he not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. (Psal. lxxxix. 30—34.) His corrections shall be the proofs of his unfailing love and faithfulness, in order to bring them back in repentance and godly sorrow, that he may again shine upon them with his favour. Surely if we contemplate the way in which he has led us, we shall find reason to look back and to admire his long

forbearance; that he has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor visited us according to our iniquities; that he hath neither left us nor cast us off. And while we have such proof of the truth of his promise toward ourselves, "experience will work hope:" we have yet the most ample encouragement to trust in his mercy and faithfulness for the time to come. "He who has delivered, does deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver."—Let this confidence encourage our love to him, our zeal in his cause, and our courage in the Christian conflict. The Captain of Salvation has obtained the victory; He has wrestled and prevailed, not for himself, but as the Head of his people, that he may give them the fruit of his victory; for the blessings which he has thus obtained are for the benefit of his believing people. Those who are united to him are the true Israel of God. The promise, "I will be with thee," is therefore sufficient to support the courage of his saints; and he may well charge them to "fear not, neither be dismayed." It will, indeed, be awfully destructive to be found amongst his enemies, in the ways of sin, or in opposition to his authority; for he who has prevailed over all for his people, will prevail over all his enemies ultimately in their everlasting destruction. But then shall the triumph of his people be complete, and his glory shall be their glory. All the effects of his triumphs are theirs; and therefore, in his last intercessory prayer upon earth, he says, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold that glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) He is in possession, as the prevalent Redeemer, the Forerunner of his people; and therefore our hope is as an anchor sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil, because there our Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus Christ, "made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. vi. 19, 20.)

He will enable his people to follow him in their victory; and to him that overcometh he will grant to sit with him on his throne, even as he hath overcome, and is set down

with his Father on his throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) Let us then look forward and gird up the loins of our mind, be sober and hope to the end for the grace which is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Let us deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Every character, every office, every title of this glorious Redeemer is full of blessings, full of consolation to his own people, who know, believe in, and love him, and who, in love, are devoted to his service.

Blessed Jesus! who but thyself could thus undertake and prevail for me? condescending for this purpose to be one in my nature, therefore one with me, though in thy Divine nature One with the Father. I adore thy person, and am amazed at thy condescension. To thee I commit my soul for the pardon of all its sin, and the glories of thy eternal salvation. In thee I shall be safe and happy in time, and when passing through time into eternity, though through the valley of the shadow of death. As thou didst not remit thy work of suffering and conflict till thou hadst obtained the blessing for thy people, so I will not let thee go, holding thee by the prayer of faith, until thou hast blessed me. All blessings are in Thee: O let me enjoy them from Thee! and to Thee shall be rendered back all the power, the glory, the blessing.

ESSAY IX.

Palm-Tree.

WE cannot deny ourselves the gratification of considering the Lord Jesus under this allusion, which is so suitable to mark out his excellency, his glory, and his abundant supplies to his people. It may, indeed, be doubted whether the reference is made to this emblem, in a direct allusion in the Scriptures; yet, in a more indirect manner, it is continually used. The palm-tree, and the palm-branches, which were engrafted all round the temple, were no doubt intended as representations of his glory; and the frequent use of them, in the Jewish ceremonies, was designed for the same purpose. Nor may it be at all unsuitable to refer to Him, who is indeed the *Righteous One*, the expression of the Psalmist (xcii. 12); "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree." "Chiefly," says Bishop Horne, "is the comparison applicable to that Just One, the King of Righteousness, and Tree of Life, eminent and upright, ever verdant, fragrant; under the greatest pressure and weight of sufferings, still ascending towards heaven, affording both fruit and protection, incorruptible and immortal."—The palm-tree is constantly growing, abundantly flourishing and fruitful, and exceedingly various in its use for the benefit of mankind. It is always considered as an emblem of beauty, high dignity, fruitfulness, patience, constancy, peace, victory, and immortality. These were its designs, no doubt, in the ornament of the temple, and especially in allusion to the glory of Messiah; and we cannot now deny it the honour of coming forth to represent his glories and his preciousness, his humiliation and his victories. May it be the means of strengthening our faith and love, and

raising our admiring view of the person and benefit of the Redeemer!

The palm-tree is a beautiful tall tree, a native of Africa and the East, where it rises to fifty, and often to a hundred, feet or more in height. It takes its name, in the Hebrew language, from its straightness and uprightness, (תמר.) On the top, its clusters of leaves or branches, which are about eight or nine feet long, extend like an umbrella, bending a little towards the earth. It is constantly growing, flourishing, and fruitful; and though pressed down by great weight, it is said that it will not grow crooked, but will rise superior to the pressure, and be able to restore itself to its former state. The more it is oppressed, the more it flourishes, and grows broader and higher. Some, indeed, refer this to the elasticity of its wood when cut into boards. (See Parkhurst.) The tree itself lives for a long time; so that, according to the account of the Arabs, no change is observed in it for three generations, and the wood is considered by them as incorruptible. By a variety of shoots or suckers at the root, it spreads itself all around, like a low forest, so that where it naturally grows it is difficult to open a passage through. Its fruit is most abundant, pleasant to the taste, useful for food and medicine, answering almost all purposes; and there is scarcely any part of the tree but what has its appropriate and important uses. The wood, the leaves, the fibres, the pulps of the young twigs, and the milky liquor of the sap have all their valuable and salutary qualities, and are all employed by the Arabs for food or domestic uses. Surely, then, it is, among all the products of nature, the most suitable emblem of the adorable Redeemer, in his person and his work, his glory and the increase of his kingdom, and the abundant blessings he bestows. It represents, as far as such an allusion can, his glory and his benefits, who, in his true dignity and excellency, is infinitely beyond all.

We will specify a few particulars, and contemplate in them the pre-eminent glory of our Redeemer.

1. *Its beauty, its perfect straightness, and its towering*

height, are the apt emblems of his sublime and heavenly beauties, and of his high exalted dignity.—A number of such trees placed in order, and properly arranged, as they are usually planted, must afford a most pleasing and delightful appearance; for notwithstanding every pressure, the stately stem still rises erect, and towers on high, and no oppression can bend or distort it. It is therefore continually used as the pattern of uprightness. “They are,” says the Prophet of the stately and erect idols of the Gentiles, “upright as the palm-tree.” (Jer. x. 5.) But behold here the humble figure of the exalted dignity of our Redeemer, from the humiliation of earth, from the scenes of poverty and misery, from the hatred of men and the oppression of all the powers of darkness, he still pursues his way to the Throne of Glory, and rises to his exaltation. All the excellencies of human nature, and all the glories of the Divine, unite in his adorable Person: angels admire and adore; but to them that believe he is indeed precious, the altogether lovely in himself, in all things having the pre-eminence. The vision of his glory is beyond the highest powers of man: faith alone can penetrate to view the splendours of his throne, the inconceivable majesty, dignity, and glory of his mediatorial Person. “*Him having not seen,*” says the Apostle, “*we love.*” He never has been, nor can be, seen by the eye of sense; but his word to the eye of faith manifests so much of his glory as cannot but charm the eye and delight the heart of the believer, and lead him to long for still clearer and more extensive views of Him whom, even in the little glances of his dazzling splendour, he perceives to be

“The brightest, sweetest, fairest One,
That eyes have seen or angels known.”

Yes; he is indeed worthy of our supreme love and most cheerful obedience. The Divine command is, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” They do fulfil the command, and readily worship him on his throne: and surely we are not mistaken in imitating those bright intelligences. The word of God is intended principally to magnify him,

to exalt him, to exalt him over all, to exalt him as the highest, and therefore the supreme God Jehovah. The word of truth represents him therefore as worthy of our highest attention, our adoration, praise, and love, in all the perfections of his person as Immanuel, and in all the glories of his exaltation. The only discovery of the Father's glory to creatures is in, and from, and through him; and so it shall be eternally; and on his mediatorial throne he is yet the Alpha and Omega, the All in all. What different praise should we offer him, did we but realize his true nature, character, and offices! As faith arises in its clearness and strength of vision, so our hearts are more in unison with the song of the adoring spirits before the Throne; and soon shall we join them, with all that holy fervour, purity, and delight which animates their songs to the Lamb in the midst of the Throne.

2. *A regular row of such tall and leafy trees must have afforded a most delightful shelter and refreshing shade.*—In this manner they were planted, and abounded in some particular places in the land of Israel. Thus Jericho is called the City of Palm Trees (Deut. xxxiv. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 15), because of the abundance of those trees which grew around it; and even to the present time, though these trees are found but in a very scanty manner throughout Palestine, several of them yet remain about the plains of Jericho. Such was also their protecting shade, that we find it recorded of Deborah, that “she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah,” some lowly habitation sheltered by some ancient and venerable palm-tree; “and there the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.” (Judges iv. 5.) It was from this circumstance also, that Tadmor, erected by Solomon in the wilderness, derived its name, being a slight corruption of *tamar*, a palm-tree, and which was afterwards called by the Romans, for the very same reason, *Palmyra*. So the benefits of a good government are represented, by the prophet Daniel, by a wide-spreading tree, which diffuses its shade over all the plain, and affords refuge and shelter to the birds of the air and

the beasts of the field. No allusion can be more suitable or more interesting than this, amidst the heat of this scorching wilderness, where fatigue and thirst so often oppress the weary spiritual traveller. The church thus expresses her sweet confidence in his care: "I sat down under his shadow with great delight." (Song ii. 3.) When the believer thus, by faith, trusts in him; when he realizes the shadow of his almighty power, his covenant love and grace, his promise and his faithfulness, in his ordinances, where he graciously discovers them; how pleasant is the season, how grateful the feelings of the soul! Oh! says the believer, it is good, Lord, to be here. O that I might here abide and rest, beneath the sweet overshadowings of thy love! "Thou, Lord, hast been a shelter for me; I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever." (Psa. lxi. 3, 4.) Such sweet frames are the anticipation of his eternal manifestations of loving-kindness and grace. Safe in thy care (says the believer), here and thus I realize my safety; for he that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High, who abides under the shadow of the Almighty, will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust. He shall cover me with his feathers; under his wings will I trust; his truth shall be my shield and buckler. (Psa. xci. 1, 2, 4.) This, indeed, is among the common benefits and advantages of a wide-spreading tree; but in the peculiar property of the palm-tree, we have still further representations of the excellency of our Jesus, as it is an emblem,

3. *Of his patience and constancy, in the work of our redemption.*—For this purpose it is constantly applied, on account of the great weight and pressure which it sustains without injury, and from which it rapidly recovers itself, restoring its usual uprightness in the tree, or straightness in the boards.

We may here contemplate the emblem of his awful conflict, and the great oppression of his soul; his amazing patience and persevering fortitude through the whole, and the constancy of his love to his people under all, till he

again ascended the Throne of Glory, as the Eternal Conqueror for them. Truly might our condescending Saviour exclaim, in the midst of his bitter sufferings, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. From above he hath sent fire into my bones, and it prevaieth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet; he hath turned me back; he hath made me desolate and faint all the day." (Lam. i. 12-14.)—But he loved his people from eternity. (Jer. xxxi. 3.) He then engaged to undergo all that was necessary to accomplish their salvation (Psa. xl. 6): he never therefore turned away from the sorrows which met him in his way, nor turned back in the arduous work. "O death," said he, "I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (Hos. xiii. 14.) The Apostle tells us, alluding to the constancy and bitterness of his sufferings, that "in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." And if we follow him to the lonely mountains, where, through the gloomy hours of night, he retired to meditate, to pray, and to wrestle for the salvation of his people; or, if we follow him to Gethsemane's gloomy garden, and behold the awful scene in which he there was engaged, the dreadful conflict and bitter sorrow of his soul; we shall see how truly the Apostle has described his state of sufferings and of sorrows. There, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke xxii. 40-44.) But in the view of this it was that he undertook for us in the counsels of eternity; it was "*for this cause*" that he came into the world; and through a life of poverty, ignominy, and sorrow, he cheerfully and resolutely endured. For this he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, when he knew the last dreadful conflict was to be endured: for this he surrendered himself up into the hands of men, and

appeared before the tribunal, silently bearing the contempt and reproach of a cruel soldiery, and a more cruel priesthood: and then, "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.)

Adored be the constant love of my Redeemer, who loved me so as to give himself, in human nature, to sorrow and suffering, and to all the consequences of sin; to the agony of the garden and of the cross, and to the gloomy region of the grave; who endured through all the violent assaults of the great enemy, through the hiding of his Father's countenance, till he had completed the work of redemption, and ascended to his throne. O may I love and reverently adore Him, and, with the obedience of love, glorify his name!

But the principal excellency of the Palm-Tree is,

4. *The great variety of uses for which it may be applied.*—There is scarcely any part but what has its peculiar utility. The Arabs dry the fruit, with which they make meal, and so preserve and carry it with them through the desert. It thus supplies the deficiency of corn, and forms nearly the whole of their subsistence. Its juices, when suffered to flow, by cutting the bark, supply the most delicious milk: the pulp of the young twigs, and the fibrous part of the bark, when eaten, are very nourishing, as are also its leaves. Its stems are given for food to the camel and sheep; and with the fibres arising from the stumps of its cut branches, they make their ropes. No other tree is used for so many valuable purposes. "In Assyria," says Mr. Gibbon, "the face of the country is interspersed with groves of innumerable palm-trees; and the diligent natives celebrate, either in verse or prose, the three hundred and sixty uses to which the trunk, the leaves, the juices, and the fruit were skilfully applied. The tree also rapidly multiplies by scores, and thus affords the most abundant supply of useful and delightful fruit*," &c. But let me here contemplate the

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. II. chap. iv. p. 435.

blessings which I derive from Jesus my Redeemer; the abundant provision and fruitfulness which he affords; the all-sufficiency of grace and blessings which are in him, infinitely more abundant, infinitely more precious and salutary, than the choice and fertile palm-tree; the blessings of salvation, not only affording a supply for the food and healing of the body, but of the immortal soul. He comprehends all I need, to relieve my wants, to satisfy my desires, to make me live by grace spiritually and heavenly, and then to comfort and refresh my regenerated and quickened soul, and supply its nourishment and its delights through time and through eternity. The fruits of forgiving mercy, pardoning love, sanctifying grace, Divine favour, covenant love, and heavenly blessing, grow in rich abundance upon him. He is my suitable Saviour, all my salvation; in him it has pleased the Father that "all fulness should dwell." (Col. i. 19.) "In him is all the fulness of the Godhead, that we might be complete in him," and need no other source of blessings. (ii. 9, 10.) "He is full of grace and truth, that out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace." (John i. 14—16.) And in whatever light I view him, he is all my salvation; and, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," &c. (Eph. i. 3.) If I need spiritual healing, as well as spiritual supply, "He forgiveth all our iniquities, and healeth all our diseases." (Psa. ciii. 3.) Himself the true Tree of Life, brings forth abundantly his constant and never-failing fruit; and the very "leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Rev. xxii. 2, &c.)—Let faith make use of Jesus for all its wants and desires, and there can be no deficiency. *Let me go up to this Palm-Tree, and take hold of its clusters*; then shall I "sit under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit will be sweet unto my taste." What abundant provision! what infinite supplies adorn his beautiful and ever-verdant branches! The sweet and delicious fruit will purge and purify my soul from the defilement,

and from the pollution of all my sins, which can neither be too many, nor too powerful, nor too polluting for his heavenly influence. They shall supply all my wants, and satisfy all my desires. Let me but take a view of Jesus, as presented in his word, and I shall behold a glorious sufficiency, with every encouragement to apply to him, to feed on him, and to place all my hope and happiness in him. Let me then, emboldened by faith in his promise, take of this cluster of heavenly blessings, the fruit of the immortal Palm-Tree, and I shall find my eyes enlightened, my conscience peaceful, my heart renewed and quickened, my spiritual strength revived, my hope kindling into immortality, my affection sanctified in the love of Jesus, my heart rejoicing in the blessings of his grace, and the promises of his glory. I bless my Jesus, his cross is indeed the very tree of life. He himself is the fulness of all saving blessings. Be thou then to me, O Jesus! my wisdom, my righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Then will I glory in thee, though having nothing in myself but what I must be ashamed of. Give me out of this fulness till I am complete in thee in grace, and till I am complete with thee in glory: there thou shalt have all the praise, when the choir of the redeemed ascribe salvation to God and to the Lamb for ever.

Again; The straight and lofty growth of this tree, its longevity and great fecundity; the permanency and perpetual flourishing of its leaves, and their form, resembling the solar rays; make it a very proper emblem of the natural, and thence of the Divine, light. Hence in the holy place or sanctuary of the temple, the emblem of Christ's body, palm-trees were engraved on the walls and doors, between the coupled cherubim*. A more beautiful emblem of the glory of my Redeemer cannot be found. He, as the Sun of Righteousness, diffuses his beams of Divine influence, grace, and consolation, through all his church, as the rays of the natural sun prevade the whole creation, and

* Parkhurst, under the word **תמר**.

becomes, like them, the source of all beauty, splendour, fruitfulness, and delight. In his light, I see light; as I live in him, I live holily and happily; and the eternal splendour of his beams is the glory and happiness of the heavenly world.

5. *Its branches also were used as emblems of victory and of peace.*—This perhaps arose from the circumstance of its resisting pressure, and restoring itself to its original uprightness; or from the elasticity of its planks, when cut into boards, which so powerfully resists the incumbent pressure. Here then it is a suitable emblem of Him who went forth conquering and to conquer; who through every opposition has triumphed over our great enemy, and all his foes; who, through every oppression and weight of sorrow, arose from the grave, and, ascending on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts to give unto men. “Doubtless, believers, by bearing palm branches after a victory, or in triumph, meant to acknowledge the Supreme Author of their success and prosperity, and to carry on their thoughts to the Divine light, the great Conqueror over sin and death. And the idolaters probably used palms on such occasions, not without respect to Apollo, or the sun, to whom, among them, they were consecrated.”—*Parkhurst*.

Thus every where around you in the temple, the branches of the palm-tree were engraven on the wall and on the hangings; and the branches themselves were used in its various services, especially on the Feast of Tabernacles; when they were also appointed to be used, among other goodly branches, in making their booths. (*Lev. xxiii. 40; Neh. viii. 15.*) This, no doubt, was in reference to the glory, the grace, the conflict, and the victory and triumph of the Redeemer; and also to the peaceful kingdom which he should establish when his victories should be complete. When, therefore, the adoring crowds attended the Redeemer into Jerusalem, on the only occasion when he assumed any appearance of dignity or dominion, they took branches of the palm-tree, and strewed them in the way. The meaning of this emblematical action is evident from

their own language : they meant to hail him as the conquering King, and ascribe to Him their triumph and their deliverance : " **HOSANNAH TO THE SON OF DAVID !**" (Matt. xxi. 8, 9.) Though ignorant of his true design and the nature of his salvation, they thus ignorantly proclaim the glory of the Lord Jesus ; they hail him as the Messiah who was about to conquer ; but they expected the conquest of their temporal enemies, instead of the eternal triumph of a spiritual Redeemer over sin, and death, and hell.

But now, says the mighty Redeemer, is the judgment of this world ; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. (John xii. 31.) Behold, then, he rises from under the hidings of his Father's countenance, from the oppressive weight of justice and Divine indignation, and from the overwhelming power of the prince of darkness. " He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them upon his cross." (Col. ii. 15.) There he conquered, that we might conquer through him. From the grave he rises as the Mighty Conqueror over all our spiritual enemies, to establish the kingdom of his peace and glory ; with every enemy beneath his feet, that he might place them under ours. " Lift up your heads, then, O ye gates ! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ! that the King of Glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, may enter in." We will hail the ascending Jesus, and still prolong the cry of the adoring multitude, " **HOSANNAH TO THE SON OF DAVID !**"

The palm-tree is also a suitable emblem of,

6. *Incorruptibility and immortality.*—The tree, which was ever growing, was most beautiful, and constantly flourishing : it endured through many generations ; and its wood is so durable, that it is considered by the Arabs as incorruptible. But our triumphant Jesus on the Throne is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; and " able therefore to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him, because he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

(Heb. vii. 25.) In his Divine nature He is from everlasting to everlasting, the eternal Jehovah; "He who is, and was, and is to come." As Immanuel, he has received an immortal crown and an eternal throne; for of the Child born and the Son given, it is proclaimed, "Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." (Isa. ix. 7.)

But while our exalted Jesus is the same in himself, and the same in his glory, he is also the same in his grace and love; in the all-sufficiency of his mediatorial fulness, and in his disposition to bestow blessings upon his people. He is their eternal source of supply, their eternal light, and immutable defence. This is the fulness of his mediatorial glories, that He is the eternal Saviour. Oh, then, be thou my eternal Friend and Portion, thou eternal Jesus! When the natural sun shall be no more the light of his church by day, and when for brightness the moon shall give no light; or when all means and ordinances shall be for ever passed away; then the Lord shall be unto his church an everlasting light, and her God her glory. *Thy own Eternal Sun, the Sun of Righteousness, shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord Jehovah "shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended," &c. (See Isa. lx. 19, 20.)*

Upon the whole, the ultimate effect of this emblem may be to denote,

7. *The superior excellency of our Redeemer above all besides.*—No tree is so useful as the palm-tree, nor applied to such a variety of valuable purposes: but none in heaven or earth can equal the glory of our Redeemer; none like Christ to the penitent sinner, to the contrite spirit, or to the believing heart. "In all things he must have the pre-eminence." He stands the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely: nothing good, nothing excellent,

nothing beautiful, can be known or enjoyed without him; while there is no useful quality, no excellent benefit, no glory, nor beauty, but what resides in him and flows from him. He concentrates in his adorable person the sum of all the glories of heaven and of earth; and while faith excites the admiration of his people below, the vision of his glory excites the adoring song of glorified spirits above. O may I be found in Christ! may Christ be mine! and I shall be satisfied with his fulness throughout eternity.—What, then, should be the great concern and aim of his people, but to be like him? The righteous in him shall indeed flourish like himself, by union with him. The palm-tree is a beautiful emblem of what they ought to be, as deriving virtue from him in this barren and wilderness world: though slow in its growth, it is beautiful, durable, and most useful. Such was the Divine Redeemer when on earth, and such should they be spiritually who belong to him. As branches, indeed, of this living stock, they must be like him, of the same spirit, and therefore bringing forth the same fruit. The means whereby this is obtained and carried on, is beautifully represented by the Psalmist: “They that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God,” &c. (Psa. xcii. 12—15.)

Let us then be found in a more diligent use of his appointed ordinances; that we may derive more virtue from his fulness, to conform us to his image, and render us fruitful to his glory. Too little, indeed, is this fruitfulness displayed, either for the glory of God or the good of man. To live by faith upon Him, is the appointed means of deriving more grace from him, that more glory may be given to him. Let us live in believing dependence on our all-sufficient Saviour, that we may follow the steps of his conflict against sin and satan; and so shall we participate of his victories. Here, O believer! realize thy security and thy defence: Jesus, so beautiful, so glorious in himself, the Righteous One, shall be thy protecting shade, thy constant and abundant supply, thy light of life and glory. Constant in his work, and unchangeably persevering, he

has obtained everlasting victory, and secured everlasting peace. He is himself eternally the same, and his blessings shall eternally be thine. Soon the palms of victory shall eternally be placed in thine hand; for to him that overcometh he will give to sit with him on his throne: even as he also overcame, and is also sat down with his Father upon his throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) May we be among that happy number in the temple above! where we shall behold, not the emblems of his glory, but himself; where we shall not only hear of his victory, but enjoy its benefit among that innumerable multitude, with white robes and palms in their hands, ascribing with the loudest voice of triumph, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

ESSAY X.

Ointment — Camphire.

ONE grand point in which all true believers agree, in whatever else they may differ, is the supreme excellency of Christ. And as it is the office of the Spirit to testify of his glory, it is their most delightful employ to meditate upon him, to study his word, that they may know still more and more of him; and it is their chief desire to glorify and enjoy him. That sacred book, where this interesting allusion occurs, is called, *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's*; i. e. the chief of all his songs,—more sweet, more dignified, more comprehensive in its subject, and in its expression, than the thousand and five songs which he composed besides. It is properly a song of love, setting forth the glory of Christ, and his preciousness to his church, and the mutual affection and regard which unites them in one indissoluble bond. Sensible of his glories herself, and wrapt up in the manifestations of his love, her mind absorbed in contemplation upon this one object, as if all others must be acquainted with Him who is so precious to her heart, she breaks forth in an abrupt manner, and in an allusion without a name, exclaims, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.” (Song i. 2.) Let me enjoy some sweet manifestation of his love, who is the only beloved of my soul. Then to shew the value which she put upon him and his love, she uses two comparisons to things in which sense delights, which are most gratifying to the animal taste, and refreshing to the senses: “Thy love is better than wine;” yea, “thy name is as ointment poured forth.”—The latter of these is now to engage our attention; and similar to this is the allusion in ver. 14, where

the Redeemer is compared to "a cluster of camphire," which, though certainly not the same as that which we call by this name, and in the explanation of which learned men greatly differ, must allude to something whose fragrance and utility were then well known and delighted in. The allusion must have had a peculiar beauty and effect to them, amongst whom the richest spices grew, who were accustomed to their fragrant perfumes, and by whom they were in continual use for common and sacred purposes. It is not indeed improbable that an allusion might here be made to the holy anointing oil (Exod. xxx. 24), which was designed typically to shadow forth the glory, the beauty, the fragrance, and the utility of the person, offices, and blessings of the great Messiah. Let it now engage our attention; and may it refresh our souls with its spiritual and heavenly fragrance!

By the name of Christ, some understand the doctrine of Christ: but I apprehend we must rather understand by it Himself; *i. e.* his mediatorial person; or, if we would carry the idea still further, we may embrace in it literally the names he bears, or the characters and offices which he sustains. The names of Christ may indeed include his Gospel, in which he is set forth in all his glories, and in all the benefits and blessings of his salvation. In the latter sense it seems necessary to understand it in Matt. x. 22, and Acts ix. 16. In each of these views it is true in fact, in the experience of all his believing people. And as to the sentiments which all those entertain of him, who have faculties to behold and discern his excellencies and blessings; to them, however the world may appreciate his value, He is, in all, the most suited to give delight and to every spiritual sense, and as the sweetest savour of the sweetest precious ointment. This is especially the case with his Divine Person, uniting in itself the two natures of God and man, and thus constituting him Immanuel, God with us. The glories of that person are infinitely beyond what angels can express, or even conceive; much less the finite power of the human spirit invested with flesh and blood, and thus

beclouded in all its views, and limited in its most extensive range of vision. Here are heights which can never be attained, and depths which can never be fathomed. They will form the subject of everlasting contemplation and everlasting delight, and render his name eternally *The Wonderful*.

But if we consider the sacred writer as referring *literally to his names*; names which are never without a meaning, but which imply the fulness of his characters and offices; here is indeed a rich abundance of heavenly fragrances, of spiritual odours to delight the spiritual senses, when rectified and renewed by the Spirit of God. How full of infinite and Divine blessings is the name Immanuel! How rich in grace the Messiah, the Anointed! (Isa. lxi. 1.) What an infinite variety of sweets in the name, our Jesus! The character and offices he sustains may all be summed up under the names of Prophet, Priest, and King. "Let the disconsolate lamenting sinner lift up his head, and behold Christ the Son of God anointed a *Prophet*, to preach salvation and liberty to such; a *Priest*, to purchase it; and a *King*, to give it." (Leighton.) Under the character of the Prophet, the church of old celebrates the delight which she found in his heavenly teaching: "His mouth is most sweet." (Song v. 16.) Grace is poured out upon his lips (Psal. xlv. 2), in the richness of his promises, or the pleasantness of his precepts. (Psal. xix.)

As the great Priest of our profession, he unites in himself several other characters which are infinitely important and precious to the believer; our Sacrifice, our Surety, our Atonement, our Propitiation, and Intercessor. The dying love of the Redeemer is a sacrifice well pleasing to God; in which he smells, as in the sacrifice of Noah, a savour of rest; and which is most delightful to the faith of his people, while the odour of his intercession perfumes the heavenly world. As a King, the wisdom, the power, the sovereign love and grace which guide his authority and dominion, are subjects of delightful contemplation. In connection and subserviency to this, what an assemblage

of delightful names he bears, significative of the love of his heart, the power of his arm, or the faithfulness of his grace! He is the Saviour, the Redeemer, and the Lord our Righteousness. He is the Friend, the Husband of his church, the Hope, the Healer, the Refuge, the Rock of salvation. How many are the characters which this dear Redeemer bears, so suited to our wants, so glorious to him, and so precious to us! When the believer considers the different views in which he is thus represented; each so suited to his situation, his necessities, and his renewed desires; Thy names of love, says he, are as the richest perfume, like balsamic ointments poured forth, that spread their savour all around.

If we refer the name of Christ to *his work, and to the benefits and blessings of his salvation*, here we have a rich treasury of sweets, a repository of all that can delight the heart of the humble penitent sinner, or the admiring believer. Without this there can be no enjoyment; but in the possession of it is the sum of all delights. When we are said to draw nigh to the Throne of Grace in the name of Jesus, the name must signify the *work* which he has performed, and which is the ground of all peace and joy to the church of God. But how infinitely delightful is the discovery of covenant and adopting love, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost! How sweet the sense of pardoning mercy, the savour of Divine peace! (Rom. v. 1, &c.) How rich the enjoyment of communion with God in Christ Jesus! (1 John i. 3.) And the witnessing of the Spirit “with our spirits that we are the children of God! and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. viii. 14—17.) These are views of our glorious Redeemer, which render him infinitely precious, and may justly be compared to the most grateful perfumes, or to the clusters of the camphire, whatever may be designated by that name.—Let us contemplate a few particulars of their resemblance.

1. The precious ointment is principally valued for *its*

delightful fragrancy, which is most sweet and grateful to the senses.—This is the principal reason of its being used; and this is evidently the principal design of the allusion. Its medicinal virtue may be in some measure referred to, but much more its delightful and gratifying odour, which justly represents how exceedingly precious the Lord Jesus Christ is to the faith of his believing people, in all these admirable views of him. For the use of the tabernacle, and no doubt of the temple, two mixtures were composed of the richest perfume; the one called the holy anointing oil, with which the priests, and most probably the kings, of Judah were anointed; and the other called a perfume and confection, which was used for the burning of incense daily on the golden altar; neither of which were to be imitated, upon a penalty of being cut off from among the people of Israel. The first was not to be poured on any stranger; and besides the latter, none would be acceptable before God. This holy anointing oil was but a type of that fulness of the Spirit which was poured out upon our great Priest and King, in all his glory, beauty, and excellency. And all other anointed ones were but the figure of Him who was thus anointed, and on whom truly the holy anointing oil of the Divine Spirit was poured without measure. This is beautifully expressed in Psalm cxxxiii. by the precious ointment upon the head, which ran down upon the beard, even upon Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his garment, filling all the place around with its delightful fragrance. So He is represented, Psalm xlv. 7, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows; while his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, as he comes out of the heavenly places to this lower world. This so adorned, or broke through, his human nature, that the presence and power of his Divine nature was most evident; and in the glories of that Divine nature, together with the graces of the Spirit, in his human nature, shining forth in his life and his whole conversation, he diffuses a most delightful savour of heavenly excellency and grace to his people, to whom he is thus altogether lovely.

Not only do the drops of this holy oil descend upon his
 head; he derives not his anointing from without, but from
 his own Divine fulness; and oceans, immense oceans, of
 the gifts of grace are in him the most abundant: yea,
 infinite gifts of grace are in him; in whom it has pleased
 the Father that all fulness should dwell, all the treasures
 of wisdom and knowledge, all the fulness of the Godhead
 richly. Not all Arabia's spicy groves can send forth so
 of a perfume as flows from the names, and the characters,
 the Redeemer: when the Holy Spirit reveals them to
 them, then they flow like a gale from the heavenly shores.
 So the soul that has been shut up in the filthy prison of
 sin, under temptation and guilt, how precious is the name
 of Jesus, the manifestations of his love by the Spirit, and
 the joy and triumph of his soul! He is then like a man
 brought out from such a filthy situation, into the pure clear
 air, in the most delightful fragrant spot, where he finds
 himself surrounded with the odours of innumerable spices,
 in their richest and choicest perfumes. Then indeed the
 name of Jesus is most precious: from henceforth it
 spreads the sweetest odour through all his path. It em-
 balms the bed of affliction, and of death, yea, the regions
 of the grave, with the savour of heavenly pleasure, and the
 foretaste of everlasting delight. But the peculiar and un-
 utterable excellency of this holy perfume, when poured on
 our persons and our services from him in whom it rests
 without measure, like the composition of the sweet in-
 cense offered on the golden altar, is this, that it makes
 our persons most acceptable to the heart of Infinite Purity
 and with it all our poor services ascend, as pillars of sweet
 incense, surrounding the throne of God, the sweet savour
 in which he finds rest. O, blessed Redeemer, how glorious
 art thou in thyself! how useful and precious to my soul!
 This, as it is the first, is perhaps the chief design of the
 comparison; though there are some other properties of
 sweet ointment, which may still further represent his ex-
 cellencies and his glory.

2. *It is reviving and exhilarating to the animal frame and spirits.*—“Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart.” (Prov. xxvii. 9.) It was continually used on the most joyful occasions: then they anointed themselves with the chief ointment. (Amos vi. 6.) “Let thy head lack no ointment” is the direction of the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, when he calls to a pure, temperate, but cheerful use and enjoyment of all the lawful comforts of the present life. But as the Lord Jesus Christ, in his person, in his names, characters, and offices, is so exceedingly precious, so the application of these by the Spirit rejoices the heart of the humble penitent, and fills the soul of the believer with refreshment and consolation, beyond the most reviving fragrance of the richest spices. The one is mixed and temporary; the other is pure and eternal; there can indeed be no true joy without this: the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment. Without the knowledge of Christ and his salvation the precarious joys of sin are but folly, and the loudest laughter of the gay and thoughtless but the madness of the carnal mind. It is He who is anointed with the oil of gladness without measure, that it may flow down to all his people, that he may be the Consolation of Israel, and that they may receive refreshment and joy from him; “Come unto me,” says he, “all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The grace of Christ, the consolations of Christ, the fulness of his salvation, and to be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, are the constant cure of all our griefs and sorrows. For this purpose he was anointed of the Spirit to diffuse his Divine influence of grace and joy over all his people. In this view he thus exhibits himself to their faith: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to

comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isa. lxi. 1—3.) This is the only source of peace and refreshment to the penitent sinner, or of holy reviving to the backsliding, but now returning and mourning, believer. "I rose up," says the languid church, "to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock." (Song v. 5.) When his name is poured forth in his ordinances, and faith contemplates and thus receives the sweet odours, faith itself is enlivened, hope is encouraged, love is warmed, joy unspeakable pours itself into the heart, and fresh impulses of grace direct the soul in its heavenly course. For the consolation of the Spirit in the manifestation of Jesus and his love, is the great spring of all holiness; it deepens humiliation, it elevates heavenly love, and it animates the springs of obedience. If we were living more upon the fulness of Christ, and, in the exercises of faith, upon his glories and office, because of the savour of his sweet ointment, his name would be as ointment poured forth, and our hearts would not only be more happy but more holy; and more happy, because more imbued with the holy virtue and influence of his grace.

The sweet ointment has also,

3. *A mollifying, softening, and healing influence.*—So the Prophet describes, under the same allusion, the corrupt and dangerous state of the Jewish Church, by that of a wounded person, whose wounds and bruises and putrifying sores have not been closed nor bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Of this nature was the balm of Gilead; and in the same manner, the good Samaritan is represented as pouring in the medicated oil. It is thus the grace of Christ mollifies the heart; and though the Law may break the stout and hardened heart in pieces,

when applied by the Spirit, it is the discovery of the love and grace of Christ that softens it and melts it down to godly sorrow. Then a Manasseh, a Magdalene, and a Saul can dissolve into tears of repentance, and flow down in humiliation and contrition. The hardest heart then becomes a heart of flesh, loses its insensibility and stony hardness, and becomes tender and impressible to the great evil of sin, the folly and vileness of transgression, and the obligation of Divine mercy and forgiving love. But this is the only balm, the sweet oil, the fragrant ointment, which can heal the wounds of a guilty conscience, and a sinful and corrupted heart; which can stop the progress of the spiritual malady, and restore the soul to health and soundness. By this our dear Redeemer, as the good Physician, “forgives all our iniquities, and heals all our diseases.”

Oil, or sweet ointment, was used also,

4. *To beautify and to cleanse.* “Oil to make his face to shine.” (Psa. civ. 15.)—It is supposed to get wrinkles out of the skin, and to render it clean and smooth. It was, therefore, in constant use among the Eastern women: it formed part of the directions of Naomi to Ruth, when she sent her to Boaz. (Ruth iii. 3.) We have also a particular account of the manner of purification of the Eastern women, in the court of their prince (Esth. ii. 12): “for so were the days of their purifications accomplished; to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women.” It was ever used by warriors to make their armour glitter (Isa. xxi. 5): “Arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.” Oh, what a faint emblem of the infinite virtues of our adorable Redeemer, when he communicates his grace to his chosen people! While in himself he is essentially glory and beauty in the eyes of God, of angels, and of men, his grace and gracious influences adorn and beautify all those upon whom they are poured, with a spiritual and a heavenly beauty. The spots of natural corruption shall be cleansed and purified

from the heart, and the spots of contracted guilt shall be done away, as though they had never been. The power of his grace, even now in the present state of imperfection, beautifies the soul; so that in the eyes of her Beloved, the church is all excellency: "Thou art all fair," says he, "my love; there is no spot in thee." (Song iv. 7.) And when representing the state of the Israelitish Church, as partaking of his love, washed and cleansed, anointed and clothed with all the sweet influence of his grace and Spirit, he describes her beauty as perfect through that comeliness which he had put upon her. (Ezek. xvi. 14.) Such at present is the state of every believing sinner, as to his justification in the sight of God; for if found in Christ, if viewed in him, if complete in him, he can have no deficiency in the eyes of infinite Holiness and Purity. When clothed with the garment of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness, he stands arrayed as in the beauty of bridal ornaments, and in greater splendor than in the most glittering jewels. (Isa. lxi. 10.) The beauty of his sanctification is now begun: he shines in all the graces of the Spirit, though mixed, imperfect, and often too sadly blotted with the stains of remaining corruption; but hereafter in every respect, in justification and in sanctification, he will present his people without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the Throne, and fix them complete for ever. This is the true beauty of all his saints; the most absolute righteousness in the righteousness of the Saviour; the completion of purity and holiness in the grace of his Spirit.

And as ointment,

5. *Causes the same delightful fragrance to arise from those on whom it is poured,*—so, like the anointing oil, the anointing influence of the Spirit, shed upon the heart, will cause the believer to diffuse the same holy fragrance all around, in his temper and in his actions; for to partake of Christ, is to be made like him. Oil, or liquid ointment, so diffuses itself into many bodies as to change their qualities, and their appearances; but this holy anointing

changes the very nature of its subject, and transforms it into itself, diffusing its own qualities into the believing soul that receives it. The believing soul spreads around the savour of his sweet ointment, in displaying the grace, the beauty, the virtues of the Saviour. How pleasant to himself the obedience of love, and the exercise of Christian graces in the various circumstances and relations of life! How pleasant to others in their effects! and how useful in their influence to all around! How sweet the savour of the Christian's life and conversation, when it is conformed to the humiliation, the righteousness, the truth, the benevolence, the kindness, the meekness, and the beneficence of the Redeemer! These are what the Apostle describes as the fruits of the Spirit; "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." (Gal. v. 22—26.) "Put on, therefore," says the Apostle, "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Col. iii. 12—15.) Yea, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. iv. 8.) What can be more beautiful, what can be more fragrant to the world around, than these graces, when appearing in the Christian's temper and conduct? But these, as fruits of the Spirit, are the natural and genuine effects of Divine grace. The more it is poured upon us, and received into use by faith, the more will these effects be produced to the honour of the great Anointer, of him who, anointed without measure, is the Messiah, the Christ, who hath the power of anointing. His grace, indeed, must be effectual; but his grace alone can produce these important and salutary effects. Let us learn to know that all our grace is

derived from him, all that can constitute our beauty in the sight of God, and all the fragrant odour of Christian graces before men. Who made thee to differ from another? is a question which it is of importance frequently to ask, for our humiliation and his praise. Let us acknowledge his grace, and give him the glory, while we seek more grace to glorify him more. All the offering and service of a sinful creature, without this holy anointing, is but abomination in the sight of God. Nothing could be used acceptably in the temple but what was anointed with the holy oil; nor could any sacrifice be offered without the holy perfume of the incense: nor can any of our services be accepted but by the anointing of the Spirit and the intercession of the Redeemer. But thus we offer up spiritual sacrifices; and in him the offering of Gentile sinners is "acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

How sweet is this fragrant Ointment, as it is poured out in the Scriptures of truth! These are but the testimony of Jesus, where we behold his glory, and see and enjoy the communication of his love. The preaching of the Gospel is the bearing his name to Gentile sinners, in all its preciousness. (Acts ix. 15.) It is the preaching Christ, without which all will be of little value, and of no efficacy for the salvation of sinners. And in doing this, "we are to God," says the Apostle, "a sweet smelling savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." (2 Cor. ii. 15.) With this savour of his name he fills all his appointed ordinances. "No such sweet air blows, as in his ordinances." There Christ is, as it were, like Mary opening the box of ointment, which diffuses its spiritual savour in the assembly, but which only the spiritual Christian feels. (See Zech. iv. 2, 3, &c.) But this only becomes effectual for these delightful purposes, when his presence and his Spirit are there. Then it is sweet to pray, to hear, and to receive the symbols of his love. Then he conveys the droppings of this precious ointment in all its fragrance, and in all its reviving and transforming influence, which should teach us most highly to value his

word and ordinances. Christ alone is the precious, fragrant, reviving, sweetening Ointment, that can perfume with a heavenly fragrant all on which it is poured forth. But these are the appointed means of receiving, and here he has promised to pour forth the savour of his Name. If, then, we would enjoy it; if we would have our souls revived, beautified, or rendered fragrant in his graces, we must be daily coming to him in the reading and hearing of his word, in prayer and meditation, and in the ordinances of his house. These are the channels in which he has appointed that it shall be conveyed to my heart, and thus alone. Hence the believer so delights himself in these means of his grace: there he has beheld his glory, and he longs to see it there again. He is satisfied as with marrow and fatness. (Psa. xxxvi. 8.) There he waits to be revived and blessed; and there let us wait, for there alone can we expect the sweet influence and enjoyment. But, waiting in all his appointed means, let us not fear to derive a rich abundance from him. That this Ointment is poured forth, denotes that there is an *exceeding fulness* treasured up in himself. There can be no failure, no deficiency: it flows continually from Him, in whom all fulness dwells, and in whom there is sufficient and to spare, when the wants of all his believing people are supplied. The pouring out of this sweet Ointment must denote also *the liberal communication* which he affords to all his people. He gives abundantly of what is in him: his mediatorial fulness was received, not for himself, but to communicate: "He received gifts to give unto men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them;" and he will discharge the trust. He is not like those who receive in order to keep; he is as willing to give as we are to receive, as much as we can want, as abundantly as we can desire. The holy oil on the head of our Priest flows down even to the skirts of his clothing, or to the lowest of his people. (Psa. cxxxiii. 2.)—When, under another allusion, his blessings are compared to a fountain, it is a fountain not shut up, but open

(Zech. xiii. 1); and under the same allusion he calls all who are athirst, whosoever will, to come unto him and drink. (John vii. 37, 38. This renders him so precious, because he is so gracious, so free, so rich, in communicating all the fulness of his saving blessings.

To taste, indeed, the natural savour, and relish the sweet odours of nature, there must be suitable natural senses to perceive them; so to relish and enjoy this delightful savour of grace, there must be a believing mind. That man who sees no beauty in Christ, nor perceives any fragrantcy of his grace, has not the spiritual faculty of enjoyment; and this faculty is a living faith. It is not to the world, to the profane, to the careless, or to the self-righteous, that these excellencies of Jesus are made known, but to the convinced sinner, the humble penitent, the virgin souls who are partakers of precious faith. This perfume also must be poured out around him, or they cannot be received or delighted in. But what can equal Christ and his grace to the humble penitent, the poor, the doubting, the distressed, the tempted believer! All is misery without him; and his returns to the soul, in the manifestation of his love, are the most grateful and reviving, represented by the most delightful things on earth: in value, in fulness, in duration, he excels them all. The soul of the believer, like the Apostle, desires to know nothing *but Christ; Christ crucified, Christ exalted.* All things are loss in comparison of him. The name of Christ, like the perfume which sweetens every thing it touches, gives a beauty and an excellency to every thing with which it is connected. He is the sweetener, the beauty of all, the all in all, and himself above all. If such be his glory on earth, what shall be his heavenly glory? If such the enjoyment of him on earth, what shall be the enjoyment of him above? If such the pleasures of faith, what shall be the pleasures of actual vision; to be with him, to be like him, to see him as he is? All other enjoyment, even the sweetest odour, must end in unceasing corruption; but the glory of Christ is eternally precious, and with himself more

and more delightful, and shall be a growing savour of delight to his people through eternity. In his presence there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore; and to wake up in his likeness, will yield immortal satisfaction. Let faith now dwell upon his glories, and it shall receive of the sweet savour of his precious ointment, and diffuse its fragrant influence all around. The odoriferous gales of Divine consolation, from the spicy shores of the heavenly world, shall afford a delightful anticipation of its joy and blessedness, till the immortal soul be covered, be filled, be immersed in its richest, fullest odours, in the land of unbounded and everlasting fragrancy, and of pure and unmixed delights.

ESSAY XI.

Strength.

THE Strength of Israel is a name and title of the Redeemer, which is peculiarly acceptable and dear to the mind of the believer. Sensible of his own weakness and insufficiency, he would find no hope, and could enjoy no consolation, but in the confidence of being in better hands than his own; under the guardianship of those eyes, which never slumber nor sleep; and in the keeping of that wisdom which is infinite, and that power which is almighty. In the natural world we find many beautiful illustrations of this truth. Those who are conscious of their own weakness fly to the stronger for refuge and protection: there they seek and find the shelter which they need, and may be said to be strong in the strength of those by whom they are defended. So is it with the believer, whose mind is enlightened by the Holy Spirit: humbled under a sense of his fallen and depraved condition, he feels, and therefore readily acknowledges, his guilt and extreme helplessness; and with such a sense of need, he contemplates in Jesus a suitableness and all-sufficiency, both of grace and of power. Without him, in whom is all his salvation, he knows himself to be undone; but oh, if faith beholds, believes, and trusts in humble reliance upon him, what security, what confidence, and what peace, possess the soul! His promises secure his Divine aid to all who, renouncing self-righteousness and self-dependence, trust in the Lord Jesus alone, as their everlasting Strength.—Blessed Jesus! thus glorify thyself now, as the Strength of thy people. Let thy Spirit testify of thee thus, to thy honour and our joy; that, though weak and helpless, we may be strong

in thee; and in the language of holy triumph rejoice in thee, "as the Lord Jehovah, our Righteousness and our Strength."—In contemplating Jehovah Jesus, as the Strength of his people, our view must no doubt be directed,

1. *To the Strength which is essentially in himself.*—His own Divine glory and Almighty power are the foundation, and therefore the security, of every mediatorial character which he bears; his own self-sufficiency in himself constitutes his all-sufficiency to his people; for if he were not such in himself, he could not become such to us. Every character under which he is designated rests upon, and leads us up to, his Divine glory and Godhead; without which he could not sustain, so as fully to accomplish, all that those characters imply to his people. If he is called a Rock for Strength, he is the Rock of Ages, to denote his eternal might, and that in him is everlasting Strength. The great evidence of his might is the work of creation; and under this character, as the great Creator, the God of Israel of old encouraged the faith and firm reliance of his people, when ready to faint and be discouraged: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who created these things; that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by their names, by the greatness of his might; for that he is strong in power, not one faileth." (Isa. xl. 26.) "Why sayest thou, O Jacob! and speakest, O Israel! My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (ver. 27—31.) But our confidence is the same: this God is alone the true

rock of our salvation: by our Jesus “were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” (Col. i. 16.) It is in this view, and under this character, that he proposes himself to us as the confidence of our salvation, “Look unto me, and be ye saved; for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isa. xlv. 22.) Let us always keep this in view, in contemplating every character of our Redeemer and Saviour: this alone renders his ability complete; and assures us of his infinite sufficiency to perform his offices, and fulfil the hopes of his people.

But absolute Power and invincible Strength could afford no consolation to sinful creatures, unless they were exercised and engaged for their benefit and on their behalf. If we derive any consolation from the Strength of the eternal Jehovah, we must contemplate it as exercised according to the designs and purposes of his everlasting covenant love, in which all his might, yea, all his perfections, stand engaged for the redemption and salvation of his people.

It is the *Strength of his love*, by which he becomes the Strength of his people. In the counsels of eternity our help was laid upon the Mighty One; our help was then his peculiar concern: this was the covenant engagement arising from his own sovereign grace, to help us out of our sinful state, out of all its miseries and dangers, from all its curse and consequences, from all our enemies and conflicts with them, into the kingdom of his eternal glory. This must for ever be the object of our admiration, as it is the ground of our hope. Who could claim the manifestation and exercise of such love as this? But who can doubt the efficacy of such love, its continuance, its success, its everlasting triumphs? Or who can fear the faithfulness of such a friend? This love is made known to his people in the exceeding great and precious promises of his word, without which never could a sinner have expected or hoped for its amazing display, and its exertion in the varied works of redemption and salvation. But now what peni-

tent sinner can doubt of his ability to save, or of his willingness to receive him? What humble believer can question his inclination to bless his people, to deliver them from all, and through all, their trials and dangers?

This view brings his strength near to me, gives me an interest in it, and perfect security by it, when I am found believing in him, and relying upon him. If, as a penitent believing sinner, I embrace his mercy and his grace according to his promise, and rest in humble hope upon his promised aid, surely I may say, "*In the Lord Jehovah have I righteousness and strength.*"—But this confidence will be confirmed, when I take a view of the Almighty Redeemer still further, in fulfilling the characters which he has assumed, and discern how he has exercised his almighty power,

2: *In overcoming every difficulty, and completing the work of redemption.*—Here his covenant Love comes forth into act, and his almighty Strength is brought into effect: here we discover the almighty working of his Power. The prophet Isaiah has given us a most glorious view of him, when going forth upon the work, clad in his armour of invincible might. He saw that there was no man, and (therefore) placed himself in our stead, when there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation on his head; and he put on the garment of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak, &c. Thus the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord (Isa. lix. 16—20); or, as the Apostle has stated it; "and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Thus prepared for his work and warfare, who but must expect a glorious issue? The same Prophet, therefore, presents us with a view of him returning from his conflict with the spoils of victory." (Isa. lxxiii. 1—6.) "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his Strength?

I that speak in righteousness," whose purposes of love and mercy never change, "mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me:" the mighty Saviour hath alone accomplished, and must alone have the honour of salvation: "for I will tread them in mine anger," &c. The Prophet again recalls to his view, and expresses, in nearly the same words, the voluntary undertaking, and the substitution of the Redeemer himself in the place of his people; and thus represents him, in the firm determination of his unchangeable purpose, to tread down the strength of all his enemies to the earth. But in the work, the suffering, the victory of the cross, we behold the prophecy in its absolute completion; and as with the voice of triumph he himself proclaims, before he yields up the ghost, "*It is finished.*" Then was he strong to atone for the sins of his people; then was he mighty to endure the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the vengeance of Almighty justice. Then was he strong to drink up the cup of bitterness and woe, to endure the piercings of the sword of the Almighty; then was he mighty to bruise the serpent's head, to overcome the powers of darkness; yea, to become the plague of death, and the destroyer of the grave. "By death, he conquered him that had the power of death; that is, the devil." But behold he rises! Neither death nor the grave can hold its prey: the mighty Redeemer ascends on high. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; that the King of Glory may come in, even the Lord mighty in battle. By his own blood he enters into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Yes, thou mighty Saviour, I adore thee: the victory is thine; thine be all the glory. But though he conquers, it is my enemy that he conquers; it was for me he engaged, he fought, he suffered, he subdued, and triumphed over sin and satan, death and hell. Let me then triumph in him. O Lord, I will praise thee, &c. Behold God is my salvation: I will

trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. (Isa. xii. 1, 2.) Now let the sinner come to Jesus, and trust in him, and fear no evil. It is the voice, it is the call, of mercy: Let him take hold of my Strength, saith Jehovah, him whom I have appointed as the Strength of salvation, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me (Isa. xxvii. 5); for the Strength of Israel cannot lie nor repent. But while I contemplate redemption completed in the Strength of the Lord Jesus, I need the same might and power to bring me to him, and to lead me through, to the complete enjoyment of it in everlasting salvation. In this view I must adopt the same language, and look to the same source. I must cleave to Jesus from day to day: he is still the Strength of my salvation; nor has the strongest believer any security besides; but he that glorieth must glory in the Lord.

Let us view him,

3. *In the continual exertion of that Almighty Strength, in carrying his redeemed through all their dangers to his promised rest.*—Men, in their natural estate, and ignorant of their true character, neither feel nor will confess their weakness: they smile at the humble confessions of the believer, as enthusiastic folly; while the pride of their own natural powers, or moral goodness, deceives and destroys them. Nothing, however, but the constant conviction of the Redeemer's eye upon him, and the Redeemer's arm of power exerted on his behalf, could keep the believer's mind quiet, or prevent his being tossed about and agitated with continual fears and apprehensions. "If the Lord had not been on our side, will Israel say, they had swallowed us up quickly; yea, the waters had overwhelmed us, and the stream had gone over our soul." (See Psa. cxxiv. 1—5.) A sense of their own weakness, and the power of their spiritual enemies, affords a continual and a just ground of alarm, independently of the promised grace and aid of the mighty Saviour. And when faith is not in exercise upon the almighty power and love of Jesus, as

engaged by covenant promise to preserve and uphold his people, the confidence of the mind must sink; the mind itself must be overwhelmed with fear, and all its hopes be destroyed. But when, on the contrary, the believer contemplates the power of Jesus as engaged for his security, his heart takes courage; he trusts in Him who has delivered, to deliver to the end. Blessed be the Lord, says he, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth: our soul is escaped, &c.: our help is in the name of the Lord Jehovah, who made heaven and earth. (Psa. cxxiv. 6—8.) He in whom is everlasting Strength hath engaged, from everlasting, to be the Strength of his servants: with an almighty arm he hath gotten himself the victory; and with that almighty arm he will still fulfil his characters of covenant mercy, and his designs of love, till he has brought them through, as eternal conquerors with himself. “Fear not, O Jacob, O Israel,” says he who created and formed him; “fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel thy Saviour. Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west.” (Isa. xliii. 1—5.) Let us see how this Strength is applied for their peace and deliverance.

He is, no doubt, (1.) *The Strength of their justification.*—This, indeed, is the same as his being their righteousness; and therefore it will not require any enlargement here. They feel themselves guilty, as transgressors of the Law of God; every commandment of which is holy, just, and good; and as such, they feel themselves, and confess themselves, exposed to the wrath of God. “Fear not then,” says Jehovah Jesus, “I am the End of the Law, for righteousness to every one that believeth.” I have prevailed, by almighty power, to sustain the guilt and the curse of sin: I have satisfied the justice of God, by enduring all its righ-

teous vengeance: I have honoured the Law, by suffering and obeying in all that it could demand: though you are altogether as an unclean thing, and all your righteousness but as filthy rags, I will clothe thee with the garment of my salvation, and cover thee with the robe of my righteousness. Justly would you be separated from a Holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; but my blood cleanseth from all sin, and my righteousness justifies from all things; through these, peace and reconciliation are promised with God, and shall be manifested to the soul of every believing penitent sinner. But this name rather relates to him as the Strength of their calling, their Sanctification, and their Preservation in all the various states of their pilgrimage, and in all the dangers of their conflict.—They feel themselves filled with infirmities, and failing through the weakness of natural and spiritual powers: here they faint and fear, but here he is,

(2.) *The Strength of their support in all their infirmities.*—When I see the slender ivy encircling around the sturdy oak, I see the emblem of the believer cleaving unto Jesus. Feeble in itself, it would necessarily fall to the ground, and be crushed by every passenger; but twining itself around the strong and majestic trunk, that stands firmly rooted and unmoveable, it strikes its fibres closer and closer, deeper and deeper, as it grows and shoots along; till at last it can scarcely be distinguished from the venerable tree on which it grows, nor be separated from its body. Let me here learn a lesson of faith: thus let me cleave to Jesus, and I shall be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. Let me never lose my hold, but grow up into Christ Jesus in all things; cleaving closer and closer, striking deeper and deeper, in every exercise of the Christian life, and in every advance in the Christian profession.

When the feeble bird is apprehensive of danger, it flies to the maternal wing for protection; when the child is alarmed, it flies to the arm of the parent, and beneath his wisdom and his power expects protection and deliverance.

Let me see in all this the emblem of my own insufficiency, my duty and privilege, and the protecting power of Jesus. If I leave him, slender as the ivy, feeble as the bird, helpless as the child, my strength will in all be perfect weakness; the slightest danger will overwhelm me, and I shall soon learn, that without him I can do nothing. Indeed, it appears to be the principal design of many of the Divine dispensations to the servants of God, to shew them how vain is all wisdom and might without Him, to drive them to Him, in dependence and faith, and to put the honour upon his own power and grace in their deliverance. There alone is my security; his arm alone can raise me up, can support and preserve my soul.

(3.) *He is the Strength of protection against all our sins, corruptions, and temptations, against all our inward and spiritual enemies.*—Alas, says the believer, like the servant of the Prophet, alas, master! what shall we do? But let the Lord open the eyes of faith into the invisible world, and the almighty power of Jehovah Jesus, infinitely more glorious and powerful than the horses of fire and chariots of fire round about Elijah, appear engaged and ready to defend the weakest of his servants, who put their trust in him.

I lament over the *inward corruptions* that I cannot dislodge from the recesses of my heart: I feel the burden of my sins, which, when I would do good, are urging and oppressing my reluctant soul. I feel myself compelled to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" What could I do? What consolation could I find, if he had not promised, "Sin shall not have dominion over you?" &c. When I sink under the sense of my own weakness, and my proneness to transgress, I can find no other refuge but the power and grace of the Lord. That this power, however, shall be exerted on my behalf, that this grace shall be bestowed upon me, I can have no assurance, except from his own promise; the promise which must arise from his own sovereign pleasure. And blessed be his Name, his word abounds with ex-

ceeding great and precious promises, to the humble penitent, and the renewed believer, who feels, but laments, his corruptions, and is longing for deliverance and salvation. "I had fainted," said the Psalmist, "unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living: wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (Psa. xxvii. 13, 14.) But the inward corruptions of the believer's heart are assisted and abetted,

(4.) *By the outward enemies which labour to destroy his soul.*—"We wrestle not" (only) "against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We are unable to oppose, with any hope of success, these invisible and powerful adversaries: but go forth, says the Lord the Redeemer, in my strength: enlisted under my banner, look to me for direction, for courage, for strength, and for victory. "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee:" though thou art weak, I am strong; and the supply of my strength shall be equal to thy day. And though no store can be treasured up in thee, it is treasured up in my arm and heart, and shall be supplied at the time, and in the measure which thy necessity and thy conflicts require. Hence the believer must always be kept conscious, that in himself he has and can do nothing, while in Christ he has and can do all things. "Sing ye to the Lord," says the Prophet concerning the church, "a vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." (See Isa. xxvii. 2-4.) Can any language more beautifully or more expressly represent the unremitting care of Jehovah over his church, and her security? Under the allusion to a fortified place, the Prophet again assures the church of the Divine protection, beyond the possibility of a failure. "We have a strong city: salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks, &c. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in

the Lord for ever ; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. xxvi. 1—4); and in his strength, the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy, shall bring down, and tread upon, the loftiest ramparts of the enemy. (ver. 5, 6.) Fly, believer, with all thy corruptions and enemies, to the arm of Jesus : his almighty power stands engaged to defend and save thee. " They shall never be ashamed that trust in him. He is engaged in the covenant of his grace for them ; he is able to fulfil to the uttermost all his engagements ; and for this his faithfulness stands immutably pledged. By his promise and by his oath he has laid the sure ground " of strong consolation to all who have fled for refuge to the hope set before them," in the Person and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Corruptions, sins, and enemies may be many ; they may assault the soul, perplex the spirit, darken the mind, and alarm the fears of the believer ; but " I will be with thee," is sufficient for his security and consolation. This was the consolation of the Apostle, when, distressed with the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of satan, he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him ; and though denied this request, yet received that encouraging answer, " My grace is sufficient for thee." This we know supported his faith and hope, and encouraged him in the conflict. But the same promise is made to every believer. Faith is the means by which the blessing is conveyed ; and where the grace of God hath wrought this faith, the believer will not only confess his own inability, but gladly glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him. Thus believing in Christ, and receiving grace according to his necessity out of his fulness, the weaker he feels himself, the stronger will he be in the Lord ; the more his weakness is felt in himself, the greater will be his dependence on the all-sufficiency of the Lord the Saviour. He will, like the Apostle, take pleasure in infirmities, &c., for Christ's sake, because in such situations he has the most clear proof of the all-sufficiency of his Saviour, and finds that, " when he is weak, then he is strong." This was the view which seemed always to

impress the mind of the Apostle. "Such trust," saith he in another place, "have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. iii. 4, 5.) And again; "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." The Lord may indeed at times suffer his people to go mourning for awhile; and through the weakness of faith, and the darkness of sense, they may not be able to see his hand, or rest upon his power. They may apprehend, with fearfulness and terror, that soon they shall be swallowed up or finally destroyed. But his love is unchangeable, and his power almighty, and his presence is ever with them. "Fear thou not," says he, "for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. All they that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish," &c. (Isa. xli. 10—16.) It is true, they shall "gather together against thee, but they shall fall for thy sake," &c. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." (Isa. liv. 15—17.) Resting on such an arm, and confident in such promises, the believer may be assured, that he who hath begun the good work in him will complete it to the day of Jesus. The youths may faint and be weary, and the young men utterly fail; the self-confident will always be disappointed of their vain-glorious hope; but he that flies to Jesus, out of weakness shall be made strong and victorious, for the glory of his name and his truth. This is the lesson that we have continually to learn, weak in self, strong in the Lord; nothing in self, all in Christ; weak, yet strong; self-humbled in the dust, yet always rejoicing in the Lord. Christ will be exalted upon the throne, and glorified in all his characters; his strength will be made perfect in weakness; and the most weak, the

most humble in himself, will be ever the most secure; receiving most from the fulness of the Redeemer, and rendering him the most abundant returns of glory. O Jesus, be thou the strength of my salvation, and my enemies shall fall before me!

But our Jesus is also the Strength of supply, in all the wants of his people. The only measure of his fulness is the infinity of his nature, the boundless extent of his attributes, and the immeasurable heights and depths of his love. The measure of our expectation is his own promises, which he hath given us in his word, "exceeding great and precious;" yet all these in his infinite power he is able to fulfil, and in his immeasurable love he is determined so to do. But there is not a want nor a desire which the renewed mind can feel that does not here meet with a suitable provision. What a delightful view does this present to the humble fearful mind! The strength of those promises is in Jesus; their security is in him; the fulness necessary to accomplish them is in him; and they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. "He of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Yea all are yours, if ye are Christ's, says the Apostle: let faith rise and triumph over present distresses, trials, or afflictions; rejoice in Jesus by the way, and anticipate the fulness of enjoyment in the realms of glory.—But Jesus is still more; he is,

5. *The Strength of all grace for duties, or for fruitfulness.*—The representation which our Lord himself has made of this humbling but encouraging truth, by an allusion to the vine and its branches, is a striking and just illustration of our dependence upon him, and of the manner in which we derive the needful grace out of his fulness. As the root, or stock, is the strength of the branches, which must all die when separated from it; so is the Lord Jesus, the Strength of all the life of the believer, and of all his fruitfulness, so that without him (separate from him) we can do nothing. It is only by abiding in him, in the exercises of faith, that we can bring forth the fruit of

righteousness to his glory. In vain do we seek for this from corrupted nature; for here there is no source of holiness, but a great strength of corruption, which brings forth its fruits accordingly. All the appearances of spiritual religion are but a delusion in the carnal and yet unregenerated heart, which knows not Christ, and has no union or communion with him. They are false in their principle, defective in their motives, and selfish in their ends. In vain do we seek for this, even in regenerate hearts: there no stock of grace independent is treasured up; but the grace to sanctify my heart, to subdue my corruptions, to preserve me in the exercise of Christian tempers, or the fruits of Christian holiness, is in Christ Jesus, and can come from him alone. And if I am now seeking for it from any other quarter, from the remains of strength or virtue in a depraved nature, or in external means and ordinances, I know nothing of its source, or of its true nature.—He is the Strength of my humility and repentance, of my faith and reliance, of my love and zeal, of my gratitude and obedience, and of my comfort and consolation. Never let me expect this, nor the increase of this, but from him; or their liveliest exercises will soon decline, and their brightest lustre soon die away. But when he becomes the Strength of my soul, the support of my spiritual life, the enlivener of my spiritual faculties, by the gracious influences of his Spirit, then how easy are trials, how weak the power of temptation, how pleasant the duties of life! My soul rejoices in the Lord, delights in his ways, and finds its only happiness in his salvation! The Prophet has represented this in a poetic strain of spiritual allegory, in allusion to the abundant dews which fall in those warm climates, whereby all nature is revived and fructified: “I will be,” says Jehovah, “as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon,” &c. (Hos. xiv. 5–8.)

Let me then be convinced, that self-sufficiency and self-dependence are the most dangerous of all errors. To rest

in any thing without Christ, is to have no interest in him. He is constituted the source and fountain of all life, grace, strength, and blessing; and if I am not willing to submit to receive them all through and from him, I must remain altogether destitute: however I may fancy myself rich in virtue, I must be poor in grace: however I may conceive myself to be strong and sufficient for duties or trials, I shall soon find myself weak indeed; and however I may be confident of security by my own power or watchfulness, I am in a state of the most imminent danger. The man who sees not his need of Christ, is in darkness even until now: he is in a state of guilt under the Law, and deluded by the artifice of sin and satan; and he who thinks that of himself he can turn to God, repent, exercise faith, and become holy and spiritual, knows not the nature of this grace, nor the state in which he is. As there is no redemption but in Jesus; no pardon, righteousness, and acceptance but in him; so without him there is no grace, no victory over corruption, no glory in the end; and, therefore, to be without Christ is to be lost for ever: "He that hath the Son of God hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

If the believer get into a state of self-dependence, he will be sure to fail, for this is the cause of all our declension in holiness or consolation; whereas, the way to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth most easily beset us, and to run the race set before us, is looking unto Jesus, "who is the Author and Finisher of our faith." To make his people sensible of this, the Lord will humble their self-confidence, and shew them their own inability and total helplessness, that they may seek all grace and strength from him, and that he that glorieth may glory only in the Lord. The true spirit of Christianity is the living upon Christ for all, and so living daily the life of faith upon the Son of God (Gal. ii. 20); going to him, in the prayer of faith, to receive from him the continual and needful supplies. It is the great work of the Spirit to convince the heart of this; and the more we see of the holy nature of

that God with whom we have to do, the purity of his Law, its spirituality and the justice of its sentence: the more we see the necessity of a complete righteousness for justification, the need of regeneration, sanctification, and perseverance in grace and holiness to enjoy the kingdom of God, the more shall we see that, without Christ, we are, and can do, nothing; that we are strong only in the Lord, and in the power of his might, by putting on the whole armour of God (see Eph. vi. 10—18); and that we are filled with might by his Spirit alone, in the inner man, when Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. Union with Jesus is the source of all good; communion with him is the source of all life, happiness, and joy; for a sinner out of Christ is defiled, guilty, and helpless. O, let us fly to him as sinners, and cleave to him as believing sinners; and when he is glorified in the dependence of faith, he will communicate abundantly of his grace and strength.—We adore thee, O thou blessed Jesus! for that love which led thee to engage for, and thus interest thyself in, the concerns of thy people, to secure their safety, their spiritual prosperity, their victory, their everlasting salvation.

Thine almighty power exerted hath borne our curse and sorrow, and subdued our enemies; and now that almighty power is engaged to bring us through every trial, and secure an everlasting victory. (Isa. xxv. 9—12.) Thy sovereign grace hath exceeded all our demerit, and thine unchangeable love hath risen above all our ingratitude and neglect: still we are weak, exposed to sin, to enemies, and to fears; but thy power, thy grace, and thy promise, secure our perseverance and our victory.

“Awake my soul, away my fears;
Let every trembling thought be gone,” &c.

If brought back to God, if enlightened and convinced of sin, if turned from darkness to light; if sin be the object of hatred, and its power and love be subdued; if kept in the exercise of grace, in the serenity of peace, or the triumph of holy joy; if, in a word, I have not been suffered to fall back to sin and to perdition, I must acknowledge

Jesus as the Author, the Supporter, the Preserver of the faith, the grace, the consolations of my soul. (Isa. xxvi. 4.) Yes, blessed Jesus! thou shalt be the object of my delight and gratitude, as of all my confidence and hope. This, though weak and helpless in myself, shall be my boast, till I get beyond every trial and danger, that the Lord Jehovah, Jesus the Saviour, is my Strength. Yes, he will be the Strength of the everlasting victory of his people. "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Let me, then, go on, emptied of self, and trusting in him: never shall I get higher than this while here below; and indeed, through eternity, he shall be the only source of life and felicity. Let me, as a sinner unable to do any thing as of myself, trust in the Lord; and in him, when weak, I shall be strong. Let me take the armour he hath prepared for me, and from day to day go forth in his strength for the Christian warfare. Let me continue using it to the end, and I shall endure safely and triumph eternally over all. But then, to him alone shall be ascribed the "power, the riches, the wisdom, the strength, the honour, the glory, and the blessing; from my grateful soul, and the souls of all his redeemed for ever and ever." (Rev. v. 12, 13.)

ESSAY XII.

Precious.

IN the works of nature, there are beauties which the eye of the naturalist meets with delight: in the works of Providence, there are beauties which delight the heart of the wise and careful observer: in the Scriptures of truth, and especially in the plan of redemption, there are still more exalted beauties which engage the attention of the Christian; but in the person and work of the adorable Redeemer the believer beholds, by faith, the essence of them all. The glories of Jesus are, therefore, the continual subject of his meditation and admiration; the more he contemplates them, the more he discerns of their beauty and excellency, and their suitableness to his own wants and enjoyment. Whether he considers them as in themselves, or views them in comparison with all besides; or, whether he contemplates their connection with, and influence upon, his present and eternal hopes; they become more endeared to his heart. He in whom they centre is the most glorious object in heaven or in earth; the object of love and of desire, and deserves to be infinitely more so. It must therefore be equally true now, as it was in the times of the Apostle, that "to them who believe *Christ is precious.*" The word used by the Apostle is very peculiar: it is the abstract term *τιμη*, denoting *honour, preciousness* itself; as though the Lord Jesus was the only honourable, the sum and substance of all preciousness. And is he not so? Let the believer's heart reply, that knows and that enjoys his blessings. Let us consider some of the various ways in which the term is applicable to him. And may his own Spirit glorify him by discovering his excel-

lency to the eye of faith, and then all things will be accounted but loss for the excellency of this knowledge. Whatever may engage the attention of the world, nothing can ever bear comparison, in the mind of the believer, with the incomparable glories of Immanuel. He knows he never can fully conceive, and he never can possibly exhaust, the fulness of his excellencies. Hence he is continually discovering new beauties, new subjects of love and praise; for, as his person is infinite, his glories must therefore be infinite; and we must fall infinitely short in their description. The copious subject has neither beginning nor end; where then shall we begin; and where can we end? Eternity must prolong the theme, and run unceasingly forward in the discoveries of his perfections. But though we must fall far short in each, a few particulars will more accommodate the subject to our present faculties, and elevate the views, strengthen the faith, and impress the mind of the believer.—Let us then contemplate his preciousness,

1. *In the essential glories of his Divine nature.*—Whatever difficulties may occur to the mind upon a subject so vast and so unfathomable, faith refers them all to the wisdom and the truth of God, and believes the testimony of his word. Here it learns that he is one with the Father; that he is a partaker of the same *attributes*, entitled to the same *names*, a performer of the same *works*, and a receiver of the same *worship*. Here the believer reads of him as the *great God our Saviour*, as He who was in the *form of God*, though he humbled himself to the form of a servant; as the *brightness of the Father's glory*, and the *express image of his person*; as *God over all blessed for ever*; in a word, as the *Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End*; and of consequence the independent, the self-existent, the eternal, Jehovah. This indeed could alone constitute his all-sufficiency to become the Saviour of men: infinite wisdom, and power, and grace, were necessary for his undertaking and accomplishing so vast, so stupendous a work; for applying it to the hearts of sinners, and completing its enjoyment in the souls of his people. How glo-

rious and precious is the blessed Redeemer to the eye of faith, in the contemplation of all his Divine perfections, which so fit him to be what he has undertaken to be, in the salvation of his chosen ! As this is the ground-work of all his suitableness to sinners, and is the strength and security of every office he bears, so it constitutes the great excellency of that in which the believer delights most especially to contemplate him ; viz. of his mediatorial person, in which he appears as Immanuel, God and man, God with us.—Whenever we attempt to contemplate the attributes of Deity, as they exist simply and absolutely in the Divine nature, we are lost and bewildered in the search. But when we behold them in the person of Jesus, united with the manhood, his infinite glories displaying themselves through our nature, in the one person of the Redeemer ; though this is indeed “ the great mystery of godliness,” yet those perfections appear more accommodated to our state and faculties, and assume a milder ray, on which our feeble sight can gaze, without being totally overwhelmed and confounded with its brightness. That he should thus condescend to take upon him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham—human nature in its low and humbled state, in the form of the lowest servitude—must ever form a subject of the most exalted admiration to angels and to men : and when faith contemplates this two-fold nature in one person, how precious does he appear ! This is the very Saviour a sinner needs ; without whom he must have perished, but from whom he may justly expect eternal redemption. On the one side he beholds his ability and his strength ; on the other, his grace and compassion, his sympathy and pity ; and here is a suitable object of love and delight, of faith and hope. This glorious person is called Jesus,—a name implying both his nature and his office—the same as Immanuel, that is, Jehovah the Saviour. The increasing discovery of the nature of this mysterious union, which perhaps we shall never be able fully to conceive, will render him increasingly and eternally the delight and admiration of his saints. The contempla-

tion indeed of this name opens to us a view of his glorious designs and engagements in the covenant of redemption, in the counsels of eternity; in every part of which, the believer, who feels himself eternally interested in them, must admire his wisdom, and his love. He is therefore most precious,

2. *In the transaction, and in the fulness of his work of redemption.*—Only such a Divine person could be suitable to accomplish so mighty a work: but since he has undertaken it, who is so infinitely able, the eye of faith, fixing itself upon this adorable object, traces every step of his condescending path with fresh delight and wonder. He who was in time born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the design and purposes of that love, had “His going forth from everlasting;” and when set up in the mediatorial character, as the Eternal Son of God, or ever the earth was, his delights were with the sons of men. Who can recal to mind, this eternal love of the Redeemer to a race of beings so infinitely beneath his glory, without sentiments of the most cordial gratitude and affection? From the very beginning of time, and from the fall of the human race in their original parent, we behold the providence of God preparing the way for the accomplishment of this plan of heavenly love and mercy, as if anticipating with delight his entrance into human nature, before his actual incarnation. How often did He appear in the form of the son of man, though with that glory which proclaimed and determined his Divine person, to patriarchs and prophets, and holy men of old! But at length “*the Child is born, and the Son given.*” He “*is born the Saviour;*” “*in the fulness of time, behold God sends forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem us who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*” And now he displays a character which endears him greatly to the believer’s heart; while in it he accomplishes all that is necessary for the salvation of his person. Every step, while it discovers more his voluntary humiliation, exalts still higher the greatness of his love, and places him in a

view in which faith discovers more in him to delight in and admire. The weakness of infancy, the indignity of the manger, the meanness of poverty, the reproaches of contempt, together with the purity and integrity of his obedience in the midst of all, the bitterness of his sufferings, the scourging and the mocking of the barbarous soldiery, and the ignominy of his cross, are circumstances which give a beauty and a grace to the person and character of the Redeemer. In all this, says the believer, He is precious; for all these were endured for us men, and for our salvation. Did He take upon himself the lowest form of a servant? Was He made sin, or was He surrounded with continual griefs and afflictions? It was for us: in his bitterest conflicts, he was contending against our enemies; in his greatest exertions of overwhelming sorrow, he was putting away our sin; in his agonizing sufferings, he was bearing our curse; in his death, he was procuring our life; and in all the ignominies of his cross, he was preparing for us a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Look at Him thus, believer, by faith, and say, is he not precious? How precious; the tongue of the brightest seraph cannot tell! Go, stand at his cross; and while others despise and reproach, who look no further than to the appearance of sense, let faith penetrate the darkness and the veil, till it behold his amazing glory, and is overwhelmed with his amazing grace. Then thy heart will exclaim with the Apostle, God forbid that I should glory, save in this scene of inexplicable wonder, in which all that is glorious and all that is debasing unite together—the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. There the High Priest of my profession “offered himself an offering and a sacrifice to God,” for the sins of his people. There the atoning blood flowed from every vein; and now we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of Divine grace; and we, who were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, since he has reconciled us unto God in one body by the cross. (See Eph. i. 7; ii. 13—16.) How glorious was the Jewish High Priest,

how precious to the believing Israelites, when, on the great day of atonement, dressed in his priestly garments of purity and holiness, he offered the atoning sacrifice, to put away the sin of the nation! But infinitely more glorious is our great Priest, when once, in the end of the world, he puts away sin by the sacrifice of himself; his garments of humiliation and purity dyed with blood, his own blood, the blood of his heart. Now He has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. He has completed the atonement, by his one offering perfecting for ever them that are sanctified. (Heb. x. 14.) Thus my dear Redeemer becomes suited to my wants, my situation of danger, my weakness, and my fears. He of God is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His work is perfect: he did not enter into the mansions above till he had obtained eternal redemption for us, and secured our admission with him to his kingdom. Now the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—He is then increasingly precious, when viewed by faith,

3. *In his mediatorial fulness; carrying on his redeeming work from his throne of glory, in the world, in the church, and in the hearts of his believing people.*—Here he maintains all his characters in the fullest manner, and fulfils all his offices in the most perfect exercise of them. If we behold Him as the *Priest on the cross*, as offering the sacrifice, shedding his own precious blood for us, and completing the atonement; here we behold Him entering within the veil into the holy place by his own blood, and in the virtue of it claiming admission as the Surety and Advocate of his redeemed. (See the whole of that beautiful passage, Heb. ix. 11–15.) There He liveth who was dead, and is alive for evermore. (Rev. i. 18.) There He ever lives to intercede for his people. Under these endearing views he offers himself as the confidence of our soul; able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, as a merciful and a faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the

sins of his people. Through his dignity, as Jesus the Son of God entered into the heavens, we are encouraged to hold fast our profession; and, as the Son of man, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, we encourage ourselves in the sympathy and kindness of his nature, in the discharge of all his offices of love, and come boldly to the Throne of Grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. (See Heb. vii. 25; ii. 17; and iv. 14—16.) Here, then, faith beholds him as infinitely precious. I come and commit my cause and my soul into his hands, with all my sin, guilt, and infirmity; for He is my Advocate with the Father, who is the Righteous One, the Propitiation for my sins. (1 John ii. 1.)

If there be something most admirable and engaging in this character, when as a *Prophet* he instructed the family of his disciples, when he taught the people, and spake as never man spake, how glorious does he appear when, teaching by his Spirit, he teaches to the heart; when at the same time he gives the disposition to sit at his feet, and to hear his words, either of reproof and conviction, of direction and instruction,—or of peace, joy, and consolation, in the messages of redeeming mercy! This is peculiarly the promise of our exalted Jesus: to this he peculiarly directed the faith and hope of his disciples, before he left them alone on earth, to ascend to his glory. And his promises are so worded as evidently to belong to his church, to the very end of time. “I will send you,” said he, “another Comforter from the Father, who will abide with you for ever.” (John xiv. 16.) “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (ver. 26.) “He shall convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.” (xvi. 8, &c.) “He shall glorify me: he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” (ver. 14.) His primitive servants experienced the truth of his promise; their minds were enlightened in Divine knowledge, their hearts sanctified by his Divine grace; and they rejoiced in all those powerful, kind, and glorious influences of the Spirit which

endeared their Lord and Master to them, and led them to a certain demonstrative evidence of the truth of his salvation. This Spirit of his grace, not only testified by outward miracles in confirmation of his mission—for these were peculiar to that time, as being then peculiarly necessary—but by a secret, though powerful, influence, enlightened their understanding, and renewed their heart, and wrought in them all that was necessary to salvation. And this same influence is equally necessary at the present time, equally promised, and as really experienced by all true believers; so that it may be said of real Christians, that they are really partakers of the Spirit of Christ, poured out from him as the great Anointed One, and the only Anointing One, the true Messiah. “And the anointing,” says the Apostle, “which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you;” *i. e.* as to the great essential truths of the Gospel, necessary to the regeneration, justification, and salvation of sinners; “but as the same anointing teacheth you of all (these) things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” (1 John ii. 27.)

But he has all power committed to him, as the *King* upon the throne, to govern all things for the good of his people, and bring them to eternal life and glory. (Matt. xxviii. 18; John xvii. 2.) In this is summed up all the fulness of his glories; and whether faith contemplates his regal dignity upon the mediatorial throne, as exerted over, and in, his people; or as displayed for them in the extent of universal nature, earthly or heavenly, visible or invisible; in all, the person, character, and office of the Redeemer are above all, exceedingly precious.

He is exalted to reign in and over his people, and by his Spirit he asserts his authority, and claims and takes possession of their heart; and then his people are willing in the day of his power. When the Spirit of his grace becomes a Spirit of conviction, their corruptions become their grief and sorrow, and the objects of their avowed and decided hatred. They would not insult their Lord, by

joining him with such companions as these, but desire forever to have them driven from their heart. When the hand of their Almighty Lord and Saviour subdues them under his control, bending their wills to his; when he melts down their heart in contrition and godly sorrow; when he mortifies their pride and passion by the sweet influence of his grace, and reduces every thought into obedience; when they feel an entire submission to his will, and their whole hearts devoted to his service;—these are the favoured seasons in which they most rejoice, and taste the felicity of heaven amidst the afflictions, sorrows, and burdens of earth.—Oh, says the believer, that it might always be so! The sweet enjoyment I have experienced of it has degraded all other joys in my esteem, and makes me weep, and mourn, and lament, when my yet polluted and sinful heart again disobeys and displeases my Lord. Well, O believer! rejoice in hope: through the grace of Christ it soon shall be so; and the time shall come when neither sin nor guilt nor sorrow shall defile thy heart, dishonour or grieve thy Saviour or his Spirit, or separate thee from the sweet enjoyment of him more. How precious is the view! how precious the Saviour that shall thus exalt thy soul! But all things are in his hands; and he is Head over all things to his church, which is indeed the most endearing and illustrious of all his characters. All the affairs of the world, and all the conduct of Providence, is in his direction; all my afflictions, trials, difficulties, temptations, and enemies are under his guidance and control; yea, they are his, for he sympathizes with them all. Yea, still further; universal nature, the powers and principalities of the world of spirits, the things which are beyond the view of mortal vision, and beyond the grasp of finite understandings; the things invisible, spiritual, and immortal, are all in his view, under his power, and obedient to his almighty word. But is he able to direct the vast machine, in all its boundless extent, and in all its minutest operations? No doubt he is; for he hath “*all power in heaven and in earth.*” And here is the peculiar suitableness

of our Redeemer ; here is the sure encouragement of our faith, that he is Immanuel, Jehovah, the Saviour. None but such a Divine person could be able to conduct the concerns of that infinite and everlasting government which is upon the shoulder of the Child born and the Son given. But he who is the mighty God as well as the infinite Jesus, can do all, and accomplish all, and rule over all things for his people. How encouraging to look, by faith, through the veil to the throne of God, and by faith behold there such a Friend and Saviour, and to see all under the guidance of his hand ! He who loved me in eternity, who redeemed me in time ; who laid down his life for me, who scrupled not such an expense of love ; He reigns in infinite wisdom, in covenant mercy, truth, and grace, in unchangeable love and delight,—and, at the same time, in almighty power, over all things, that he may accomplish the salvation of his redeemed. Surely he must be “precious to them who believe !”—He is, indeed, precious to his people,

A. In every relation, and in every character which he there sustains.—He has discovered his love to his people, and his suitableness to them in every respect ; and thus endears himself to their hearts, by representing himself in his word under a vast variety of allusions, under many gracious and interesting characters, which express his relation to them, his love towards them, his care over them, and their security in his hand. He is the Sun to make my day to shine upon me with the light of grace, till he rise in the realms of glory ; and he is my Shield, to defend me from the arrows of justice or the shafts of the enemy. I adore him as the Rock of Ages, on which I safely build for eternity. He is the Ark of my safety, my Strong Tower, and the City of my Refuge. In allusion to the most interesting relations of life, he is my Father, my Husband, my Brother, my Friend ; and in all the most endearing offices of life, he is my Counsellor, my Guide, my Helper, my Deliverer, my Advocate, and, in a word, my eternal Saviour. It is indeed impossible for us

here merely to enumerate, much less to expatiate upon, those peculiar characters of the Redeemer, which render him so suitable to his church. These are distinctly the subject of the present Essays; and after all we shall fall infinitely short of his glories; in each the believer will discover fresh beauties, by and in which he will become more precious to faith. Contemplate him then, O believer! in all these adorable views, till he become increasingly precious to thee. But here let it be observed, there must be the inward manifestation of his glories by the Spirit, or all his beauties will pass by unobserved; and he is therefore only precious when he makes a manifestation of himself in his glory, grace, and love,

5. *By the discovery of his Spirit, in his ordinances to the heart.*—Then, “beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Then we so behold him as to love him, and so love him as to imitate him, and be conformed to his likeness. How precious to behold his face, though with a veil of ordinances between, when the glances of his beauty shine forth in the means of grace; to behold him in the closet, when he visits the secret retirements of the soul, when prayer draws down his favour, and praise returns him all the glory; to behold him in his house, in the publication of his word, in the memorials of his dying love, and the sweet communion of his saints, how sweet is the enjoyment! These make the believer long for more of his visits below, and for the state in which all his glories shall shine without a veil above. Let me, says he, behold thy power and thy glory, so as I have before seen thee in the sanctuary.

“My willing soul would stay,
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing itself away
To everlasting bliss.”

These are the moments of such delight on earth, as savours of the relish of that pleasure which flows at his right hand for evermore. If then He be not precious to us, the reason

is evident; we are destitute of the eye of faith, that spiritual faculty which discerns his excellencies. Hence it is that the world seeth him not, neither knoweth him. Ignorant of their state and want as sinners, they never think it necessary to inquire after his character, his glory, or his works; and blinded by the love of sin, when they hear of his beauties, they can neither discern nor believe them. "The natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Men make a profession of attachment to Christ through education and habit, or in compliance with the profession of those around them; but never seeing their need of salvation, or their state as sinners, they are totally ignorant of what the Lord Jesus has undertaken and performed to save sinners,—and what he must do and is doing in the hearts of all his people, for their enjoyment of that salvation. Hence all their religion is but a mere profession, attended with a total ignorance as to the true nature of Christianity, its doctrines, and its blessings, and without any realizing views of the preciousness of Christ. No wonder, then, that there is no power from such a profession, no influence upon the heart, no benefit in the conscience; for no such blessings are expected in and from Christ Jesus. None, therefore, can here be obtained; and hereafter the neglect of such a Saviour will only aggravate the guilt and condemnation. We may know, by these considerations, whether we are partakers of the precious faith of the Gospel. We see what its effects will be: it will exalt and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ as to his person, work, and character, in the heart of the believer. As faith is the gift of Christ, and the work of his Spirit; and as it is the office of the Spirit especially to testify of Christ, surely he must testify the same things of him, to every one whom he teaches. Every believer, therefore, will have the same views, though in different degrees; and He will be precious to all who believe. So of old, Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ; and the Prophets testified

of him, for the very spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Of Him David, the sweet singer of Israel, witnessed and wrote in the noblest and sweetest of his Psalms; and the Apostle of the Gentiles joins the sacred throng, and accounts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. The great question, then, to which we should direct our attention is this; Is He precious to us? otherwise it is evident that we have not that faith which filled the hearts of all his ancient servants. But, O believer! say, is He not so to you? have you not found him rendered so in the actual experience of his grace? When faith is lively, all his glories open to view; the heart is raised in adoring love, admiring gratitude, and humble confidence. The more precious, indeed, Christ is to us, the more do we concur in the dispositions of the redeemed above, as a sure token that we shall soon be among them. There he is accounted worthy of all the honour of redemption and of salvation. Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain: He hath loved us, and redeemed us to God with his blood; therefore to Him be the honour, the glory, the worship, the praise, with the Eternal God for ever. (Rev. v. 12, 13.) Faith views the same object now, though at present in a glass, through his word and ordinances, and therefore darkly. It takes also the same view of him, though at present imperfectly, and, in proportion, it has correspondent effects. The more, then, we contemplate his glory in the light of Divine truth, the more precious will he appear; every thing connected with him and the enjoyment of him, will be precious to the believer; and therefore it is that he puts such a value upon the word of the Gospel, prayer, meditation, the Sabbath, and ordinances of the Lord; for these are his means of communicating faith, of strengthening the views, the powers, and the consolation of faith. Without the use of means, faith will languish, as surely as the natural life will do so, without its proper food; and it is in these means that he communicates himself in faith, as the Bread of Life to the soul. The neglectful use of these means, or the not

exercising faith in them, is the cause why there is so little power of Divine influence attending them, and such coldness of affection to the great Redeemer, even in those who are partakers of real faith. Use them, then, believer, with all diligence, to the full assurance of faith to the end. Pray for an increase of faith, and employ it more in meditation upon the infinitely worthy object that is displayed in the Gospel for the hope, and joy, and salvation of perishing sinners. Here you have every reason for strong faith, as to his person, his work, and his promises, and as to your security by trusting in them. And when faith in his person and fulness is lively, it will soon lead to the reliance of faith, and the sweet confidence upon his word. If, however, you have such a view of him by faith as to endear him to you above all the world besides, bless him for it. As you go on, faith will increase; you will find more reason to love him and trust him in all and with all, and more evident obligation to live to his glory. You will find him a Tried Stone, sufficient to support you in all your trials and temptations, upon a dying bed, yea, at the bar of God, and throughout eternity. Experience of his love, grace, and faithfulness will make him more precious, till you behold and enjoy him above, in all the fulness of his glory. When an Apostle had but a glance of this, he saw things which it was not lawful, or rather not possible, for him to utter. He could find no human language to convey an adequate idea; and should the brightest seraph before the Throne condescend to come down to tell the glories of the Redeemer, the language of mortals would fail him: never could he make known below the vast, the full, extent of the glories of our Redeemer above. When admitted to behold those glories, and to see them as spirits see them, we shall freely confess, not only that not the half, but not the thousandth part, hath been told us. (1 Kings x, 6—9.)

But will this Jesus, in all his glories, be mine? Is he now my Friend, my Saviour; and will he then be my everlasting Portion? When he comes upon the throne of judg-

ment, will he come without sin for my salvation, and place me at his own right hand for ever? How ravishing the hope and expectation! Lord, give me more faith to admire and love thee more now; to realize thy grace, thy presence, thy sweet consolation in every situation, through the pilgrimage of life, through all the darkness of the wilderness; then shall my heart call thee my precious Saviour. But when I see thee as thou art, thy glories will render thee precious beyond the capacity of mortal faculties to describe; and my immortal powers shall be employed in the delightful exercise throughout eternity.

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ESSAYS
ON
ALL THE SCRIPTURAL NAMES AND TITLES
OF
CHRIST.

TENTH SERIES.

TENTH SERIES.

ESSAY I.

Immanuel.

THE fulfilment of Prophecy is the great glory, and the decided evidence, of Christianity. Nothing can afford so great an incitement to our attention, so strong a confirmation to our faith, or such an enlivening influence upon our hope, as the application of prophetic testimony to the person and work of the Redeemer. By this we discover, beyond a doubt, the glory of the Saviour, the truth and faithfulness of God, and the fulness and security of his salvation. Blessed be God that we have in the Scriptures the fullest testimony of this kind, that we might want no evidence as to the person in whom we are to trust, in a business of such infinite and eternal importance; and that we might want no assurance which is needful, for the confirmation of our faith in his ability and his grace. We find the humble Jesus ushered into the world, passing through it, and departing from it, with this appeal; that "*all these things were done, that it might be fulfilled which was written in the Scriptures concerning him.*"—We are now to contemplate a name which holds a very high place in the language of Prophecy, concerning the glorious Messiah; and which, according to the interpretation of the Evangelist, had its full accomplishment in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Evangelist has elucidated the Prophet; and his language has divested the prophetic name of all prophetic ambiguity, and thrown upon it the brightness of

Gospel light and glory. (Isa. vii. 14; Matt. 1. 23.) We behold in it the clearest display of the essential divinity of Messiah, connected with the greatness of his humiliation, and the condescensions of his love. The prophecy itself is both glorious and lucid; but the evangelical interpretation is most decisive and indubitable. Oh, may this glorious Immanuel, who has indeed been God with us in our nature, be still God with us in all the discoveries of his grace to our hearts, and in all the hope and the blessings of his salvation!

A short consideration of the original design of the prophecy may perhaps be useful to develop its meaning, and discover its true application to the person of the Messiah; and, in consequence, to him whom we acknowledge as Jesus the Lord our Saviour. Ahaz, the king of Judah, was at this time under great alarm from the invasion of the Israelites, joined by their neighbours the Syrians; and from so powerful a confederacy, apprehended the destruction of the nation, and of the house of David. The Prophet Isaiah was therefore sent by God to encourage him; and to assure him that the house of David, of which he was the head, though very unworthily, should not be destroyed. For this purpose he is directed to offer him a sign in the depths, or in the heights above; but though in other instances Ahaz was rebellious against the Lord, on this occasion he affects an extraordinary reverence for Jehovah, and assigns as a reason for his not asking the sign, that he would not tempt the Lord. It is, however, generally supposed, that this arose from the same spirit of rebellion; that he was unwilling to take the advice of the Prophet, and quietly to wait for the Lord; and that he did not wish to have the Prophet's prediction thus confirmed by a sign, being more desirous to pursue his own way, and trust in the power and in the gods of Assyria. Upon this a sign is given to him of the Lord; viz. the promise of the future Messiah from David's race: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." This was exceedingly calculated to invigorate his hope,

and excite his courage; for if Messiah was to come of the royal line of David, while Judah was yet remaining a kingdom, though it might be five hundred years before its accomplishment, yet he who designed to work this salvation among them would certainly work out all salvation for them: nor could the nation, amongst whom the Messiah was to appear, of the family of David from whom he was to arise, possibly perish while such a blessing was in them. Now as every prophecy of this illustrious event became clearer and clearer, so it is in this instance. Not only are we told that He was to arise from the tribe of Judah and the family of David, but a further illustration was given of the first promise as to the Seed of the woman; viz. that he was to be born of a virgin, and therefore to be eminently the woman's Seed. We are informed also who and what he was to be; that he was to be called—and if called, he was surely to be, for we cannot suppose a name imposed upon him unsuitable to his character, or that he was to be called what he was not; no, He was to be—and to be acknowledged as Immanuel, which the Evangelist interprets for us; that is, *God with us*. And yet, though so glorious, he was to be truly a child in human nature, and nourished and educated as other children, eating butter and honey, the usual food of children in those regions; not that he might, therefore, be more enlightened than others, but *until* (as the word should be rendered) he should so grow up to the time of maturity, when he should "*refuse the evil and choose the good*:" which mode of expression in its most literal sense can only be true in Christ Jesus, and might refer to the absolute purity of his nature, in refusing what other children naturally prefer, and choosing what others naturally refuse. As a confirmation, therefore, of the truth of this distant prediction, and a satisfaction to the mind of Ahaz, in the confidence of present deliverance, the Prophet seems to have pointed to his own child, whom, by Divine direction, he had taken with him for this purpose; for his being thus taken with him by the command of God, implies that he must have some part, and answer

some end, in the delivering of the prophecy, assuring him that, “before this child (הַנֶּעֱמָר) should know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings;” a prophecy which was literally fulfilled. (See 2 Kings xv. 30, and xvi. 9.)

The great object of attention here, is that which every where meets us in the language of Prophecy: the Child born of a virgin mother, the Infant in the manger, wrapt in swaddling bands, who yet is denominated, by the Prophet, Immanuel, and whom the Evangelist declares to be what the name implies, our Jesus, God with us. The several views which we may thus take of his person and character, will all be calculated to excite our adoration and worship of his Divine nature, joined with admiration and wonder at his humiliation and voluntary condescension to ours. The chief view, and that upon which every other interesting view of the subject must rest, is that Jesus, being our Immanuel,

1. Is God in our nature, God incarnate.—This wonderful truth and fact is the very basis of Christianity. If we yield up this important truth, we are at once deprived of all the peculiarities of the Christian system, and that which constitutes in it our firmest and unshaken consolation. It is true the doctrine is altogether incomprehensible to our finite minds, and therefore we would not attempt to account for it; but when we find it to be the declaration of God in his word, we therefore believe the fact, because we believe what God has declared. The subject presents itself to us in two views, in both of which the fact is indeed most wonderful: (1.) That Jesus, who is in our nature, is true and very God; (2.) That He, who is God, hath taken upon him our nature. Let us contemplate a little both these amazing, but incontrovertible, facts.

(1.) That Jesus who is in our nature, is true and very God.—That he who was born into this world, in the city of Bethlehem, a child like others,—who was cast out from the womb, and laid in a manger, an infant with all its feebleness and helplessness, wrapt in swaddling bands,

nurtured at a mother's breast, and borne in a mother's arm, —should at the same time be the Great the Mighty God; He who was the Creator of the heavens and the earth, who is the constant Upholder, and finally to be the Judge, of all; is indeed such a stupendous truth, that could admit of no belief, if it were not upon the testimony of God himself. But is it not the uniform testimony of Divine truth? Is it not the doctrine of Prophets, of all the ceremonies of the Jewish dispensation, of Evangelists and Apostles?—Let the Prophet Isaiah inform us of the true dignity and glory of Him who was long expected by believing Jews, as the Messiah, upon whose shoulder the government of the church was to rest for ever, and who for this purpose was, in the fulness of time, to be the Child born and the Son given; and He will tell us, that He is the Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, or the Father of Eternity*. An Evangelist will join the same testimony, and assure us, that it was the WORD that was with God, and was God, which was made flesh and dwelt among us. (John i. 1—14.) The great Apostle of the Gentiles, when speaking of Him who came according to the flesh, of the seed of Israel, declares, that in his Divine nature He is "God over all blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5): and in another place, his testimony is decisive, and he himself asserts, that it is a fact that can admit of no controversy in the church of God, that "great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) While the fact is thus asserted by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, though reason staggers, faith will steadfastly adore. We will leave it therefore to pride and folly, to endeavour to account for it; and to unbelief and infidelity, to dwell or venture on its denial. Let us take the other view of this subject, in which it will appear, if possible, yet more wonderful, in the depths of Divine condescension and mercy which it displays, that

(2.) He who is God, *hath taken upon him our sinful fallen nature*,—not indeed with its sinfulness in his own

* See that sublime and astonishing passage, Isaiah ix. 6, 7.

person, but yet with our sins upon him, with all their guilt, and in all their consequences. Hence the deep humiliation, which marked his first entrance into this state of existence, and the poverty, meanness, and sorrow which attended him, in every stage of his life on earth. If the Eternal Jehovah, the God of heaven and earth, should condescend to appear among us for any purpose of his pleasure, we might naturally have supposed that he would have assumed a form of dignity and glory. We might have expected at least something of angelic splendor, if not that awful pomp and form of Divine Majesty in which he appeared at the giving of the Law, when he forced the attention of the afflicted Israelites, and the mountains trembled at his presence. But no: He comes on purposes of love, and his terrors shall not make us afraid. If He appears among us, He appears as one of us. The Word is made flesh; God is manifested in the flesh. This term is never used, but to imply the frailty, the weakness, the infirmities of our mortal nature. When therefore, the Divine nature, the glory of Jehovah (Isa. xl. 5) tabernacles among us, he comes into this world, though by a miraculous and absolutely pure conception in the Virgin by the Holy Ghost; yet in appearance in the same weakness of infancy, and is born a child like us, though of a virgin mother. From childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, he grows up as others of the sons of men: sometimes his Divine glory breaks through the veil of human nature: "We saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father:" but lowliness was the peculiar character of Jesus, and sorrow and suffering were his lot, while he was God in our nature, with us. Miseries and calamities, hunger and want, contempt and pain, followed him through life, till he closed his residence on earth, in our mortal nature, with the bitterest agonies and an ignominious death. Never was sorrow like unto his sorrow, from the moment when he was cast out as an infant, till he bore his cross upon the mount of Calvary, and was fixed upon it there, and finished the work of his redemption. But why was this mystery of Divine Wisdom, this miracle

of Almighty Power, thus manifest to sinful man? It was none other than the fulfilment of a plan of infinite love, the work of infinite compassion. Since there was no other way to restore sinners to God, to raise up the fallen nature of man into a re-union, and therefore communion, with his great Creator; therefore, He who was the highest in heaven stooped to become the lowest upon earth, and to display his unequalled love, in his unequalled condescension. This is the reason, which the great Apostle has given us of this his inconceivable incarnation: "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself, in like manner, took part of the same." For in this, his design of redeeming love, "it behoved him in all things to be made like unto us, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people." It is evident, that to accomplish the work of redeeming sinners, consistently with the Divine perfections, the nature which transgressed, must endure the penalty; the nature that fell, and was overcome, must arise and conquer; the nature that sinned, must render the due and satisfactory obedience to the Law of God. But human nature, in its lapsed condition, could never effect this; nor, even in its best estate, could it bear the punishment, so as to rise above it: never could it meet the powers of hell, so as to triumph over them, or even render an obedience such as the Law requires.

Human nature, unaided by the Divine, must for ever fail in the work of redemption; and the Divine nature, without the human, was impassible, and therefore unable to suffer the deserts of sin. But when the human nature is united with and upheld by the power of the Divine nature, in the person of Immanuel, behold the important work is effected; everlasting obedience is rendered, transgression is finished, and eternal redemption obtained. Therefore He is said (as it is properly rendered in the margin of our Bibles) to have *taken hold* of the seed of Abraham, when he came down from heaven. He then took upon himself the nature of his brethren, that he might

thereby secure its union with God and its access into the presence of God : and he so *took hold* of that nature, that he might never more let it go, but hold it united in an indissoluble bond, and carry it with him to his Throne of Glory, as the pledge and security to all his people, that they in their whole frame of body and soul should follow him there. It was no doubt the same view which animated the mind of the Prophet, when he thus exulted, " Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust, and not be afraid : for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; He also is become my salvation." We must here, I apprehend, lay a peculiar stress on the word *become* ; for as there is no necessary connection between the idea of God, or Jehovah, and a Saviour ; and as in the full range of his infinite perfection, independent of the covenant of redeeming grace, we behold nothing but justice and holiness, which tend to a sinner's destruction rather than to his salvation ; it is only by an act of infinite condescension that he can become the Saviour ; *i. e.* according to the covenant of redemption, in the person of Messiah, becoming Immanuel, God with us, God and man, in one Christ, and so effecting reconciliation. Here, then, we can account for the exalted and sublime descriptions which are continually given of the person of our Redeemer, and for the glory that is put upon him ; which, upon any other system, must appear inflated by the ardour of imagination, and destitute of reality and truth. Had Jesus been born a common man, like one of us, or even a prophet of the Lord, why should all the glory of prophetic description be so eminently directed to him, and exhausted, as it were, in his person ? Why should he be the sole object in which all the prophecies meet and are accomplished ? Why should he alone be particularly attended with all the glories of heaven at the time of his nativity on earth ? And why should we retain the commemoration of his birth in a manner so superior to that of all besides ? No : the songs of the heavenly host will proclaim to us who he is. Though born into this world as the Child of the virgin, He is born

a Saviour, the Christ, the Lord. (Luke ii. 10, 11.) In this angelic song no doubt a reference is made to the declaration of the Prophet (Isa. xl. 5), in which he is styled Jehovah, who was to be the Messiah, and the glory of Jehovah revealed, that all flesh may see it together; and which, according to the angelic choir, can alone afford tidings of great joy to all people. What angels, then, adore and worship, we need not fear to admire and celebrate in the highest songs of praise, and the most exalted strains of gratitude and love. O what a wonderful view does this present to us of the grace of the Father, the condescension and compassion of the Son, and the infinite designs of love to man in each person of the ever-blessed Trinity! In the fulness of time "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," into which we are brought by the Spirit of his Son, sent into our hearts. (Gal. iv. 4—6.) That he who was in the form of God should take upon him the form of man, as a child, as a servant, in its lowest debasement, should indeed excite our gratitude in proportion as it raises our admiration. Well might the Prophet exclaim, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." (Isa. xlv. 23.) And well might the Apostle, when celebrating the glories of the Redeemer, be so animated with the view of the "unsearchable riches of Christ;" for whenever we proclaim this Saviour, we do indeed set before the eyes of men riches unsearchable; unsearchable riches of grace, of mercy, and of truth, and ending in the unsearchable riches of his everlasting salvation. If we admit the fact, that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, we must admit the inference, that he is worthy of our highest adoration and love; worthy to be celebrated through eternity for his own humiliation, and the benefit of his redemption bestowed on us. Angels stoop down to pry into this amazing

mystery, and obey the Divine command to worship the infant Jesus: our praise shall join with theirs, and bless the incarnate Lord, our Saviour. This view of this wonderful Name, is no doubt the peculiar view which it is designed to convey to our minds, and the ground of all the blessings which are contained in it. For in whatever other way God is with us, it is because he has been with us in our nature, in the person of Christ Jesus. The title has been considered as implying still more, and including in its comprehensive meaning all the benefits which we derive from his mysterious union in our nature; and it has therefore been considered as comprehending the idea of "*God for us;*"—God so with us as to stand engaged for us and on our account, for our benefit and salvation. This indeed could not be, except as He is God in our nature; but retaining this as the great and fundamental truth contained in the name, we may then take a different and more extensive view of it, and consider what infinite advantage and benefits are implied in it, to all his people. That this is implied in the name appears evident from the explanation of the Evangelist; for the corresponding name in which the fulfilment of the prophecy took place, certainly includes all the blessings of his salvation. "His name shall be called Jesus," says the Evangelist, as fulfilling the title which we are now considering: but the name Jesus is literally Jehovah the Saviour. He is Jehovah the Salvation of his people, God with us in human nature, become our salvation; and so called expressly, because he shall save his people from their sins.—We contemplate him, then, as Immanuel, God with us, as in Him,

2. *God is reconciled and at peace with us.*—The human nature of Christ Jesus, in union with the Divine, having obeyed and suffered to the uttermost of the demands of justice; having satisfied the law and honoured the government of God; having thus obtained eternal redemption, and entered itself into the enjoyment of its glory, now sinners of the sons of men may come and partake of what their Surety hath done and obtained, and plead his work

in bar of the sentence which the Law denounces upon them; and God, who is well pleased in Christ Jesus, will not only be reconciled to, but well pleased with, all who fly to him, believe in him, and rest upon him. We who were afar off (by nature and by practice), are brought near "by the blood of Christ; for he is our Peace." This mystical and mysterious union is no doubt alluded to by the Apostle, as the ground of all our peace with God, when He says, "God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The Apostle certainly refers to that discovery of reconciliation which hath taken place between an offended God and guilty sinners, by the Divine nature in the person of Christ, who hath thus honoured and satisfied the offended Majesty of Jehovah by his perfect work, and now proclaims in his Gospel its gracious effects, inviting sinners to return with confidence of acceptance to the God of peace in Him. The proclamation of peace was the most engaging part of the Saviour's employment on earth. It was peculiarly suited to his character and office, which was designed to convey peace to the needy and guilty sinner. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, anointing him "to preach good tidings to the meek; to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isa. lxi. 1, &c.) And when the Lord Jehovah directs the attention of his people to Him, as his Servant, which alludes to his taking upon him that nature in which he might appear in the form of a servant, he leads him to the faith and confidence of his people, as one who would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till he send forth judgment unto victory; and now he dwells with us, though not personally, yet spiritually, in his Gospel. As the Gospel of Peace, peaceful are all its doctrines, its declarations, its invitations, and its promises. The God of Peace in Christ Jesus, we are assured, will bruise satan under our feet shortly; and he who now dwells with us, as our God of Peace, will bring us to dwell with him in the kingdom of

his eternal peace.—But Christ Jesus is God with us, as He now,

3. *Dwells with us, as our covenant God, to exert his Divine power, and display his Divine love and care for our salvation.*—Still our Immanuel is God with us, though not visibly, yet spiritually; though not seen by the eye of sense, yet glorious to the eye of faith; not as with his disciples in his bodily presence, but in the power and influence of his Spirit. In this manner he will dwell with his church to the end of time, and promises to every individual of his people, “I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee.” When he visited us once in human nature, it was to open an intercourse which should never be broken, and redeem a people to himself. And were our faith lively and strong, it would behold him still equally present, managing the affairs of his church, as when in the body of his flesh he conducted the concerns of his little family in the land of Judea. The very name of the New-Testament Church, according to the prophet Ezekiel, is *Jehovah Shammah*, “The Lord is there;” and some of the most exhilarating promises on record refer to his constant presence among his people. “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion,” says the Lord, by the Prophet Zechariah (ii. 10, 11); “for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.” But the Prophet Zephaniah has recorded a still more delightful engagement of the Lord and Saviour, expressing the delight of his heart in his communion with his saints: “Sing, O daughter of Sion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.” “In that day” (in the Gospel-day) “it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Sion, Let not thine hands be slack; the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love;

he will joy over thee with singing," &c. (iii. 14—17.) This prediction may indeed have a reference to his personal appearance on earth in our nature; but it does more especially relate to his presence in his Spirit, and in that love and care which he peculiarly displays in the New Testament-church, and over all believers in his name.

Immanuel is also still God in our nature, as glorified in that nature; and, though not present with us in it, is bearing it for us before the Throne, in consequence of his having borne it in his humiliation upon earth. There he appears as our great Priest, most glorious as the Son of God, most compassionate and sympathizing as the Son of man. It is Immanuel who is the Head over all things to the church; and the human nature of the Redeemer before the Throne is the instrument of universal government. This certainly implies that still he has a knowledge of his people; is engaged in constant attention to them, and observance of them; and that he is now present with them for all the purposes of their preservation and salvation. Yes; blessed be his Name, he is thus still "God with us."—There is only one other view which we will take of this amazing subject; that he who is God in our nature is also God with us, as he is,

4. *God in union and communion with all his people.*—Having taken human nature, or part of their flesh and blood, he hath thus confirmed their union in himself. He is, therefore, so present with them, that he is intimately and really united with them. Thus in his last supplication for them to his heavenly Father, after he had expressed what he had done and would do for them, in calling them out of the world, and sanctifying them for himself, he beautifully expresses that close and indissoluble union which subsists between him and them, in which they are one with him as he is with the Father; one body, one spirit, with him their Surety and Redeemer. And thus all the glories of the Divine nature, which otherwise are at an infinite distance from our view, are softened down, and brought near to us, as viewed in Christ Jesus; and those

who are the called of his grace, the disciples of their incarnate Saviour, as he bare their nature, are one with him and he with them. So that since he who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one nature, he is not ashamed to call them brethren. (Heb. ii. 11.) All the Divine relations also which exist between the Father and the Son as in our nature, are applicable to them as one with him. He who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is their God and their Father in Him. Coming near to him in Christ, they are viewed in him, the fulness of his body: He looks upon them, therefore, with all that favour, love, compassion, and design of blessing, with which he looks upon Christ Jesus when he finished the work of redemption, and when for the suffering of death he exalted him on high, and gave him a name above every name. There our nature is the Head over all in the person of Christ, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence; but in this he appears only as the Forerunner of his people, who, possessing virtually in him, as their Representative, shall soon actually possess all with him and in him through eternity. Sinners of the sons of men, once afar off, are now brought near into fellowship and communion with the Eternal Father. When the Apostle is speaking of this amazing mystery of Divine communion, he traces it up to this very source, the condescension of the Son of God into our nature, that by his becoming like one of us, and partaking of our nature, those who are in him might be brought back to fellowship with the Father in him. This certainly is the force of his reasoning, when, in 1 John i. 1—3, he speaks thus; “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life.” This Word of Life is no doubt the essential Personal Word, manifested in the flesh of Christ; “for the life was manifested,” &c.; and the grand design of all is, “that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”

How great the glories implied in this wonderful and delightful Name! God in our nature, Jesus, Immanuel God with us, is a God at peace with us, our covenant God present in his almighty power, his infinite wisdom, his love and care, to bless his redeemed. And as he has united himself with the nature of his brethren, herein he has begun a most astonishing union, which shall lead to an everlasting fellowship and communion with him above. What an animating, what an ennobling truth! how elevating to the mind of a poor penitent sinner! Jehovah hath taken our nature, and therefore our nature is in union with himself, for all the purposes of everlasting salvation and glory! Let us welcome him then into our heart by faith, and receive the message of his condescending mercy with gratitude and love. To neglect and despise this Saviour will incur a guilt, that never could have rested upon us without such a display of mercy. (Heb. ii. 1, 2, &c.) His Divine glory was so hid, when he first appeared in flesh, behind that veil of his humanity, that many could discern no more than his poverty and his meanness: but when he appears again, he will indeed appear as God with us; he shall vindicate the honour of his Name, and the glories of his Majesty.—Let it then be our concern, while we contemplate his condescension, to avail ourselves of the greatness of his compassion, and thankfully receive him into our hearts, who will never refuse to receive the returning sinner into his. But if we would do this, let us remember that it must be done with a deep sense of our need through sin, and an earnest application to him for pardon and salvation. Then we shall joy before our condescending Immanuel with the joys of faith, and the believing expectation of his promised blessing. Not with the joy of the drunkard, the sensualist, or the profane, but with those joys which arise from a spiritual apprehension of spiritual things; from the sweet relish and enjoyment of them, with thankfulness to that Redeemer who hath obtained and who bestows them.—Here, then, let the children of Sion rejoice in their King. His name is called Im-

manuel, and he is what he is called, and he will make good the name in all its glories to those who trust in him. He is God with us, our Friend and our Redeemer: nay, as God, the great God our Saviour, with all his attributes engaged for our everlasting salvation. How infinite the security which thus arises to his ransomed people, to encourage their dependence of faith! O how infinite his mercy, that he should undertake, and that he should still continue to carry on, such purposes of grace; not only by his almighty power, but by his love united! While as God he rules with all his absolute dominion, he rules over all through that nature in which he became like us, and in which he bare the sins of his people. While, therefore, he is able to overcome all our enemies, and direct all our concerns, in the sympathy of his human nature he compassionates our infirmities. What can the humble penitent desire more to engage his love or to establish his faith; or, though miserable and guilty, to encourage his expectation of all the blessings of salvation? We may, perhaps, assert, though we would do it with the most profound reverence, that Infinite Wisdom itself could not devise more, nor infinite grace give more, to encourage the returning sinner and the humble believer. "Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief." Oh, our Immanuel! we love thee, but not as we ought. O that our love might increase more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, till we behold, and serve, and glorify thee with better powers, all consecrated to thy glory in the realms of bliss. There he who hath been God with us hath determined that all his redeemed shall be with him, and as one in nature, united as the fulness of his body, who filleth all in all. (John xvii. 24.) This was the great design of his humiliation, of his tabernacling in our nature, of his suffering, and of his cross; and as he came down to unite his Godhead with a portion of our flesh and blood, so he shall come again to raise up and purify the flesh, yea, the dust of his redeemed, that he may receive them into eternal union with himself, in all the enjoyment of all his glory.

On earth he hath lived with them ; in heaven they shall live with him ; and when he has changed our vile bodies that they may be made like unto his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, then will he present the whole of his church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, as part of himself in his mystical body before the Throne of God : and our Immanuel shall reign in the midst of his redeemed, still bearing their nature, and still one with them, and they with him, throughout eternity.

ESSAY II.

Shiloh—Deliverer.

THE name and title which is now under our consideration (שִׁלוֹה) is, by all Christian commentators, and many of the Jewish, especially in their old Targums, referred to the Messiah. It occurs but once in the sacred Scriptures; namely, in the last and dying blessing of Jacob to his sons (Gen. xlix. 10), and has given rise to many conjectures as to its etymology and meaning. But as to its accomplishment in some remarkable person, there can be no doubt, from the circumstances which are described in the passage itself: for as Judah hath no longer a governor, and as the tribes are not now accurately known, if it hath not been already accomplished, it is now absolutely impossible that it ever should be. It stands therefore as an unanswerable evidence of the mission of Jesus, as the Messiah; of the truth of Christianity; and of the blindness and obstinancy of the Jewish people. By the Seventy it is rendered, τα ἀποκειμενα αὐτῷ, *i. e.* “till he come to whom it is reserved.” Some would read it “the Son of the Lord,” or “the Son of Jehovah;” others, “her Son,” considering it as including the idea of the original promise, and giving an intimation of the miraculous conception of the Redeemer, as the Son of the virgin. It has also been considered as derived, with slight variation, from שָׁלוּחַ to send; and to imply, he who was sent of the Father: and others have derived it from שָׁלוּחַ, under the sense of being weary, suffering; and to refer to the suffering Messiah (until his passion and suffering come to pass). But it is more generally referred to שִׁלוֹה as its root, as signifying to free, to loosen, to rescue, to de-

liver, or to make peace; to be quiet, happy, prosperous; and to point us to the Redeemer as the great Deliverer; he who loosens our bonds, or the great Peace-maker, the Procurer of our happiness and prosperity. Both of these ideas are most probably included, and are well united in the title of Him who is all our salvation. So the Psalmist celebrates his mighty salvation, "He hath *delivered* my soul in *peace*, from the battle which was against me." (lv. 18.) Here then is another most delightful and encouraging character of the Redeemer, which, in whatever point of view we consider it, makes him suitable to our wants, and the glorious object of faith and love to all his people.

If we consider the season when the prophecy was to be accomplished, there seems to be a peculiar propriety in the name which is here given to him: the sceptre was then to depart from Judah, and the Jewish people to be reduced under the Roman power; but then the glorious שִׁלּוֹחַ should come, and should set his people free, with the glorious liberty of the children of God. Let me then in this view contemplate the promised Shiloh, the glorious Deliverer, and Peace-maker between God and man. The bonds of their captivity were but the emblem of mine and of all the guilty race of Adam, bound with the chain of sin under the dominion of Satan: but he can loosen the bonds of my captivity in sin and sorrow; he can deliver me from mine enemy; he hath procured, and can introduce, peace between God and my soul; yea, can make all things at peace with me, till I obtain everlasting deliverance from every evil. Oh, let my soul realize the view, while contemplating the name, and, being blessed with his salvation, return him all the glory! The Jewish people indeed expected a deliverer, and one who was to introduce peace to his people; but their sensual minds could look no further than to a temporal deliverer from the power of the Roman yoke, and to the peace and prosperity of their nation. But how infinitely was this beneath the true dignity of Messiah! how little, how contemptible was this in comparison of deliverance from the bondage of sin and satan, and his blessings

of everlasting peace and glory! It was peculiarly in those views that he was held up by the Prophet, as bringing peace to the broken-hearted, and deliverance to the spiritual captive. How and in what manner he effects this will now engage our attention, uniting both these ideas in the several instances of his power and love.—Our mighty Shiloh is,

1. *The great Peace-maker and Deliverer of his servants, by loosening the bonds by which they were held under the righteous law of God.*—As this lies at the ground of every hope of a sinner; so this was the first and principal office and design of God's appointed Shiloh. He came to roll away that curse of the Law which rested upon all the fallen race of Adam; and to deliver his people from that curse in a way most wonderful, by "becoming a curse for them." What a view does this present to us of the wretched state of man as a sinner, and the cause and method of his deliverance! As the child of a fallen parent, I was held under the Law, by an obligation from which none of the creatures of God can ever be absolved; by the obligation of creature-ship, whereby I am bound to obey or to suffer its righteous penalties. But that Law condemns me as a sinner, and denounces me justly accursed: "for as many as are of the works of the Law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the Law, to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) "But behold he is made under the Law, to redeem them who were under the Law;" and therefore, "the Lord looseth the prisoners." (Psa. cxlvi. 7.) The cross of Jesus, as it is the suffering of my curse, so it insures my liberty, when, flying in penitence and faith, I claim the benefit of this dispensation of grace, thus ratified and secured. I fly now from my state under the Law, to the Law-fulfiller, and am therefore no longer under the Law but under Grace; no longer under that covenant which condemns me, but that dispensation of grace which secures the bestowal of all grace and eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our blessed Redeemer hath thus blotted out the hand-writing which was against us, which was contrary to us, and taken it out of

the way, nailing it to his cross : and, by the powerful influence of the Spirit of life, makes his people free from the Law of sin and death ; that Law which discovers sin, and denounces death.

The manner in which the believer is brought into the knowledge and experience of this privilege, the Apostle represents by a very just and striking comparison. He considers the Law as the husband of the creature, which, as long as it liveth, hath the power and dominion over him ; but when its covenant obligation is dissolved, by the introduction of a dispensation of Grace, in the person and by the death of Christ Jesus, the man who is interested in that dispensation is discharged from his obligation to it ; *i. e.* as a covenant ; is free to be married to another, and is actually united in another covenant-engagement to the Lord Jesus, and thus a partaker of all the blessings of his grace and mercy, that he might bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were discovered to be such by the Law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death ; for nothing else could be the fruit of such a union between the Law and guilty sinners : but now we are delivered from the Law in all its destructive influences, that being dead whereby we were held, even its covenant obligation, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. (Rom. vii. 1—6.) The Apostle then goes on to shew how he had been brought into this knowledge and experience, which is also fulfilled in all who are partakers of the same grace. (7—9, 24, 25.) What a mighty Deliverer, what a suitable Peace-maker with God is here ! Jesus the Shiloh ! In being justified by faith, his people have peace with God, have access into his grace, and stand therein, and rejoice in hope of his glory ; and all things are at peace with them, when his love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. (Rom. v. 1—5.) Jesus, be thou my Shiloh, my effectual Peace-maker, my Almighty Deliverer from the condemning Law. The sweet effect of this will be,

(2.) *The peace of the conscience, in its deliverance*

from all its guilty fears.—Those, like the fetters of iron or the bars of brass, detain the soul of the convinced sinner, in a dreadful bondage under darkness and distress. I am so fast in prison, said one of old, that I cannot get out: no ray of Divine mercy, no beam of hope, no glimpse of consolation, can break in upon the afflicted mind: the consciousness of deserved wrath fills the gloomy apprehensions, and the prison of sin appears, but as the forerunner of the dreadful prison of hell. If the Lord let loose his terrors, without the displays of his covenant grace and mercy, this must be the state of every enlightened conscience: it is the just desert of every sinner; it is actually the state of every impenitent sinner, whether he discern it or not; and the discovery of it to the mind by the Spirit of grace, though the first step in deliverance, hath often driven the penitent to the border of despair. O, bring my soul out of prison! says the trembling penitent: but who can effect this mighty deliverance? None but Jesus. He, however, is able to accomplish it; since the Spirit of Jehovah is upon him for this very purpose, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, &c. (Isa. lxi. 1.) How sweet the change, when he enters the prisoner's dungeon; when he bids his chains fall off; when he illuminates the darkness with the beams of his countenance, or brings him forth to the light, to behold his righteousness, the righteousness of faith, the pledge of eternal salvation! Now the terror of the Law, the fears of condemnation, of wrath, of death, and of hell, loose their hold: though firm as adamant, and indissoluble to any power but his, they fall like the torrent from the heart of the believing penitent, when he says, "Come forth, go free." (Isa. xlix. 8, 9.) Look to Him, thou afflicted, tempted, contrite, fearful, penitent sinner: he can easily dissolve all the bonds which bind thee in darkness and distress, and fill thy soul with light, liberty, and joy. This is the office which he bears; this the design of the character which he sustains, especially as the promised Shiloh; this is his delight to accomplish for

his people. The gift of his Spirit is in order to complete this design, whose peculiar office and work it is to be the Comforter. By his sweet influences, he speaks peace to his people, and to his saints; and the same voice which convinces of sin proclaims the righteousness of the Redeemer, and, discovering its everlasting sufficiency to the view of faith, bids the law-condemned sinner, exult in pardoning, justifying grace, and the assurance of eternal liberty.—O come, thou blessed Shiloh, into my heart! proclaim there the liberty of thy grace, and say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. He who delivers from the bonds of guilt, will also deliver all his people from that which is the cause of all their misery,—

3. *The bonds of sin and inward corruption.*—Of this deliverance the unbelieving Jews had no idea, since they had no knowledge of the spiritual bondage under which they were held, while the servants and the slaves of sin. The freedom, therefore, which the Saviour held out to them was unintelligible to their carnal minds: “We have never,” said they, “been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou then, Ye shall be made free?” But Jesus answered them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth” (or liveth in the practice of) “sin is the servant of sin; but if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,” in a high exalted sense, with the spiritual liberty of the sons of God. The Apostle Peter also intimates the same awful truth: “While they promise liberty” (to others), “they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” (2 Pet. ii. 19.) This is the entire state of the world, or of all unregenerate and unconverted sinners: their ignorance of which is the strongest proof of its fatal and delusive influence. The first effect and first step of gracious deliverance is the knowledge of our natural bondage, without which there can be no desire, nor just sense, of that deliverance. Then the humble penitent begins to lament over the law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, bringing him into captivity to

the law of sin which is still in his members. (Rom. vii.) He is often compelled to utter the heart-felt confession, and the sincere and earnest prayer, "We are tied and bound with the chain of our sins; yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us." This is the liberty for which every renewed soul must long, by the very nature of its spiritual birth; for "that which is born of God cannot commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin" (*i. e.* commit or practise sin) "because he is born of God." The very breath of the spiritual life is the prayer of faith, for all the blessings of salvation; and never can he be satisfied till the liberty be completed, where sin shall be no more: the promise, therefore, of the new covenant is a new heart and a right spirit, with an assurance that sin shall not have dominion over them who are in the covenant of grace. (Rom. vi. 14.) The work is now really and effectually begun, constantly and finally preserved, and shall in the world to come be absolutely completed in deliverance from the being of sin; for we shall be like him, when we see him as he is. (1 John iii. 2.) Though every professor is not, yet every real believer is, a witness of this; he hath experienced the power of the Spirit breaking the bondage of sin and corruption, as the earnest of continued and everlasting deliverance. Convinced of the guilt and evil of sin, he hath been turned in sincerity from the love and power of it: it is no more the object of his delight, nor the pursuit of his life, but by the grace of the Spirit he finds the daily victory, and shall do so continually; and his trust is, that "He who hath delivered from so great a death, and doth deliver," will deliver even to the end. The ground of his trust is indeed the promise of God; which is also confirmed by the consideration, that the very office of the Spirit in the covenant of redemption is the Sanctifier of the elect people of God. If sin be ever ready to bring us into bondage; if it "still dwelleth in us;" if the body of sin and death cause us to groan being burdened, he having undertaken to be the Sanctifier, the Preserver, and the Comforter of the redeemed, is con-

tinually carrying on his work in the hearts of his people, in opposition to the power of corruption. For this purpose he dwells in all the people of God; their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) They are the subjects continually of the *unction of the Holy One, and the anointing which they receive of Him abideth in them, &c. that they also may abide in Christ.* (1 John ii. 20—27.) Thus united to Jesus, they are not only one body with Him, as members of his church, but they are united in a still closer union, as “*one spirit with Christ Jesus;*” since the same Spirit that dwells in him, dwells also in them, their life-giving, life-preserving, and life-securing Friend. Here are all their fresh springs of grace: in themselves unable to do any thing, abiding in Christ, from him they derive an ability for all things: they feel in corrupted nature a natural tendency to fall back again into all its depravity and pollution; but his continual communication preserves the life which he hath given, enlivens its exercises, and renews its decays, and will do so to the end; “for faithful is He that hath called you, who also will do it.” Thus the grace of his Spirit is the earnest and the pledge of his perfect work, sealing the children of God as his, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory: thus he shall vindicate them into eternal liberty, and, as the kinsman Redeemer, shall see them set perfectly at liberty, and placed in the inheritance which he has redeemed for them, and to which he has redeemed them.—Let the power of the great enemy assault them by the way,

4. *He will loosen the power of every enemy, under whom they were naturally in bondage; and will “destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.”*—Satan himself is represented in Scripture as “the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;” and, therefore, “the whole world” is said to be lying in wickedness, or, under the power of this wicked

one (Ephes. ii. 2; 1 John v. 19); and to be resting in the snare of the devil, being "taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. ii. 26); and the effect of this is evident, in that universal opposition to authority and to the law of God.

Man, originally deceived by the great tempter, is now voluntarily joining in his rebellion, and follows the imaginations of a corrupted heart; influenced by the suggestions of the enemy, and submissive to his power. But our mighty Deliverer came to take away the prey from the mighty, and set the lawful captive at liberty: to destroy him that had the power of death, *i. e.* the devil, and at the same time to destroy his works. His own life on earth was therefore from first to last a scene of combat: he entered especially upon it in the wilderness, where he overcame all his spiritual temptations. In the dreadful conflicts of the garden and the cross, the powers of darkness exerted the utmost of their might; but, glory to the Almighty Redeemer, they exerted it but in vain. His human nature, indeed, sinks into the grave in death; but this was the appointed means of getting himself the victory: and this completed, behold, "He ascends on high, leading captivity captive." During his abode on earth, he often manifested his power over satan by casting him out from the bodies of men; and now the same almighty power is manifested over the same enemy, by casting him out from the souls of his people, delivering them from the powers of darkness, and bringing them into his own kingdom of grace. (Col. i. 13.) The conquered enemy is now in the chains of the Conqueror; and, amidst all his malice and his rage, only so far shall he go, "and no further," if our Mighty Redeemer restrains, and bounds, or prevents, his destructive efforts. But if he suffer him to tempt, to distress, or to torment, his saints, he is not let loose from his controul; his arts shall be turned to his own confusion, and his power rage no longer than it can answer the purposes of His own love, and be overruled to His own glory.

and the salvation of his redeemed. Every believer indeed must join with the Apostle, and say, "We are not ignorant of his devices," his subtilty and art, his malice and his power; and will be ready often to exclaim with the trembling Israelite, "These enemies are too strong for me: how shall I overcome them?" or with the pious Jehoshaphat, "We have no might against this great company that comes against us." "We wrestle," says the Apostle, "not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephes. vi. 12.) Through darkness, through sorrow, and through fears, how often does the trembling believer apprehend that he shall be one day destroyed, or that he is even near to destruction! But while he takes unto himself the whole armour of God, he shall stand (ver. 13, &c.) Let him look to the Captain of his salvation: since he hath triumphed on the cross, he hath triumphed, not for himself, but for his people. Here is the pledge and the security of their victory. If our enemies are ever watchful, He is omnipresent: if they are great and powerful, He is almighty: if they are malicious, he is unchangeable in his love: if they are subtle, he is omniscient. This is the character, this the ability, of our Mighty Shiloh, that we may commit ourselves to him, and peacefully rely upon his protection and his care. He hath fulfilled the engagement of his promised love: with his great and strong sword he hath punished Leviathan, the piercing serpent, even Leviathan, the crooked serpent; and hath slain the dragon of the sea. And he will still keep his vineyard, water it every moment; and, lest any hurt it, will keep it night and day. (Isa. xxvii. 1—4.) He bids his people fear not, nor be dismayed: their covenant God will strengthen, will help, will uphold with the right hand of his righteousness. When dangers appear most pressing, then generally his deliverance is the nearest at hand; when weakest in ourselves, his power is ready to appear. "Fear not," says he, "thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help

thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth : thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff," &c. (Isa. xli. 10—15, &c.) Though he defer his aid, and wait beyond the season of our expectation, it is only to discover to us our iniquities, and then he will appear to manifest his own glory ; for the Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in the very due time of trouble. (Psa. ix. 9.) He shall judge the poor of the people ; he shall save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor. (lxxii. 4.) When his people have no helper, then shall his own almighty aid be ready for their deliverance. (ver. 12.) His daily care and watchfulness shall afford continued preservation to those who trust in him, till shortly he bruise satan under his feet for ever. Then shall he manifest the truth of his promise ; then he will give to his people eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of his hand. (John x. 28, &c. : compare Deut. vii. 17—24.) To accomplish this, our great Peace-maker and Deliverer hath,

5. *Loosened the bonds of death and the grave.* (Psal. cii. 20.)—This was his covenant engagement : " O death, I will be thy plague ; O grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hos. xiii. 14.) It was by death that he was to atone, and that he was to obtain salvation ; and therefore he voluntarily condescends to yield his dying breath, and lie under our sentence of death in the gloomy regions of the grave : but therefore, also, he could not be holden of death ; the grave must give up its prey : Him hath God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. (Acts ii. 24.) The bands which bound our Mighty Deliverer were but like the cords which bound the Israelitish Judge, when he arose and took the gates of Gaza, and bore them away, in triumphant contempt of the malice of his enemies. Behold thus the breaker-forth hath gone up before his people : they therefore have broken up and passed through the

gate, and are gone out by it; for their King shall pass before them, and the Lord Jehovah on the head of them. (Mic. ii. 13.) When he burst the bands of death, he proved the fulness of his redemption: he obtained, therefore, for his people an eternal discharge from sin, the sting of death, and from all its consequences upon the persons of his redeemed. His victory is theirs; and being now planted in the likeness of his death, they shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Yea, they are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col. ii. 12; Eph. ii. 5, 6.) How often does he thus remove the dreadful bondage of the fear of death, which must ever be a solemn consideration to a dying sinner! But where the power of his resurrection hath been felt, in the communication of spiritual life to the soul, death and the grave have no destructive power: they shall have no victory, and need not therefore excite any terror. Of the sweet effects of this we have abundant proofs in the living and dying experiences of his saints, who, like the Psalmist, rejoice in the valley of the shadow of death, where the rod and staff of the Redeemer support their spirits, and sustain them through the gloomy passage, to the realms of glory. (Psal. xxiii.) They join the triumph of the Apostle; What shall separate us from the love of God? neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. (Rom. viii. 35, &c.) Life is ours, and death is ours. (1 Cor. iii. 22.) Soon this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Where, then, O death! is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, he giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. xv. 53, &c.) Glory be to the power of our Mighty Deliverer, to him who hath so successfully undertaken our cause! to obtain and to secure our peace with God, what hath he not wrought! When I take a view of the calamities and evils from which his mercy hath ransomed me; when I consider myself exposed to all the consequences of sin, in all its manifold

afflictions and misery, and contemplate what he hath done in order to my deliverance; here I must find a ground of admiration throughout eternity, for so long its benefits will continue, and still increase. Surely the love of Jesus is an height and depth, a length and breadth, which PASSETH KNOWLEDGE, FOR IT IS INFINITE. O thou, my Peacemaker, and my mighty Saviour! thy submission, thy sorrow, thy curse, are the only causes of my escape and triumph over all: thy cross has loosened the bond of sin and guilt, and broken the power of satan: thy sufferings have ransomed me from sorrow and affliction: thy death hath loosed the bond of death; and thy resurrection secures my triumph over the grave. Thy ascension hath rescued me from the depths of hell, and opened for me the way to God: by thy Spirit, power, and grace, the bonds of satan and of corruption are now broken in my soul: I am brought from darkness to light, from the power of satan unto God; and thy own almighty power shall bring all the blessings of thy salvation into experience, and crown them all in everlasting felicity. Adored, then, be my Jesus! O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; for thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem! Praise ye the Lord. (Psa. cxvi. 16—19.) If delivered now from the bondage of corruption, the work of his grace is but the pledge and earnest of everlasting triumph; and we know that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. (Eph. iii. 20.)

The language of prophetic inspiration hath informed us, that, when he comes in this character, unto him shall the gathering of the people be: and where should guilty, helpless sinners fly, but to him who is the effectual Peacemaker, the mighty Deliverer, the Source of his people's prosperity and happiness? Those who feel their state will

welcome him in this glorious character, "and fly as the clouds, and as the doves to their windows." Only those who are ignorant of their wretched slavery will ever reject or neglect this Saviour or his salvation. Ignorant, like the unbelieving Jews, such men, when he proposes in his Gospel the spiritual liberty of his dispensation, will no doubt wonder at the invitation to liberty, since they are insensible of any bondage: but the convinced sinner, striving against sin and satan, and lamenting the awful bondage under which he is still held, will fly to the Mighty Shiloh, and place himself under his gracious protection. And indeed, without this, or unless we are made free by him, all his mercy, and grace, and salvation, and his power and design to vindicate the liberty of his people, will avail us nothing.—If we would know our interest in the benefits of his salvation and deliverance, we must seriously ask ourselves the important question,—Has the Spirit convinced us of our enthralled and condemned state without him; and enabled us to fly to and rely upon him as our Helper, to avail ourselves of the proclamation of liberty in his Gospel, and take him as the Object of our faith and dependence; in a word, to bow down in allegiance to him, and willing submission to his authority? "The Jews had no idea," says a learned and pious writer, "of this spiritual and holy freedom, and wished to live without rule: they were too wise, too righteous, too free, in their own conceit, for the wisdom, righteousness, and deliverance of Shiloh: their hopes and desires were below: his joys and dignities were spiritual, their expectations were carnal; his liberty was heavenly, while all the liberty they desired was to be independent of God, and to be free from righteousness." God grant that this may not be our character! The prophetic declaration, indeed, related to the calling of the Gentiles into the church of God; and in a degree this hath been accomplished: for as soon as the Shiloh was come, his name and his salvation were proclaimed to Gentile nations; and, though rejected of his own, they heard, they believed, and by the power of his

grace were gathered to his church. Still, through Gentile nations, his name and his salvation are glorious; but the time is coming when it shall receive a more glorious accomplishment, when “the people shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call him blessed;” when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, and the powerful influence of his Spirit; when He shall collect his saints, numerous as the dew-drops of the morning, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in. Then nothing will remain of the work of our glorious Shiloh, but the collecting of all his redeemed to himself, in the heavenly world.

How glorious the deliverance in the end, when the blessed Shiloh shall come again in his glory, with the glory of the Father, and of his mighty angels, without sin to the salvation of his people! When this effectual Peace-maker, this Almighty Deliverer, this Fountain of Prosperity, and felicity to his chosen, shall fulfil his office, in delivering his redeemed from all the troubles and sorrows of the curse, and free them from all sin, all their enemies, and all their sorrows; and place them triumphant over the second death, in peace, undisturbed peace, in undefiled holiness, in everlasting felicity and glory! Though as prisoners in sin, they had nothing naturally to expect but the prison of hell, when he loosed the bonds of sin and guilt, he opened the door for their escape; and there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. When he loosed the obligation of the Law in its covenant demand, and delivered from its curse, and the sentence of its condemnation upon the cross, he then in fact completed the deliverance of his redeemed; so that the Apostle speaks of it as already effected,—“Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come,”—for then his victory was complete, and in his hands the salvation of his people secure.

When the soul quits this tabernacle of clay, absent from the body it shall be present with the Lord; and when the trump shall awake the sleeping dust, the voice of Him who is able to subdue all things to himself, shall change this

vile body, and make it like unto his own glorious body. Then shall their triumph over all their enemies be complete in their eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord: sinners shall hear the sentence, "DEPART;" and rebels who would not submit to his grace, will be crushed by his arm. Where Jesus is not the Deliverer, he will be the Righteous Judge; and the wrath of the Lamb constitutes the most awful and destructive source of righteous indignation and destruction. Then he who destroyed the power of satan and all the powers of darkness on the cross, and who reserves them in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day, shall bring them forth before his Throne, to receive their final, their irrevocable, sentence: while all who were in league with them, led captive by them at their will, thus yielding themselves into willing slavery, shall be joined in their condemnation. This shall secure the everlasting felicity of his saints, when not an enemy remains to annoy their peace, nor injure their soul for ever. Then shall they be welcomed to his bliss, in these delightful words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Here is the true liberty of the sons of God, brought forth from this prison-like world of sin and sorrow, from the prison of the grave and death, to enter upon their restored inheritance. The bonds of sin and sorrow are loosened for ever, the bonds of death for ever broken, and the liberty of life, glory, and immortality, eternally secured. They rise above all, to be eternally with and like the Saviour; to enjoy and glorify him in the kingdom of peace and glory. Here their prosperity is indeed exalted, to its highest consummation, and the glorious Shiloh fulfils his character in its utmost excellency, beatifying power, and blessings. This the work of redemption is the alone work of the Almighty Jesus, from the beginning to the end, from the design in eternity to its accomplishment in everlasting glory. The redemption, the victory, the deliverance, is of Him; though the glory, the felicity, the enjoyment, is the happy portion of his saints. O, thou Mighty Deliverer, set

me free from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of thy grace here, as an earnest of its eternal consummation above. To all these sorrows I am justly exposed; and, without thy almighty interposition, must forever remain in the miserable bondage of sin, satan, and of death. Deliver me by thy power and grace, and thou shalt have all the glory. I will bless thee in the character of my Shiloh, in the experience of its benefit in the sweet peace of God and the deliverance from sin and guilt in all its power and condemning influence. Then shall I anticipate by faith, and hope soon to obtain, that happy state, under thy protection and unchanging love and goodness, where all that I now groan under, and lament over, and grieve for, shall be no more; and I shall join the song of the redeemed, set free from all the bonds of sin, corruption, and sorrow, in the everlasting freedom and felicity of thy kingdom.

ESSAY III.

Refuge*.

A REFUGE is a place of strength, fortified by nature or by art, to which the oppressed and persecuted may fly in times of danger, and find protection and safety. Under this allusion, the power and grace of the Lord our Redeemer are continually represented in Scripture; since He in any trouble is the *only* Refuge, and in all troubles is the *all-sufficient* Refuge, of his saints. He is eminently that Man, that God-man, who is "the Hiding-place from the wind, and a Covert from the storm" (Isa. xxxii. 2); "a Strength to the poor, a Strength to the needy in his distress; a Refuge from the storm, a Shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." (xxv. 4.) To this view of the name we have been repeatedly directed, under various titles of the Redeemer; such as *the Rock, the Covert, and the Strong Habitation*. It is indeed implied in almost every name and title which he bears, and under which he is represented in the Scriptures: and the vast variety of allusions which are there made, seem designed to confirm our faith and confidence in Him, as the Protector and Salvation of his people. A different view of the title will, however, now claim our attention, in reference to the *Cities of Refuge*, which were appointed in the land of Israel, and which, while they constituted a part of the Jewish polity, were also so arranged as to be the type of the Redeemer, and spiritual emblem of the nature of his salvation. The original appointment of these cities, with the political purpose

* In allusion to the Cities of Refuge.

of such an appointment, we find recorded in the Book of Numbers. (xxxv. 9—28.) They are again mentioned, (Deut. iv. 41—43), where the separation of them for this purpose, in the lands on this side Jordan, is actually made with the name of the city so separated: and again (Josh. xx.) where the same separation is made by the direction of the Lord to Joshua, on the other side of Jordan, in the land of Canaan. According to the Jewish law, in cases of accidental murder, the nearest of kin, who is called the avenger of blood, and who was also the redeemer (as the word signifies) had a right to punish and kill the manslayer wherever he found him; but, by the Divine appointment, this merciful provision was made for his deliverance: Six cities were appointed by lot, to which he might immediately fly for refuge; and as these were so situated through the wholeland, that some one or other of them must be within half a day's journey of every part of the land, and as the avenger of blood would rarely be upon the spot, the manslayer would have the advantage of him in point of time; and as no one else had a right to stop him in his flight, he most generally reached his refuge before the enemy could overtake him. But then he must immediately hasten his escape, leaving his beloved family and connections, his profitable employment, his dearest interests, and his choicest comforts. He must neither loiter nor yield to weariness; nor slacken his pace, nor be deterred by any difficulty which might meet him in the way, till he got safe within the wall of the city. Here he was secured, not by the strength of the city, but in virtue of the Divine institution. In order, therefore, to aid his flight, the cities themselves were easy of access, the roads were preserved in good repair, bridges were erected where necessary, and at every turn way-posts were placed with the inscription REFUGE upon them, that there might be no mistake; and strangers and proselytes were included in the merciful provision. In the city no weapons might be formed, and it was well supplied with every necessary and comfort of life. When once within the inclosure, the avenger of

blood could only act as the prosecutor; and the party had time to appeal for his defence and justification. The cause was tried at or near the place where the murder had been committed; and if the act appeared to be unintentional, he was conveyed back to the city of Refuge, and was there protected, though as a prisoner at large, until the death of the high priest. But he must not go off, nor leave the city till then; otherwise the avenger of blood was justified in slaying him, as a despiser of the ordinance of God; and no atonement or compensation could purchase his liberty till the event of the high priest's death.

This, in a political point of view, was amongst those useful, humane, and solitary institutions which distinguished the Jewish people; who were at that time, whatever infidelity may conceive and suggest, or intimate, far beyond other nations in the mildness and justice of their laws and customs. But there can be no doubt, from many of the attending circumstances, that this institution was also designed as remarkably typical, and affording a striking representation of the preciousness of Christ to a guilty sinner. He is the Refuge prepared by God for the deliverance and protection of the guilty, fearful, penitent; easy of access to all who are willing to fly to him. Thither the perishing sinner flies from the avenger of blood, and within that sacred enclosure finds security from every enemy and every accusation. In the city of his Refuge his wants are well supplied; he is safe through time while dwelling in Christ; and when death shall set him free, through the death of his great Priest, he shall be safe in eternal liberty, in the inheritance of the heavenly Canaan. I will fly for refuge, then, to Thee, thou Almighty Saviour. O that I may be found in Christ! and in my salvation, thy name, thy power, and thy grace shall have all the glory*.

* As this institution was typical of the sinner's Refuge from the deserved wrath of God, the signification of the names of these cities has been noticed in application to the person, character, office, and

While we confine ourselves to this view, a few circumstances of similarity will illustrate the type, and discover the more eminent glory of Him in whom all the types and shadows have their most complete fulfilment.

The first point of similarity is,

1. *In the state of the persons who were permitted to flee thither.*—This privilege was granted to the manslayer who by accident had occasioned the death of another, and who was therefore exposed to death by the sentence of the law, under the hand of the avenger. Now as this appointment was both political and typical, while there is sufficient to answer the type, the whole is so arranged that the curse of the law and the demands of justice may not be prevented. The wilful murderer must by all means be put to death; no hand must stay it; and, to inspire the mind with horror even at involuntary homicide, the unhappy perpetrator is, even under this merciful provision, condemned to a kind of banishment till the death of the high priest, which perhaps, in many cases, might be for the term of his natural life. When such an unfortunate circumstance took place, what an apprehension of danger must have alarmed the mind of the unhappy offender, exposed every moment to death, according to the law, if he did not obtain the protection of the appointed city before the avenger of blood discovered and overtook him! Every one he met in the way must have excited an alarm, lest in him he should behold his dreaded enemy; and every circumstance around him must have been full of suspicion: all his aim, all his efforts, must be directed to get within the city; for life is there, and death every where besides. What a just picture is

love of Christ. Thus *Kedesh* signifies “holy,” and Jesus is the Holy One of God, and our Sanctification; *Shechem*, “a shoulder,” and the government is upon his shoulder; *Hebron*, “fellowship,” and believers are called into the fellowship of Christ our Lord, and through Him have fellowship with the Father; *Bezer*, “a strong-hold,” for He is a strong-hold to all them that trust in Him; *Ramoth*, “exaltation,” for Him hath God exalted, with His own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour; *Golan*, “exultation” or “joy,” for in Him all believers are justified and shall glory, or triumph.—See Gill, Henry, Scott, Brown, &c.

here of the state of a guilty sinner, of every descendant o fallen Adam! It is my state by nature: it is, my reader, yours by nature; and yours still, unless you have sought and found the Refuge that is in Christ Jesus. A due conviction of this is of the utmost importance; without which we shall never discern the excellency, necessity, and privilege of that Refuge. It is this that lays the necessity for the union of the Divine and human nature in the person of Immanuel, of his condescension, the redemption of his cross, the influence of his Spirit, and the constant supplies of His grace, for the salvation of his redeemed. The Law denounces wrath; the curse rests upon the transgressor; and death and judgment, with all their consequences, are appointed to men. A sinner out of Christ (whatever be his state besides) is, as under the Law, exposed to the sword of justice, the shaft of death, and the misery of eternal death; and has reason to apprehend that every thing around him, in the creation of God, stands armed to vindicate the great *Creator's quarrel*. It is ignorance alone that keeps a guilty world in the security of a false peace: the sentence is only suspended upon the brittle thread of life: the avenging arm of justice is in pursuit of the transgressor: death, the minister of Divine wrath, is following close behind him; nor is he one moment secure from his unerring shafts; and if death overtake the sinner before he reach the City of his Refuge, then his soul is lost for ever!—Is not this the real state of man? Consult the fact, the general condition of mankind: let our own experience speak in confession of our own guilty state and danger; and this, compared with Scripture testimony, will solemnly confirm the humbling, alarming truth, that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. iii. 23); “that every mouth must be stopped before him, and all the world stand guilty before God” (ver. 9); and that “as many as are of the works of the Law, are under the curse.” (Gal. iii. 10.) With this conviction, the enlightened penitent will cry out for deliverance, with the earnest supplications of a Saul, the cry of the asto-

nished Jews, or the anxious inquiry of the terrified and trembling Jailor. Because of the possibility of such a circumstance occurring in the land of Israel, these cities of refuge were appointed; and adored be the sovereign mercy of our eternal God, because of the certainty of our state of sin and wrath, Jesus is set forth as the Propitiation, the Sacrifice, the Saviour, and therefore the Refuge of a sinner. "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners:" that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have everlasting life." He came to seek and to save the lost. What need then have we of such a Saviour! and how suitable a Saviour is He to such perishing sinners! We have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. It hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell; and, having secured the reconciliation through the blood of his cross, he brings those who were alienated and enemies in their hearts by wicked works, to be reconciled to God, and thus secures them under his grace, for his everlasting kingdom. (See Col. i. 14, 19, 23.)

The next circumstance of similarity which I shall notice is,

2. *In the method of obtaining the benefit of these cities, which we may properly denominate a practical and operative faith in God's appointment.*—The person who in this state was thus exposed to danger, dreading the wrath and the hand of the avenger, must naturally seek for safety. If he believed that this was God's appointment for his deliverance; that here was safety, and here alone, as he valued his life, and as he was anxious for deliverance; he could not but quickly flee hither for protection. The man who was not in this state, did not need it. If he did not believe that this was the appointment of God for deliverance, he certainly would not trouble himself to fly away to its sacred enclosures. If he did not believe there was safety there, he would lightly regard it; and if he did not believe

that there *only* was safety, he would probably hesitate to his destruction: but the contrary conviction would, most certainly, urge him forward without delay, to hasten to the refuge set before him.—Such is the faith which is the gift of God, the faith of God's elect. Jesus is exalted as the only Saviour. “There is but one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus;” “neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” “He, therefore, that hath the Son of God hath life: he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” This is the invariable testimony of the Divine word, which must be found true in the experience of every sinner. Whatever the convicted conscience exalts in the stead of Christ, will be found both defective and destructive; and in whatever way the sinner hopes to come near to God but in Christ, he will find it shut against him. Had the unhappy manslayer fled to any other city, however fortified, he must have been brought forth to his destruction: this only afforded the desired security, because of the appointment of the God of Israel; nor can the best works, the deepest sorrow, or the most laboured exertions, save a sinner from the wrath of God. “None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good,” because none but Jesus is appointed of God the Redeemer and the Saviour of lost and ruined men. But him hath God appointed for every purpose of redemption and salvation; and lodged in him all the power, the ability, the grace, the fulness, which is necessary to accomplish the vast design. In him is the fulness of wisdom, the fulness of the Godhead, that his believing people may know him and glory in him, as their “Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption;” and be “complete in him.”

When the guilty sinner feels his true state under the Law, warned by the minister of Christ to flee from the wrath to come, and directed by him also to the Refuge of the Gospel, believing his state, believing the record, his faith becomes practical, and his conduct is beautifully ex-

pressed by the Apostle, in allusion to this very circumstance: "He flies for refuge to take hold of the hope set before him." (Heb. vi. 18.) Behold how the unhappy object flies towards the city! how eager, how earnest! Methinks I see him, when first the fatal blow exposed him to the avenger's wrath, looking all around, and then directing his flight without delay. He forgets, for the moment, all his friends, all his former comforts, and engagements, and hopes: he speeds his journey, watching every turn, and observing every way-post of direction. He neither stops, nor yields to fatigue or difficulties, till he has got safe within the walls of the city; and then he congratulates himself upon his felicity. So let me, a poor sinner, exposed by the Law to the sentence of justice and the stroke of death, fly earnestly to Jesus: let no consideration of earthly friends, interest, or hopes, deter me from, or delay, my flight. The language of the Lord to me is like that to Lot; "Escape for thy life: look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Gen. xix. 17.) Danger is behind, deliverance is before; certain destruction is without, certain salvation is within, the city of our Refuge. Let me fly to Jesus; all the hopes, the honours, the riches, the possessions of the world, will leave me soon to perish; all the hopes of self-righteousness will deceive the expectation of the sinner; but Jesus "is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him."

We cannot here but lament over the general insensibility of sinners, so exposed to danger and destruction! How affecting is the difference of our conduct in regard to our bodily and our spiritual dangers! The one class we immediately feel, and desire deliverance; while the other is hid from the eyes of the generality of mankind, and it neither concerns them to prevent nor to escape from it. The manslayer could not but know his danger, and therefore flee from the impending vengeance; but the poor sinner, who has broken the Law of God, and is exposed justly to its curse, yea, who carries the very sentence of death within

him,—will still ignorantly maintain his integrity, fancy himself upright, and rest in the security of a false peace, like a man in the delirium of a fever, or under the insensibility of a lethargy. It needs, however, little discernment to perceive that the world is full of misery; because the world is full of sin, and Scripture declares faithfully what the consequences must be; and if men, through obstinacy or pride, will not attend nor believe, what can ensue but total ruin? (Isa. xxviii. 17.) Who can stand before the holy Lord God, without an interest in the Saviour? Sinner, lay it to heart; consider the state of the world, look into thyself, look into the Scriptures of truth: the one confirms the other, and denounces thy certain destruction, without the knowledge of Christ, and faith which is in him.—But what must abundantly secure the hope of the returning sinner, is another circumstance of similarity; viz.

3. *The sure warrant which the poor unhappy offender had to flee thither for protection.*—This, no doubt, was the general direction of the God of Israel, the appointment of the city for this very purpose; and the direction to all, without exception, to flee thither, who should find themselves in this peculiar circumstance of danger. Such then is Jesus: He is given of God, appointed of God, set forth by God, made of God unto us all we need. He came into the world for this only purpose, to save sinners, to seek and to save those who are lost. The invitations of the Gospel are also directed to men as sinners; as ruined, lost, condemned, perishing; to all, without any exception, of those who are willing to embrace the invitation, to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, for pardon, justification, life, deliverance, and salvation. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.” Whosoever believeth shall not perish; whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out. (See Isa. lv. 1, &c.; xlv. 22: Matt. xi. 28: John iii. 16; vi. 37: Rev. xxii. 17.)

This is the scriptural warrant for the perishing sinner to come to Christ; and surely he cannot wish for more. Who can have any reason to think himself excepted, or to fear that he shall not be received? The doubts of unbelief are as dishonourable to the character of Christ, and the truth of God, as they are injurious and distressing to the penitent soul.

The way to the cities of refuge was open and plain; at every turning a way-post was erected, pointing to the refuge: and such are all the ordinances of the Gospel in the Christian church. They point the sinner to Christ, and tell him, there is his Refuge from all guilt, and fear, and danger. Such are the ministers of the Gospel: "Cast ye up, cast ye up," (ye ministers of the Lord,) "prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people; for 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." (Isa. lvii. 14, 15.) It is the very office of the minister of Christ, as his ambassador, to declare that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and so to beseech sinners, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. v. 20.)

Such is the very spirit and the language of the Christian service and Christian ordinances; the highest of which represents, by the most striking and simple signs, the love of Christ crucified for sinners. Yes, trembling sinner, nothing can obstruct thy coming to Christ, and partaking of his salvation, but thy own love of sin and unbelief of heart. His salvation is prepared, is given to every willing soul, to all who find its suitableness: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come!" Let us direct you to this blessed, this secure, Refuge. Nothing is in thy way, if thou art willing. This willingness may, indeed, imply more than what some suppose; while it certainly implies less than that which many would exact of a helpless sinner. It

implies, no doubt, a real sense of the guilt, the vileness, and the danger of our sins; a believing view of Christ as the Saviour of the guilty; a desire of pardon, justification, and acceptance; and the real longing of the heart to have the heart renewed, the conduct sanctified, and the soul conformed to the image of the Redeemer. Wilt thou be made whole? Then Jesus maketh thee whole. He can, he will, nay, he does, when he begins to subdue the love and power of sin in thine heart, and leads thee to long for his salvation. Seek not for any warrant in thyself. How absurd had it been for the manslayer to have waited till he could have found some plea of worthiness, to enter the city of refuge, or by any vain excuse to have delayed his flight thither! So absurd is the conduct of the guilty sinner, who fears to come to the Saviour for salvation, till he can procure some recommendation, some worthiness of his own, to present, as his plea for resting on the Saviour. Thy warrant is this; that Christ is the appointed Saviour; that the sinner is invited to him, is commanded to come to him, and has the promise, that, when coming and believing, he shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. To wait till the work is done before you come to Christ, would be as unwise as the conduct of the man who should wait till he is healed before he send for the physician. Come as you are, guilty and perishing, if you desire to be made whole; for this is the method of his grace, to magnify itself in the wretched and the helpless. Wait at his Throne of Grace in prayer and supplication, till he perform the work and justify and sanctify your heart; for he will do it. Let faith rest on him, and his fulness and his promise; and, glorifying the Redeemer, he will honour it by realizing its expectation, grounded upon his word. The exercise of faith is compared to many things which are suitable to the different views which the Scripture gives us of Christ. Thus, if he be an Object presented before us, we are to look to him; if he be a Foundation, we are to rest upon him; if a Fountain, we are to drink of him; and if a Refuge, we are to flee to him. All these are designed to

shew, that he only is the Confidence of our hope; and that he is the All-sufficient One. The excellency of his Gospel is the peculiar abundance of its grace: it proclaims pardon for the guilty, yea, even to the murderer; not, indeed, pardon in impenitency; and yet, though not for, in the way of, penitence, faith, and prayer. "Such were some of you," says the Apostle, after enumerating the blackest catalogue of sins; "but ye are washed, but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.) The pledge which he has given you, humble penitent, in thus enlightening your mind, and calling you to himself, he will most certainly bring to perfection, and complete in glory, in eternal health, life, and salvation, and eternal conformity to himself. The only circumstance of similarity which we will remark besides is,

4. *The security of the place.*—Once within the city, no enemy could approach: here the unhappy object was safe from every injury, from all the resentment and anger of the avenger. If he followed him close to the gates, he could proceed no farther: for, admitted within, he immediately claimed and enjoyed all the privileges of the favoured spot.—Believer, contemplate the glory of Christ in this view. Thou hast fled to him, and obtained shelter in his heart: then all the benefits of his grace shall be thine; and the infinite glory of his sovereign grace must be his own. Let my soul, then, contemplate the glory of my Redeemer as thus appointed, thus furnished by God, thus accessible, ever open, well supplied with all the needful provision for my soul, the Refuge from the broken law, the guilt of my conscience, the rage of mine enemies, and the wrath of a righteous God. O believer! once brought into Christ Jesus by faith, the Law has no covenant demands upon thee, that being dead whereby thou wast held; for "Christ Jesus is the End of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus:" wrath cannot follow thee; for he was made "a curse for

us, to redeem us from the curse of the Law." And if "Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come," the sword of justice shall not slay thee; for thou hast to plead the privileges of this favoured City, into which thou art fled by faith: and "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made thee free from the law of sin and death." No enemy can injure thee, for here is Divine shelter and protection; the power of the Almighty surrounding thee in the Refuge appointed by the grace of the Almighty God. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong City; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." (Isa. xxvi. 1-4: compare xxvii. 1-5.) No want shall there distress thee, for the city is well provided with all thy immortal soul can need; with the water of life, the bread of life, the rich provisions of grace. There flows "the river which maketh glad the city of our God." (Psa. xlv. 4; Rev. xxii. 1.) There his people are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his house, and drink of the rivers of his pleasure. (Psa. xxxvi. 7-10.) O how excellent is thy loving kindness, O Lord! This, in a word, is the sure Refuge of his saints. God (said one of old) "is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." (Psa. xlv. 1-3.) "God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early" (ver. 5): and again says the triumphant Psalmist, "In God is my salvation and my glory, the rock of my strength, and my Refuge is in God." Fear not therefore, O believing penitent! "Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before him; God is a Refuge for us.

Though there be safety no where else, though all besides should fail and disappoint the hope of the trembling sinner, here there is no failure, and can be no disappointment. When the trembling soul, like the Psalmist, looks all around and is compelled to say, "Refuge fails me; no one careth for my soul;" then may he adopt the language of his faith, and say, "I cried unto thee, O Lord; and I said, Thou art my Refuge, and my Portion in the land of the living." (Psa. cxlii. 4, 5, &c.) Then, O my soul, I, even I, a poor guilty trembling sinner, may hope to find, yea, I shall find, Refuge in the heart of Jesus my Redeemer; and under the shelter of his hand, in this appointed city, where my God has secured the Refuge of his people. (See Psa. iv. 8.) From day to day, then, O believer! realize in faith his suitableness and preciousness, and thine own security by reliance upon him. Continue in this city of thy Refuge, by the daily exercises of faith: never be found without, for there alone is thy security: go on in the faith of Jesus, and live by faith upon him, and thou shalt keep within these walls of his almighty power and love, unchangeably secure. Jesus, thy atoning Sacrifice and Righteousness, and all thy Salvation, is able and willing to deliver thee to the uttermost. Yes, my soul, I cannot need more than is in him; nor greater encouragement and security than is given me, in his invitations, and the faithful promises of his word.

But there is one circumstance of peculiarity, which we have not yet noticed. The unhappy object was to remain within the confines of the city, till the death of the High Priest, and then he was restored to all the privileges of the Israelitish nation. In this view politically, the place must have been considered in some measure as a place of confinement, and the person a prisoner at large there: and such is the state of the believer while on earth; here he lives upon Christ by faith, and cleaves to him in obedience and love; here he is protected in safety, by the love and grace of the Redeemer: but he is not yet in the full enjoyment of all the privileges and blessings of the Christian dispensation; for this he waits the appointed season, and

waits in the certainty of hope. But viewed typically, it teaches us, that the death of Christ has indeed extraordinarily set his people at liberty; that through his dying love, they are now delivered from the guilt of sin, and its condemning power. Their Great Priest, by his atoning sacrifice, hath obtained their eternal redemption; and he is himself entered within the veil, as their forerunner, to secure their exaltation with himself. He has promised, that where he is, there all his people shall be. When death comes, it shall only, through him, the dying and risen Saviour, set them into perfect liberty, in the Jerusalem which is above, the Canaan of eternal rest, and bring them into all the privileges of the chosen Israel of God. When brought before the Throne of Judgment, then shall it be evident that, like the manslayer of old, when brought before the judges, they had a right to flee to this city of appointed Refuge, and through the promise of God had a right to claim its sacred protection. Then will it be evident, that they came in faith, and committed themselves in sincerity to the grace and care and influence of the appointed Saviour. Then will it be evident, that the atonement and redemption of Christ is the safe reliance of every penitent sinner; that in Him, and in Him alone, is salvation, while all who neglect this salvation must perish in their sins.

Blessed be the Lord, for such an appointed and suitable Refuge. Flee, O sinner! flee, my soul, to Him, in humility, faith, and sincere surrender. Seek his protection, encouraged by his own word of invitation and of promise, and He will be thy Refuge, from all the curse of the Law, from all thy guilty fears, from all the rage of thine enemies; in a word, thy Refuge in every time of trouble.

But when death has set thee free from thy prison-house below, then shalt thou be secured, in the city of our God, and enjoy all its unchangeable immunities, its glorious privileges, its ineffable delights, with all the company of the redeemed, in the presence of thy Lord, thy Redeemer, and thy Friend, for ever.

ESSAY IV.

Guide—Leader.

WHEN called to pass through ways which are intricate and dangerous, how important is the presence of one who is competent to direct us, and to guide our steps, and to defend us from evil, especially if overtaken by the darkness or surrounded by the storm! Without such an aid, continual fears must alarm the mind, and continual anxiety oppress the spirits. But under the guidance of such a Friend, and in proportion as we feel a confidence in his wisdom and his care, our fears will be allayed, our anxieties composed, and our minds rest in peaceful confidence. What is life but an intricate and dangerous road, which lies through a howling wilderness, surrounded with beasts of prey, opening on uncertain labyrinths? Through it we must travel, though encompassed with darkness, and by nature ignorant of the various tendencies of its different paths. Mankind are wandering all around us, and the deceitfulness of their different pursuits is evident to every observer: each one discerns the folly of his neighbour, and hears the lamentation of general disappointment. And yet the great difference of the end renders it of infinite importance to distinguish the path in which we are walking; since the issue must either be life or death, heaven or hell, eternal glory or everlasting sorrow. In this dilemma, Jesus our Saviour offers himself as our Leader and our Guide, in all respects suited to our necessity: he is altogether willing to afford us his constant presence and direction, and invites us to put ourselves under his guardian care. Ignorant where we are, and how to direct our steps, surrounded with darkness, and uncertainty, and

danger, his aid is absolutely necessary, if ever we would get safely through the desert wilderness. And who that feels his state would not welcome the offer of such a Leader;—He who, “through the tender mercy of God, hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace?” (Luke i. 78, 79.) Let us commit ourselves to his direction; and then to contemplate him in this character will only be learning more and more of his protection and our safety, and will afford sweet satisfaction to the believer’s mind, while his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. The first inquiry of a person placed in such a situation as to need a guide would be, for one who is capable of directing him, and willing to afford his aid. Let us make the same inquiry, and we shall find a full and satisfactory answer in the power and love of the Lord Jesus. If we ask as to his ability to perform the task, here we shall find that our help is laid upon One that is mighty. The almighty power, the all-sufficiency, and the infinite grace and fulness of the Redeemer, are the unfailing security of every character which he bears, and make him the proper Object of our confidence and our glorying. If he had not undertaken for us, in vain had heaven or earth proposed its aid: but with him on our side, nor earth nor hell can hurt us: we shall go on securely, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, when we have no confidence in the flesh. A Leader and a Guide must be furnished,

1. *With suitable wisdom*;—and the more extensive his knowledge, he is in proportion more suited to discharge his office. But our Jesus is suited to the office by infinite wisdom and knowledge; for in him are laid up “*all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*,” and “*all the fulness of the Godhead*.” (Col. ii. 3, 9, 10.) He who hath all knowledge cannot be mistaken nor deceived; but wherever information is partial, and knowledge of course limited, which is the necessary imperfection of human nature, deception may be practised, and mistaken views delude the mind. Mistake and error are therefore natural to man.

If, then, the Redeemer was himself a creature, he could not be the Object of our implicit confidence: eternally dependent and limited in his knowledge, we might justly apprehend the possibility of mistake; but when he possesses in himself the fulness of the Godhead, being self-sufficient, and in himself containing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, he must be all-sufficient for us, unerring in all his determinations, and infallible in all his directions. Creatures may err in the most important concerns: whatever we commit to them is liable to failure; nor can any mere human wisdom guarantee our absolute security; and in the guidance of our views, our sentiments, and our conduct, the dictates of the wisest and best must ever be brought to the one unerring standard of Divine truth. The boasted gift of infallibility, could it be proved as any where existing, would be the greatest blessing to mankind; but unproved must be the most dangerous and delusive. To the care of Jesus we may, however, trust without reserve, without fear, and without the possibility of failure. And when we are following his direction, we are sure that we are following in the best way, and to the best end. A guide to be useful must also be present; and to the omniscience of the Lord Jesus is added,

2. *His omnipresence.*—In the expanded deserts of the East, where there was no beaten track, the necessity and utility of a guide was continually felt. And in passing through those intricate and unknown ways, no step would be safe without his immediate observation. In the present times, the traveller could never find his way through those inhospitable deserts without the aid of a person thus prepared and instructed to direct him, who generally goes before, marks out the path, abides constantly near, and continues with him to the end. In other difficulties of a mental nature, where we stand in need of such assistance, it is impossible to be continually near the source of information, or to have a leader and director continually at hand: we must therefore obtain general information, and act to the best of our own judgment or opinion: we therefore must

often he in uncertainty, and must be exposed continually to err. But the Lord our Redeemer is ever near: his eyes behold his people when they see not him: no storm, no clouds, no time, no distance can ever separate them from him." "Behold, I go forward," said holy Job, "but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: but he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job. xxiii. 8—10.) The conduct of Jehovah, when leading forth his chosen Israel, and guiding them through the desert to the promised Canaan, is a beautiful type and a striking representation of that constant care with which he beholds and preserves his church. "The Lord went before them by day, in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." This led the Jewish Lawgiver, in his first triumphant song, to anticipate their final preservation, confident that he would lead them to the end: "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." (Compare Exod. xiii. 21, 22, &c.; xv. 13, 17, 18.) His promise to his people is still the same: and his constant and unremitting care is represented by the Prophet, in allusion to this very circumstance: "The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Sion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence." (Isa. iv. 5, 6.) His promise to Joshua is applied by the Apostle to every individual of his people: "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee," (Josh. i. 9; Heb. xiii. 5, 6): "therefore we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper." The Prophet Isaiah represents the same continued care under another allusion; and, comparing the church to a vineyard,—I, says the Lord, do keep it; I will

water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. (Isa. xxvii. 3, &c.) How suitable, how all-sufficient the consolation, to recollect in every trial, perplexity, difficulty, or danger, that the eye of Jesus is constantly upon me! that he to whom I have committed the keeping of my soul, is guiding me by his infinite wisdom, and ordering all my concerns aright! That he who can never be deceived, is never ignorant of my state, and never absent from my path! "I set the Lord, therefore," said the Psalmist, "always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." (Psa. xvi. 8, 9, &c.) This, which was the triumph of the Redeemer, is equally the triumph of his people in him; and shall be till he shew them the path of life which he hath trod before them; where, in his presence, there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand pleasures for ever more."

As it is of the utmost consequence, that a guide and leader should be well acquainted with the way, so it adds greatly to the confidence,

3. *When he hath trod the path before; searched out all its labyrinths; and is well acquainted with all its most intricate, its dark, or gloomy passages.*—And here the suitability of our Redeemer is most strikingly evident. What path of trial, affliction, or temptation has he not known by its experience? When he came into our nature, he took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses; yea, in all things he was made like unto us. (Heb. ii. 17, 18.) He passed through this wilderness world, as the man of sorrows; acquainted with reproach and contempt, with affliction and temptations, and with all the power and malice of human and of spiritual enemies. In the agony of his soul he bore the hiding of his Father's countenance, the just effects of his indignation; till bearing all the consequences of our sins, he passed through the valley of the shadow of death, and in the strength of his almighty arm rose the conqueror over all. "In that he suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted;" and has the feeling of all our infirmities, because he was in

all points tempted like as we are; yet without sin. (Heb. iv. 15.) He knows, therefore, how to deliver his people out of temptation; to carry them through all their trials; to make the trial of faith, which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, to be found unto praise, and honour, and glory; to make all things here work together for good; to lead them through the waters, or through the fires; to conduct them through the valley of death, to make them triumphant in and over all; and then, to plant them in the land of rest and glory. In all they are safe under his eye, under his care and direction. Whatever be the darkness or difficulties of the path, it is the right way in which he is leading them; soon shall they get beyond all, and possess the great goodness which he hath laid up for them; nor will he ever leave them, till he hath performed all the good things which he hath spoken to them of.

But nothing is so great an encouragement as the fact itself, that the person in whom we trust hath before acted successfully in this character, and guided many a weary passenger to the destined end. Behold the skill of our infallible Leader!

4. *He hath been the guide of thousands, and ten thousands, in one generation after another; who have all got safe through to the promised inheritance.*—He never lost one for whom he undertook; not one who hath committed his way to him, and relied upon his wisdom and his care. Multitudes which no man can number, called by his grace, washed in his blood, justified in his righteousness, sanctified by his Spirit, guided by his eye and care through all their difficulties, trials, and enemies, are now more than conquerors before the Throne; all ascribing the power, the glory, the honour of their salvation to him, and to him alone. They followed the Lamb, and he led them through: they bore their testimony by the way to his wisdom, his power, his constant care and faithfulness; and they bear their testimony now from before the Throne, and say, Come to Jesus! they that believe in him shall never perish;

they that trust in him shall never be ashamed. Sinners, learn to trust in him and rest upon him, and you shall experience the same guiding care, till you join our happy society, to depart no more; for he will be "*glorified in his saints*, and admired in all them that believe." Here, then, are abundant proofs of his ability to guide his people through all the dangerous paths of the wilderness, and conduct them safe to the desired end.—But another question may perhaps arise as to,

5. *His willingness to execute the important office.*—

And this must be satisfactorily answered to every inquiring mind, by his undertaking for his people, and the promises of his word to all who trust themselves to him. In the counsels of eternal love he gave himself to the accomplishing of their salvation, and proposed to himself at first the ultimate effect, that by giving himself for his church an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, and so present it to himself, out of the ruins of the fall, made a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. (Ephes. v. 2, and 25—27.) What greater proof could be given of his love to his church, than the condescension to which he submitted, the sufferings which he endured, the victories which he obtained, and all the wonders which he wrought for them! These are the most indubitable proofs how he loved his people; nor can there be a stronger pledge of the continuance of his love, and the bestowal of all his blessings on them. He who hath thus accomplished all his undertaking for them, will as certainly fulfil and complete all his designs towards them and in them, till he hath brought them all around his Throne. And in order to confirm their confidence in his wisdom and his care, he hath indeed given to us "exceeding great and precious promises:" "*Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.*" "*Cast all thy care upon him, for he careth for thee.*" "*Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he will bring it to pass:*" yea, "*in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy*

paths." When the Psalmist is enumerating the grounds of the blessedness of the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord will not impute transgression, we find this among the number, the promise of Divine direction: "*I will instruct thee,*" says the Lord, "*and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.*" (Psa. xxxii. 8.) How beautiful the allusion! He goes before his people; yea, the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous. His eyes are directed around in every quarter, to discover the best path, or to discern the most distant danger; "for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout all the earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them that fear him." If the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Jesus, they are not like the treasures of the miser, but of the liberal man, "who disperses abroad and giveth to the poor." The character of the Lord Jesus, his undertaking and design, and the whole of his conduct, seems designed to assure his people how ready he is to take them under his care; to guide them through the wilderness, to stand by them, and never leave them till they are got safely to the end. But what can exceed the extent of that promise, which stands on record for the encouragement of his church from one generation to another? "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour," &c. "Fear not, for I am with thee." (Isa. xliii. 2, 3, 5.) But it may be asked, Will the Lord take *sinner*s under his care? will he direct the guilty and unworthy? Surely it is to such that he must shew his loving-kindness, if ever he discovers it to any of the sons of men. The guilty and the unworthy, who desire and seek his aid, shall not be disappointed in their hope. In the 25th Psalm throughout, we have a display of the temper of his people, and of his

amazing grace: we behold the penitent sinner in his perplexity directing his prayer to the Throne of God. (ver. 4—7.) “Shew me thy way, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation: on thee do I wait all the day. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness’ sake, O Lord.” The prayer of the humble shall not be rejected, which relies not upon its own worthiness, but the greatness of Divine mercies; for good and upright is the Lord, gracious in his nature, and faithful to his promise: therefore will he teach even sinners in the way. (ver. 8.) The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way. (ver. 9.) This delightful promise, this kind encouragement, inspires the supplicant with confidence, which vents itself in the continued prayer of faith, the firm reliance and joy of hope to the end of the Psalm, assured that all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them who keep his covenant, rest upon his covenant mercy in Christ Jesus, and then delight to do his testimonies. (ver. 10: see ver. 11—22.)

And here it is of the utmost importance for the direction of our hope and conduct, to be acquainted with the method which the Lord uses in the present state to guide his people, and to communicate his direction to them; that we may not encourage an unfounded expectation, nor be discouraged by disappointment. In the present dispensation of his mercy, we are not to expect the visible manifestation of his person, for “the heavens have received him, until the times of the restitution of all things.” We cannot see his person, nor audibly hear his voice. Nor does he communicate the intimations of his will, as he did formerly, on extraordinary occasions, to Patriarchs and Prophets. Let us, therefore, remember not to expect such interpositions in the present state. Visions, revelations, and mental im-

pressions, are much to be suspected; nor can they in the present dispensation carry any certainty in them of proceeding from God. In matters of truth and practice they must be tried by the Divine word, which is altogether sufficient without them: and in matters of general conduct they must be tried by that wisdom which is profitable to direct; combining and comparing the various circumstances of Providence together, that we may find out the path of duty. They are therefore as needless as they are useless. Those who have yielded to them, and given themselves up to be governed by them, have often found themselves deceived; and if the mind has been so infatuated as to rest upon them, considering them as Divine manifestations, such deception and disappointment hath tended greatly to shake their faith even in the word and promise of God, and to bring great distress and sorrow into their minds. When God spake to man in dreams and visions of the night; when he often appeared to his people by a visible manifestation, and no doubt attended with circumstances which authenticated its certainty; those expectations were justifiable, and such discoveries were suited to the spirit and general tenor of that economy: but at present, when no such interpositions are promised, nor, according to the present method of the Divine working, generally afforded, they are dangerous, and commonly delusive. The Lord has now his established and appointed means of instruction and guidance; and when he intends mercy and grace to his people, he sweetly inclines them to use those means, to assent to the direction which he affords, and to be found for these purposes diligently in the way and means of his appointment.—To instruct us in the knowledge of his truth and doctrine, and open to our view the nature and glory of spiritual things he has given us,

1. *His Word.*—This is the only sure guide of faith and practice, and, blessed be his Name, this is all-sufficient, This is our standing rule; nor can we ever err in attending to its directions. The cause of all error is an inattention, neglect of, or want of submission to, the dictates of the

word of God. If we judge of its truth by the standard of our own reason; if we are determined proudly to reject what is there plainly revealed, because we cannot understand how or why it is so; if we warp its truth to our prejudices, or substitute our fancies in the stead of it, no wonder, if, under the dispensations of the clearest light, we run into darkness, and are bewildered in the labyrinth of error, amidst the plainest declarations of the truth of God. If we studied the Scriptures, in the temper in which the Psalmist wrote the nineteenth and one hundred and nineteenth Psalms; if we had the same view of his statutes, his law, his ordinances, and his judgments, as that which filled his mind; and if we could say with him, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel;" we should not long hesitate as to the truth itself, we should never materially wander from it in our understandings, nor depart from it in our practice. The various parts of the Divine record are indeed surrounded with a different degree of light and clearness; but since the blessed Jesus hath come to bear witness to the truth, even in his own discourses, which are left on record, we shall behold a complete testimony to every part of Divine truth; and when speaking in and by his Apostles, through the light and influence of the Eternal Spirit; though none but the same truths are displayed, we behold them more clearly stated, and more abundantly amplified. This has arisen, not from any defect in the Divine Teacher himself, nor in the manner of his teaching, but from the incapacity of his hearers. Even his disciples themselves, to whom the truth was directed, and must have been communicated, could not understand nor receive many things which he spake to them; but under the dispensation of the Spirit, given by him from the Throne, the light of truth was clearly to shine forth, and hath, therefore, spread its brightest beams abroad with all the refulgence of its glories. Let our understandings submit to his truth, and our hearts to his direction, and we shall always be in safety. But this discovery of his will is not in itself sufficient to produce these effects in the present

state of man; for how often do we need to present the prayer, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things in thy Law!" "What I see not, teach thou me."

2. He guides his people, therefore, secretly and inwardly *by his own Spirit* of unerring wisdom.—This is the peculiar promise of the Redeemer; and in his last discourse with his disciples, the promise is again and again repeated for their encouragement, and for the consolation of the church, and of every one of his true disciples, to the end of time. That it refers not only to his immediate disciples, but to his people, from generation to generation, is evident by the terms in which it is expressed. The promised Comforter is to be always with his people, to teach them all things, to testify of him; to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; to guide them into all truth, to glorify his name, and to abide with them for these purposes for ever. (See John xiv. 16, 26; xvi. 7—14.) These were his gracious influences on the hearts of the primitive Christians, as the Apostle testifies; "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (1 John ii. 20, 27.) "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) It is evident, therefore, that he gives this heavenly gift to all his people, illuminating the mind spiritually, not independently of the Scriptures, but inclining the mind to the study of them, and thus opening the understanding to perceive, and the heart cordially to believe and embrace them. To set up the written word, in independence of the Spirit's teaching, is the pride and self-confidence of carnal wisdom; and to exalt the work of the Spirit, in independence of the written word, is mere enthusiasm, and opens the way for the unlimited operation of a wild and uncontrolled imagination. These are graciously united together in the providence and the dispensation of God to his church, and must

be united in the dependence of his people.—But to this he hath also kindly added,

3. *The ministry of the Gospel.*—This is the established means which he hath appointed for the calling, the conversion, and the edification, of his saints. Here his people are to come for direction, for quickening, and for consolation. Though the ministry of his Gospel can convey no new truth; nor exhibit any new ground of hope, nor foundation of spiritual blessings; yet, by the light and aid of his Holy Spirit accompanying it, old things are often placed in a new light, the decayed impression of scriptural truths is renewed and revived, and the Divine power and blessing attend the ordinance for the refreshment and strengthening of his people. Here the believer has found the promise of the Saviour fulfilled: here he has found in his house the fountain of life springing up, and the table of mercy spread with all the rich provision of the Gospel: here he has delighted himself in fatness, and his soul has been abundantly satisfied; nor can the believer expect the power and blessing of the means without their use. Ministers themselves, indeed, are but empty channels; and sometimes they are found so, to make the believer know the source of his dependence. They are found but earthen vessels, unsupplied and empty, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. “But they that wait upon the Lord shall (here) renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

These are the established means of spiritual instruction; means in which the humble inquirer shall never be left without light to guide him, or consolation to support him. And then as to the outward concerns of life, and as far as spirituals are connected with them, he will guide,

4. His people in the right way *by his providential care*; and by so disposing the circumstances of life as to mark out, to the candid and sincere inquirer, the path of duty.—To his character, as such, and to his covenant engagement to his people in this respect, he directs the faith and confi-

dence of his church of old: "Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God, who teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." (Isa. xlviii. 17.) Here, indeed, as well as in the search after truth, it is dangerous to expect or to trust in the strongest impressions of an indulged imagination. This is not the way in which the Lord generally leads his people. He has not, indeed, bound himself, not thus to direct his people in very peculiar circumstances; but he has given us no reason to expect it, no promise to guide our faith or hope that way. And even granting the possibility of some special case of the kind, it can never afford an example to follow, nor a conduct for imitation. Yet, while waiting at the Throne of Grace in humble supplication for Divine direction, using the means which he has afforded us; and comparing the circumstances of providence together, and watching their leadings; the believer may expect and does receive the plainest discovery of the Divine Will and his own duty. The Lord leads the blind by a way which they know not, and in paths which they have not known: he makes darkness light before them; and crooked things straight. "These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." (Isa. xlii. 16, &c.) They do, as it were, hear a voice behind them, saying, This is the way; walk ye in it; when they turn to the right hand, or when they turn to the left. How beautifully has the Jewish Lawgiver and Prince described the care of God over his Israel of old, and his constant attention to their comfort and supply in their protracted journeys through the wilderness! "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste-howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him, &c. (Deut. xxxii. 9—14.) The scriptural allusions

to this are very common and very beautiful. (So Isa. lviii. 8—11.) “Thy Righteousness,” the Lord thy Righteousness, “shall go before thee: and the glory of the Lord shall be thy re-reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day: And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.” (So also chap. xlix. 10, 11.) “They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my high-ways shall be exalted.” In other places his guardian care is represented by that of a shepherd tending his flock, with unremitting attention, and the tenderest affection: “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” (Isa. xl. 11: Psa. lxxviii. 52, &c.; xxiii.)

Here, then, we have a most delightful character of the Lord Jesus. His infinite wisdom, together with his infinite grace and love, ensures the constant protection of his eye and the direction of his hand. But no doubt in this is implied the correspondent duty of dependence in us, the constant seeking for his aid, and the constant reliance upon his word, his teaching Spirit, and his guiding providence. A guide would but avail but little to the man who was too wise in his own conceit to seek or follow his direction; and little will it profit us that there is a Leader of his church, if we are following our own fancies, or the vanities of our own minds. When the Lord promises to guide his people with his eye, then follows the direction, “Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding

whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." (Psa. xxxii. 9.) If we feel a spirit of dependence, the expression of it will be the language of prayer: it will drive us to prayer, quicken us in prayer, and keep us in the exercise of prayer. "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer: thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am." (Isa. lviii. 9.) How often do we hear this language from the lip of the devout Psalmist! "Lead me in thy righteousness and in thy truth; lead me in a plain path for thy name sake, because of mine enemies. Send out thy light and truth; let them lead me and guide me; let thine hand lead me and guide me. O lead me in the way everlasting!" Let us not, then, be discouraged by the various difficulties and perplexities of our way; but be led thereby to Jesus, that he may lead and guide us through. He has undertaken it as his office, and promised it in his love: "To whom then, Lord, should we go but unto thee?" As his promise is connected with our dependence upon him, so far from being afraid to come in the time of difficulty, it is both our duty and our privilege. Blessed be God for such a confidence! Let us use it in faith, and, as we have constant need, let us maintain the constant sense of it, and be engaged in the constant application of faith for his protecting care. Our security is not in self-confidence, but in self-diffidence; not in our own wisdom, but in discovering our own ignorance; not in our own power, but in feeling our own weakness. If this keep us ever looking to Jesus, there we cannot fail: then when we are weak we shall be strong; and the weaker in self, the stronger in the Lord. But let us always remember that the use of means is connected with the promise of his wisdom, power, and care: we cannot expect his guidance but in the means of his own appointment; and there we ought not to doubt of it. He has appointed the end by the means, and the means in order to the end. His promise should incline his people to use the one, and insure their minds of the other. Yea, he has promised to keep his people in this dependence, that

they may partake of his love and favour. I will not depart from them, that I may do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. While, then, He keeps his people that they shall walk with him; the most ignorant, the weakest, the most simple, who walk with him, are in his guidance secure, though they know not a step of the way in which he is leading them, or though the paths of Providence may be intricate. They are wise and right: it is no doubt the right way to the city of habitation. Rejoice then, my soul, in the wisdom and goodness of thy guiding Saviour: never be discouraged, but trust thy all to Him: he is as able as he is willing, to lead and to defend thee, and therefore thou shalt soon be safely conducted through all to the rest above. Remember, my soul, the infinite wisdom of his mind, the omniscience of his eye, and the almighty power of his arm. Remember He himself has trod through every path of trial, sorrow, and temptation, and has conducted thousands and ten thousands through the same path: nor has he ever lost one committed to him, or who hath committed himself to his care. And remember the willingness of his heart, secured to thee by his undertaking and his faithful promise. These considerations embrace all that thou canst possibly need. Let me then be found in the use of his word, under the ordinance of the Gospel church, its ministry and its sacraments, in humble dependence upon the Spirit of his grace. Thus shall I know the truth, all that is necessary for salvation, and be led in the right path of his providence to its enjoyment; for error arises, in general, not from the weakness of the understanding, but from the unwillingness, the pride, the prejudice, the perverseness of the heart. Commit, then, all thy ways to him, nor ever perplex thyself with events, with consequences, with possibilities. He that now follows Jesus as his Guide, shall follow him to his glory. In the way of holiness he will lead all his people safely; for he will be with them in the way; and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein, (Isa. xxxv. 8, Margin.)

He whose arm was mighty of old, to cut Rahab and wound the dragon; He who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, and made the depths of the sea the way for his ransomed to pass over, shall renew the miracle of his wisdom and his power from age to age, till all the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Sion, with everlasting joy upon their heads; where they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away, (Isa. li. 9—11.)

ESSAY V.

Anchor of Hope.

“BLESSED is the man,” says the Prophet (Jer. xvii. 7, 8), “who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is:” like the tree planted by the waters, he shall never want a suitable and abundant supply for growth, fruitfulness, or beauty. But the hope of ancient Israel was the Messiah; and the hope of the Christian church is Christ the Lord, even Jesus, who is our Hope. (Compare Acts xxviii. 20; 1 Tim. i. 1.) Thus, when the Apostle, in the verse preceding that in which the present title of the Redeemer occurs, is speaking of the Hope set before us, to which the trembling sinner flies for refuge (Heb. vi. 18, 19), he certainly does not allude to the grace of hope, as it is exercised in the mind of the believer, which is often much shaken, and which is subject to a great variety of changes, but to Him who is the object of our hope; which Hope, says the Apostle, we have *as an anchor*: and that the same is meant as in the preceding verse is most evident; for the word “hope” is not repeated by the Apostle, as appears by its being found here in italics, but the relative pronoun alone is used, which can refer to nothing but this very antecedent, “*The Hope set before us.*” In this view then we justly consider it as relating to Him who hath laid the foundation of our hope in his incarnation, his obedience, his cross, and his resurrection; to Him by whom all our hopes are upheld, in whom all our blessings are treasured up, all that his people, in the exercise of grace, do or can hope for; who is, in a word, “*Our Hope of Glory.*”—When faith goes out to embrace this glorious object as set before

us in his word, then the grace of hope springs up in the heart; and as its exercise is secured in the believer by the covenant promise of God, though it may waver in its exercise and enjoyment, it shall never fail of its ultimate expectations. "*This Hope*," says the Apostle, "*we have*," or rather, *we hold fast**, "as an ANCHOR."

The use of an anchor is, to hold fast the ship in the uncertain ocean; and amidst the raging of the storm; and if itself be sufficiently strong, and, while it holds fast beneath, be sufficiently secured to the vessel, then the ship will ride out the storm in safety. But the Anchor which we have is *sure and steadfast*, and entereth into that within the veil, "whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec."—The allusion affords us another most interesting view of the glory, suitableness, and preciousness of the Redeemer, by whom we are encouraged to hold fast, till we are passed through the stormy sea of life, to the haven of rest above. The soul of man must here be considered as a vessel upon the uncertain and tempestuous sea, laden with stores of infinite value; its own immortal powers and capacities of enjoyment: it is sailing to the eternal world; bound to the heavenly shores in desire and expectation, even the haven of everlasting rest; but in its passage it is exposed to the winds and waves of affliction, the storms of persecution and temptation, all the evils and calamities which sin has introduced, and is therefore in danger of being cast away, and of never attaining the wished-for country. The truth of this part of the comparison is well known to all mankind: we cannot but feel the uncertainty of every thing that surrounds us, and the dangerous state in which we are placed by the disorder, and darkness, and confusion of sin. As this is a matter of sensible experience, we

* The word *ἔχουσιν*, generally translated "to have," as it denotes possession, may sometimes be better rendered by *tenere*, "to hold;" and so, I apprehend it ought to be rendered here; as also in Heb. xii. 28, where see the margin.

are indeed often too much affected by it, and ready to let go the hold of faith, which alone can keep us in tranquillity, and the expectation of hope, which alone can encourage us in proceeding forward to the end. The most tranquil, the calmest life, is sometimes exposed to distress and apprehension : but if no outward trials shake the confidence, the inward trials of the soul, where the nature and value of that soul is known, are often more severe and more distressing than the most dreaded calamities of life. What darkness beclouds the mind, what tempests shake the faith and agitate the soul, when the sea of life is stirred into commotion by the stormy blasts of conviction, amidst the gloomy terrors of Divine justice, and the righteous sentence of the holy law ; which, like the pealing thunder, or the lightning's dart, pierce to the soul ! When the dreadful apprehension of deserved wrath gives reason to expect the stroke of destruction ; or, when the enemy of the soul, and all the powers of hell, surround it with temptations, and clothe it with astonishment and dismay ; conceive, in the affrighted spirit, the preludes of everlasting sorrow. How often does the soul, amidst all these various difficulties and perplexities, feel the dangerous state in which it is placed, and fear its own total destruction, from the many rocks and breakers with which the dangerous sea of life abounds ! What a beautiful descriptive view has the Psalmist given us of this scene of a stormy sea, the true emblem of human life ! " They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters ; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths ; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses." (Psa. cvii. 28—28.) In such a situation, while the dangerous tempest continues, the only natural security of the vessel is to have

a something which can hold it steady ; and this is the design of the anchor : when the wind drives, when the storms and tempest are up, when the sea beats around, agitated by the raging winds, the anchor, if strong and secure, will preserve it in safety. Though it cannot prevent the feeling of the storm, it will prevent any injury from it, and keep the rolling vessel from being carried hither and thither by the fury of the wind, or from being driven afar upon the ocean. Here, then, is our necessity, and surely we need not ask any of our fellow-sinners, if they have not felt, at times, some of these distressing trials, been involved in these afflicting scenes, or been terrified by the stormy blasts and waves of sorrow. But here also is the glory and the suitableness of our Redeemer ; whatever be our difficulty, danger, or necessity, in him is the suitable remedy. And whatever name our sorrows bear, he bears some name, some character, which corresponds therewith, and which promises us the desired relief. When passing over the tempestuous sea, he becomes the Anchor of the soul : and, while we examine its qualities and its excellencies, we shall find increasing cause of faith, confidence, and love ; for he is both sure and steadfast, and entered far beyond all the changes of sublunary things himself, even within the veil, where all his people long to arrive, and where all, by his power and faithfulness, shall soon be brought.

Let us then contemplate how Jesus, the Anchor of our Hope, is able to hold us fast through all the storms of life, and preserve us from every danger, till he bring us there. We know well that nothing else can ; all the hope of the world, and all hopes that are placed upon the world, are uncertain and delusive : they leave us to be tossed about with every accident, and every casual event, and fail us in the moment when we most stand in need of them. But this is the confidence of faith : Thou, Jehovah, " wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever ; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting.

strength." (Isa. xxvi. 3, 4.) And we shall now see that he only can be, and that he is, our sure Anchor of eternal Hope.

1. *An Anchor is secure according to its strength.*—It is made of the strongest metal; and this is of the utmost consequence, that it may be capable of holding fast without breaking in the trying storm. And this is what the Apostle means, by its being "SURE." Here then is the glory of our Jesus; and here is that which should draw our hearts to him, that "our help is laid upon the Mighty One." While every allusion shews, that the only dependence of his people is on Him, it also presents to our faith his sufficiency; and never can we too constantly be reminded that our security is in Him, in belonging to Him, in being in Him, and in living by faith upon Him.

Here then, in contemplating his ability, we are again led up to the view of his Divine power and glory. We are reminded that our security is in Him, because "*in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead.*" It seems in the Scripture view, that no character could properly be undertaken nor sustained by Him, unless as He is God our Saviour, Immanuel, God with us. Nor can any of his characters be understood by us, except as we consider him in this light. How could he bear, support, and preserve his people, and all the concerns of his people, in every age and at every time, in every place, and in all places, at the same time, and this continued through all time unto eternity, except as the Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Eternal God? Without this, our confidence, instead of meeting the approbation of the Lord, would rather expose us to that solemn curse which he himself has denounced against all human dependence; for "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.) But no; we boast. "God is my Salvation, I will trust and

not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song : he also is become my salvation." (Isa. xii. 2.) He who feeds his flock, who hath assumed the delightful character of its Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, is the Lord God, who is come with strong hand, for their salvation. (Isa. xl. 10, 11.)

In the fulness of the Godhead which he possesses, we behold almighty power, infinite wisdom, unchangeableness of nature, and of love, yea, all the perfections of Jehovah ; for none can contain in himself the fulness of the Godhead, but he who is the Lord God. And in the grace of his Mediatorial character, we behold all these perfections united with the sympathy and tenderness of human nature. Thus we behold him complete in ability and grace, engaging in, appointed to, prepared and fitted for, and fully executing, the work of redemption ; and engaged to complete it finally, in the salvation of all his redeemed. This Anchor has proved its sufficiency ; for when all the possible storms which could assault and try human nature, were experienced in his own person, he remained the same. The storms of life have followed the persons of his redeemed, ever since sin entered into the world ; but he has sustained them all, and borne them safely through : and since all their souls' concerns are committed to his care, they may still safely depend upon his ability and grace. O how infinite is his power ! What can be beyond his might ? what can He not do, what has He not done, for his redeemed of old, that his people can now want ? We cannot have too much even of guilt, nor of fear, or trouble, to trust to Him ; nor can we, in the exercise of humiliation and faith, trust in Him too much. But of what use is this Anchor, however sure, unless I am secured by it ? This is indeed a most important inquiry. For an anchor,

2. *Secures only when there is a firm and mutual connexion between itself and the vessel, without which it is of no utility.*—The vessel connected with it rides safely and secure, through the midst of the storm, while all besides

are tossed about and exposed to perish. The fact is equally true with regard to the immortal soul: unless united to Christ, all the things in earth or heaven cannot protect and save me. The Apostle, therefore, speaks of fellowship with the Gospel; the fellowship of the mystery, *i. e.* of redeeming love; a fellowship with Christ, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings. As this is necessary to salvation, so it is a fact in the experience of believers; Christ is in them, and they in Christ. (See John xvii. 20, &c.) This leads up our view to one of the most wonderful mysteries of Divine and Sovereign Grace, in the experience of believers: being united to Christ in the purpose of his covenant love, they are in time actually united by the communication of his Spirit, and practically united in the exercise of faith: this is that three-fold cord which can never be broken.—They are united to him *in the purposes of his covenant and unchangeable love*. To this Fountain the Apostle traces up all their blessings. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.” (Eph. i. 3, &c.) In this view, the blessed Jesus is said to be “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” In the counsels of eternity he undertook, and was then accepted for, and on behalf of, his people. They were given to him by the Father, to redeem, to call, to regenerate, to sanctify, preserve, and save*. This is the ground, the efficient cause, of all their present enjoyment and future hopes; and as this love was from everlasting, without any cause in themselves, arising from their worthiness; so their unworthiness cannot affect its exercise, which is as unchangeable as the nature of Jehovah. “I have loved thee,” says the Lord to Israel of old, “with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-

* John vi. 37; x. 27—30; xvii. 2.

kindness have I drawn thee." And in that beautiful allegory, in which the Lord Jesus Christ is represented under the character of Wisdom, "*set up from everlasting;*" then his delights are described as being with the sons of men. (Prov. viii. 31, &c.) This is the only security of his people: his stability, engaged for them, engages and secures their stability to the end. "They shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good: but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." (Jer. xxxii. 38, &c.: see also Mal. iii. 6.) From hence it comes to pass, that they are actually in time united to him *by his Spirit given to them*. This is eminently the Gospel promise, and the great gift of Jesus: thus he brings into effect the purposes of his love, and actually unites himself with them. So close is this union, that they are not only one with him, as in his one mystical body, but they are said to be *one spirit with him*; and thus he dwells in their hearts, ever present for their security and defence. By his effectual calling he brings them into the power and grace of the Gospel, and realizes that union which he eternally designed; "We are bound, therefore," says the Apostle, "to give thanks unto God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by the Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.)

This Spirit dwelling in his people, is the only security of their faith, of every grace, and of their eternal salvation; and as the promise secures his abiding in his people for ever, to dwell with them, and to be in them, upon this the prayer of faith is grounded; "*Take not thine Holy Spirit from me;*" and thus the expectation of faith is

secured, that he "*will not leave them nor forsake them.*" Hence arises that *exercise of faith* whereby the believer actually takes hold of Christ, and becomes *practically and experimentally a partaker of his grace and salvation*; "*which hope we hold as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil,*" Now the believer realizes the power and grace of his Saviour, and his own security in him: he holds it fast in every storm of an accusing conscience, a condemning law, and an afflictive world. As faith is in exercise, it tranquillizes and satisfies the mind in the midst of every trying scene, till all the storms of sin are passed over, and he be passed through them to eternal rest. Hence, we see why the being and acting of faith is considered as of such importance in the Scriptures; because faith is not some speculative opinion, but a living principle in the heart: it leads the believer, under a discovery of his guilt and danger, to behold the glory of Jesus: it brings and enables him to recline and rely upon him; yea, it is itself that reliance and resting on him. Thus it expects and derives all grace out of Christ, in whom there is that all-sufficiency of supply. It is, therefore, by faith, and by the power derived through faith from Christ, that the believer triumphs over his guilt and sin; over the sorrows or the delights of sense, the frowns or smiles of the world, and over the last great enemy, death. Faith, as it holds fast by the person and work of the Redeemer, and holds firmly by the precious promise and faithfulness of God, anticipates the rest above; and in proportion passes through a dying life, with a joy full of immortality. Such was the faith of the ancient Patriarchs, who, not having received the promises, yet all lived and died in the faith of them; were *persuaded of them in their truth*, and *embraced them in their excellency*; and so declared that they were only strangers and pilgrims upon earth, looking for their inheritance above. (Heb. xi. 13, 14.) And nothing but the same faith ever has or will produce the same effects, carry the believer

over the sorrows of life, to triumph in them, to triumph through them, to triumph over them. Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief. Lord, increase our faith. Faith in exercise is an evident work of the Spirit, and a proof of his indwelling within the heart. It is the evidence of everlasting love, and the means of deriving all blessings from Christ Jesus: it is that grace which gives the greatest glory, yea all the glory, to Christ, while it brings the richest consolations into the soul.—But, still further, the anchor is then only secure when,

3. *Itself is fixed beyond the reach or influence of the storm, upon a sure and firm foundation.*—This is the meaning of the Apostle, when he adds, this Anchor is *stedfast*. As it can never be broken itself, because of its strength; so it can never miss or let go its hold. Strong in itself, as eternal and almighty power, as infinite wisdom and unchangeable love, it rests or is grounded upon that which secures it beyond a failure; the nature of Jehovah, the eternal covenant, the unchanging promises, all the glorious realities of an eternal world. Thy hope, O believer! is “*entered within the veil.*” Jesus, the object of thy hope is there; and when the graces of faith and hope pass through the waters of life, they find their security in him, who is fixed before and upon the Eternal Throne. Here is the peculiar distinction of this Anchor, as it is the *Anchor of the soul*, in which it differs from all others. They are cast downwards to the earth: He rises upwards to the Throne of God; and there remains for ever, that he may be able to bring all his people there. A common anchor does not, however, rest in the midst of the waters, but, sinking to the bottom, takes hold of the ground; and the deeper it fixes, the greater is its security. The hope of a person who is trusting to the things of this world, is like an anchor swimming in the waters, which has no hold, and therefore no stability in itself, and is totally insufficient to secure any thing besides. But the hope of the believer enters beyond the things of this world: these are the causes; the incitements of the tempest, and there-

fore in them there can be no rest; but Jesus is passed through, beyond the waters of trouble and of sorrow to the **Eternal Throne**, and there let our faith follow him. Whatever is in this world, is changing; and the trust and confidence which is placed in it must therefore be the same. How evident, how serious, is the proof of this solemn truth! But when the believer looses his hold of earth, and grasps at heaven, upon the commands and promises of God, he apprehends everlasting realities, takes holds of certain objects, and, having a sure hold by faith, pursues a certain expectation of the final and complete enjoyment. There is the fixed unchanging state, the kingdom which hath foundations, the inheritance which is incorruptible. There the Anchor of our Hope is fixed upon the unchanging faithfulness of Jehovah.

Thus, when the Prophet is proclaiming the approach of Messiah, as the glory of Jehovah; to fix our hearts to him in love, he contrasts his excellency with the fading vanities of earth: "The voice said, Cry: and he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is grass." All earthly glory is but as the grass, and its sweetest, richest beauty is the soonest gone; like the tender flower that fades ere its beauty is matured; "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isa. xl. 6—8.) "This," says the Apostle Peter, "is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you," which is no doubt the essential Word of Jehovah, who became Immanuel for us. While then by faith we behold the blessings promised in the Gospel, this gives the hope of the believer security beyond a change, and beyond a failure. Though the believer may be tossed about at times, with guilty fears, with the besetting power of corruption, the violence of temptations, and the sorrow of afflictions, his security is yet the same; he is held by the power, and love, and grace of God, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ; and thus faith takes

hold of the immoveable Anchor. But let him always remember, that his security does not depend upon his knowledge of it: it does not arise primarily from his faith, much less from its strength, or its appropriation of the blessing, though his consolation and the sanctifying effects most certainly do. He ought not, therefore, to let go the hold of faith: he is directed to hold fast this confidence, which hath great recompense of reward; a present recompense now in the consolation of the heart, and all its gracious effects upon the conscience, and upon the conduct. Hold fast then, believer, by Christ, this Anchor of thy Hope: commit the keeping of thy soul to Him; trust his person, his covenant, his work, his fulness, his promise, and thou shalt enjoy much of its gracious efficacy, now in the present time of trouble; but thy eternal confidence shall never be disappointed. No: it shall be completely realized in his kingdom, where this Anchor of our Hope is sure and steadfast, entered within the veil. O, how superior is the hope of the Christian, to that of the worldling, in its highest glory! It is superior in its object, and as superior in its security. "Who will shew us any good?" is the constant inquiry of a thoughtless and ungodly world: and the good which they are seeking after, is only that of sense and present enjoyment, suited to the body, or at best to the rational powers and animal affections. But what are all these, if obtained, but vanity and vexation, empty in themselves, unsatisfying in their possession, and quickly passing away? Uncertainty is stamped upon them all: the hope therefore which rests upon them must be equally uncertain. How indeed can it be otherwise, when it is fixing amidst the storms and tempests,—among those things which are in constant revolution?

If such a hope may be sufficient to satisfy the deluded sinner, in the time of health and strength, it fails him in the moment of necessity, when all shall fail besides. When some affliction approaches, and death draws near, then the insufficiency of all earthly hopes and dependency will be evidenced, in the dreadful apprehension of guilty

fear, or the sorrow of despair. What can I do, when the springs of nature are breaking, when the chords of life are loosening, when reminded by some fatal disease of approaching mortality; which seizes, and retains its hold of, some vital power in spite of every effort; which proceeds forward and tramples down all before it, in its solemn way to death? What can I then do, if earth sums up all the objects of my desire and hopes? The vain delusion will then be manifested; and all the structure which the earthly mind has raised upon them will fall down into destruction, and bury the sensual sinner beneath its ruin. Nothing but Christ, nothing but a real interest in Christ, nothing but a vital union with Him, by his Spirit, and in the exercise of a living faith, will then secure the immortal soul from death: nothing but the knowledge of this, will support and comfort the spirit through the last trial, till landed safely above. Without this, O sinner! thou wilt be driven away in thy wickedness; the tempest of affliction will shipwreck all thy hopes; and the storm of Divine wrath will hurry thee forward to death, hurry thee before the throne of judgment, and hurry thy soul to hell.

The hope of the formalist and self-righteous, though more refined, is equally delusive as that of the sensualist and the profane. The hope that rests on man will only procure the curse of God. The confidence in moral excellencies, in prayers, repentance, duties, which rejects Christ, is but a refined act of rebellion against God; for it opposes his appointed way of salvation, exalts the wisdom of the creature against the wisdom of Jehovah,—substitutes an imperfect, defective, and polluted obedience, instead of the perfect righteousness of the Saviour, as its hope of pardon and acceptance before God. It debases the Law, degrades the Gospel, dishonours the Saviour, and renders his work and his grace vain and unprofitable. "For if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain." No hope but that which rests upon the person, the work, the redemption, and the grace of Jesus, will ever bear the trial of the great decisive day. But happy, happy is he,

who has fled to Christ for refuge! The world rolls on through all its sublunary changes; but his hope is within the veil, beyond the stormy sea. He has hold, firm hold, of Him who is the Rock of Ages, the Rock of Eternity; and all his hopes are secured by the faithfulness of a covenant God. His Anchor of Hope, sure in itself, is stedfastly fixed before the Eternal Throne; and though the believing soul may be driven about, and agitated by the winds and waves of affliction and trial, secure by union with him, it never can be lost. He shall experience constant preservation, and be safely landed, in the end, on the shores where he would be. The storms of life shall only carry him forward to his desired port; as the ark of old was preserved and supported on and by the waters of that deluge, which overwhelmed all besides, till it landed on the mountains of the new world.

Come, my fellow-sinner, thou art exposed through sin and misery to all the vicissitudes and storms of mortal life; all its pleasures and enjoyments are blasted through sin, are unsatisfying in their possession, and rapidly passing away; so that the trust which is placed in them will first deceive, and then destroy. As a ship without an anchor, upon a stormy sea, so is a sinner on the sea of life without Christ; but behold the blessing set before thee in the Gospel! it is Jesus, the Anchor of Hope, sure and stedfast. He has been prepared for the design of saving sinners, by the power of the Holy Ghost resting on his human nature. He is adapted, in his person, his work, and characters, to accomplish all a sinner can need, and is set forth by God for faith to embrace, and for hope to rely upon. In what does the mariner place his greatest earthly confidence in the time of extremity? In the strength and security of his anchor. So let the believer hold fast by Jesus, encouraged by the promises of his word. When the sinner feels his danger, he is then more apt to fear, and more cautious of what he ventures to trust upon. He examines the object of his hope, and the warrant he has to hope in it. But the more minutely examined; the more excellent, the more

glorious, the more suitable, will this Saviour appear in himself; and the more evident will be the encouragement of the guilty penitent to cleave to him, from the invitations and encouragement of the Divine word.

Doubt not then, thou broken-hearted penitent, surrounded with the fears of guilt, the storms of conviction and temptation. When the dark clouds of guilt arise, and darken thy sky, intercepting the Sun of Righteousness; and the winds begin to agitate thy soul; still hold fast by Christ, and remember, that an anchor is designed for use, and this Anchor of Hope is cast for faith to take hold of. (Heb. vi. 18.)

Dismiss thy fears, thou trembling believer! They arise only from contracted or defective views of Christ, and the weakness of thy faith. Thy Anchor is sure; the ground on which it rests is secure, the fulness and the faithfulness of Christ thy Saviour. Here there can be no possibility of doubt. But have I really hold of it? and shall my faith hold fast to the end? These are questions which you think may justly agitate and perplex your mind. Do you really see your need of such a Saviour? Are you resting for all your salvation upon him; and desiring all that salvation that is in him? Then take encouragement; thy faith is the faith of God's elect; and though its lively exercises may be shaken, and your comforts waver, he will yet pray for thee, as he did for one of his disciples of old, that thy faith fail not. Therefore rejoice: thy soul shall not perish, but be brought unto the land of everlasting life.

The more you realize these views, the more will they support and console thee; the more will they tend to sanctify and elevate thy soul. Live not then at so low a rate: let faith and hope retain their hold of Jesus. Be not discouraged at feeling the storm; the Anchor is not designed to prevent this, though it be secure. This is the season for storms and trials; the haven of rest is above. Expect these scenes of trial here; but in all look to Jesus, and in all trust in Him.

While the Anchor is sure, the cable of faith also has a

secure hold ; and the power of God shall hold both, for the salvation of his people, who are "*kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*"—Pray then only for more faith to trust and to love the Saviour more. This will be to the glory of his Name, as well as to your own sanctification and consolation.

What a beautiful assemblage of ideas has the Apostle put together to express the design of God, in the security and felicity of the Christian ; who, feeling his need and danger, has fled to Christ, and reclines all his hope upon Him ! No expectation can be too large for his faith, since it cannot exceed the power of God, the fulness of Christ, the grace of his Spirit, and the precious promises of his word. For " God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it with an oath ; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us : which hope we have as an Anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," constituted, after the order of Melchisedec, the Priest and the King upon the Throne for ever. (Heb. vi. 17—20.)

ESSAY VI.

Inheritance.

IN this world of earth and sense, a title to some great estate gives honour and respect, and often procures a most commanding influence among our fellow-creatures; nor ought we to attempt to diminish its influence, since it tends to promote the established order of God in the due subordination of the different ranks of men, and so to preserve the peace and welfare of society. But what are all the riches or possessions of this world, in comparison of the riches of grace; the possessions which faith opens to the prospect of the true believer? Whatever advantages may be derived on earth from earthly possessions; to be rich towards God is infinitely superior in its eternal consequences. Who, then, is so truly great, when viewed as to the whole extent of his being, and in his eternal relations, as the real Christian, the child of God, the heir of glory? Here, perhaps, he has no possession; nothing which he can call his own; no riches, nor honours, nor influence among men; yet "*all things are his,*" since "*he is Christ's.*" Here he has no inheritance; but how glorious that to which he is entitled by the promise of the Gospel! It is none other than all the fulness of Christ Jesus. "The Lord Jehovah," says he, "is the Portion of mine Inheritance." By faith he views the immensity of his possession, suited to the nature, equal to the wants, and commensurate with the duration, of his immortal soul. And, though the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, when all earthly good shall pass away for ever, then "he knows that he has a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," where the Lord his Redeemer shall be

the Object of his delight, and the Source of his felicity for ever.

This opens to us a new view of the preciousness and grace, the sufficiency and glory, of the all-comprehending Object of our faith and love. Under the title of *The Portion of Jacob*, we have already considered the nature of this Inheritance as all-sufficient in itself to the soul of man, constant, ever present, never failing the believer here, and everlasting enduring hereafter. We would now, then, take a different view of the subject, and inquire how Christ Jesus may be considered as the Inheritance of his people, and view the title as obtained and made over to them, by their Elder Brother in human nature. This will discover to us the persons to whom this right and title belongs, who may claim it now by faith, and are assured of its eternal enjoyment. Oh, happy are the people who are in such a case! With him as their Inheritance, the poorest are rich indeed; whereas, without him the richest are poor for eternity.

1. In every point of view, we must trace up all our blessings and hopes as sinners; to *the eternal love of our Redeemer*; and we know, that all our spiritual possessions and enjoyments are *only in and through him*.—The inheritance of the Law has long been forfeited by the transgression of our first parent; the gates of paradise for ever barred, and the access to the original tree of life for ever prohibited to fallen creatures. No longer can we approach near to God in that way, nor receive our blessings from that source. This the Apostle has fully decided. Believers are "*heirs*," says he, "*according to the promise*." (Gal. iii. 29.) "But if the inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of *promise*." (ver. 18.) If, indeed, "there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (21, 22.) The inheritance of grace is the effect of covenant love, confirmed, according to the terms of that covenant, by the

precious blood, the cross and passion of our adorable Saviour, who took our nature, that, as our Kinsman, he might be able to become our Redeemer. We have, in the Jewish polity, a beautiful representation of this; for when a person or a family was enslaved, and the inheritance was sold away from its original possessor, the nearest of kin (*kin*) had the right of redemption. He who was the avenger of the blood of his kinsman, was also the redeemer of his person, or of the inheritance which had been alienated. "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession; and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold." (Lev. xxv. 25: see Ruth ii. 20; iv. 4—6; Jer. xxxii. 7, &c.) The possession was thus brought back again into the family which originally held it. No doubt we have here the shadow of good things to come, the body of which is Christ. The lost inheritance is a just resemblance of our state, who, by the rebellion of our first father, have lost all title to Divine favour or inheritance in the love of God; while our Kinsman-Redeemer perfectly fulfils his office, and of sovereign grace redeems and restores the forfeited possession. He, "in all things, was made like unto us," that he might call us *brethren*. "Made of a woman, he was made under the Law to redeem us who were under the Law, that we might obtain the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, &c.) Hence the lowliness of his birth, the sorrows of his life, the agonies of Gethsemane, and the tortures of his cross. What were these but the ransom of our souls, the price of our redemption? who are redeemed, not "with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," whom God hath raised from the dead, and exalted to glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. (1 Pet. i. 18—21.) Let the name of our Jesus be blessed, who hath thus become the Almighty Redeemer of his people. Our inheritance in grace and glory is altogether dependent upon him: the Avenger of our wrongs, the Ransom of our souls, the Redeemer of

our forfeited rights, and the Author of life eternal to possess them.—But not only are our blessings derived from him, but,

2. *All the blessings which a sinner can hope to enjoy are in him.*—He himself is the Sum and Substance of all excellency, and of all enjoyment. In his person, as Immanuel, “are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;” in his person is “all the *fulness of the Godhead*,” all the glories of heaven and earth. To have Christ as ours is to have all, since he is the “All, and in all.” His presence and favour, enjoyed by faith, is heaven upon earth: His presence and favour above, is the glory of heaven itself. Let me have Christ; and if I know my riches, I shall have nothing left to be desired. Well might an Apostle say, “To whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” This is the language of faith in every true believer. A discovery of guilt makes Jesus precious as a Saviour; and a sense of want makes him precious in the infinite provisions of his grace, whose all-sufficiency can never be exhausted, and whose infinite fulness can never fail. It is the believer’s felicity that his Inheritance is God himself, the Lord Jehovah; but, as there can be no communion between the great Creator, as an absolute God, and sinners, but only through his discovery of himself in Christ Jesus, it is in him as a covenant God in Christ Jesus, and especially in that person of the Godhead, who “*hath become our salvation*,” that the believer rests his hope, and finds his blessedness. In the great God our Saviour, Jehovah Jesus, the believer is entitled, not only to this or that particular blessing, but becomes “*an heir of God*.” He has the Lord himself as the Portion of his inheritance, upon the ground of covenant love and promise; for all the attributes of Jehovah, all his infinite perfections, all his abilities of blessing, stand engaged to call, to keep, to bless, and save his people. (Rom. viii: 13; Gal. iv. 7.) The Portion of Jacob is not like that of the worldling; for *He is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord Jehovah, God of*

Hosts is his name. (Jer. x. 16.) What an astonishing and delightful view does this open to the mind of the believer! He who filleth all in all, who is the Former of all things, is not only with him, has not only given himself for him, but gives himself to him for everlasting enjoyment. He has made over, by covenant promise, all that is in himself communicable to creatures for his felicity; all his power, grace, love, and faithfulness for his present support and defence, and all his fulness and excellencies for his everlasting inheritance. This honour have all his saints in time and through eternity. When the believer gets beyond this world, that eternal life which awaits him, as it is the purchase of his blood, so is it in itself only the enjoyment of his presence, of union and communion with himself. "Thou shalt shew me," says the believer, "the path of life; in *thy presence* is fulness of joy, and at *thy right hand* there are pleasures for evermore." "I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness." Then that God, who is the strength of his people, when flesh and heart faileth, will himself become "their Portion for ever." This view animated the mind of the Apostle, when, in the confidence of adopting grace and fatherly love, he exclaimed, "Behold, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall *see him as he is.*" (1 John iii. 2.) This is the confidence which inspired the Psalmist when he sums up all the security of the church in that one great and comprehensive view, "*This God is our God for ever and ever.*" (Psal. xviii. 12—14.) Let, then, the believer behold his glorious inheritance in the presence and enjoyment of God his Saviour! This is that Inheritance which alone is "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." How beautifully expressed by the Prophet! "There the sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the *Lord Jehovah*

shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." Thy Sun, the Sun of Righteousness, shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord Jehovah (himself) shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended, (Isa. lx. 19, 20: see also Deut. xxxiii. 26—29.)

But the idea of an inheritance implies something more than the simple idea of a portion or possession: it includes in it a certain mode of coming into possession: it is something which a person obtains a title to, by right of succession or relationship. An inheritance, properly speaking, is "a perpetual right or interest in lands invested in a person and his heirs;" and the inheritor is one who comes into possession of a patrimony or hereditary possession, by succession or hereditary right, which can be the case with none but the heir. If ever the term be applied, as it sometimes is, to simple possession, it is by an improper or inaccurate use of the term in common language. Let us then inquire a little further, into the title which the believing sinner obtains to the glorious inheritance of light, and the manner in which it is made over and secured to him.

That a sinner can have no legal right, no right of natural succession, is self-evident. The rebellion of our first parent forfeited our inheritance, to which we have ever since ceased to have any claim; nor can all the power, wisdom, or goodness of fallen nature restore the title. The purchase is far beyond our ability: we indeed have no valuable consideration to give; we are nothing; we have nothing but what we have received, nothing but what our corruption has polluted and defiled. Who then can redeem the lost inheritance? "The redemption of the soul is precious, but it ceaseth for ever." Upon the ground of right then, or of merit, we have no claim; yea, we have no hope. The natural relation to God, as his children, is dissolved by sin; and the relation to him in which we now stand, as rebels, leaves us nothing to expect, as our rightful inheritance, but everlasting misery. It is grace, grace

alone, which could change, or that has changed, our inheritance of sorrow and despair, for the prospect of life and immortality in the heavens. A purchase indeed has been made, and the inheritance redeemed, but not by us: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." The purchased inheritance to him was dearly bought, that it might come again to us through him, through his union with us, and our union with him, as our brother in human nature. And "this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." (1 John v. 11.) Hence though the natural title be for ever lost, it comes to us again, according to the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, by relationship and right of succession; and the believer, as a child of God, is an heir of God through Christ, and by right of relationship to him. This is the peculiar and most exhilarating view which is presented to the believer, in this title of the Redeemer; as to us, indeed, the whole plan of redemption, with all its provisions and blessings, even that which fits us for the enjoyment, as well as the title and enjoyment itself, comes as the free gift of eternal and undeserved love. To this view the Apostle directs our faith, even to that eternal love of the Father, which, placing his people in Christ Jesus, in Him determines to bestow all blessings upon them, and to give them, in Him, the sure and rightful title to them. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. i. 3.) What infinite love here claims our astonishment and praise! Were a prince to take a poor beggar into his house, determined from his poverty and rags to make him a man of great authority, and the heir of his riches, his honours, his dignity, and his glory; this would afford but a faint emblem of the love of God in exalting a sinner, a rebel

into his favour, and into the enjoyment of all his communicable excellencies. Under this view, the Scripture beautifully represents it: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." (1 Sam. ii. 8: so also Psa. cxiii. 7, 8.)

Well might an Apostle say, "God so loved the world;" for this is love, the height, the depth, the length, and breadth of which passeth knowledge! All the blessings, therefore of this covenant, of this dispensation of mercy, with all that is preparatory for its enjoyment, in the mind of sinners, is, as it must be, the free gift of God in Christ Jesus. The gift of pardon, and of righteousness, does away the legal disability of the sinner; who, as a rebel under the sentence of death, has no right to any possession in the heavenly world; and the gift of his Spirit, in sanctification and preservation, forms the mind to a meetness and suitableness for the enjoyment. In no other way could a sinner obtain or hope for the possession of glory. Whatever had been left for sinners to do, would certainly have been left undone, unless, in the covenant of redemption, the Spirit of the Lord had engaged to work it in them. While therefore nothing remains to be done as to the acquisition, he has promised to effect in them that which must fit them for the enjoyment; and when exhorted to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," we are informed, "it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) Every necessary qualification is the free gift of God; and when, seeing our need, we desire and ask the blessing, the promise of God secures its communication. Thus prepared and provided by Sovereign Grace, it is reserved for those who, according to the terms of the new-covenant dispensation, have the right and title to it; viz. thus,

1. *By union with Christ Jesus as their Elder Brother, and become the children of God, and brought into his family; for children only are the rightful heirs of a father,*

and brethren of an elder brother. This leads us into that deep but delightful mystery of redeeming love, the believer's union with his Lord; one with Christ, and Christ with him. Their title and their blessings are mutually the same: found in Christ, they claim in him: "*in him*," says the Apostle, "*we have obtained an Inheritance.*" (Eph. i. 11.) Upon this alone every right and title of the believer is grounded, to every blessing he enjoys or hopes for, and much more to the glorious Inheritance itself.

When entering into the eternal possession, they will be presented as in Christ; and when the Apostle is alluding to this (Eph. v. 25—27), he considers their blessings secured by their close relation to the Redeemer, as a wife to the husband, who enjoys all things in his right, and as legally one with him. But as an inheritance naturally falls, or is bequeathed, to the children, who have a natural right to the father's inheritance, or the possession of the family; so according to the order and constitution of the covenant of grace, the Eternal Jehovah has established a beautiful similarity, who, as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is our God and our Father in him. He gives indeed to sinners according to his own purpose and grace; but in order to their enjoyment, he takes sinners as his sons and daughters. By his adoption, he appoints them as such; and by his sovereign grace and power he makes them such. This no doubt is an act of his own free grace; for what inducement could he discern in rebel creatures for such an act of beneficence? Here then is the ground of all their privileges, his adopting love: and in consequence they are made partakers of his Spirit to bring them into the privilege; for "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.) This is what our Lord refers to, when he insists upon the necessity of a new birth; the being born again, born from above, born of the Spirit, in order to the entering into his kingdom. This, says the Apostle James, he hath effected in us, who are believers: "of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." (James i. 18.) And

the Apostle Peter blesses God for the same: "Who hath begotten us again," says he, "to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," in order to our possessing that eternal inheritance. (See 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.) Partakers of this Spirit, they become,

2. *Believing sinners*, and are thus by faith actually united to Christ Jesus: they live upon him, and live in him: believing the testimony of God as perishing sinners, they fly for refuge to take hold of the hope set before them, and thus shelter themselves as in him. The Apostle has stated this as the Divine means of entering experimentally into this union with Christ: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26—29.) Hence united to Jesus, they become vitally and experimentally interested in all that he has done; take hold of his precious promises, claim their right to all upon them, and rejoice in them as securing all even to returning rebels. By this means they are brought,

3. To bear the character and exercise *the disposition of children*.—Without this there could be no capacity of inheriting the holy kingdom of Christ Jesus: our heavenly Father, therefore, in the purposes of his love, could never by the most wonderful grace and exertion of almighty power, prepare the Inheritance for them, and then leave them incapable of the possession? No—"How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee the pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations?" says the yearning heart of a heavenly Father. "And I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father; and shalt not turn away from me." (Jer. iii. 19.) Hence by the Spirit of grace, fulfilling the purposes of adoption, they do acknowledge the dear relation, delight in the privilege, and would not change the honourable estate into which they are brought by grace, for ten thousand worlds. A new disposition conformable to this relation and character is wrought in their hearts, suited to their state, and to the nature of that spiritual and holy Inheritance to which they are advancing. The great design of the preaching of the Gospel, under the

power of the Spirit, is to produce this: opening the eyes of sinners, turning them from the power of satan unto God; "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in Christ Jesus." (See Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 12, 13.) When convinced of sin, and when the grace of the Spirit has opened the eyes upon divine and spiritual realities, faith takes hold of the blessings: and thus the heart is brought to love, and delight in, the filial duties of the spiritual family; to honour and obey their heavenly Father, and promote his glory in the world, and in the church. Thus when the Spirit of adoption has wrought the disposition of children, then their filial relation is manifested; "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again, to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (See Rom. viii. 14—21; Gal. iv. 4—7.)

Yea, this exercise of faith, this work of the Spirit, these childlike dispositions, affections, and desires, together with the frequent testimony of a Father's love, manifested by the Spirit to the soul in the way of duty, are the earnest of the future enjoyment. Thus, in believing, his people are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the

purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Eph. i. 13, 14.)

What sovereign grace, thus to prepare and bestow the inheritance! nor less to prepare the heart of rebel sinners for the enjoyment! Oh, Spirit of adoption! form our hearts into the character, and enliven our hope and expectation of the enjoyment, that we may be "*followers of God as dear children,*" till we come to the possession.

But every blessing thus made over to the children of God, the children of faith, we behold in the Scripture, in the exercise of faith, secured to them under the character of returning sinners, who are always the heirs of promise, by the covenant oath and promises of God. This, as recorded in his word, we may consider as the title-deeds of the inheritance, secured as firm as a covenant God can make them, by his own faithfulness and truth. "God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the *heirs of promise* the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us in the Gospel." (Heb. vi. 17.) Observe how sweetly the character of a returning sinner and the heir of promise is here blended together, that the humble penitent may not hesitate, as though he was excluded by the high appearance of the character, but assure himself of the fatherly love of his reconciled God, who, having thus bestowed his grace, will welcome his return, and admit him, even him, again into all the privileges of his beloved family. (See Luke xv. 11—32.)

The word and promise of God constitute the only ground of hope to any of his creatures. The highest angel in his presence possesses nothing but as his own gift of grace, and is dependent upon that grace for its continuance. How much more so the sinner, who has forfeited all by his rebellious contempt of his authority, and disobedience to his commands! So peculiarly is this the case, that we generally, though improperly, limit the

idea of grace to that mercy which is shewn to sinners. In vain had any transgressor hoped or attempted to return to God, had he not himself devised and shewn to us the way in which we might return with acceptance, and had he not engaged by promise to receive the returning sinner. Our hopes can go no further than his word; and, therefore, can only be founded upon Christ Jesus, as he is there set forth in his person and in his work; and can find no certainty but in the promises of his truth. Oh, blessed be the name of our Redeemer! in him there is an all-sufficiency of all we need; in him we have exceeding great and precious promises; and "*in him all the promises of God are yea and amen.*" The Gospel, therefore, which is the manifestation of the purpose of God in the covenant of redemption, the dispensation of the grace of God, is constantly spoken of under this very idea: it is "*the promise,*" and as such opposed to the claims of law. "If the Inheritance be of the Law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore then serveth the Law? It was added because of transgression, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator. Is the Law then against the Promises of God? God forbid! for if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. iii. 18, 21, 22, 29.) "*Heirs according to the promise,*" says the Apostle; not on any legal claim, but the covenant promise of God, received and pleaded by faith (compare Heb. ix. 15); in which the Apostle tells us, that Christ Jesus has fulfilled his mediatorial work, and by his death secured, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. When the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the Gentiles called into the church of God, the great object was that they might receive the promise in Christ by the Gospel. (Eph. iii. 6, and Tit. iii. 4-7.)

What a most encouraging view is here presented to us of the nature of the Gospel, whereby the hope of a penitent believing sinner is eternally secured, independently of any worthiness in himself, by the free grace and the covenant promise of God in Christ Jesus! Here let faith take hold, and hold fast, and preserve securely in the heart its title to pardon, life, and heavenly blessedness. That hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began, *in and to Christ Jesus*, the Head of his redeemed; for the promise *before the world began* could only be to Him, the Surety of the covenant, who had undertaken their cause in the counsels of eternity, and to whom all the promises were given on behalf of his elect and redeemed people. (Tit. i. 1, 2; 2 Tim. i. 1.) Though his children may be disobedient, and deserve and receive chastisement, yet still the loving-kindness and truth of God shall never fail to HIM, till all his seed be brought to the inheritance of glory. (Psa. lxxxix. 28—34; Isa. lix. 21.)

The inheritance can only be possessed on the death of the relative, through whom the right of inheritance descends. The Apostle, therefore, has represented the blessings of salvation as not only a gift by promise, but as confirmed by the dying love of Christ Jesus, and by his own testamentary bequest; “for where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.” And as all things were, therefore, typically, by the Law cleansed by blood, so without shedding of blood there is no remission. The blood, therefore, of our great Mediator has been shed to take away sin, to remove the bar which lay in the way of our enjoying the inheritance; and thus, by his one offering, he hath now perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and “we have boldness to enter, through the blood of Christ, into the holiest.” (Heb. ix. 15—18; and x. passim.)

This view of the subject gives a peculiar beauty and

security to it. For when once that which is made over by a testamentary bequest, or by right of inheritance and succession, is confirmed by the death of the testator or possessor, it becomes irrevocable: no other terms or conditions can be added but those which are stated in the will; and nothing can set aside the right of the lawful and acknowledged heir. If, then, Jesus has bequeathed all the blessings of his salvation to returning sinners, who shall deny them their right, or the consolation of its enjoyment? If he has secured all by his death, to the heirs of promise, there can be no alteration for ever: and the sinner who comes to God, in Christ, has a right to that promise, and may plead it before the Throne, for all the blessings of salvation. In this view our Lord alludes, when he says to his disciples, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;" and again, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." The grant is sure and irrevocable, and its possession must be "*sure to all the seed.*" Their title is indefeasible and unalienable, the death of Jesus. He who condescended to become their Elder Brother in human nature, hath established their claim beyond a controversy; and none shall ever prevent their enjoyment of his blessings of grace and his inheritance of glory. No other terms can ever be advanced than those which were fulfilled in him. The promise can never be altered, nor its conditions changed. The prayer of faith shall obtain the blessing, and the returning penitent be admitted to all the privileges of the children and family of God. The believing sinner shall be secured for glory. Let faith, then, survey its glorious inheritance. If, with a heart formed for its enjoyment, the believer would frequently contemplate the views which the Gospel opens to the eye of faith, the grand objects set before us, the blessings of the promise, the glory which is to be revealed, and the eternal kingdom which awaits the children of God,—how would it enlarge the heart, and elevate it above the gross pleasures, the empty glories, the fading riches, the vanishing possessions of earth! Such was its effect

upon the believers of old, who, when persuaded of and embracing this promise, declared themselves "strangers and pilgrims upon earth." (Heb. xi.) How poor is the richest inheritance on earth, in comparison of that of the believer! The natural portion of man is indeed nothing but sin and sorrow, which will unite themselves with every earthly good, and put vanity into it. The richest man on earth, the mightiest possessor, is, without Christ, but an object of pity.

Ye rich and noble, who grow great and self-sufficient in your extended possessions; who boast of secure titles of a long succession; what is that long succession but itself a proof of the uncertain tenure by which your possessions have been held, and by which they are now held by you? Ye who are adding house to house, and field to field, behold the vanity of your pursuit, and turn your attention to better things. Take the most enviable situation upon earth; feed a dying creature with all the honours and glory, with all the fame and renown, which earth can yield; let him accumulate all the treasures which earth can afford him, and riot in all the enjoyment and pleasures of sense with which the world abounds; still are they not unsatisfying even in the present enjoyment? Are they not uncertain and insecure? and, alas! how soon do they totally pass away! But what is the degradation of that poverty which is rich in faith, and which cannot prevent the right of inheritance to the kingdom of glory? Believer, though poor in this world, thou hast an inheritance above; it is suited to the nature of an immortal soul,—it is nothing less than the infinite fulness of thy Redeemer himself. Its present earnest affords a satisfactory enjoyment, which shall not pass away with the dying body, but then be consummated. Death shall only realize thy title, and place thee in the full and eternal possession. O let me not then be satisfied without the knowledge of Christ; without an interest in his pardoning mercy and his sanctifying grace; without a vital union with him! Then shall he be my portion and inheritance for ever; his Spirit

will become the earnest and the pledge, and give the present foretaste, and will form my soul into a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, and then bring me securely there. Soon every thing shall else fail, and then I shall know the value of this incorruptible inheritance, whether my title be secure or not.—Believer! though in this world you should meet with troubles and trials, affliction and distress, poverty and want; remember that here is not thy inheritance. Let the view bear thee up, carry thee on, and help thee patiently to endure under all, till thou art got through. Faith is the ground of patient hope; and surely with such prospect of blessings before thee, so undeserved, so graciously bestowed, so faithfully secured, thou canst have no reason to complain now, let thy present lot be whatever it may. How infinite the value of such a hope! how sweet its solace under all the afflictions of life, and especially in the moment of death! All hope of happiness in life without this is vain: and my situation of life, blest with this prospect, must be happy, since nothing can break the security of this hope, nor dissolve its joy; yea, that which closes all below, is only the consummating of this. Lessen then, believer, thy hold of earth; take faster hold of eternal realities; of Jesus, by, through, and in whom, thou art a possessor of all things. Wipe away thy fears, dismiss thy sorrows, wait through all these changes for the glories of eternity. This faith sustained the suffering Christians of primitive times: under all, they believed and fainted not, looking for the far more eternal and exceeding weight of glory. (See 2 Cor. iv. 13—18; v. 1—9.)

Let us then walk worthy of such glorious hopes, and as the heirs of such a heavenly spiritual inheritance. Be ye followers of God, as dear children; walk as children of the light, since God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephes. v. 1—8; 1 Thess. v. 4—10; 2 Thess. ii. 13—17.) Seeing that we look for such things, let us be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (2 Pet. iii. 11—14.) We live beneath our privileges, beneath

our character, beneath our glorious expectations: how shall we not, having such hope, purify ourselves even as he is pure? how shall we not desire and aim to be more assimilated to that which we hope for, that state to which we trust we are rapidly advancing through the dreariness of time. Thus, O believer, while thy title is secure, and thy possession certain in Christ Jesus; thus shall thy interest in these glories be more evident. Thy peace and joy will be more uninterrupted here, thy thankfulness and gratitude more excited, and a growing meetness be formed for the enjoyment. The anticipation in the soul will then be more sweet and delightful, till the full possession be attained above, for the Holy "*Spirit of promise*" will thus be the "*earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, UNTO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY.*"

ESSAY VII.

Head of the Church.

THE union of Christ with his people is the glory of the covenant of redemption: it is the chief effort of Infinite Wisdom and Power; and the noblest act of Sovereign Grace, in the mystery of everlasting love. We find it frequently represented in Scripture by the most striking, expressive, and interesting allusions to those unions in nature which are the closest and the most indissoluble; the most effective in their communication, and the most sensible in their enjoyment. By this, the love of Christ, his care over his people, and his constant communication of supply to them, are presented to the eye of faith in the most engaging manner; their dependence upon him enforced, their enjoyment of him encouraged, and their security in him maintained. But amongst these, that which we are now to consider is the most eminent; viz. The close connexion which subsists between the head and every part of a living body, as the source of sensation, of nourishment, and direction; indeed, of every communication and supply for the purposes of life and action. The figure is not only used in Scripture, but very frequently in common life: the governor or director of any society is commonly called its head, and the collective society, therefore, bears the name of the body. Thus, we speak of the head of an army; the head of a people; the head of any place; or the head of a house: and the propriety of the figure is evident in each of these instances, by the least consideration of the natural object, from which the allusion is derived, but especially in its reference to the work and offices of the Redeemer. If we consider the relation

which the head holds, or the offices and uses which it performs to the body, we shall see how beautifully it figures out the glory and the grace of Jesus, as holding and performing the same spiritually to his body, the church. Our faith and love will thus be confirmed; our comfort and the refreshment of our souls increased; and our simple and satisfactory reliance upon him established, by dwelling upon the various interesting parts of this mystical, but very intelligent, character of the Redeemer. Indeed, like every other character of Christ in the sacred Scripture, it tends to encourage the believer. While looking to Jesus, realizing his connection with him, and living as he ought in dependence upon him, it tends to lift him superior to his difficulties, trials, and perplexities; and, while promoting the glory of the Lord Jesus, to increase the consolation and the spiritual advancement of the humble dependent Christian.

The first, and the principal, truth or doctrine which the allusion is intended to impress upon our mind is, the believer's total dependence upon Christ, for the communication of all spiritual life, and the sustaining of all spiritual vigour; for this is the first office of the head,

1. *That it is the source of all vital influence.*—This appears to be the case, even from the first formation of the human body, and continues to be so in every stage of its existence. The natural head being united to the body, is the seat of all communication and influence: it is the peculiar property of the head to communicate its virtue through the whole, as it is the seat of life and of the animal spirits, the spring of motion and of action. So is Jesus the Head of union with his people; the Head of influence, and of all vital communication to all the members of the body. “The head pours and diffuses into all the members, motion and sensation, by means of the animal spirits, which, from the head as their spring, spread themselves through all the body, flowing through the nerves, the channel of communication.” By something similar to this the order of society is preserved in the political body;

for from the seat of power are diffused, in their different degrees, all the authority, the ability, and the influence throughout the state, which preserve the life, the vigour, and the health of the empire. But, in a spiritual view, this admirably illustrates the relation which subsists between Christ and his church. He, as the only source of life, and grace, and strength, enlightens, enlivens, and invigorates every member, from the greatest even to the least. This Divine Head diffuses into them all they have and are; all spiritual life, with all its sensations, motions, liveliness, and operations. The first view, therefore, which faith takes of him in this character is, as the Head of quickening influence in himself, and as the *living*, and therefore as the *life-giving*, Head of his people.

The state of all mankind by nature, one with another, is the same—"dead in trespasses and sins." The situation of Israel, as represented by the Prophet, (Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10), is the just representation of the state of man, like a valley of dry bones, without life or action. That man is a rational creature, capable of being wrought upon by motives, does not at all affect the truth of this statement; for though naturally and rationally alive to the things of sense, he is really spiritually dead to the things of God, destitute of spiritual understanding, spiritual power, or spiritual activity: as unable morally to help himself out of that state, through the depravity of his nature and the corruption of his will, as the valley of dry bones to restore themselves to spiritual life. The inability, indeed, is not of the same nature; but it is equally true, yet arising only from his corrupted heart and affections, for which he must be considered as accountable before God, and must incur guilt and condemnation. His spiritual death is not, therefore, in one respect, like the natural death of the body, or the deathlike state of an inanimate subject; but its effects are as morally certain, since he is not only dead to God, but at enmity with God. As a rational and intelligent agent, he is the proper subject of warning and admonition; and his obligations, as the creature of God, are unchange-

ably the same; and his guilt in rejecting them can never be prevented or lessened by the natural indisposition of his heart to attend to, or obey, them. But while under the power of his fallen state, he will as surely reject them as any cause will surely produce its effect. What then can be the hope of the servants of God, in performing their office to call sinners to repentance? Nothing but the hope of the Prophet: "Can these dry bones live?—Lord, thou knowest:" but "Prophecy upon these bones;" "Prophecy unto the wind;" and "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath into you, *and ye shall live*; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah," the living and life-giving Lord. (Ezek. xxxvii. 5, 6; compare 11–14.) Like the Prophet, therefore, at the command of God, we exhort, we command; and his wind, his Holy Spirit, attends, and renders the admonition, the exhortation, the persuasion effectual. The glorious truths of the Gospel are unfolded to the mind; and the whole truth of God, received in faith, alarms, allures, quickens, and draws the now spiritually living and believing soul to God; influences it to all the actions, and sweetly blesses it with all the consolations, of the spiritual and the heavenly life. But this is wholly the effect of that Divine Grace which is communicated from Christ Jesus, the Head of his church, whose office it is to quicken them to himself. Now, they arise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; and actually united with him by his Spirit, by virtue of union with him they derive from him all life, all grace, all strength and spiritual vigour. They know that they are entirely indebted to him for their regeneration, their calling, their sanctification, and their consolation, and so pass on, through *the life which they live in the flesh, living spiritually by the faith of the Son of God.*

The blessed Redeemer, indeed, fulfils this character only towards, and in, his church and people. They only are united to him by his Spirit in the exercise of faith, and

so receive the communication which the Head imparts. The natural head performs this office only to the body of which it is a part, and which completes the fulness of that particular human frame; and its vital communications are circumscribed by the members of the body. So the church, which is the body of Christ, is said to be the "fulness of him which filleth all in all." His mediatorial fulness consists in possessing, or having in himself, all the members of his church: he cannot be complete without them; and in them all his designs of grace, and all his purposes of love, are consummated, and his mystical person is full and complete. But as the head is of the same nature as the body, so to become the Head of his church, he becomes (O wonderful condescension!) as a part of them in taking their nature; and it is in that very nature that he is exalted especially to bear and fulfil the character before the Throne (Eph. i. 20—23); from thence communicating his vital power and influence by his Spirit through all the members and parts of his mystical body. They all, and each of them, are brought into union with them; an union experimentally realized by faith, and discovered by its sanctifying and transforming efficacy in the heart and life of every one of them. For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." What, then, must be the character of all those who thus rejoice in Christ Jesus? There is a real, vital, experimental union between Christ and them: they are quickened by him, and therefore live upon him. This, according to another very similar allusion, is compared to the insertion of a scion or branch into a stock, which, thus ingrafted, becomes a part of it, and receives vital moisture from it, for all the purposes of vegetable growth and fruitfulness. Separate from Him, we can do nothing; but abiding in Christ will necessarily produce vigour and fruitfulness. (See John xv. 1, &c.) There are no doubt different degrees of vigour, both in animal and vegetable life: there are decays and revivals; there is sickness, and there is health. But life is a reality, however low, and will long for, and tend to, health

and fruitfulness. Nor is the spiritual life a mere name, or a mere profession; it is equally a reality in the spiritual world, though it also may have its different degrees, its decays and revivals, its sickness and its health. But the believer is not among the world lying in wickedness, dead in trespasses and sins: he is planted into Christ Jesus, a partaker of the power of his death and his resurrection. Let not then the Sabbath-breaker, the careless sinner, the sensual, or the profane,—let not those who are following the course of this world, alive to all its pleasures, amusements and enjoyments, but insensible to the love of God,—fancy that they are in union with Christ Jesus, or living members of that life-giving Head. No: Christ has no fellowship with Belial, nor God with the world; and “all that is in the world,—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,—is not of the Father, but is of the world.” If in Christ, in the covenant of his love, he must “bring such, and they shall hear his voice:” his grace will bring them to repentance, and turn them by faith to himself, or the dead in sin shall perish with the world which lieth in sin and wickedness.

Fruitless professor, art thou of the body of Christ, united to the Life-giving Head? Consider, and let conscience judge. Art thou ingrafted into Christ? This only can change thy state and character. Talking of the grace and glory of Christ Jesus, hearing of his supreme and adorable excellency, may excite some affections and desires which are merely natural or animal; as the representation of any thing which is excellent, if believed, must excite some motion of natural affection towards it: but this is very different from the view and experience of the true believer, who is thus led to Christ, really united with Him, living by faith upon him, and actually deriving grace and consolation from him. O that those who profess to be in Christ, would thus manifest the effect of such an union! which, though operating in different degrees, must be found real and true in every believer.

Happy is the believer, whose faith is most lively in its

exercises, and dependencies upon the only Fountain of all life ; for he feels most of the virtue, and enjoys most of the blessedness of such an union. As in Christ the fulness is all-sufficient, yea, infinite ; from him the communications are diffused through every part, and through every individual member, for duties, for trials, for temptations, for afflictions, and for all the fruits of Christian graces, to the glory of the giver, and the consolation and spiritual improvement of the receiver. The various situations in which he places his people ; the various offices which he has appointed for them, and appointed them to, in his church ; and the various duties which arise from the different relations of life, require, no doubt, different and varied supplies of grace, like that which is diffused from the head to the different members of the body. And thus the Apostle beautifully represented the efficacy of his grace, in the whole church of believers : “ Speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things which is the Head, even Christ ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph. iv. 15, 16.) Under the same beautiful allusion, the church is represented as one undivided body, united to Christ its Head, and yet consisting of its several distinct parts ; all and each of which are necessary in the body, receiving, according to their necessities and uses, diversities of gifts and graces, from the one Spirit of Christ Jesus, and which ought therefore to be united in the strictest bond of love and mutual harmony, without reproaching or blaming each other, and without murmuring or repining at their own appointed situation. (See 1 Cor. xii ; also Col. ii. 19.) The view which thus opens to the mind—of the glory, of the all-sufficiency, of the grace of Jesus, and its constant and sure communication to his people—is indeed the most delightful and encouraging which the mind can receive. It does, as it were, solicit the most cordial reliance, and the sweetest confidence of the heart,

upon the Divine Saviour. This, however, is not all: there are other views which are included in the title, and of which we must now hasten to the consideration.

2. The head is *the seat of intelligence*; and, as such, the Lord Jesus Christ is *the Source of all wisdom to his people*. "IN HIM," says the sacred record, "*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" (Col. ii. 3.)—In the head are placed the bodily eyes, by which we discern the objects around us. There also is the seat of the eyes of the understanding, by which we discern intellectual objects, reason and judge concerning them, and regulate our life and conduct according to the wisdom that is found there; so that the actions of the body are wise or the contrary. "A wise man's eyes are in his head;" *i. e.* they are placed in an elevated situation for observation and use, and are made use of by him there: "but a fool walketh in darkness;" *i. e.* as though he had no eyes there. Such is the relation of Jesus to his people. Those who make use of him walk in the light, while those who neglect him walk in the darkness of ignorance and sin. In the dear Redeemer is the source of infinite wisdom: no object can escape his observation or attention, no multiplicity of objects perplex his mind, no state nor circumstances be beyond the measure of his understanding. But whatever is in Christ, as *the Christ*, from this vital union which exists between him and his people, is for their use and benefit. If it was pleasing that in him all fulness should dwell, it is that we should be complete in him; if in him is all wisdom, it is "that he may be made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." The eye of his observation also never slumbereth nor sleepeth. It may appear so to do, to our limited comprehension; but the very suspicion arises from ignorance and unbelief: and if his eye be always open, it is as certainly directed towards his church's interest and welfare. (Psa. cxxi.) He knows, *i. e.* he observes, his people, the least as well as the greatest: he knows the state of their souls; he is acquainted with all their affairs,

with all their enemies, and with their power and subtilty: he knows their warfare and their weakness, their fears, their trials, their perplexities,—how far he may suffer the enemy to assault them without injury, and what will be too much for the weakness of their state. Nothing can evade, deceive, circumvent, perplex, or overcome him; and, therefore, while his eye is upon his people, and his attention thus directed for their preservation: and while they look to, trust in, and are guided by him, nothing shall, or can, overcome or destroy them. The prayer of faith shall draw down the special manifestation of his love, and the tokens of his care. The leadings of his providence, or of his grace, may be mysterious to them; but they are assuredly the effect of his wisdom, who has promised to “guide them with his eye,” and “search out their path” for them; and though Sion may sometimes say, “The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me; Can a woman,” says he, “forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand: thy walls are continually before me.” (Isa. xlix. 14, 15: compare xl. 27—31.) What security, what safety, does this view afford to the believer, who can say, I have trusted my soul, my all, to Jesus! Take courage, he will not cast thee out; he will never leave thee; and whenever thou lackest wisdom ask it of him, and he will give liberally, nor ever upbraid thee with thy ignorance and folly. Happy believer! Precious Saviour! let us trust him more, and praise him more, till we are finally more than conquerors, through him.—Allied to this part of the subject, there is another interesting view, which is calculated for the security and consolation of the believer; for, as by the wisdom of the head, all things are arranged for the guidance of the actions and the ordering of all our concerns, so,

3. Jesus also, who is infinite in wisdom, is *the Head of direction and of government to his people*.—The figure is used to this effect, in the illustration of natural things.

The prince or the general, as the head of the state or of the army, regulates and governs all things according to his wisdom; and in proportion to the ability of each, we expect success in the campaign or happiness in the state. The internal and spiritual government of his church can be in no other hands but those of the great Head of the church. He has appointed its different orders; and his providence so directs, as to place his people in their several situations and offices there; while his grace is bestowed in fulfilment of his promise, according to their several necessities, wants, or duties. Well would it be, if we were always attentive to this great truth. Well would it be, candidly and carefully to observe the leadings of his providence, and to fix our minds especially on the duties of those situations in which it has pleased him to place us. There it is that he expects us to honour and serve him; not in the duties of another; not in those duties which belong to other situations and offices in his church, but in our own. There it is that we may justly expect his all-sufficiency of grace and help; and wherever he has placed us in duty and in trial, we may be confident that there he will not leave us, nor deny us the grace and strength which are needful to suffer, to bear, or to act for him. His grace shall be sufficient for us, and his strength made perfect in our weakness. The very idea of a body implies the existence of different members, which have very different duties, and require very different degrees of grace for the discharge of them. Yet the lowest and the least member of his body is the object of his love and care, and shall be supplied with the proportionate supplies of grace, according to its measure. But while he governs his body the church, his government is also universal over all for it (Eph. i. 22); the several concerns of his people are all managed by the exalted Redeemer, and conducted by his hand. In his general providence he so rules, orders, determines, prevents, or overrules all things, as to preserve a church for himself in the world, and to promote their present and everlasting good. (Isa. ix. 6, &c.) In the midst of a tur-

bulent world, and of all things which oppose them, he sits above and smiles at every attempt of his enemy. Willingly or unwillingly, all are under him and shall obey him and promote his purposes. His honour shall be maintained, his Gospel shall spread, his people shall be collected, his church shall be preserved, fed, and blessed. The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain. (Psa. lxxvi. 10.) If the skill of the commander gives well grounded confidence of the success of his army; or if a wise and able governor promote the happiness of his people; infinitely happy must be the people of the Lord under his government, as the Head of his church; and surely successful must be the warfare of his people under him, whose wisdom is over all. He sees all the parts of his kingdom, with one glance of his all-pervading eye, which no earthly prince can pretend to: his eye is present with every individual of his church; and he knows how best to manage all for their present good and everlasting triumph. What an encouraging idea! He who loved me, and gave himself for me, even to the death upon the cross, is the Governor of all things in nature, providence, and grace, to promote his designs of salvation to his people! Let the recollection calm every fear, and bring every thought into obedience to his will. But this view of the subject has obtained a separate consideration under another title,—*The Head over all things to his church*. We pass on, therefore, to another most interesting part of this allusion. The head is the seat of sensibility, which immediately feels the sorrows of every part. And this leads us to consider the Redeemer,

4. *As the Head of sympathy and compassion*.—Nothing can more fully represent the affectionate kindness, the tender concern, and the constant care, which the Lord Jesus Christ feels for all his people, than such a comparison as this. That he makes his people the members of his body, is the nearest and dearest connection into which he can possibly take them, and the highest honour to which he can advance them. And shall he not then sympathize

with all their pains, feel all their distresses, and be tenderly sensible of all their wants and necessities? And what can afford them so great a security of relief, assistance, and blessing as this? There are many terms of natural relationship which are used to express the greatness and tenderness of his love; but none so intimate, so endearing as this. As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth his people. (Psa. ciii. 13.) As the parent eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them and beareth them on her wings; so the Lord Jehovah of old led, and still leads and looks with cordial delight upon, his people. (Deut. xxxii. 11, &c.) The tenderest affection of the tenderest mother, looking with affectionate fondness upon her sucking infant, cannot represent to the full the compassion of his heart. (Isa. xlix. 15.) Nothing can be so intimately dear to us as a part of ourselves. For others we may have great affection and regard; but nature itself has taught us an involuntary care of ourselves; for "no man yet ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Eph. v. 29); "for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (ver. 30.) A member may be very painful; it may be diseased; but still we are unwilling to part with it. The head utters its lamentations over it, it suffers with it; and would, if possible, communicate a virtue effectually to heal it. What a beautiful resemblance of the unchanging and unchangeable love of Jesus, and of his sympathetic care and concern for the happiness of his people! He hateth putting away; yea, in all their afflictions he is afflicted (Isa. lxiii. 9); and therefore, "in every temptation he will make a way for their escape, that they may be able to bear it." Nay, there is one part of the human frame which is above all the rest in susceptibility of pain, and which is therefore guarded with the utmost care, and in itself has provided its watchful defenders, which close at the approach of danger: to this he compares his people; and by this illustrates the minuteness, the jealousy, of his care: "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine

eye." (Compare Zech. ii. 8; Deut. xxxii. 10; Psa. xvii. 8.)

If an Apostle, in love to the church of Christ, and as united as a member in that spiritual body, could appeal thus, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. xi. 29); how much more shall not He who is the very Head and Source of all its vital influence, feel for the infirmities, and resent the injuries, of his people! It is his peculiar character "to bear the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom;" that "he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." If a member of his mystical body be weakly and infirm, shall he therefore separate it and cast it away? No, surely: he will treat it as we treat a diseased limb. It is a limb still, and it is *ours*: we therefore peculiarly observe it, attend to it, cherish it, administer remedies, endeavour to effect its cure and its restoration to perfect health, that it may enjoy, with honour and with ease, its place amongst the members of the body.—Let this ever remind us of the love and care of our Redeemer, and excite our gratitude and confidence. This also should teach us the lesson of brotherly love and kindness to every fellow-member of the body of Christ, who is thus beloved of our common Lord and Head. If we are all of one body, one spirit, and united in one Lord, how should we, with "all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!" (Eph. iv. 2—16.) Strange would be the sight to see the members of the body contending with each other, because of their different places, offices, and duties; but as strange, yea much more so, must it be, for those pure spirits above, who can make the observation, to see the members of Christ, united in one mystical body, in a state of disorder and continual contest with each other, because of their different gifts, and talents, and appointments in the church of Christ. "Let us then put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffer-

ing; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Col. iii. 11–15.) One more idea will complete our contemplation of this interesting figure. As the head is exalted above the rest of the body, so,

5. *Jesus is the Head of superiority, dignity, and excellency, in the spiritual body.*—He is the Head of the body the church, who is the Beginning, the First-born from the dead, *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*" (Col. i. 18.) Since he is above all his people, and above all things in the heavenly world, he is thus calculated to display his wisdom, power, and authority, for their benefit; as the Head, taking the highest place in the body, is suited to look around it, and observe, at the greatest distance, whatever may concern its interests, "once he bowed himself from the Throne of Glory, for their benefit, and came down to earth; but his proper seat is the Throne of Glory and of immortality on high." (Daille.) There he reigns above the whole church militant or triumphant. He rose, the First Fruits from the dead, and thus became the Head of the resurrection, and is exalted, and "set at the right hand of God in the heavenly place, far above all principalities and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. i. 20, 21.) From hence he beholds and looks down upon the things which are done in heaven and in earth, and is able to gather together now his mystical body by the Gospel; to regulate its affairs, to preserve it for himself, and save it to the uttermost. And then the voice of the archangel shall bring it to himself, when God, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, shall gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth,—the church militant and the church triumphant,—even in him. (Eph. i. 9, 10.) Now the crown of glory is placed upon him; for to whom can all glory

belong but to him who hath redeemed his church with his blood; who calls and collects them to himself, who preserves and supplies them, who secures them and saves them with an everlasting salvation; for “of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” This is the dignified, the delightful, employment of the spirits before the Throne. They cast their crowns before him, saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” (Rev. iv. 10, 11: see also Col. i. 16.) He is there acknowledged as the King of kings and Lord of lords; and on his head are many crowns. (See Rev. xix. 11—16.)—Believer, you will now cheerfully join the song, which ere long you shall be admitted to join around the Throne; and, expecting and receiving all from him, will readily yield to him the superiority, the glory, and the praise of all. O what power, what glory, what infiniteness of excellencies dwell in Jesus, as he is the Head of his body the church! Let him then have the dependence and confidence of my faith. In thus looking to him by faith, the communication of his grace shall be granted; and in those lively communications my soul shall be more ready for every duty; and, laying aside every weight, and the sin which does most easily beset me, I shall run with patience the race that is set before me. (Heb. xii. 1, 2, &c.) Let me ever recollect that there can be no supply of vital influence but from the Head.

He is the all-sufficient and the only Source; and from him only must I expect the communication of all spiritual life and spiritual liveliness. When the Apostle is describing the state of some in the primitive church, who had widely wandered into error; tracing it up to its unhappy origin, he considers it as arising from this one cause, “their not *holding the Head*, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” (Col. ii. 19.)

If he be the Head of all vital influence and quickening communication, then let me expect all from him; if he be the Head of wisdom, let me seek his enlightening influence to lead me into all truth, and to shew me every path of duty. Let me trust all my concerns and ways to his direction, and be ever ready to submit to his wisdom in the way in which he leads me. As the Head of sympathy and compassion, he claims it at my hands: his everlasting love and unchanging tenderness of affection secures the interest and welfare of his people, since they secure all his infinite ability, all his infinite fulness, and all his infinite perfections, as Immanuel, to be exerted on their behalf.—I cannot doubt of his love and care, whatever may be the outward aspect of his ways of providence. He who feels and resents every injury done to his people, as if done to himself, cannot possibly abandon them to the power and malice of their enemies. But behold him, my soul, on the Throne of Glory, in all the dignity of his exaltation over all worlds, as well as over his church, employing all his attributes and perfections in universal government, and surely thou canst not fear nor be discouraged. In the dark clouds of his providence, and amidst the tumults of the world, we are indeed very apt to doubt and indulge gloomy apprehensions; but this is only our weakness and our unbelief, whereby we see not his wisdom nor his love, when looking forward through the mazes of uncertainty. The retrospect, however, will clear up every difficulty, and manifest his manifold wisdom. Every member in the human body is immediately obedient to the will of the head, and moves willingly at the impulse of the mind: and shall the members of the Living Head refuse to him their obedience of love? This must indicate a diseased, if not a dead, member: it proves either that the professed member is not really united to him, or that there is some unhappy obstruction that prevents the communication of vital efficacy. If not really united to him, but merely in profession, such a member will certainly be taken away (John xv. 2); and every diseased

member must submit to the regimen or prescription of the heavenly Physician for its recovery. Beware then of that profession which has no power, no evidence of union with Christ; no communication from him, and no effectual influence directing to holy obedience. The living believer, considering the place he holds in the body of Christ, will there be desirous of learning what he is called to do in his situation and relation for the glory of his Lord; and by the grace derived from Jesus will be found in the discharge of it. But in all, thou Head of thy church, we will place the crown upon thee, by faith, and in our songs of devoted praise. We rejoice, O our Redeemer! that, sitting on the Throne above, all the many crowns of nature, providence, and redemption are on thy head. If angels adore Thee, we need not fear to join them in attributing all glory to Him who is God over all, blessed for ever. Soon, O my soul! thy glorious Redeemer shall bow himself again from his Throne of Glory, not in humiliation, but for the salvation of his people. He comes down to take thee up with him to His glory; and then all his people, all who have believed through grace, shall be collected around his Throne. His grace shall be perfected, their desires shall be completed; nor shall one of them be missing: for the church is his fulness; and if any of them were found wanting, there would be discovered some deficiency in that fulness of his mediatorial body. But this can never be: they must therefore all surround his Throne, and be united in his glories throughout eternity, while casting their crowns before the Throne, and celebrating his eternal honours.

ESSAY VIII.

Physician — Healer — Balm of Gilead.

NOTHING can be more truly descriptive of the state of man by nature, than a state of sickness and disease; for sin is the spiritual malady of the soul, which tends to death eternal. The disorders of the soul are therefore frequently represented in Scripture by those of the body; and from thence is derived the most interesting representation of the method of their cure. A peculiar discovery here also opens to the mind, of our spiritual wants and dangers; and the Lord our Redeemer appears in a new and suitable character, as the Spiritual Healer and Divine Physician. To Him alone must we look, till all our iniquities are forgiven, and all our diseases are healed. In every step of the spiritual discovery, his grace alone is the effectual remedy: his care and wisdom alone are the security of our hope; and under him the health of the soul, begun in pardoning mercy and regenerating grace, is carried on, till a perfect conformity to his will in glory shall manifest that all his redeemed are made perfectly whole. If we feel our true state, the view of the Redeemer in such a character will be the most gratifying and the most interesting. This discovery is indeed of the first importance; for though sin be the fatal disease of man, which is spread throughout all his vital powers, and will assuredly carry his soul down to death; like many of those natural diseases which stupify the mind, the more we are under it, the more insensible we are even of its existence, and the more ignorant of our real situation. Till then the dying sinner discovers no excellency in Christ, manifests no concern about him, nor makes any inquiry as to his ability or his grace. But when, like

those poor and perishing objects who flocked around our Lord in the days of his flesh, the destroying malady is felt and feared, how precious is that Physician who is able to save,—willing to save all that come, and able to save them to the uttermost! This is the delightful character in which we are now to contemplate him. If we consider the spiritual faculties of man, and that which constitutes their spiritual health, it will need little observation to discover the corrupting poison which has shed its baneful influence over them all. The power of sin, entering into the soul, has debilitated, polluted, and infected every faculty. The eyes of the understanding, the ears of spiritual perception, all the powers of spiritual sensation, the hands and the feet, or, spiritually, all the powers of action, are contaminated and disordered. In another view, the judgment, the imagination, the passions and affections of the mind, are under the influence of corruption, and the *will* is most infected of them all. Well may it be acknowledged, The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint: from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness in it; but “wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” (Isa. i. 5, 6: compare Gen. vi. 5.)

It has been sometimes observed, that there is a very near and peculiar analogy between the diseases of the body and those of the soul: for what is lust but a burning fever? What are pride and anger but the raging frenzy of the mind? What the indulgence of worldly desires, but a fatal plethora, which has a tendency to stop all the vital functions? What is carnal security but an overwhelming lethargy? And what that spiritual indifference to God and the things of God, but a dead palsy, or a wasting consumption? while the defiling loathsome leprosy, spreading through the whole frame, most justly represents the general depravity and total corruption of the heart. The comparison might no doubt be enlarged into a variety of other particulars, which would still further discover the

total corruption, and the imminent danger of the soul of a dying sinner, of which he is, alas! too often fatally ignorant. Insensibility of danger, in a mortal disease, often constitutes the very extremity of that danger; and thus it most certainly is with the dying sinner. The first step towards spiritual healing, is the discovery of spiritual sickness; and this is the first effect of the Spirit of grace. In other words, a sinner under a law which condemns him, under the wrath and curse of God, destitute of all righteousness which is the health of the soul, and disordered in every power of the mind, every affection of the heart, and every passion of the soul, cannot but need a Saviour, a Physician of divine and heavenly skill. This however is the state of all, since all have sinned; and nothing but the deadening influence of sin could make the sinner insensible of the truth and danger of his state. Without spiritual healing, the death of an immortal soul for eternity is as sure as the death of the body labouring under the most destructive malady. The discovery of this must make the Saviour indeed precious, and the suitable remedy which he has provided most desirable to the sin-sick soul; especially when it is known and felt that Jesus is the only all-sufficient Healer; that the remedy he has provided and administers, can alone effect the perfect cure; and that it must be applied and received in his own appointed way, to complete the purpose. All besides will but "heal the wounds of his people slightly;" and, covering over the surface with a deceitful appearance, leave the wound to rankle within till it break out in greater virulence. While, however, men think themselves well at heart, while they see and feel nothing of their departure from God,—of the alienation and depravity of their mind, that plague which is spreading there, that root of every particular spiritual disease; while, confident in their own moral excellency, they boast of spiritual health, since they see no need of the help of the spiritual Physician; no wonder that they discover no excellency in him, no suitableness in his grace. They may pay him, perhaps, some customary honour, some

compliment of dependence ; but never can they apply to him, nor ever receive or use the directions of his word. But is thy conscience labouring under guilt, thy heart lamenting its ruinous depravity ; and “ *wilt thou be made whole ?* ” Art thou willing to be saved from guilt and sin, and every spiritual disease ? Blessed be God for this heavenly Physician, and for the Balm of Gilead which he has abundantly prepared. We need not shew you your need, nor bring you to the application ; we have only to point him out in his person and character, and to shew who and what this glorious Redeemer is, to excite your confidence and love. And thus, blessed be God, we can direct the dying sinner to one who is the all-sufficient Healer of souls ; who freely administers his effectual aid, and will not deny his fullest benefits to the most miserable and wretched, who seek to him, and commit the salvation of their souls to him.—Let us then,

1. *Contemplate his ability, his wisdom, and his skill.*—Without the assurance of suitable ability, we do not venture the life or health of our body in the hand of any one ; nor can we do it with any confidence or satisfaction. But a soul is of more worth than ten thousand worlds ; as far beyond the body, as eternity is beyond time. If the soul die under sin, it dies for ever : this is its natural termination, unless prevented by a Divine and efficacious remedy. It is declared, “ The soul that sinneth it shall die ; ” but all have sinned, and the spiritual disease is hastening forward to its awful and fatal issue. If then Jesus is set forth as the heavenly Healer ; if we are directed to look for it to him, and to him alone, surely the first question that the sinner, who feels himself in a dying state, will ask, must be, Is he *able* to deliver my soul ? This may be of little consequence to the careless, to the ignorant, or to the self-righteous, but must necessarily be of infinite moment to the convinced and enlightened mind. Happily then the word of the Lord tells us, “ *that there is salvation in no other.* ” It opens to our view the Divine glories and abilities of his person, and continually sets before us what

he has done and is now doing ; and what he therefore can do to save, and to restore our souls. He is represented to our faith, in the glories of his Divine nature : “ *Immanuel, God with us,*”—“ *the Great God, and our Saviour,*”—“ *the Lord Jehovah become our Salvation.*” (Isa. xii. 2.) Under this character he invites the confidence of dying sinners : “ *Look unto me, and be ye saved, for I am God.*” (Isa. xlv. 22.) Then in the fulness of his mediatorial character, uniting the human and the Divine nature in his own person, we are assured that he has done all that was necessary in redeeming sinners to God ; and that now also upon the Throne, he is able to do all for their calling, their justification, their sanctification, and their final salvation. For this purpose he was first anointed, as the Christ, “ to preach good tidings to the meek, and to bind up the broken hearted ; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ” (Isa. lxi. 1—3) ; for this “ all power is given to him in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. xxviii. 18 : compare John xvii. 2.) Who can doubt but that a Saviour so glorious in himself, so furnished with all the fulness of the Spirit and the plenitude of all power, is able to deliver us from all our diseases, and supply our need ? Though as miserable as sin can make us ; though the whole head be sick, and the whole heart faint ; his ability is equal to the most desperate case of sin and misery. That he is both God and man assures us of this a [] for thus he is infinite in wisdom as he is almighty in power. If we give up this truth of God, we lose the foundation, the life, the spirit of the Gospel. But, if such be his person, then is he ever present for us to seek to ; then in his omniscient wisdom he knows all our diseases, in their nature, their symptoms, their operations, and their tendencies ; and he knows the suitable remedy, and when and how to administer it for effectual relief. The past discoveries of his skill encourage the application of the dying penitent, who, whatever may be the peculiarity of his case, need only look into the record of his skill, in the word of truth, to see how soon one or other in similar circumstances

of guilt and danger, has found pardon and healing: that he, in whom we are directed to trust for our future deliverance, has delivered the whole church of believing sinners from the beginning, while he is still delivering all who trust in him. It was foretold, that, when he should come to save his people, "the eyes of the blind should be opened, the ears of the deaf be unstopped, the lame man leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb should sing." (Isa. xxxv. 4—6.) To this display of miraculous power, in the healing of the natural diseases of the multitude, he appeals, as the evidence of his person, his true character, and his Divine mission. We are even told, that "he healed all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people. He spake, and they were made perfectly whole." These displays of healing power were, however, but the figure of the true spiritual healing of his church. His hand is not shortened now that he cannot save. No: he is still the Life, the Life-giver, and the Life-preserver. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (1 John v. 11.) He gives eternal life to his people, and must therefore first deliver them from the power of spiritual death: and what he gives he preserves, for thus only could it be eternal. Let me come to him with all my diseases, as I discover and feel them in a sin-sick soul; and his hand shall be stretched out to relieve and heal me. "He that believeth in him hath eternal life:" he feels its restored influence, and shall soon enjoy its perfect felicity. Then let my faith acknowledge his power, and trust his faithfulness, pledged by his promises to exert it. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." "Speak, Lord," only, "and thy servant shall be made whole." Yes; my spiritual malady, the pride, the lust, and the carnality of my heart, shall yield to thy grace; the love of earth, and sense, and sin shall be subdued; my corrupt tempers and dispositions shall be exchanged for the love of God; the purity of holy affections, the desires of heavenly blessings, the beginning of that spiritual health, which sweetly anticipates the perfect in-

tegrity of the soul; its consummation of Divine health in all its powers, in unspotted holiness, and the perfectly restored image of my God.—Let us then,

2. *Contemplate the remedies which his skill and wisdom have provided, and which he applies to complete this glorious design.*—In the nature of things, remedies are generally unpleasant to the natural senses in their application; since they are intended to correct what is out of order in the natural system, and therefore put restraint, and produce a powerful influence, and exercise a force in replacing the disordered parts, or in correcting or expelling the offending humours. Such also in general, as to the natural feelings, are the remedies of sin, which has put the whole moral frame out of order, and which it pleases God to employ for the purposes of spiritual recovery. In the process of the spiritual healing, afflictions often come with the kindest design; and when sent in covenant love, to humble under sin, to discover its malignant evil, to render the cure and grace of the heavenly Physician desirable, they must be reckoned amongst the choicest blessings: for, as there is no proper evil but sin, whatever delivers from it, or is the means of God's determination for that purpose, must be so esteemed. But if we escape outward afflictions, an afflicted conscience, more or less, is generally employed by the Great Physician, for the spiritual healing; for it is the most encouraging token that he designs the healing of that soul which he has taught to feel its destroying malady. These, however, are only the external means of administering the true remedy; the good Physician can effect his purpose, either by affliction or prosperity, by darkness or by light, by pain or by peace. If there were not something employed far beyond this, the disease of sin would be found too inveterate, to yield to their combined power or influence; and without his own sanctifying power, these are sometimes observed to increase the malady, to irritate the corruption, and the rebellious tempers of the human mind. In connection with these means, and indeed for the effecting of this very purpose,

the Lord in general employs the doctrines of his word, the preaching of his Gospel, and the appointed ordinances of his house. These, as external means, are what he has commanded us to use, and to which alone he has promised his effectual blessing. Here then we are to wait, like the poor cripple at the pool of Bethesda; nor does the Lord in general manifest his saving power but through these means. Let us then put a due value upon them, neither exalting them, as containing within themselves the sovereign remedy, nor debasing them, as needless or unimportant. The blessing indeed is his own, independently of all means; but though he has not bound himself to bestow no blessing but through them, he has not promised to bestow any blessing without them. There he generally is found as the Lord our Healer; and to the use of them he has limited the expectation of faith. But let us then remember, that the heavenly Physician has indeed provided an infallible remedy for a guilty conscience, and a diseased sinful heart, which, when rightly received, is certain and efficacious. It is his *own precious blood*, applied by *the power of his Spirit*. It is the water and the blood. It is beautifully represented, by the oil and wine of the good Samaritan: it is the Balm of Gilead, the Portion of Life and Health. He shed the precious stream from his own wounded heart, to bring us near to God, that we might have redemption, and that he might speak peace to all our maladies, through the blood of his cross.—What an amazing mystery of love is here! When nothing but his own precious blood could heal our wounds, and cure our souls, he spared not his own self: he so loved the church that he gave himself for it; so that we are redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, emptied himself, took upon himself the form of a servant, and humbled himself even to the death upon the cross. Upon the cross he consummated the mystery of love: there the water and the blood flowed, freely and

abundantly flowed, to purify and heal our souls. There he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed. There he bare our griefs and carried our sorrows; yea, the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all. (See Isa. liii.) Here is the ground of all our hope; and here the way is prepared for our pardon, justification, regeneration, sanctification, and eternal life. By the influence of his Spirit, he renders the provision of grace effectual; and while he uses externally the ordinances, and various means which his wisdom sees fit, he puts his powerful influence into them, and they become "the power of God unto salvation." This alone is the way of a sinner's healing. Since this kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man has appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his own mercy, he saves us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. And this being shed on us abundantly through Jesus our Saviour, we are justified by his grace, and made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (See Tit. iii. 4-6: compare 1 Pet. i. 2-5: 1 Thess. i. 4, 5; ii. 13: 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14: 1 Tim. i. 14: 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.) Here opens a source of great confidence and unfailling consolation, to the conscience of a guilty dying sinner, in the all-sufficiency and certainty of the remedy which his love has prepared, when administered and applied in the use of his own means, by his own Almighty Spirit.—Let us contemplate a moment,

3. *The universal efficacy of this heavenly remedy, to all the diseases of the soul.*—The great disorder of the soul is sin; that malady which includes within itself every evil. Sin in its several branches, and in its various afflictive consequences, comprises all the evils of life. The salvation of the Lord Jesus is therefore summed up, in the one great blessing of saving his people from their sins. He came to put away sin: the Lamb of God came to take away the sin of the world. This he has effected as to its guilt and condemnation in the work of redemption, and is

exalted to complete the grand design, by the regenerating and renovating grace of his Spirit. By this, the love and power of it is broken in the hearts of all his people; and that new and heavenly nature, those spiritual and holy tempers and characters are formed, which shall be consummated in the life eternal. This sovereign remedy, *the water and the blood*, which flowed from the heart of a dying Saviour on the cross, is indeed the true panacea, applicable to every malady, and effectual for its removal. The Divine glory of the person of our Redeemer, has given an infinite merit, and therefore an infinite efficacy to his work, to his atoning sacrifice and finished righteousness; and what then can be too polluting for that blood to purify, or too obstinate and inveterate for his grace to subdue? No: when the guilty sinner feels his disease; when with an afflicted conscience, in sorrow for his sins, he makes his application to the Great Physician; though no one else can do him good, though all besides are physicians of no value, here is the effectual Healer of all his sorrows. Let him bring every disease to him, and he shall find his blood and his grace sufficient, varying their efficacy, according to the discovery which he makes of his varied distresses, suited to every soul-sickness, and every disease among the dying sons of men. He will glorify his wisdom, and his power, and shew the universal efficacy of the remedy which he has prepared, in the perfect deliverance of every believing sinner. The spiritual recovery must no doubt correspond with the various consequences of sin, in the present and the eternal state, and will be felt in the conscience and the heart, by the effectual removal of those consequences, the symptoms of spiritual decay, the beginnings of eternal death. If the conscience be afflicted with guilty fears, which forbode eternal sorrows, where shall the afflicted soul find deliverance? Nothing in nature, nothing around us, can ever encourage the hope of salvation. "Thou hast destroyed thyself," is the solemn charge of the Divine word; "But I," says the heavenly Healer, "I have borne thy sins: behold me the Lamb of God; I have taken away the sin of

the world: my blood cleanseth from all sin; and as far as the east is from the west, so far have I removed thy transgressions from thee. Come now, let us reason together: though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Does the guilty sinner feel the awful effect of being destitute of that righteousness which is the spiritual integrity of the soul, and in which alone it stands with perfect acceptance before God. Behold Jesus has been made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. As the End of the Law, he is the Righteousness of every one that believeth, and surely may every one of his believing people say, "In Jehovah Jesus I have righteousness and strength." The awful effects of sin are discovered by their darkening and beclouding influence on the understanding, and all the powers of the mind. Who but Jesus can remove that spiritual ignorance and insensibility? But his Spirit, and light, and grace, can clear away every obstruction which prevents the spiritual vision, or the exercise of the spiritual understanding, and purify, and enlarge, and strengthen all its powers to behold, contemplate, and discern the glory of the Gospel, the nature of its doctrine, and the excellency of its blessings. (1 John v. 20.) If all the moral powers of man are out of order, his high celestial faculties sink down into the stupidity of sin; the grossness of earth, labouring under the corrupting influence of sensual objects, altogether polluted and defiled;—if his passions, which originally all harmonized in the love of God, and in sweet delight in heavenly objects, are all in disorder and insubordination;—if his whole frame be spiritually enervated, without any spiritual understanding for spiritual objects, or spiritual appetite for spiritual blessings, or spiritual faculties for spiritual enjoyments; if pride and worldly mindedness, and lust, and every evil temper and disposition reign within him, and spread their destructive influence through his soul; who shall restore the disordered frame, correct and remedy the prevailing and destroying corrup-

tions, and renew within the soul the powers of spiritual life, and health, and vigour? Behold the heavenly Physician: he bids the sinner trust his skill, and submit to his direction, and the most inveterate malady, whatsoever disease sin has introduced into my soul, beneath his hand shall yield to returning health and vigour. His precious blood, his healing grace, has a quickening energy, a renovating power. The remedies which we administer to the body can only revive and restore what is injured or diseased; but his almighty influence can even restore what has been lost, and can give life to the dead, as well as revival to the living. When he gives peace with God through the blood of his cross, he gives also a new heart, and creates a right spirit within us. How powerful, then, is the efficacy of his grace, when the perverse passions become regulated and holy, when pride is humbled into humility, worldly-mindedness exalted into the glorious hope of heavenly blessings; when lust is changed into purity of heart, and all the evil passions of the mind yield to the mild and generous influence of the Christian graces, the sweet fruits of the Spirit! Thus pardoning and sanctifying grace effectually unite in the restored health of his people. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Heb. x. 16.) Yea, he heals the destructive influence of their corrupt backslidings, when, neglectful of his direction, they again relapse from spiritual health into corruption and guilt. (Hes. xiv. 4—6.) Now the understanding discerns the beauty of his word; the spiritual appetite relishes and enjoys the blessings of his love; the spiritual faculties are alive to spiritual enjoyment; the soul, again enlarged by grace in the love of God, rises out from the corrupting influence of sense and carnal delights, and again finds its delight in God, and grows into a conformity to his holy will and heavenly image. This is spiritual health; this is what the heavenly Healer has undertaken to effect, and what he is infinitely able to effect in the soul of his redeemed. The remedies which he has provided are suited to the purpose; and in their use and application the convalescence is begun, and under his

hand and care shall finally be completed. Though now, indeed, the believer only finds the beginning, and at present mixed with much of the remains of sinful corruption, yet is the renovating power of his grace actually felt, his newly quickened soul aspires to, aims at, and is continually tending towards, that perfect health and soundness which he shall assuredly attain, under the great Physician, in that world where the happy inhabitants "shall no more say, I am sick, because the people that dwell therein are forgiven all their iniquities." For as the efficacy of his remedy is universal, and his skill unailing, so also his blood and his grace,

4. *Have an unailing virtue wherever they are received and applied.*—This is far from the case in human remedies. Whatever may be the skill of the medical professor, there are many circumstances of disease and affliction to the knowledge of which he cannot attain. The cause is latent, the discovery is dubious, and the remedy required altogether uncertain. After all the experience employed, and all the pains endured, the remedy used may prove ineffectual, or may be found to have been improper and injurious. What anxiety must have filled the mind of an afflicted, dying sinner, sensible of his danger, and of all the solemn consequences of his sin, if the least doubt of this kind could be justly harboured in the mind, as to the heavenly Physician! He might mournfully exclaim, Though I apply to this Physician, and though he administer to me his much commended balm, the long-famed remedies of his providing, they may not perhaps be suited to my peculiar case; they may fail to heal or restore me. How awful is my case in such extremity of danger, without any certainty of relief! But no: his blood was sufficient to atone for sin, and is therefore all-sufficient to purify from guilt: it cleanses from all sin. His grace is almighty in its efficacy to heal, and his power to deliver from all the consequences of sin. He who has purchased his church with his own blood, who is God our Saviour, the Lord our Righteousness, is able to save unto the uttermost. Whenever in the days

of his flesh he undertook the healing of a diseased person; he spake and it was done; he perfected the healing and the cure. And so shall it be, O thou fearful penitent! waiting for spiritual healing in the prayer of faith, at the foot of his Throne. Have you committed yourself to him—the salvation of your soul into his hands? He will never fail them that trust in him. The efficacy of his grace comes recommended to thee by the experience of all his people from the beginning. Thousands and tens of thousands can give their *probatum est*, their testimony, to its unfailing virtue. They sought and they found complete salvation in Him; and now before the Throne abase thyself; they bid thee come and find the same. Yea, his skill is recommended to thee still further by the testimony of God himself. He is no self-obtruding empiric, but divinely appointed to discharge this very office, appointed of God unto us as wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and delighting to perform the office to all his people. A circumstance, therefore, which most recommends this heavenly Physician to the needy sinner, is the freedom with which he administers his remedies to all who come to him. Many of our fellow-mortals die under disease and affliction, for want of that assistance which they have no ability to procure: and if the door of mercy was not opened to every comer; if we were required to bring any suitable recommendation for obtaining its relief; the salvation of Jesus, upon conditions which we were unable to perform, could be of no use to us. But as it is freely given, it becomes suited to our extreme necessity, who are as indigent as we are miserable. But lift up your eyes, O dying penitent! to the door of mercy. Behold there inscribed in the characters of everlasting truth, “Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (Compare Rev. iii, 18; xxii. 17: Matt. xi. 28.)

He cannot possibly be a gainer by any thing that we could give him: therefore he gives his blessings without money and without price. The only requisite is, that the sick

and dying sinner should know his state, and desire his recovery; and, glory be to his Sovereign Grace! this knowledge, this disposition, he himself bestows upon his redeemed. Look then, thou dying sinner: behold this Jesus; contemplate his wisdom, his grace, his all-sufficiency of mercy, and his fulness of power. "Is there no Balm in Gilead, is there no Physician there," thou fearful dying sinner? Yes, the word of God is the continual testimony to the person of Jesus; his character, his glory, his all-sufficiency. He is set forth as the propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God in our forgiveness and salvation. The invitation of his word encourages thy return, and insures thy reception and blessing. Thou canst not come in vain; for through this Jesus is preached to us the forgiveness of sins, and in him all who believe are justified from all things. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Blessed Saviour, and glorious salvation! his be all the praise that it is so suited to our necessity and misery. None have ever been rejected as beyond his power or grace: all the saints on earth, and all in glory, bear their testimony to his ability and his compassion. The blood and grace of Jesus are suited to you, to me, and to all: it is therefore "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." How shall I sufficiently adore, or trust, or praise thee, thou good Physician of my sin-sick soul. Thou art Jehovah *Ropheh* (רפֵה), the Lord that healeth me. (Exod. xv. 26.)

But let me always recollect that a remedy, in order to be effectual, must be received and applied. How then shall we expect the Divine remedy of the heavenly Physician to be effectual, unless there be an application to him by faith; and an application to the heart, of his atoning blood and sanctifying grace by the power of his Spirit? What application, then, O my soul, hast thou made to this Friend of sinners? What application has been made to my heart by the Spirit of the Lord, of his healing and restoring grace? And what effects have been produced by this upon my soul, by nature diseased with sin, and in-

fectured with every symptom of that mortal and soul-destroying plague? Have I come by faith to Jesus? Have I trusted his atoning blood and righteousness, and found the sweet effects of it in the peace of my conscience and the justification of my person, in which alone I can be accounted whole, or perfectly righteous, in the sight of God? Have I experienced the humbling, cleansing, sanctifying, saving power of his grace; and am I living in the use of his appointed means, in the exercise of faith upon him for the carrying on of the healing effects? Am I thus making fresh applications daily to Him whose continued care and daily influence can alone preserve what has yet been imparted, establish and confirm the benefit already received, and promote and increase the holy health and vigour of the new and spiritual life? This is the appointed method of receiving and rejoicing in spiritual health and continued recovery. And how absurd is it to commend the Physician, and to praise his prescriptions, and to talk of his excellency of life and health, and yet to avoid the means of its attainment, and to dislike and be averse to the cure itself! Such an inconsistency would be obvious, and readily condemned in the distempers of the body; and yet, alas! how often does it occur in the diseases of the soul! But, if desirous of deliverance and salvation, let not the dying sinner, in the most desperate state of spiritual disorder, be distrustful of the skill or grace of the Redeemer: let him apply to and trust in the ability and willingness of this Divine Restorer; "for he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up all their wounds." (Psa. cxlvii. 3; Mal. iv. 2.) His sufficiency is equal to his willingness. His willingness knows no limits but his infinite sufficiency; and what then can prevent the communication of all his benefits to the needy sinner at his feet? He can, and he has promised to, forgive all our sins: he has engaged that sin shall not have dominion over his people, to quicken his redeemed to the life of grace, and consummate it in the life of glory, where every believer shall be made perfectly whole.—Let me then go forward in the constant exercise of faith, and trust him

that it shall be even as he has spoken. While my corruptions and miseries humble me before him, let me not forget the value and the efficacy of the Saviour's blood. If my soul, convinced of sin, be long mourning under it, it cannot be for want of fulness in him, but of a believing continued application to him. It will, however, be needful also, always to remember, that this is only the convalescent state of the people of his love: the cure is not yet completed, though in a certain progress. Still I shall find the remains of spiritual disease to grieve, to humble, to debase me, and to make the Divine Saviour more precious, while it teaches me the necessity of constant application to him and dependence upon him. But it is the glory of his cures that they shall all be perfected. The period is coming, the happy state is approaching, where there shall be no more sickness, nor death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things shall be passed away. (Rev. xxi. 4.) This is the glorious consummation of the great Redeemer's work and cares! Blessed Jesus! now indeed the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: the spiritual disease indicates the spiritual death, and threatens death eternal: but I come to thee; hast thou not begun the spiritual restoration? I trust myself under thy care, the only spiritual Healer, who hast undertaken the gracious design, and art able to accomplish it. Let thy blood cleanse my conscience; let thy grace heal my heart, bring every passion into order, every thought into the obedience of righteousness, the obedience of faith and love; and carry on the healing process. Let spiritual life increase in its exercises, its acts of duty, its vigorous efforts, and its heavenly enjoyment, till every power and every faculty be perfectly restored; till thy favour be perfectly enjoyed in renewed and exalted affections; and thy holy image again be apparent in my body and in my soul, united and glorified together, in the world where sin and sickness shall never enter!

ESSAY IX.

Tabernacle — Temple.

FROM the fall of man to the actual appearance of the Redeemer, the great doctrines of salvation were represented to mankind by a variety of sensible emblems, till, in the Jewish dispensation, the whole were embodied into a system of types and figures eminently calculated, as appears upon the review of them, to represent the glory of Christ, and the fulness of his salvation. Amongst these, the tabernacle in the wilderness, and, afterwards, the temple at Jerusalem, were the most remarkable; for in their construction, together with their sacred vessels and ornaments, and the various services which were there appointed, the transactions, the doctrines, the blessings of the covenant of redemption, were all typically displayed; and here, as in one grand point or centre, all the parts of that dispensation met and were united. It could only be on this account that so particular a charge is given to Moses, in the erection and furnishing of the tabernacle, to attend in every circumstance to the divine model which had been set before him by God himself; “*And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.*” (Exod. xxv. 40.) The Apostle, alluding to this admonition given to Moses, tells us expressly what was their scope and design; They “*serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.*” They were *examples*, which set before the eyes of those who observed them, and raised in their minds, by the intervention of sensible objects, the idea of spiritual things. They were *shadows* which delineated and gave, as it were, the outline and sketches of them; and they were *patterns*,

which, when just and accurate, represent clearly the nature of those more extensive objects which they are intended to exhibit to the mind. So the whole of these institutions were earthly rudiments of heavenly things, intended to represent them as they are in Christ Jesus, the living Temple, and as derived from him to all his people. When, therefore, an inspired Apostle enters into an explanation of the leading facts, we cannot but admire the wisdom and the grace which is manifested in them. Without this indeed it must appear strange and unaccountable that such exactness should be divinely prescribed in the arranging of them, such time be spent in the completing of them, and such a strictness enjoined in the observance of them. But when all are seen as leading up to that one great object which is the glory of heaven and of earth, "Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," and exhibiting the glory of his person, the acts of his condescension, the doctrine of his Gospel, and the blessings of his salvation, the reason of this appears evident; and the Divine wisdom is justified, and even greatly exalted, in their minute and exact appointment. *The Tabernacle* and *the Temple* will now particularly claim our attention in this view; both of them being designed for one purpose, and being nearly alike in their several parts,—except that the temple, in its stability and grandeur, greatly exceeded the other. In both, therefore, we shall behold the same object, especially that eminent person in whom, as in the temple, all the Divine glory was displayed. We have the authority of our Lord himself, that the temple was the type of his human body, filled with the glory of his divinity. "*Destroy this Temple,*" says he, "*and in three days I will raise it up again;*" but "*he spake of the Temple of his body.*" (John ii. 21.) An Apostle, speaking of the same subject (viz. the body of Christ), calls it the "*true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man.*" The body of Christ, indeed, is not complete without his church: the temple may, therefore, represent him in all his fulness, connected with the

church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. It may, therefore, relate to him, either personally or mystically; and, as such, every part of the furniture represents something of the glory which dwelt in the humanity of the incarnate God our Saviour, the Divine graces of his wonderful person, or all that fulness of blessing which is in him, for the supply of his church. Its structure, its furniture, its design, will all lead us to some further discovery of the glory and all-sufficiency of our Redeemer. What, then, the Psalmist speaks literally of the Jewish tabernacle, will be the language of every Christian, as to him who is the great Antitype of the whole: "One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me upon a rock. And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle the sacrifices of joy" (of shouting). "I will sing; yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord." (Psa. xxvii. 4—6.) In the living Temple of my Saviour's body, I shall behold all the beauty and glory of Jehovah: there shall my soul be secured from every danger, and hid from every enemy; and therefore in him shall my song of praise ascend, acceptable to God in Jesus Christ.—Let us attend,

1. *To their buildings, or the structures themselves*, as all the minutiae of these were strictly enjoined. No doubt they are capable of affording spiritual instruction; and that which is worthy of God's appointment must be worthy of man's observation. Too particular an investigation might, however, lead us into fruitless minuteness, and, unless very cautiously pursued, degenerate into fancy and wild imagination; besides, that it would diffuse itself into too extensive a source of remarks for our present limited plan, which prescribes to us only the great and leading features, as the subjects of our attention. The construction of *the taber-*

nacle is described by the sacred writer, in the xxvith and xxviith chapters of the Book of Exodus. A spacious court was to be formed by curtains of fine linen a hundred cubits long, to be hung upon twenty pillars of brass filleted with silver on each side, and fifty cubits broad to be hung upon ten pillars of brass filleted with silver at each end. And for a gate, in the centre of the east end, a hanging of twenty cubits of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work, upon four pillars of the same. (Exod. xxvii. 9—18.) Into this all the people had a right to enter, that they might come into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Within this enclosure, and nearly at the west end, was the tabernacle itself, divided into two apartments, into the first of which only the tribe of Levi and the priests might enter. It consisted of a tent about thirty cubits long, about ten cubits broad, and ten cubits high, formed with boards of Shittim wood overlaid with gold, fixed in sockets of silver, united with bars of the same wood covered with gold, through rings of solid gold. The east end being reserved for an entrance, was hung with a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen wrought with needle-work. (Exod. xxvi. 31—33, 36, 37.) When the tabernacle was thus erected, having no roof, it was covered over, and on each side, with five curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, embroidered with cherubim of cunning work twenty-eight cubits long, and four cubits in breadth; affording a beautiful internal roof, over which was another covering of curtains of goat's hair thirty cubits long, four in breadth, five on the one side, and six on the other, half of one of which was doubled back in the front, and the other half hung over the back side of the tabernacle. Over this was another covering of rams' skins dyed red; and above all, another of badgers' skins, or strong leather. The tabernacle itself being divided into two apartments, into the holy place the priests alone might enter for the service of God; and into the most holy place the high priest alone, and that but once a-year, on the great day of atonement.

The separation between these was made with a beautiful veil of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work, with cherubim hung with hooks of gold upon four pillars of Shittim wood, overlaid with gold in sockets of silver. (Exod. xxvi. 31, 32.) The whole being thus erected by Divine appointment, and every part formed according to the Divinely appointed pattern, was consecrated to the service of God, and filled with his own Divine glory. Such, also, in future times was the more glorious temple; for the tabernacle being moveable, was in time set aside for that more splendid display of magnificence and dignity in the temple which was intended for the same purpose, and a more noble exhibition of the same truths and blessings. Of this we have a more particular detail in the sixth and seventh chapters of the First Book of Kings, and the third and fourth chapters of the Second Book of Chronicles. It was built according to a plan and model devised by God himself, and erected by his own command upon Mount Moriah, one of the hills of Mount Sion, the name of a general range of hills in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and, it is supposed, on the spot where Abraham offered up his son Isaac. The form of it was much the same as the tabernacle, except being every way of larger dimensions. Its outward court was a circumference of half a mile walled round about, where every clean Israelite might enter, and into part of which afterward even the Gentile converts were admitted. Within this court was another for the Priests and Levites, surrounded with a low wall that the people might, over it, see what was doing by the priests; near to the west end of which stood the temple; and at its entrance were two pillars, the one called *Jachin*, "stability," and the other *Boaz*, "strength." You then entered a porch twenty cubits from north to south, ten from east to west, and a hundred and twenty in height, which served as a steeple to adorn the building, and a place of shelter and prayer to the serving priests. Beyond this was the sanctuary itself, or the holy place, forty cubits in length, twenty cubits in breadth, and thirty cubits in height; and passing through the sanctuary

you entered by a fine veil, and two-leaved doors of olive tree, into the oracle, or the most holy place, twenty cubits square, as in the tabernacle; appropriated to the same uses, and to the entrance of the high priest alone. The walls of the house were reared with alternate rows of fine cedar-wood, and hewn stones, most probably the finest marble; the figures of palm-trees and of cherubim appeared every where within, wrought upon its curtain, and carved upon its materials. The oracle had no window, and was therefore particularly dark; nor had the sanctuary any in the tabernacle; and in the temple but narrow windows, light against light: the pavement, walls, and roof within were overlaid with gold, and the roof without covered with the same precious metal, which, when the sun shone upon its top, must have given it a most splendid and dazzling appearance. We may reasonably suppose that, as the model of this structure was laid by a Divine Architect, it was the completest building ever erected; and it is no improbable conjecture of some, who would derive all the Grecian orders, and greatest ornaments in architecture, from this temple. When thus prepared, it was dedicated by feasting and sacrifices, which were consumed with the holy fire, which anew came down from heaven; and the Shechinah, or cloud of Divine glory, entered into it to take up its rest over the ark between the cherubim*, which constituted its peculiar honour; its own conclusive grandeur and heavenly dignity.

But now let us contemplate its emblematical design, and see how exactly and justly it is calculated to represent the person and glory of our Divine Immanuel, when in future times, as God incarnate, he appears among his people; and when in his human body, as in the Temple of the Lord, all the Divine glories dwell. "Then the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace

* For further account of the Tabernacle and Temple, see Brown's Dictionary of the Bible under these words; and Jennings's "Jewish Antiquities."

and truth." His Divine person is of no human origin, but is the plan, the model, the work of an heavenly Architect, "the Tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. viii. 2); "the greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building." (Heb. ix. 11.) His human nature itself was prepared for him by his heavenly Father; for "a body," says he, "hast thou prepared me." It was wrought and formed by the Holy Ghost; then it was anointed without measure by his influence, and adorned with all his gifts and graces. By his Divine power it was conceived in the womb of a virgin mother; according to the declaration of the angel, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 34, 35.) Here is a suitable preparation for the residence of the Divine glory. In the pure and spotless body of Jesus, in the Temple of his Manhood devised of God, and reared up with infinite wisdom and skill, consecrated with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and his own bloody sufferings and sacrifice, is the glorious residence of his Godhead.—The temple was eminently the house of the Lord Jehovah: of this place he had said, "My name shall be there" (1 Kings viii. 27—29); and therefore, "it came to pass," at its consecration, "when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stay to minister because of the cloud. For the Glory of the Lord (Jehovah) had filled the house of the Lord." (Compare Exod. xxix. 42—46, and xl. 34—38.) Thus in the dear Redeemer "dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person." "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." This was the design of both the tabernacle and the temple; the tabernacle, however, though most glorious within, had its outward covering of meaner and rough materials, and was a just representation of the outwardly mean and lowly ap-

pearance of our Redeemer, though inwardly most glorious, when tabernacling on earth. Being moveable, and at last entirely taken down, it represented the human nature of the Lord Jesus as about to be cast down in death: it therefore particularly marked out his great humiliation, when going up and down among his people, in a body like ours, subjected to the same infirmities, till he died upon the cross. And as the tabernacle was taken down, or rested in the temple, which was erected in its stead, and was virtually the same, though vastly more glorious; so the dying Saviour, dropping all his infirmity and meanness in the grave, rises again in the same body infinitely more glorious, to execute all the same glorious offices upon his Throne. The Temple therefore, besides presenting to the eye the emblems of the same object, was the type of the firmness and stability of his heavenly glories; the very names of the pillars, at its entrance, though designed, not for support, but ornament, immediately directed the mind to this view, the stability and strength of the great Antitype. The whole building was the perfection of all wisdom, skill, and beauty, human and Divine, and formed the best representation which could be given on earth of him who is "*the All in All*;"—"*the Brightness of Glory*." But not only were the tabernacle and the temple the residence of the name Jehovah, but they were intended to manifest Jehovah as reconciled to us: they exhibited therefore his person, by the sovereign mercy of God set up to be our Mediator; the appointed, the sure, the glorious and eternal means of our fellowship with God, and of receiving all blessings from him. This was the design of all their officers and services: both of them together represented the fulness of his mediatorial excellency, the perfection of his glories; and the two apartments, the holy and the most holy, in the tabernacle and temple, intimated that the Divine and human nature of our Redeemer were but one Christ, God and man but one Immanuel. As the medium of an Israelite's approach to God, it was only in that temple, or as looking by faith towards it, that any of his services

were accepted; and it is only through Jesus that we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Eph. ii. 18; compare Col. i. 14—22.) He is the means of all fellowship with God; the treasury of the atonement, the light, the purification, and all the provision for our souls. In every view, therefore, it reflects the glory of Christ Jesus. Its design is accomplished in him; but in all he rises infinitely above, and the eminent, the exalted, glory must be to our Jesus, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. The conformity and propriety of the type, but the pre-eminent excellency of the Antitype will appear, especially as the appointed and all-sufficient medium of our approach to God, if we proceed to consider,

2. *Their typical furniture and their services.*—All these mark out some distinct excellency, work, or blessing of the Redeemer: in their different parts, his different works, offices, and benefits; and collectively, his all-sufficiency and the fulness of his salvation. Though far beneath the Christian dispensation in clearness and in glory, their testimony is not now to be despised nor rejected; for these were the things which led the believing Israelites to the knowledge of Jesus and his salvation: and still they shew to us that it was the same Gospel which was preached to them, and which they received; and, illuminated by the Gospel, they reflect back a mild lustre upon all its truths and blessings.

Let us then pursue the inquiry. In the entrance, or in the first uncovered court, by the door stood the brazen altar, and the brazen laver (See Exod. xl. 29, 30), visible to all, because they conveyed a truth necessary to all, the dying love, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, and the regenerating influence of his Spirit.

(1.) *The altar of burnt-offering* (Ezek. xxvii. 1—8), in the court of the tabernacle. This was five cubits long, five cubits broad, and three cubits high; but in the court of the temple, twenty cubits long, twenty cubits broad, and ten cubits high. (See 1 Chron. iv. 1.) That

belonging to the tabernacle was built of Shittim wood, overlaid with brass, but that belonging to the temple was altogether of brass, an emblem of glory and strength. Upon this, the burnt-offerings and meat-offerings were offered, as the Lord commanded Moses. At the four corners, were four horns of the same, upon which, after the sacrifice had been slain, some of the blood was to be put with the finger of the priest. (Lev. iv. 25, 30, 34.)—The spiritual import of this emblem is given us by the Apostle: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle; for the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary, by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. xiii. 10—12.) Jesus, who is our Sacrifice, is also our Altar, in the humiliation of his human nature, and the glory of his Divine, bearing all our offerings, and giving efficacy to them all; his almighty strength and glory, justly represented by its usual emblems the strong and polished brass, able to bear up all, and give a virtue to all. The Altar was four square, denoting his perfection, and so his all-sufficiency; or, it might denote the universality of his salvation, to all the ends of the earth, the four quarters of the world, though this was especially denoted by the four horns at the four corners. These also, as they were the natural emblems of the rays of light, the glory and strength of the firmament, must be considered as representing his Divine power, and all the splendid rays of his Glory, and his Majesty. And as these were undivided parts of the altar*, they intimated, that the mediatorial strength of his salvation was derived from what he bore and suffered there: the blood put upon the tips of them plainly shadowed forth the virtue of his sacrifice and obedience, as sufficient to atone for all his brethren to the end of the earth, and spreading the all-sufficient grace and power of his redeeming blood; for the salvation of his redeemed, wherever scattered among

* See Essay on the title *Altar*. Ser. vi. Ess. ix.

the sons of men ; and that he who was the glory of his people Israel would be God's salvation to Gentile sinners. Thus, the first object which strikes our attention affords the most eminent display of a dying Saviour, in the merit of his atonement. This is the foundation and the glory of every dispensation of God to man, since man became a sinner, and stood in need of such an amazing display of sovereign grace, and boundless love.

(2.) The next thing which struck the eye of the believing Israelite was *the brazen laver*, placed a little further on, in the court of the tabernacle (Exod. xl. 30 ; xxx. 18 ; xxxviii. 8) ; and in the stead of which was the capacious *brazen sea*, or *molten sea of brass* upon twelve oxen, besides the ten lavers, in the court of the priests, before the temple. (1 Kings vii. 23—49 ; 2 Chron. iv. 1, 6, 10.)—Does not this represent the purity and innocence of Jesus, that Lamb without blemish, and without spot ? Yes ; but still more they represent, not only his own purity, but his cleansing efficacy to my heart. Here let me behold then the fulness and all-sufficiency of his righteousness and of his Spirit, to justify and sanctify his people, through his blood, his grace, and his Spirit : their sacrifices of prayer and praise, and their every service is acceptable before God : through him they come near, and their offerings together with their persons, who are the spiritual priests of God, are continually well pleasing. The vessel so large, and so capacious, may justly, though indeed feebly, represent the infinite fulness that ever dwells in Jesus ; to sprinkle all nations, his elect in all the quarters of the earth, in every age and generation ; to wash away the sins of “ all who come unto God through him.” It is the type and emblem of that fountain ever open for sin and for uncleanness, &c. The twelve brazen figures of oxen ; three looking towards each quarter, which supported this immense laver, (which is therefore called a sea) ; may remind us of the Twelve Apostles of the Lord, going forth into all the world, to preach the Gospel of the kingdom to every creature, and proclaiming pardon and salvation to polluted

sinners. Here we must wash, if ever we would be cleansed from the filthiness of sin, "that we may draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." And though justified from all things by the faith of Jesus, still must we daily wash our hands and our feet there; our daily walk and conversation must be purified again and again, through the blood and grace of Jesus. No nitre nor soap can ever without this cleanse my conscience, my heart, or my actions; but here is the sovereignly efficacious Purifier: washed in this laver I shall be white as snow, yea, perfectly clean. In this laver of *Innocency*, this water of perfect purity and effectual purification, will "I wash my hands, O Lord," as did the Psalmist, "and thus will I compass thine altar;" in the confidence and joy of faith, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. (Psa. xxvi. 6, 7, &c.)

But now, with sacred awe, let us enter within the tabernacle, or the still more august and magnificent temple itself; and the first thing which strikes us in this solemn, beautiful, and venerable place, is the blazing light,

(3.) That diffuses itself from *the candlestick of gold*; or, in the temple of Solomon, *the ten golden candlesticks*, arranged five on each side of the mystical building. (Exod. xxv. 31, &c.; 1 Kings vii. 49, &c.; 2 Chron. iv. 7—20.) This must have constituted a great ornament, and formed a most magnificent appearance in the tabernacle, but more especially in the temple. From the main shaft six branches shot forth, all of one piece of beaten gold, forming together seven supporters to seven lamps of equal height, which were kept continually burning. (Lev. xxiv. 2.) These were calculated to represent the light and glory ever dwelling in the Lord Jesus: they might be considered as emblems of the sun in the natural world, the source of all light and beauty; but in their spiritual import must point us to Him who is the Sun of Righteousness, arising now with healing beams beneath his wings; the Light of his

people, the only Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world. The tabernacle, as it was constructed, could receive no light but from this ; there being no window for the admission of outward light : and even in the temple, the brightness of the lamps must have greatly outshone all the light received from without. And does not this teach us a truth which we are unwilling to learn, but which is evident to the enlightened mind, and shines in the strongest characters in the word of truth,—that man, a fallen darkened sinner, can have no light to know spiritual and heavenly objects, but by the revelation of God, and in the person of Jesus, in whom alone shines “ *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.*” In ourselves, there is no heavenly spiritual light : the true state of man is described by “ darkness and the shadow of death,” yea, “ *gross darkness*” (Isa. lx. 1—3) ; in ignorance of God and of his soul, of his own state and the way of salvation, of the present blessings of Divine grace, and of the objects and glories of eternity. Nothing can be more awful and unpleasant than total darkness ; but such is spiritually the state of man. Could we conceive of the state of the world without the sun, such would be the state of man without the Sun of Righteousness : and ever must he have remained in this cheerless gloomy state, had not the true Light shined, and brought to light life and immortality, pardoning mercy, saving grace, and endless glory. All our light of knowledge, our light of grace, and light of peace, and joy, and happiness, comes forth from this immaterial Sun, and is beautifully held forth in this illustrious type. This blessed Jesus now fills the temple of his church with the Divine light and illumination of his Spirit : he is now come forth in all his splendour, shining in all the glory of his Gospel, by the word and grace of his Spirit, into the understandings and hearts of his people. This is the glorious day to which the Prophet alludes, when he calls the church to arise from its state of dejection and torpor, and welcome its approaching glories. “ Arise, shine ; for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon

thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." O Lord, hasten it in its time. The number seven, which is always considered as a number denoting fulness and perfection, together with the ten candlesticks fully occupying each side of the temple, assures us of the fulness of light and glory which is in Him; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the fulness of the Godhead, a fulness which is not designed to rest within himself, but which, like the rays of light, must diffuse themselves all around. Thus his light is, and must be, communicated to all his church; and out of his fulness they receive, and grace for grace. Patriarchs and prophets of old were enlightened with his beams; apostles, evangelists, and the primitive teachers of his church, derived all their light with which the world was instructed and cheered, from this same repository: and now the overseers and ministers of his church, yea every individual of his people, are all illuminated by the bright beams of this celestial Lamp, and derive from him all which they know spiritually and profitably of the things of grace, or of the world of glory. Are we partakers of the bright influence of his rays? Then, "*though once darkness, now are we light IN THE LORD.*" We will acknowledge from whence we have received, and glorify the Lord our Redeemer; not walking in darkness, but as the children of the light and of the day, and, knowing the path of our feet, and the way in which we are going, shall hasten forward through earth to the brighter world above.

By the candlestick stood next in order,

(4.) *The table of shew-bread*, overlaid with gold; and arranged by the ten candlesticks in the temple stood an equal number of these, all of gold. (Exod. xxv. 23—30; 1 Kings vii. 48; 2 Chron. iv. 8—20.) Twelve loaves were put upon these, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were to be only for the high priest

and his sons. (Levit. xxiv. 5—9.) Here then we behold the blessed Jesus in another light, equally important, equally necessary, equally useful to us, as the Bread of Life, which cometh down from heaven, one with his people, made the priests of the Lord, perpetually fed. On this idea our Lord himself has beautifully enlarged; “Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that Bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this Bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh unto me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.” (John vi. 32—35: compare ver. 27, and 48—51.) “And the bread which I give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” (ver. 52—58*.) In allusion to this it most probably was, that the Psalmist represented the care of Jehovah, the Shepherd of his flock, by his spreading a table before him, in the presence of his enemies, to feed his soul with heavenly food, in the midst of a disordered world.

The twelve loaves, exactly proportioned to the twelve tribes of Israel, most certainly were designed to assure us of the all-sufficiency of the provisions of his grace for all his people: all his sons and daughters shall eat of this Bread of Life, shall find a full supply, shall rejoice in his abundant blessings, and eat and live for ever. Here there can be no deficiency: it is the infinite fulness of Jesus that is provided for the relief of their wants; and till finite can exhaust infinity, there will still remain an inexhaustible fulness, when the wants of all his people are supplied through time or through eternity. A little further on, just by the veil that separated the holy from the most holy place, was,

• See Essay on the title *Bread of Life*.—Ser. iii. Ess. x.

(5.) *The altar of incense*, overlaid with gold.* (Exod. xxx. 1—6.)—Upon this the high priest was to burn the incense both morning and evening (ver. 7); and once a year the blood of the sin-offering was to be sprinkled upon the horns of it (representing the same as the horns of the brazen altar) as an atonement. (Ver. 10; 1 Kings vii. 48; 2 Chron. iv. 19. See the nature of this incense in Exod. xxx. 34—38.) Formed of a composition of the sweetest spices, when burnt upon the altar it must have yielded the most delicious perfume; but on the great day of atonement it was to be burnt in a censer, full of burning coals from off the altar before the Lord within the veil, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat that is upon the testimony. (Lev. xvi. 12, 13.) As the brazen altar in the court denoted the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus, so by this was emblematically signified the powerful, effectual, and continual intercession of the great Mediator, which is always well pleasing to God; the sacrifice of a sweet savour and always prevailing, though only through the merit of his atonement, intimated by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice upon the horns of the altar. None but the high priest could perform this part of the ceremonial service, nor he but in the appointed way, under pain of death; and none but our great Priest can ever approach unto God for us, with the blood of his own sacrifice and the power of his own fragrant intercession. The Apostle thus beautifully unites them: “But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle” (that of his own body), “not made with hands; that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but *by his own blood*; he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,” &c. (See Heb. ix. 11—15.) For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God

* See the title *Altar*, Ser. vi. Ess. ix.

for us. (ver. 24.) As with this he entered within the veil, therefore the altar was placed just by it, and the incense once a year presented within it. His intercession is infinitely more precious than the sweetest and most fragrant perfume: in him alone is all that is acceptable to God, and well pleasing in the redemption of his people. Let us then come and commit our persons, our cause, and our services to him; for in him we, as an holy priesthood, offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) “By the blood of Jesus we have boldness to enter into the holiest by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God, we draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Heb. x. 21, 22.) For he is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. (vii. 25.) This is the encouragement which the Apostle holds forth to his believing people, under a consciousness of renewed guilt and sin: even then we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who maketh intercession for us, on the ground of his being the Propitiation for our sins. (1 John ii. 1, 2.)

Between the holy and the most holy place was hung,

6. *The beautiful veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; adorned with the figures of the cherubim.* (Exod. xxvi. 31—33; 2 Chron. iii. 14.) Besides which, in the temple of Solomon, there were doors of olive-tree, with curtains of cherubim, and the palm-trees and open flowers overlaid with gold. (1 Kings vi. 31, 32.)—This was, no doubt, a glorious figure of the body of our Redeemer, while the cherubic representation only marked out the union of his Divine nature, and the palm-branches and trees his triumph and his victory. This veil being rent at the time of our Lord’s crucifixion, shewed plainly what was its design, and manifested that now the way was opened into the holiest, the heavenly state; and that the

Lord Jesus had finished his humiliation and debased appearance on earth, which awhile concealed his true and heavenly glories. Now "He is our peace, who hath made both Jew and Gentile one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Eph. ii. 13—18.) He has, therefore, consecrated the new and living way for us through the veil of his flesh, and hath opened the dispensation of superior glory in the Gospel. (2 Cor. iii. 7—11.) All without this veil represented what the Lord Jesus was and did on earth; and all beyond, or within, is representative of the heavenly state, of what the Eternal Three are doing in the heavenly world, especially the person of our Redeemer. This is intimated by the Apostle, when he declares that the Holy Ghost, signified by the veil which the high priest alone could pass once a-year, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet manifested, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, &c. (Heb. ix. 8: compare 11, 12, and 24.) But if we enter into this MOST HOLY PLACE, we shall discern the figurative representations of the Divine glories; and the first thing which demands our attention is,

(7.) *The ark of the testimony, and its lid, or cover, called the Mercy-seat*, described Exod. xxv. 10—21.—It was formed of Shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold within and without, richly ornamented with curious workmanship, and its lid of pure gold. It was intended principally as a repository of the two tables of the Law*, written by the

* The Apostle tells us (Heb. ix. 4), that in the ark was also "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded;" though it is very likely these were beside it, in the holy place, as the Apostle's words may bear this meaning, referring ἐν ἣ, not to κιβωτον, but to σκεπη, the more remote antecedent, and which thus concurs with 1 Kings viii. 9.

finger of God, the testament; therefore called the Ark of the Testimony. Did not the wood here represent the humanity, and the fine gold the Divine glory, of the Lord our Redeemer, being the proper hieroglyphic of light and glory, and both together represent the person of our Immanuel, God and man? In his very heart was the holy law of God, and in him all blessings were treasured as our complete Mediator and Surety. This ark was therefore the great object of attention in all that dispensation. Its covering of gold was called the Mercy-seat, or the Propitiatory, which was of exactly the same dimensions as the ark, and thus denotes the perfect satisfaction of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his obedience, just answering to the demands of the Law, and to our transgressions, magnifying the Law, and making it honourable, and thus securing mercy to his people. It represented, therefore, the covering of all their transgressions of the Law, and the effects of his mercy to the transgressors themselves. There the Lord Jehovah appeared, and manifested through the high priest his favour to his people according to his promise: "And there will I meet with thee, and commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim, which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." (Exod. xxv. 22.) It is in reference to this that the Apostle speaks of Christ, as set forth by God as the propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the forgiveness of our sins through the forbearance of God, "that God may be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.) This blessed Redeemer is the glorious reality of all these typical shadows, in whom God again returned with mercy and love to his redeemed. He, indeed, is the covering of the Law, that it may no longer charge the guilt of its transgressions upon the believing sinner; for he is the End of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth.—Have we seen and felt our sins, our need of him? and, renouncing our self-righteous dependence, are we presenting our persons and ser-

vices in and through him alone? In him, then, we draw near to God, and God will draw near to us: his Law is honoured: the righteousness of that dear Redeemer shall cover our souls, and the perfect delight in his work shall render all his people the objects of his everlasting love and favour. What, then, might we naturally expect over this, but some emblematical display and representation of the Divine glory? Behold it, then, in

The cherubim of glory, shadowing the mercy-seat of beaten gold, formed of the same piece as the mercy-seat itself. (Exod. xxv. 18—20.) Over this Solomon appears to have made two others of olive-trees, overlaid with gold, which overshadowed the two golden ones, and stretched their wings the whole breadth of the house. (1 Kings vi. 23—28; 2 Chron. iii. 10—13.) Though the description of the figure of these is not given us, either by Moses or by Solomon, yet there is every reason to believe that they were the same as were seen by the Prophet Ezekiel, and which are described by him. (Ezek. i. 5—10; x. 22*.) If this be the fact, then they had the appearance of a man, or of a human body, with four faces; the face of a man and of a lion on the right side, and the face of an ox and of an eagle on the left side. The lion is the king of beasts, and most probably marked out the Lion of the tribe Judah, the King of glory; and as this alone was united with the man, we have a beautiful emblem, or hieroglyphic, of the union of the Godhead and the manhood in the person of the man Jesus Christ.

The laborious ox may be considered as the emblem of the Father, in his justice calling for vengeance: for the language of justice is this, "Nothing but an infinite atonement can appease for infinite offence." This had been done by the Lion-man; and he is therefore represented in a triumphant posture: He has satisfied, and therefore he has triumphed. (Col. ii. 15.) The eagle is the constant hieroglyphic of the wind, and this is the constant emblem of the Holy Spirit; and therefore under this he appeared

* See Parkhurst's Lexicon on the word כַּרְבֻּבַיִם.

on the great day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 2, &c.) We have here, then, as apt an illustration as such a mode of description can give us, of the Eternal Trinity, uniting the man Christ Jesus in the Second Person, and all joined together in the covenant of mercy, for the redemption of sinful man, looking down upon the mercy-seat, viewing with complacency and delight the full satisfaction, the finished righteousness, the complete redemption of Jesus, and, as such, we discovered the one Jehovah manifesting himself in the Three Persons of the covenant Aleim, the reconciled God of his people. This seems evidently alluded to by the cherubim being beaten out of the same mass of gold of which the mercy-seat was made, and which was doubtless an emblem of the Deity and absolute purity of the Saviour. The name, also, may justly be considered as implying the likeness of the Great Ones: the Prophet Ezekiel describes them as the representations of the God of Israel, as the word might be rendered. (Ezek. x. 20.) This seems to be implied in both these prophetic representations; and in their original design they are described by Moses as set up to keep, most probably to preserve, to man the knowledge of the way to the true Tree of Life, according to the new dispensation of mercy. (Gen. iii. 24.) Thus considered, they represent the Three Persons in one Jehovah, in covenant for the salvation of elect sinners.—Being thus led from step to step to the emblematical furniture of the temple, we here see the whole consummated, as might be expected, in the master-piece of all the hieroglyphic representations figurative of the Divine Persons, and the mystery of the covenant of redemption. The Jews, therefore, always spoke of the cherubim as the foundation, the root, the heart, the marrow of the whole tabernacle and Levitical service, which it could not be in any other view, or not so completely. This may account for their constant representation every where, and on every thing throughout the temple, on the sides of the temple; and upon the garment of the high priest, especially the Lion-man, the emblem of the great object there exhibited, the God-man Christ Jesus.

And this being united continually with the branches of the palm-tree, and flowers in bloom, beautifully designated the glory, the beauty, the victory, and the triumph of the condescending Redeemer in his human nature, and all the fulness of grace and glory which now resides in him. This, then, is the Christian Tabernacle, the Christian Temple Jesus, our All in all. Blessed be God for his glory and his fulness, realizing all the types, but infinitely more glorious: for we no longer have the type and figure, but the reality; no longer the shadow, but the body and the substance. How much clearer is the light, how much brighter the glory, of the Gospel-dispensation? If that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. (2 Cor. iii. 7—18.) My soul shall carry on all its spiritual service, all its intercourse with God in this heavenly Temple, in and through, or looking to, the Lord Jesus Christ. No other way of acceptance with God was appointed under the Old Testament: its figures all pointed here. And still there is the same way to God, but, blessed be his Name, now fully opened even within the veil. Thus would I glorify the blessed Jesus; look to God only in him; look for and expect all through him, expect all in him alone, and in every offering having respect to his atonement, righteousness, satisfaction, intercession, and infinite fulness of saving blessings. It is dangerous, infinitely dangerous; yea, surely destructive to neglect this glorious Saviour, or seek salvation in any other way. (Heb. ii. 2, 3; x. 28, 29.) But we shall be accepted in the Beloved, and behold the glory of God in the face of our Redeemer.—Happy believer! Jesus has all fulness of grace, and every blessing in him now. He is my Altar of atoning sacrifice, the laver of my purification, the Golden Candlestick of light and glory, the Table which supports the bread of life by his Divine fulness, and that Bread of Life itself. From him as the Altar of incense, the sweet and fragrant Odour of intercession ascends to God, and perfumes my person and my services. He is the Mercy-seat and true Propitiatory, through whom God looks down with delight upon

my believing soul. He appears as One in the Eternal Trinity; his manhood united with the Second Person through which, all and each of the Persons stands engaged in, and delights in, the work of redemption. And thus I behold a God, a covenant God in Christ, my God, my heavenly Father. Beholding thus the Eternal Jehovah as the covenant Aleim for the salvation of all who believe in him, let me draw near confidently, thankfully, but adoringly; cleave daily to him; and through time rejoice in those displays of his grace which are made through the medium of all his appointed ordinances. Eternity shall discover still more, and unveil all the communicable and discoverable glories of his Person, and of his salvation. There, if a believer in him, shall I enter into the highest of all, where Jesus is entered, the Forerunner of his people. There shall I behold him without a veil, and beyond a figure, in a manner infinitely surpassing, not only the shadow of the Law, but the glories of the Gospel. I shall behold him *as he is*, and, enjoying his fulness, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, through the endless progressions of eternity!

ESSAY X.

Passover.

THE ceremonies of the Jewish Law form together, a beautiful and enigmatical picture of spiritual and heavenly things. When we have once obtained the right clue for the interpretation of them, we are surprised how every part answers its design, and illustrates the subject which it represents; and discover with what admirable, what Divine wisdom and skill, the whole of them are constructed and arranged. The design of the Eternal Jehovah in the whole of revelation, from the very beginning, and in all his dispensations, has been but one,—“*the testimony of Jesus.*” This, which formed the substance of the first revelation to man, after his fall, has constituted the substance of every future discovery of God to his creatures. Every institution exhibits some part of his character and work; and the whole collectively represents and illustrates, as far as earthly emblems and sensible figures can do, the person of Christ, his Divine and mediatorial glories, the nature of his work and its completion, the riches of his grace, and the freeness and fulness of his blessings; thus opening the sinner’s way to God, and encouraging his confidence of acceptance and salvation. To this the Apostle Paul frequently alludes in all his Epistles; but in that to the Hebrews the subject is distinctly and explicitly treated, and the clue to spiritual interpretation clearly afforded us. How do the glories and excellencies of the Lord our Saviour continually break forth upon our minds! While we here contemplate him as the Antitype of every ceremony of that mystical dispensation, our understandings are instructed, our consciences consoled, our views enlarged, our hearts de-

lighted, and the humble penitent sinner is encouraged to trust in him, and expect from him, all the blessings of salvation. It needs only a lively faith in the truths and blessings there discovered, as treasured up in Jesus, to bring peace and joy into the soul, and fill the heart with gratitude and love. We see the types themselves, while they shew their own inadequacy, reflecting a glory upon the great object of their appointment; and while they fade away before him, they proclaim him as the only design, and the great consummator of them all. Amongst these, the doctrine of sacrifices holds the most conspicuous part, and is the ground and foundation, and the principal object in every dispensation. In no view, does the Lord Jesus appear more suitable in himself, and in a manner more humbling and affecting to us; or more engaging and more animating, than when he is represented as offering himself an offering and a sacrifice for our sins. The figurative sacrifices, indeed, as being imperfect and ineffectual, were continually repeated; but Christ, our infinitely meritorious sacrifice, having once offered himself for us, has thereby completed the atonement, obtained the redemption, and bestows the everlasting blessings. Amongst the sacrifices of the Jewish Law, *the Passover*, or *the Paschal sacrifice*, was one of the most eminent, and must therefore be considered as one of the most eminent types of the dying love of our Redeemer. The institution of the Passover was appointed on the night of the Israelites' deliverance from the land of Egypt, and was primarily designed to commemorate that event. (See Exod. xii.) It was called *Pascha*, from פסח, "to pass over*," from God's passing over and leaving the Israelites in safety; on whose doors the blood of the lamb was sprinkled, when he slew the first-born of the Egyptians. Our English term "Passover" is

* Some of the primitive Christians, viz. Tertullian, Chrysostom, &c. considered *Pascha* to be derived from the Greek πασχω, "to suffer," as alluding to the antitypical sufferings of Christ, though they might perhaps only mean that it was so ordered by God, that the term might correspond with both the type and the antitype.

therefore very suitable, and very properly marks out its nature and design. On the tenth day of the month Abib, the first of the ecclesiastical year, each man for his family; or, if his family was too small, for his and his neighbour's family, took up the lamb. It was to be a male, of the first year, without blemish: it was to be kept in the house alive till the fourteenth day, between the evening; that is, between three and six o'clock, about that time, most probably near five o'clock; it was to be slain, after a careful search, that no leaven was to be found in their houses in Egypt, in the private houses, but afterwards at the place which God should have appointed or chosen to place his name there. (Deut. xvi. 2.) Any one might kill the Paschal lamb, though the priest alone afterwards could sprinkle the blood; the blood, being received in a bason, was in Egypt to be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop upon the upper lintel, (not the threshold,) and the two side door-posts, that the destroying angel might not enter their houses; but in future times the blood was sprinkled upon the altar, as in other sacrifices. The flesh of the lamb was then to be roasted whole, and eaten by the circumcised Hebrews, and their circumcised servants, and afterwards by proselyted Gentiles, who were circumcised, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs: not a bone of it was to be broken, and what remained was to be burnt with fire. At the first observance of it in Egypt, they were to eat it as travellers; their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, with great haste, as immediately departing: but afterwards they ate it in the usual posture of recumbency, drinking a cup of wine, and singing a sacred hymn. In the original observance, they were not to go out of the door of their house till the morning, which was then indeed necessary, but peculiar to its first observance; and in future time, he who wilfully neglected it was to be put to death. In consequence of this, the Israelites, delivered from the hand of the destroying angel, were brought forth with a high hand from the power of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and went in a triumphant manner from the land of their

bondage. These circumstances must no doubt have been remembered by every pious Israelite with the devoutest gratitude, whenever the Passover was again celebrated. But while it led to a remembrance of past blessings, it pointed as a type to a still greater deliverance, which at length has been accomplished by the Lord our Saviour. On the very same evening, while the solemn service was performing, the fulfilment takes place; after himself partaking of the type, the great Antitype goes forth for its accomplishment, and enters upon his bloody agony in the garden, which was soon afterwards completed on the cross.

Now we say “*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*” Whatsoever was represented by this mystical ordinance he actually is, has actually done, and effectually obtained; and in all these he has been “*sacrificed for us.*” Let us contemplate it with humiliation, gratitude, and godly love. A variety of circumstances attending the sacred service, will afford us instruction, delight, and infinite benefit. If we consider how the solemn festival exhibits the person and character of the Redeemer, the sacrifice which he offered, the fruit and benefits of it, and the means of our attaining an interest in them; we shall comprise in this, the various circumstances which may promote this important object; and surely we shall then be inclined to ascribe to Him who loved us, and redeemed us to God with his blood, from the power of every enemy, all the glory, and the eternal praise.

I. Let us consider the Passover, as to the view which it seems designed to give us, of *the person and character of our Redeemer.*—The offering on this occasion was a lamb; and under this allusion the person of our Jesus is frequently represented. It seems indeed, to have been the peculiar delight of the Holy Ghost, to testify of Him, and represent Him under this emblem, in the New Testament, to express his love, his condescension, his gentleness, and

his grace. "Behold the Lamb of God," says the Baptist, "who taketh away the sins of the world."—There is a peculiar fitness and propriety in the type, either as to the natural properties of a lamb, or the peculiar circumstances of the Paschal Lamb. As the lamb is perhaps the least subject to choler of any animal, it is a fit emblem of Him who is the meek and lowly Saviour, who, in the days of his flesh, was most eminent for the gentleness, the humility, the kindness and inoffensiveness of the whole of his conduct. Though the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, yet when he appears amongst us, it is eminently as the meek and lowly Lamb of God. (Compare Isa. xlii. 1—4.) The emblem may also naturally represent his exemplary patience and submission to his Father's will; for "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth;" and though "oppressed and afflicted," when "it pleased the Father to bruise him," still in the lamb-like submission of his holy soul, he resigns himself to his pleasure: "Father, not my will, but thine be done." Though he could have commanded twelve legions of angels, and no one could have taken away his life from him, he meekly submits to the insults of men, and, in the compassion of his heart for sinners, "lays down his life of himself." O my soul! ever behold with faith and wonder this Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. As to the peculiar circumstances of the Paschal Lamb, this most strikingly represents the character and the circumstances of Jesus: it was first to be a lamb without blemish, free from all natural defects. And does it not thus represent the immaculate Redeemer, made without sin, conceived of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin, that he might be born without any of the contagion of natural defect or corruption, and who therefore "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth?" His very enemies bore their testimony to his unspotted purity; and his unjust judge proclaims, "I find no fault in him." He by whose precious blood we are redeemed, was "the Lamb without blemish and without spot." When

this lamb was taken up from amongst the flock, did it not represent our Redeemer, as appointed of God in the everlasting counsels, and in time chosen from the people, that he must therefore become like one of us in all things, taking our flesh and blood, that he might bear the nature of his brethren, and be suitable to the office of the Kinsman Redeemer, and be able to become “the sacrifice for our sins.” The paschal lamb was also to be a male of the first year, when its flesh was in the highest state of perfection for food, intimating the excellency of that sacrifice which he was to offer for us, and that he should be cut off in the very flower of his age, in the strength of youth and health. This circumstance may perhaps still further shadow forth the glory and unchangeableness of his Divine nature, with respect to which all the relations of time are but one, all absorbed in the infinity and eternity of his essence. In this view, our adorable Redeemer is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” “His years are the same,” *i. e.* but one and unchanging: every part, indeed even the minutest circumstance of the type, must be accomplished in the great Antitype. Thus, as the lamb was to be taken up on the fourth day, before its being offered, in the place which the Lord should choose, so was the Lord Jesus employed four years, if we consider them as prophetic days, in his public ministry: and literally on the tenth day of the month, the fourth before his crucifixion, the humble Saviour made his solemn entrance into Jerusalem, and there devoted himself to God, and to his work of sufferings, which he knew he was then about to accomplish.

When the lamb was thus prepared, it was to be slain by the effusion of its blood before the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel, each for himself, and be roasted in the fire, not sodden nor boiled. It was to be roasted whole; and care must be taken that it should be perfectly and thoroughly done, and not a bone of it be broken. The peculiar directions here given are intended most minutely and accurately to represent the *sufferings of our Re-*

deemer, and his death by the shedding of his blood;—the strict severity of justice executing the sentence of the Law upon his whole person, even to the uttermost, when he took our law-place, when it was “*exacted of Him, and he answered the demand for us.*” Then the whole multitude of the Jewish people conspired his death; the priests, and scribes, the elders and the rulers, exciting the abandoned populace, who, in the fury of their zeal, call for the sacrifice of this devoted victim, “*Away with him, away with him!*” “*Crucify him, crucify him!*” But not only the whole estate of the Jews, but all his people, bore their part in this scene of ingratitude and death. Yes; your sins and mine, my reader, then had a voice: they called for the condemnation, the scourge, and the cross. They administered the cup, platted the thorns, struck the nails, and fixed the willing victim upon the ignominious tree. If I may so speak, the hand of all his people, of all the congregation of his Israel, was upon him, to put him to death. Your hand and mine were there for this purpose; or, virtually in confession of guilt, to cast our sins upon him. But what were all these to the hand of God: causing to meet upon him, as an overwhelming confluence of waters, uniting in a mighty torrent, all our iniquities in all their guilt and curse? When He thus became sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; then, presenting himself as the Surety of the better covenant, and standing forth in the place of sinners, he submitted to endure all the consequences of our transgressions: he was slain, and shed his blood for us. The *roasting* of the paschal lamb with fire “justly represents the great Antitype enduring on our account the fierceness of God’s anger, which is said to *burn like fire.*” The sentence of the Law denounced the curse of death; the justice of the Law requires its execution; and the Lamb of God offers himself to the endurance of it. In this view it pleased the Father to bruise the Son of his love; the fire of the Divine wrath awakes against the man who is Jehovah’s Fellow, and burnt even to his very soul. (Zech. xiii.

7; Isa. liii.)—Let us view for a moment the scene of inexplicable and unequalled sorrows. It was on the cold night when he entered into the garden of Gethsemane (literally interpreted, the Press for Olives), to tread the wine-press of the Father's wrath alone: there, lying in the open air, in the coldest season of the night, and on the chilling ground, which would naturally have driven the blood inward to the heart, he sweats profusely without heat, and bleeds at every pore without a wound. It was the fire of Divine wrath burning in his very soul which caused his extreme agony, and made the vital blood burst through his flesh, so as to bedew his garments, and fall in great drops upon the ground. (Luke xxii. 44.) No nail as yet pierced him; no cross yet suspends him by his pierced hands and feet; no spear yet pierces his side and his heart; and yet he bleeds copiously. What agony must have affected his very soul! What wrestling, what conflicts, what bitter sorrow! Of him most eminently might it be said, "Behold, and see: is it nothing to you, O ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." (Lam. i. 12–14.) When he stands before the tribunal, as the sheep dumb before its shearers, under all the pain, the ignominy, and the reproach, he continues silent, nor answers reproachfully again the calumny and the insults of his accusers. But the derision of men, the mockings, the scourgings, and even the agonies of the cross, were what others might have endured, and are what his people have actually endured and triumphed over, when God has vouchsafed to be with them there; yea, even the secret assaults of the powers of darkness, his people through his victory have been enabled to sustain, and come forth more than conquerors. But He, in the awful conflict, was left alone; and when the hour of his enemy was come, and the power of darkness surrounded him, alone he sustains the insult, and meets and overcomes the mighty enemies. On the tormenting cross his soul is left to cry out, "My God!

my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Who can fully understand the meaning of that bitter lamentation, that deepest cry of bitterest sorrows! The absence of God is the curse of sin; but behold the perfect acquiescence and submission of the Saviour. For this work he had engaged even from eternity. He enters upon it with the full view and knowledge of all its unequalled grief: "Now," says he, "is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?" No: "for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." (John xii. 27, 28.) Nature, in the midst of its deepest sorrow, shrinks back: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But Infinite Purity, in absolute resignation to the will of God, acquiesces in all. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Luke xxii. 42: compare Heb. v. 7—9.) Then, in the beautiful language of the prophetic Psalmist, "His strength was dried up," by this fire of Divine indignation, "as a potsherd." "My tongue," says he, "cleaveth to my gums, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." See the exact and minute description, which, though represented in prophetic vision, is the exact counterpart of the historic fact, in the 22d and 69th Psalms. Yes, it is the fierce and burning anger of God against sin which thus flames against it in the soul of the Redeemer, that thus consumed his reins and burnt up his spirit. The indignation indeed is just; the flame is a holy flame; to it the Saviour voluntarily submitted, that he might magnify that justice. He delights in his bitterest sufferings, and cheerfully courts them all; assured it is the truth, the justice, the absolute holiness of Jehovah, which requires and is honoured in them; which thus displays the dreadful evil and curse of sin in him, to magnify in all his people, the number of his redeemed, the exceeding riches of his grace and mercy; and thus undertaking to magnify and harmonize all the Divine perfections, he exults when the glorious purpose is completed, in the language of triumph, "IT IS FINISHED!" Oh! had that curse fallen upon us; had justice exacted its due, and Divine indignation against

sin displayed all its terrors, how had it sunk us into sorrow; without a remedy, and without an end!—O for an interest in this redeeming work of our Almighty Saviour! that He, having answered for us, we may have the benefit in Him, and that we may never experience the vengeance of everlasting fire. Behold then, my soul; “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;”—*for us*, and in our stead! How serious, how humbling, and yet how animating, is the truth implied in this declaration!

If for us these sufferings were endured, then were they our due: our guilt demanded them, and our souls were justly exposed to them. But if for us, then behold the substituted offering, in whom all the fire of Divine wrath has expended itself, that it might for ever cease from the redeemed and believing sinner. When we consider the whole scene in this light, what a wonder of grace, condescension, and love opens to our view! But yet, in what other light can we consider it? why else should the Father delight to bruise the Son of his everlasting love, and never more beloved than when thus fulfilling his will in the salvation of his people? Why the immaculate Lamb of God be the eminent sufferer, uniting in himself, and upon his sacred person, the sum of all suffering; the fullest measure of grief and sorrow which ever afflicted man? Why else should the Innocent suffer, when suffering is only the consequence of sin? Why, but because he suffered *for us*; because “he bare our sins in his own body on the tree;” because he bare our griefs and carried our sorrows, was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him. (Isa. liii. 3, 4, 6.) We inquire no further, we no longer wonder at the awful scenes; we admire the grace, and triumph in the sure salvation. But observe the value put upon the blood of the Paschal Lamb: it was not to be poured upon the ground, as in common things, or as in a common sacrifice (Lev. iv. 18, 25, 34); but it was to be received in a basin, and then used in a very peculiar manner, for a very important purpose (as we shall see presently), as a token

between God and them, and as the means of their deliverance. It is perhaps in allusion to this that the Apostle calls the blood by which we are redeemed, "*the precious blood of Christ.*" This is the price of our redemption, which, brought into the conscience of his people, is the token between God and them, as the means of their deliverance from sin and satan. This is what our great Priest is offering continually, while he pleads before the Throne, in the most holy place of the heavens. "For if any of us sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," who still is the Propitiation for our sins. And upon this the Apostle sweetly argues in Heb. ix. 11—14, &c. for the consolation of the people of God: Christ, by his own blood, is entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. The most engaging view of the Redeemer to the beloved Disciple, when the heavens were opened to him for the discovery of his glory, was under the appearance "*of a lamb, as it had been slain;*"—indicating that the virtue of his sacrifice still remains, and ever will remain, and is unchangeably the same; that it yet has the same efficacy in the sight of God, and for the benefit of his people, in insuring the acceptance of their persons and all their services.—But a bone of him was not to be broken. The literal fulfilment of this was particularly secured; for when the soldiers brake the legs of those crucified with him, as they found him dead already, they brake not his legs; that it might be fulfilled which was written, "A bone of him shall not be broken" (John xix. 33—36); intimating also that he was to be a perfect and unbroken Saviour, our complete and all-sufficient source of blessings and deliverance from every evil. Oh, what a Paschal Lamb is ours! not like those of the Jewish service, which could not make the comers unto them perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; but the Lamb of God, who, offering himself once for all, hath taken away sin, and continually *taketh away* the sin of all who in the world come to and believe in him. No wonder then that his blessings, though represented by, are

infinitely beyond, those received by the efficacy of the Paschal offering.

2. *Let us compare them for a moment, and admire the infinitely happier fruits and consequence of the death of Christ.*—When the appointed sacrifice had been slain, and used according to the Divine direction, then the destroying angel went forth to slay throughout all the land of Egypt; but passed over every house on which was sprinkled the blood of the Paschal lamb. (Exod. xii. 12, 13.) “For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you as a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” We have here the nature of the judgment: it was some pestilential plague from the immediate hand of the Lord, which instantly destroyed those whom it struck. But no plague shall come near the dwelling of his people. Behold the protection of his blood! neither the sentence of the Law, nor the sword of justice, nor the wrath of God, shall ever affect those who have an interest in Christ. The blood of sprinkling upon their heart, the blood of the covenant which God has enjoined them, insures all the blessings of the covenant for theirs. They need not fear the destroying angel, though he be out, destroying all around them: in Christ they have pardon, justification, peace, and deliverance. How beautifully represented by the Apostle! “By his one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” And our sins being all forgiven, and our nature renewed, no more offering for sin is required; but “we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” (Heb. x. 14—23.) Delivered from the powers of darkness, we are brought into the kingdom of the Son of God; have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins; and are fully reconciled to the Father, all cause of enmity being removed (Col. i.

13, &c.); yea, all things indeed are reconciled to those who are reconciled to God in Christ Jesus. While the Israelites were eating the mystical food, the first-born of Pharaoh were slain; judgment was executed on the gods of Egypt; and Pharaoh, their implacable tyrant, was divinely constrained to let them go. Delivered from the Egyptian slavery, they are at once restored to full liberty, of which they had been so long deprived. The bonds of their captivity are broken, and the way prepared for their journey to the land of promise. Behold the fruits of the death of Christ in a spiritual and nobler sense, to all who believe in him. He has delivered them from the hand of all their enemies, and brought them into the glorious liberty of the children of God; and, having obtained eternal inheritance for them, prepares their way to its possession. Sin and satan no longer possess, nor shall claim, a right in those who are the redeemed of the Lord, the purchase of his blood, the servants of the Lord Christ. He triumphed over all upon the cross, and nailed to it the hand-writing which was against them. There he overcame death and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; that he might deliver them who through fear of death are subject to bondage. (Heb. ii. 14, 15.)—Sin, in its guilt, cannot injure them; for “the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.” Sin, in its power, shall not injure them; for he has subdued it, and promises “it shall not have dominion over them.” Sin, in its condemnation and curse, shall not destroy them; for “there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.” It may assault and distress them, but shall not again bring them under its bondage; for the Son has made them free, and they shall be free indeed. Their enemies may follow them, with all the rage of an infatuated Pharaoh; they may persecute and distress them; but they shall not destroy them, nor touch them: the Lord is their strength and their song, and is become their salvation. The Lord is a man of war: Pharaoh’s chariots and his horses hath he cast into the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will

divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou, in thy mercy, hast led forth the people whom thou hast redeemed, and hast guided them, in thy strength, to thy holy habitation, &c. Thou wilt bring them in, and place them in the mount of thine inheritance; in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." (Exod. xv. 1—18.)—This was the song of Moses, which, we are told, every one of the redeemed shall also sing before the Throne above. It must then be equally applicable to their state now, as to the state of the delivered Israelites. In a word, not earth, nor hell, can ever injure those who are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb; the true Israel of God, who are partakers of the virtue of the Paschal offering, and interested in the great Redeemer's love. Now the language of the Gospel invites the captive sinner to leave his chain, to enter into liberty and peace. It proclaims liberty to the captive, the opening of the prison to them that are bound, the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God to all his enemies. (Compare Isa. lxi. 1—3, and xl. 9—11.) O hear, thou trembling sinner, under the bondage of the great oppressor! look to Jesus, and be saved. Come, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and he will give you rest. Plead the blood of sprinkling, and claim the promises of the Lord, and all the blessings of this great salvation shall be thine, in present deliverance and victory, and in everlasting triumph. But if these blessings are in Christ, how are they to be enjoyed?

3. *What are the means by which we may obtain the benefits, and the blessed fruits of this Paschal sacrifice?—*The Israelites, feeling their bondage, and believing the

declaration of God, that the destroying angel should go forth, to slay all the first-born in the land of Egypt; and fully persuaded that this was God's appointed method for their deliverance, both from the destroying angel and from the hand of Pharoah, therefore they killed the Passover: every one was to kill his own lamb. But, blessed be God, we have not now to kill our Passover; for it is already prepared and done by the power and providence of God. Yet the means of our attaining the benefit are still the same; faith in Him, who is the means of God's appointment, for deliverance from sin, satan, and the wrath to come. They who believe not their danger will never use or welcome the remedy: and here the type affords us several of the most striking emblems.—When the lamb was killed, *the blood was to be sprinkled upon the door-posts and the upper lintel.* This was the token betwen God and them: it was the sign of their faith, the symbol that those within were feeding upon the appointed sacrifice, in the faith of God's promise, and meant thus to plead it before him. "The door-post signified, no doubt, the heart of man, which is the door by which the King of Glory is to enter, and which is as manifest to God, as the door of our house is to any one that passes by." The blood of Jesus, then, must thus be sprinkled upon our hearts and consciences for purification: "Having your hearts," says the Apostle, "sprinkled from an evil conscience." Then we may be considered as sprinkling our heart with this precious blood, if we steadfastly embrace the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, apply to, and trust in, him, especially as to the virtue of his sufferings on the cross; to redeem our souls to God. In a word, in all our dealings with God, we must present the blood of the Lamb, that it may always appear upon all our services, and as our only plea; and then we shall never be rejected of him. It will secure our pardon and justification, our peace and our deliverance from all evil; our soul shall be set at liberty, and triumph in the destruction of all our enemies.

The Paschal-lamb was then *to be eaten*, and nothing to remain till the morning. Does not this signify that real

communion which must subsist between Christ and his people, in order to their enjoyment of his salvation? Our Lord represents the exercise of a saving faith in him, under the same allusion,—“eating his flesh, and drinking his blood,”—intimating that he must be really received into the heart. It is not the mere profession of the name or doctrine of Christ, which will save or feed our souls: no; he must be received by faith (John vi.), whereby a real union must be formed between Christ and the soul. He must be brought into use; his benefits must be received into the soul, and digested there, as the food is first received, and then becomes as it were, part of the body, and so affords its vital nourishment. And thus alone can Christ Jesus become the vital nourishment, for the everlasting life of our immortal souls.—The lamb, it must be observed, was to be roasted whole; to be all eaten, and none of it left: and this fitly represents, that in order to our receiving the benefit of Christ’s death, we must receive him wholly in all his characters, in all his offices, and in the whole of his salvation, or we cannot expect the whole of his blessings. We must have fellowship with him therefore in his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection, if we would be with him in his triumph and glory.

It was to be eaten also *with bitter herbs*.—This originally marked the afflicted state of the Israelites at the time; but spiritually it teaches us, that never shall we receive Christ aright, nor value nor enjoy him, unless we are brought into the experience of true repentance, by godly sorrow for sin and deep humiliation. To such only Christ is precious, when we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced, and mourn with godly sorrow. To them who mourn, Christ is the comforter; to the broken-hearted, he promises his consolation (Isa. lxi. 3), and to the weary he gives rest. And if no sense of sin afflicts the conscience, we can have no apprehension of the love of Christ, nor any exercise of love to him. It might also signify still further, that if we would be partakers of the glory, we must be partakers of the sufferings, of Christ; and that we must

suffer with him, if we hope to reign with him.—In the original appointment, they were to eat it standing, with their shoes on their feet, their staff in their hand; and to eat it in haste, in the habit and posture of travellers ready to depart. Afterwards this was omitted, the necessity of it having ceased; yet the emblematical design is still highly important; for if we would feed on Christ, no time is to be lost: we must be in haste, and fly to him: it must be as strangers and pilgrims, ready for our heavenly journey, for the work of the Lord, for every duty, and for the spiritual conflict. We are not to consider this world as our home, but remember that we are travellers to a better country, even an heavenly one, leaning on the staff of faith, and our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: we must gird up the loins of our mind, and be girded about with truth; and, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. So did the believers of old: in the exercise of faith, persuaded of, and embracing, the promises, they declared that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, seeking a country which was above.

It was to be eaten also *with unleavened bread*.—This the Apostle has explained: “Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,” with sincerity in our dependence, in our attachment to him, and in our love towards him. Let there be no mixture of legality in our faith, to spoil the simplicity of our dependence, which will deprive us of all the consolation flowing from it. Let there be no mixture of carnal confidence, or love of sin, which must effectually prevent our receiving Christ, or feeding upon his blessings. The sincere, the simple dependence of faith, will alone unite to Jesus, derive the grace out of his fulness, and bring the nourishment and consolation of his grace into our hearts. No person legally unclean was to eat thereof. Though the benefit of Christ's salvation, be indeed for dying and polluted sinners, yet the enjoyment of it can only be in that

heart which is really cleansed, purified from every stain, by the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness, renewed and sanctified in reality by the grace of his Spirit. And though this is not the cause of our enjoyment, it is the only temper in which it can be enjoyed.

The Israelites were also to eat the passover each one *in his own house*; and none might go out of his house, while the destroying angel was gone forth, until the morning.—If we would be safe, we must abide in the church of Christ, or rather in Christ himself, in the exercise of a living faith. “Abide in me,” says the Saviour, “and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing.” Never must we leave our appointed Sanctuary: here only we shall be safe in time, surrounded with the enemy of our souls, while the blood is sprinkled upon our hearts; while Jesus dwells within, and while we are dwelling in him. And when the morning of the eternal day shall come, then shall the believing sinner enjoy the everlasting benefit, and be set perfectly at liberty. Here he is set at liberty to take the way, and pass on in his journey to the heavenly Canaan; but then he shall come to that land of eternal rest, through the merit of the Paschal offering of his Lord and Saviour. Though the Passover itself was instituted for the Israelitish nation alone, yet there were many typical notices in it which seemed to imply that its great and typical benefits were to be extended even to the Gentile world. This is considered by some as intimated in the gathering together of all the people, from every part of the country, which might signify the gathering together of the people to Christ, and into his church, from all parts of the world, under the Christian dispensation. “We are come,” says the Apostle, “to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” It was intimated

also by the second season appointed for the observance of the passover, in the next month, for those who were at the time ceremonially unclean, &c. So the Gentile world, for a long time considered as unclean by the Jewish nation, are at length no longer considered by God as "common or unclean." (Acts x. 14, 15.) The ceremonial uncleanness is removed, and the door of faith opened. The admission, also, of the Gentile proselyte was another emblem and a kind of earnest, that hereafter the Gentile should be united with the Jewish Church, and all constitute but one fold, under one Shepherd, one flock of his redeemed people. While thus beholding the person, the love, the grace of Jesus, so beautifully represented in the Jewish figure, we behold also in it another most serious truth, the danger of neglect in so great salvation. If any Israelite disregarded the declaration of God, and disobeyed his command; if the blood was not sprinkled on the posts of his door, the destroying angel would certainly enter to his destruction. And thus no professing Christian will ever be acknowledged as among the saved of the Lord, without the sprinkling of the blood of Christ; without the receiving of that blood by faith, and the pleading it before God, as the whole of his dependence and hope. He who in future times wilfully neglected the observance of the feast, was to be condemned to death. Thus shall it be also with the sinner who neglects the salvation of Christ. How, says the Apostle, shall he escape? Though the Sacrifice is appointed, and already slain; though Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; it will be of no avail, unless we have an interest in it. And let us always remember, that it is faith that gives the efficacy to the heart, and makes Christ Jesus to be to us, what he is in himself. My fellow-sinners, the destroying angel is out; the violated law demands redress, injured justice requires satisfaction, the holiness and truth of God demands to be honoured; and the great enemy of souls detains every son of man by nature under his captivity, from which he never can ransom nor rescue himself. The blood of sprinkling is the only means of deliverance and salva-

tion, received and pleaded by faith. God has given the destroying angel his commission against all who are out of Christ: "He that believeth not, is condemned already." No soul will be safe from his sword of justice, but those who put themselves by faith under the protection of his blood, to whom it is applied by his Spirit, and sprinkled on their very hearts and consciences. Consider thy danger, my fellow-sinner, from the power of Satan and the wrath of God. Was the cup of wrath so terrible to the human nature of Christ? what then shall it be to the sinner? Fly to the blood of sprinkling; be in haste to feed on Jesus, as a stranger and pilgrim here below, in deep repentance and godly sorrow; and then, delivered from the sentence of death, set out on thy way to Canaan, and go forward in faith in the confidence of the care and protection of thy reconciled God in Christ.

But stand there, my soul, for a moment, and adore the love of Jesus, in the greatness of his condescension, and in the mystery of his sufferings, as the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for us, and welcome the consolation that it offers to thy wounded spirit.

Nothing can so discover to us the great evil of sin, as when we see it at the cross of Christ, when we consider that none but such a sacrifice could atone for and take it away. Nothing can afford us such a proof of his Divine and everlasting love, who thus loved us and gave himself for us. The cup he drank for me was what angels could not have borne, but must have sunk for ever beneath its power. Nothing can lay such a ground of consolation: it holds out to the fearful sinner,—the captive of sin and satan, and exposed to the wrath of God,—the confidence of deliverance from guilt and righteous indignation, the hope of spiritual liberty from every oppressing enemy, and the confidence of everlasting triumph over all, and everlasting salvation in the promised Canaan of glory.

O let me, sensible of guilt and danger, welcome the discoveries of his grace, adore my dying Saviour, admire his dying love, trust his precious blood, sprinkle it on my con-

science by faith, and present it and plead it before God, as my only but confident hope ; then nothing can hurt me. And being as willing to receive, as he is to give the blessings of his salvation, let my soul triumph in my dying Redeemer. With the bitter herbs of deep humility and godly sorrow, as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, I will feed upon this spiritual sacrifice, and hasten forward on my journey heavenward. The Jewish emblem is now changed for one equally simple, interesting, and clear : the table of his love still presents to my faith the same glorious object. There let me come and realize the sufferings of my dying Saviour ; and, while looking to him, there rejoice in his blessings. I may there take him, trust in him, feed upon him, and rejoice in him : and while there I wonder at him as the Man of Sorrows, I behold him as the great God my Saviour ! The Lamb of God, who has taken away the sin of the world, is the Lord Jehovah, become the salvation of his people. I will believe in, receive him, and adore him, till he deliver me from every oppressor. He will force satan to yield his captive : he will set me at liberty, and place me among his ransomed church and people ; and he will conduct me through all the wilderness, the pilgrimage of life, to everlasting liberty, in the Canaan of rest and glory.

ESSAY XI.

The Power of God — The Arm of Jehovah — The Right Hand of Jehovah.

How different are the ways of God to the ways of man! When man by his feeble reason presumes to judge of them, he finds them far above out of his sight (Psa. cv.), and extending very far beyond his comprehension. (Job xxxvii. 5.) The outward aspect of them is often quite contrary to what he would have expected from any *a priori* reasoning upon the attributes, perfections, and glories of Jehovah: and if he be not inclined, by a humility of spirit, conscious of its own ignorance, to submit in the simplicity of faith, he will frequently be induced to cavil, if not to revile, the wisest operations of the Divine hand. This was remarkably the case with the Jews and Greeks at the first introduction of the Gospel dispensation. The humiliation of the Saviour, the lowliness of the first instruments of his grace, and the simple methods which he employed to introduce the infinite glory and blessings of the Gospel to the minds of men, confounded the carnal pride of the one, and the learned pride of the other. The Jews required a sign, —some great and noble proof of the glory of the Saviour, and which might justify their acceptance of such an humble Messiah; and the Greeks sought after wisdom, —some deep and laboured arguments, consistent with their philosophical views, to prove the truth of his doctrine; whereas the great object which the Apostle held out to them, was nothing but Christ crucified; proclaimed by men of humble origin, and received in general by the poor of this world. The preaching of the cross was therefore to them a stumbling block and foolishness; and the weakness of its mini-

sters, and the poverty of its subjects, indicated to them nothing but weakness and inefficiency. But "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." He chose "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh may glory in his presence." (1 Cor. i. 18—29.) His appointed means, however contemptible in the eyes of men, were therefore effectual beyond their most admired systems. In his hand, by the meanest instrument, the preaching of the Cross became "the power of God unto salvation." Thus it has been ever since. The wise philosopher and the rational religionist have produced the same objections against the doctrine and glories of the Gospel, while God has justified his own ways, and shewn, by the testimony of fact, that they have been suited to his design, powerful to accomplish his own purpose, and eminently to display his own glory. He has made use of the most simple declaration of his own truth, by the weakest instruments, for the enlightening, the calling, the justification, the conversion, the sanctification, and salvation of believing sinners. As Christ Jesus is therefore the *great object* and *subject*, and the *All in all* of this most gracious and yet glorious dispensation, hence he derives another name and title, which exalts the glory of his person, and invites our faith and love: "CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD." In the Old Testament we find two similar names continually occurring, or rather the same name doubly expressed, in the figurative language of prophecy; viz. *the Arm*, and *the Right Hand of Jehovah*. We may, therefore, properly unite them under one consideration. That these are prophetic names of the Redeemer, is, I conceive, evident from their application. In the prophetic Psalms, which celebrate the resurrection of the Redeemer, the Stone despised of the Jewish builder, but by the miraculous act of Jehovah made the Head Stone of the corner,

he is spoken of under this very title, "the Right Hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." "The Right Hand of the Lord is exalted, the Right-Hand of the Lord doeth valiantly." (Psa. cxviii. 15, 16, &c.: compare xviii. 1.) Thus again, He is spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah; "Behold, the Lord God will come with a Strong Hand, and his Arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." (xl. 10.) But this is more evident in the 53d chapter, where he is spoken of (ver. 1) as the Arm of the Lord revealed, who was to grow up as a tender plant, and a root out of a dry ground, &c. (ver. 2), and to become the suffering Saviour for his people (ver. 3—12: compare John xii. 37, 38, where its reference to Christ is most evident.) *The arm* and *the hand* are used to express the capacity of power and of exertion, and the *right hand* the more perfect and ready exertion of power. "By the *arm* is meant the extent of his power; by the *stretched out arm* his infinite might, reaching to all things; by *his hand* the more exact and minute displays of power and skill, and by the *right hand* the bright displays of omnipotent majesty: and, if by his finger he created the heavens, who can comprehend the reach of his arm and of his right hand?"—*Searle*. But power in God is his very essence; and, when applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, it denotes his existence as one in that Divine essence, and as such having "all power in heaven and in earth;" as the person in Jehovah, the Trinity, by whom all the displays of power have been made, or are making, in creation, providence, and redemption, and especially in the Gospel-dispensation, in the application of its truth to the heart, and for the salvation of his redeemed. This view glorifies the Lord Christ; and *Christ the power of God* encourages our faith and hope, and demands our confidence and adoration. We cannot consider less implied in this title, than that He who has a right to it,

Possesses all power in heaven and earth, *as one in the Divine essence*; and, if it be applied to the person of Messiah, such must be his majesty and glory. *The Arm of*

Jehovah and *Jehovah himself*, are evidently the same : when the Prophet cries, Awake, awake, put on strength, *O Arm of the Lord!* *Jehovah*, awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut *Rahab*, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? (Isa. li. 9, 10; see also Luke v. 17; Acts xi. 21, &c.) He who led the chosen tribes was the *angel of Jehovah's presence*, the great angel of the covenant; the person in *Jehovah*, who in the fulness of time became incarnate. This title then, which is applied to *Jehovah himself*, is also applied to the *Messiah*, the *Lord the Christ*, whereby this can be no other than *Jehovah*, or one to whom all the attributes, perfections, and power of *Jehovah* belong. He also who exerts all the power of the *Lord*, must be essential power; and, as such, we need not fear to adore and worship the great God our Saviour.

But this title principally refers to him in a mediatorial view, as that person in and by whom all the acts and displays of Divine power have been, or are, made in creation, in providence, and especially in redemption. As to creation and providence, it is impossible to read and believe the declaration of the Apostle, without acknowledging that this glory belongs to the Redeemer: for "By Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. i. 16, 17.) Again, the Apostle declares, that God "created all things by Jesus Christ." (Eph. iii. 9.) And again, that by him "he made the worlds," who being the brightness of glory, and the express image of the Father's person, "upholdeth all things, by the word of his power." (Heb. i. 2, 3, and 8, 12.)

These views, having occupied a distinct consideration in other places, will not now be enlarged upon. It is sufficient to have hinted at them in the present Essay; and we now

turn to that which seems to be the principal design of this title, as given to the Redeemer ; viz. that display of the Divine power of Jehovah which is made in Christ Jesus, in Christ crucified, or in the plan and dispensation of the Gospel salvation by a crucified Saviour. Herein, though the Divine mystery is weakness and a stumbling-block to the Jew ; and to the wise Greek, foolishness ; though to the reasoner of this world, it still appears the same ; yet a dying and crucified Saviour is found in fact to be alone the power of God to the salvation of men. In the God-man, the humble suffering Jesus, is made a discovery of God's wisdom and power, more than in any object in heaven and earth besides ; and in and by him, God has displayed and put forth all his exertions and acts of power, in accomplishing the redemption of sinners of his people.

The first view which claims our attention to him, in this character is, the power which he has effectually exerted in the work of satisfaction to the law and justice of God ; and the thus glorifying all the Divine attributes and perfections, in the mystery of redemption. This wonderful act, not all the host of heaven could have effected, either separately or altogether ; yet we see and know that it has been wrought out and accomplished by the God-man Christ Jesus, that arm and power of Jehovah, in a way as far beyond their comprehension as ours. He saw there was none to help ; therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his holy zeal upheld him : and, though appearing in the form of the most abject weakness, he effects a work which requires a power no less than Divine. To obey the Law in all the extent of its holy precepts ; and work out a perfect righteousness in human nature ; still further to satisfy all its just demands upon sinners, and suffer all its penalties which sin had deserved ; to endure all that infinite justice could inflict for sin, till its righteous indignation was all exhausted, and yet to rise superior to this oppressive conflict, the weight of duty and of sorrow, required a power beyond the ability of all creation. Who can undertake and accomplish the mighty work ? Who is

this that engages his heart to approach before God for us? It is Jesus, the Arm of the Lord: he bears our griefs, and carries our sorrows; he is oppressed and afflicted, when the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and therefore was pleased to bruise him. But, lo! he prolongs his days; he rises to divide the portion with the great, and the spoil with the strong; that he may see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. (See Isa. liii.) Such a work as this implies in it a humiliation which must veil his true glory; but it implies also an absolute, infinite, and almighty power, a glory no less than Divine, veiled under that humiliation. And this is the true glory of God our Saviour: therefore he is able to finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness, and to make reconciliation for iniquity. (Dan. ix. 24.) Or, in the similar language of the Apostle, to become our "propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare the righteousness of God in the forgiveness of our sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." (Rom. iii. 25.) "And that God might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Ver. 26: compare 2 Cor. v. 19.)

What a display of power and glory is here made through the humble Jesus, apparently in the lowest degree of weakness, but exerting no less in his work and triumph than the power of the Almighty God! In the same state of apparent humiliation and weakness, he ransoms by his cross a people to himself, accomplishing his victory over sin, satan, death and hell. This was the end and object of his covenant engagement in the counsel of Eternal Love; and therefore he is frequently spoken of in prophecy, under the character of the Mighty Conqueror, in allusions made to the enemies of ancient Israel. These solemn prophecies deceived the Jewish people, who could see nothing more in them than the promise of temporal victory, and a mighty temporal deliverer. But had they well considered the nature of those predictions, they must have seen that the enemies spoken of were spiritual, and the promised Messiah a spiritual Redeemer and Deliverer. "Who is this," inquires the

evangelical Prophet, "that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah," from the land of Israel's well known enemies ; " this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness," replies the Heavenly Conqueror, " mighty to save," &c. (See Isaiah lxiii. 1—5; and compare lix. 16—18.) These passages no doubt represent him going forth, roused to holy vengeance against the enemy of Israel, clothed with strength, and armed with righteousness. Again, the Prophet calls upon him to awake, as when he led the chosen tribes from Egypt, through the sea, and through the wilderness, into the land of promise. (li. 9, 10.) But if the outward colouring of these prophecies seem to encourage the hope of a temporal deliverer to the Jewish people, (and in which sense it may perhaps in future times be fulfilled to them, when they seek in penitence the Lord their God, and the Beloved their King, in the latter days,) a little observation would discover, that the blessings spoken of, as the result of his victories, are spiritual and heavenly, and not of an earthly or carnal nature ; the deliverance from sin and satan, and the blessings of salvation. (See lxiii. 8 ; lix. 19—21 ; lxi. 1, 2 ; li. 11.) The glorious effects of his triumph are represented by the Prophet in another place, as procuring a feast of all blessings unto all people ; rending and removing the dark veil of ignorance which was spread over them, yea, swallowing up death itself in victory, wiping every tear, from every eye of his redeemed ones, and suffering no longer the rebuke of the enemy to injure or oppress them. (Isa. xxv. 6.) This is represented, as the final object of his everlasting engagement, from which he would not draw back, till he had fully accomplished it. " O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction : repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (Hos. xiii. 14.) The victories of our Redeemer, then, are evidently spiritual victories. " He ascends on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts to give unto men ; yea, to the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them."

(Psa. lxxviii. 18.) The Mighty Conqueror demands admission into the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, into the everlasting doors of glory, as the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. But into these doors no conqueror can have a right to enter, no conquest can give a right to claim admittance, but those of a spiritual and heavenly nature. He, however, who has triumphed over every spiritual foe, must have a right to enter, and is therefore entered there for us. In the act of effecting these glorious purposes, the appearance was most contrary to the design; the means the most unlikely to accomplish the event. Yet were they most suitable in the wisdom of God, whose amazing power is manifested by bringing such glory out of such weakness, making it the very means of producing the most important ends; and, as the Apostle expresses it, "by death itself, conquering him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." The eye of sense sees nothing in the humble Jesus, but the circumstances of the manger in his birth, the man of sorrows in his life; the poor, the afflicted, the persecuted, the arraigned, the condemned, the crucified, and the buried Jesus. The eye of faith beholds in the feeble Infant, the Child born, and the Song given, the Mighty God and the Father of Eternity: in Him who emptied himself, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and humbled himself to the death upon the cross, it discovers the form of God, the person who thought it no robbery to be equal with God. On the cross it views his triumph, and sees him spoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them. (Col. ii. 14, 15.) If then the cross affords so glorious a display of power, how much more his victorious resurrection, and his glorious ascension to his Throne! That humble Jesus has conquered *for me*. When he made his soul an offering for sin, he completed the atonement: justice is satisfied; and now I draw near through him to God, every impediment being removed out of the way by his mighty power. There all my enemies assaulted my humble Saviour: he appeared there in the most extreme weakness, because he appeared under my

sin; but the arm of the Lord hath gotten himself the victory. Sin assaulted him with all its consequences of guilt, and suffering: but he endures under all, and bears up, till he had finished transgression. Satan with all the hosts and powers of darkness, in the hour of Divine permission, surrounded him, and assailed him with all their malice and rage; but behold, "the prey is taken from the mighty." Death and the grave beset him with all their terrors, but could not retain the mighty prisoner. "Thou wilt not leave," says he, "my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." (Psa. xvi. 10, 11.) Thou hast conquered and triumphed, then, my blessed Jesus, though every impediment obstructed thy progress; and so shall I,—so shall all his people through him. What can resist Him who hath already all his enemies beneath his footstool? That same Jesus, therefore, who was once so lowly, is represented by the prophetic disciple, as the Faithful and the True, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head many crowns, followed by the army of heaven, while out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword to smite the nations; and having on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS. (Rev. xix. 11—16.)

Now, in and through this exalted Redeemer are made all the displays of power, in the church and in the world, for the salvation of his elect. He alone has power to open the book, and to unloose the seals, as having all power given to him, to be the Head over all things to his church, and as the Power of God.

He brings forth his redeemed from the hand of the enemy, from the captivity of sin and satan, as he once brought forth his chosen Israel, as the arm and the right hand of the Lord, from the bondage of Egypt. In calling them by his grace, he subdues them to himself; and, dethroning the power of the great enemy, makes them willing to desert the slavish service of satan, and to choose

the service of the Lord. As the word of the Gospel is the general means whereby this is effected, it is also called "*The power of God unto salvation,*" since it is the instrument by which his power operates for the convincing of sin, turning from the love and power of it, bringing to faith, and to the obedience of faith. This was long ago foretold by ancient Prophecy, as the effect of the ascension and government of Jesus, who, seated on the right hand of the Father, should send forth the rod of his strength out of Sion, to make his people willing in the day of his power. This is evidently the peculiar design of this name attributed to the Redeemer. We well know how it was fulfilled, in the effusions of the Spirit immediately after his ascension. Philosophy, and human reason, and human wisdom, had tried in vain to enlighten, or to reform mankind, when the preaching of the Cross becomes the power of God to save his people. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, by that which men of wisdom and reason call foolishness, to save them that believe. The subject, which was thus held forth before the eyes of men was nothing but a crucified Christ, the Object of their derision: but behold, by the simple preaching of a crucified Redeemer, the powers of darkness and idolatry are put to flight; and by the doctrine of the Cross, the minds of sinners are enlightened, converted, and turned effectually from sin to God. A change is effected in the hearts of hundreds and thousands, who are brought from the kingdom of satar into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and brought to the obedience of righteousness, and obtain an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith which is in Christ Jesus. He who had determined to destroy the wisdom of the wise, and to bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent; to discover to every enlightened observer its inefficiency for the knowledge and communication of spiritual things; does, as it were, triumph over their pride and unbelief, by the simplicity of the Gospel. For where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? What has all their wisdom, knowledge, or reasoning effected? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this

world, or plainly discovered their folly and their insufficiency? For after that in the wisdom of God, displayed in all his works and ways, the world by wisdom knew not God; the demonstration of the Spirit, and the power of God accompanying the word of truth, cause it to work effectually in all who believe. (See 1 Thess. i. 4—10; ii. 13; and 2 Thess. ii. 13—17; Col. i. 5, 6.) The same grace and the same power now accompany the same simple declaration of the truth of God in a crucified Saviour, the only hope of sinners. Thus he still brings sinners “from darkness to light,” and shall bring all his redeemed out of the world, from under the power of sin. Thus, still the stronger than the strong man armed subdues his power in the heart, and brings down every rebellious inclination to the obedience of faith. If you know yourself, my reader, you will readily acknowledge, that nothing but the power of such grace could have converted your heart to the faith and love of Christ Jesus; and that which has brought you to him is able to bring any sinner to the same submission and obedience to his authority. All, therefore, that the Father hath given him, the Saviour declares shall come to him, and him that cometh to him he will in no wise cast out. (John vi. 37.) This work of effectual calling and renovation is actually going forward, wherever the Gospel of a crucified Christ is simply and plainly proclaimed, and thereby is effected what all the wisdom, the reasoning, or the power of men can never produce,—the calling of sinners from the error of their ways, and the effectual turning of the heart to God. The mixture of human wisdom, the accommodation of the truth of God to the prejudices of man, will always injure its effect; while the power of God will always attend and testify to his own truth: and thus the simplest and plainest instruments are often made much more powerful than the most worldly wise, in effecting the great object of the Gospel, the conversion, sanctification, and consolation of his people, in order to their salvation. For now, as the Power of God, he receives to himself the right of conducting forward, maintaining and preserving, his work of grace in the heart. The arm and the right

hand are the instruments of communicating every gift; and in application to the person of Jesus, they teach us, that, as all the fulness of grace is in him, he reaches forth in his mercy to communicate to every needy believing sinner. While there is such a fulness in him, and such ability and disposition to communicate, what can his believing people want, what can they desire, but to be continually under his care? When he promises, he at once leads our view to the end; the consummation of all, including every necessary gift by the way; he gives "grace and glory," and denies no good between. (Psa. lxxxiv. 11.) I give unto my sheep, says he, eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. (John. x. 28, &c.) His grace is therefore compared by himself to a fountain of water, springing up into everlasting life. (John iv. 14.) And this made the Apostle confident, that he who had begun a good work would complete it. (Phil. i. 6.) His calling is the pledge of everlasting salvation; and therefore he assures the Thessalonians that he is faithful who called them, who also would do it. Our security rests upon the promise, in which he has pledged his power to preserve us. "I will never leave thee: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee." (Isa. xli. 10, &c.; liv. 11, &c.) While, then, he is by me, who has almighty power, rich grace, and infinite supply, I shall have sufficient for my preservation, sanctification, and consolation; for my direction through time: and, thanks be to God, he giveth the eternal victory through Jesus Christ. As the Power of God, he stands engaged to subdue all the sin and corruption, and all the invisible and spiritual enemies, of his church and people. Though he appeared oppressed himself and borne down, it was only for a little season: the prophetic language represents his humiliation to death in human nature but as the bruising of his heel, while, at the same time, he was treading upon the serpent's head; then the Captain of our salvation was made perfect by sufferings, and his own conquests are the pledge and the security of ours. That he died, that he arose again, that he triumphed, that he ascended on high, that he there ever

liveth, and is therefore able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him ; these are the grounds upon which rests our hope of victory. The scene of his utmost weakness was astonishingly powerful in its effects : what, then, must be the result of his glory and his exaltation ? Though his church, like himself in his humiliation, appears sometimes as if ready to sink and be destroyed, yet the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. From time to time he has revived the dying interests of his kingdom in a world where every power is in opposition to it, and it shall in the end triumph over all. Though his people are sometimes in difficulties and in troubles, in trials and temptations, and apparently near to destruction, in the mount the Lord hath appeared, and commanded deliverance ; and he who has delivered, does deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. The greatest difficulties glorify his power the most, and prove that he is almighty to save ; sins, corruptions, enemies, shall fall before him, and his power shall fulfil his promise : “ sin shall not have dominion over you ; ” nor shall any enemy pluck you out of my hands. What gracious changes does he sometimes produce in the frames of his people, when involved in doubts and darkness, ready to be overcome and to despair ! By some means of his grace, filled with the influence of his Spirit, he restores the peace and tranquillity of the conscience, strengthens the exercise of faith and every grace, excites a holy love in the breast, and brings, by the present communication of grace and consolation, the earnest of future perfection and felicity. It is a practical truth which we must ever remember, that we must look to him for strength, or we shall never be able to stand through all ; and when the accuser of the brethren is cast down, and salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ are come ; all the glory will be ascribed to him by those who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb alone, and by the word of their testimony. (Rev. xii. 10, 11.) Then shall the power of their Redeemer bring every redeemed sinner, to the kingdom of eternal glory.

. Brought through every storm of the vast ocean of life,

they shall be safely landed on the eternal shore: conducted through every danger of the wilderness, they shall possess the heavenly Canaan: he will guide them, by his strength, to his holy habitation, and bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of his inheritance, the sanctuary which his hands have established. The work of grace being perfected, they shall be eternally with him and like him; sinners, rebels, changed into children, into the saints of the Most High, shall adore that power which effected the mighty transformation;—shall bless the grace and faithfulness which brought them there, and ascribe salvation to God and to the Lamb. The change which we are instructed to expect shall then take place in the glorified powers of the soul, all fitted for the heavenly and everlasting enjoyment, could scarcely be believed, when we consider what we now are, if it were not for the consideration of the power by which it is to be effected. He shall change our vile body, that it may be made like unto his own glorious body, according to the working, or the effectual energy, whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself. For this power nothing can be too difficult; for its effects nothing too glorious. The change of such a poor corruptible frame into a glorious and incorruptible temple of Jehovah, is but a common act of the Almighty Creator: its purification from all its guilty stain and evil propensities, is what the arm and right hand of Jehovah can with ease effect. That Word of Power which spake, and it was done, shall again give the commanding fiat, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption; this mortal shall put on immortality. He shall place the perfected souls and bodies of his redeemed in the mansions of light and glory, and, with faculties prepared for the enjoyment, shall diffuse around them all his eternal blessings of salvation, and bid them, and enable them, to enjoy them without mixture and without end. Then the mediatorial power of Jesus shall be consummated; and he shall reign in the midst of his redeemed for ever, while they ascribe to him the eternal glory, honour, and power.

Behold then, my soul, and contemplate this glorious

Object of faith and confidence. Though he appears on earth as the humble and the dying Saviour, his condescension was only in order to his exaltation, his humiliation to his victory, and his sufferings to his glory. Now that every enemy is beneath his feet, now that he has led captivity captive, where can we find such a suitable object of adoration and of confidence? Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst deliver me; thou canst subdue my sins, corruptions, and enemies, and give me the present and eternal victory. Rejoice in him then, O my soul; his mediatorial power is received for this very purpose, to give eternal life to his people. He ever liveth upon the Throne, to exert that power, to carry on the purposes of his love, to bring his redeemed to himself, to watch them with his eye, to guard them by his arm, to sanctify them by his Spirit, and to prepare and bring them to his glory. Shall not He who condescended to come from heaven to earth to redeem them with his blood, from his throne in heaven, in the exercise of universal dominion, be faithful to bring them there? Let me present my enemies before him, and seek his strength in the confidence of victory. None can be too subtle, too great, or too powerful for him. What are all my enemies, corruptions, or weaknesses in the hands of the Almighty Jesus? The Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation: out of weakness he can make strong: he makes his strength to appear in our weakness. Who art thou then, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. He says to all, as he said to one, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness:" therefore let me glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (See 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.)

The people of the Lord have a faithful pledge of his power and salvation already in their hearts; in that work which he has wrought there, the change which he has effected, and the grace which he has communicated; for thus they know that "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Eph. iii. 20.) The doctrine

of a crucified Saviour is indeed the only testimony to which the Spirit will set his seal by his own Divine power. This alone, from the beginning, has been the power of God unto salvation; and let his ministering servants ever remember this, nor ever dare to accommodate his truth to the corrupt prejudices of men, nor think to commend it to the carnal heart by concealing any of its parts, or any of its humbling and debasing truths. The simple declaration of all the truth of Christ, as connected with the Cross of Christ, the only hope of sinners, will still be acknowledged to the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of his people, when all the reasoning of human wisdom and carnal prudence will be of no avail, but to injure the truth of God and prevent its efficacy. Let us always remember that our strength also is in that dying, ever-living, Saviour alone; nor ever venture to attempt any spiritual duty, or spiritual conflict, in our own strength. Never let us expect grace for duty, or strength for victory, but in simple dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ, and on him crucified. Then, when he obtains the glory, he will give us the victory; and when weak in ourselves, we shall be strong in him. "Be not afraid," said the Lord to Israel of old—"be not afraid of them, though they are too mighty for thee: for the Lord thy God is with thee, a mighty God and terrible; he will cast them out before thee, by little and little, until they be destroyed." (Deut. vii. 21, &c.) Be not afraid, O believer! of all thy foes, when the Lord thy Saviour is still with thee, the Power of God for thy salvation. But Oh, let me not be found among the enemies of this mighty Lord! for who can resist the Arm of Jehovah or the Power of God? Who can stand before this Jesus, when he comes with the glory of his Father and his holy angels; when he comes in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? If he be not then our Friend, awful will be the sight of him as our enemy, when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. The self-righteous, the careless, the impenitent, all who have not fled to

him, and obtained an interest in his Cross, will then perish before his Throne. Oh, fly to him, sinner! now while he is upon the Throne of Mercy, where he is almighty to save, before he appear almighty to destroy.

But then, O believer! contemplate the destruction of all thy enemies, and the completion of all thy hopes. Jesus, who has undertaken it for thee, is the Power of God: he has manifested himself as such, even in his deepest humiliation, and in the lowest weakness of his human nature and his human sufferings; but in the glory of his kingdom and triumph, all his designs of love, and all his promises of grace, shall be fulfilled to thee. Here is the ground of your hope; not resting upon any uncertainty, any human instability, but upon the power and promise of Christ Jesus,—“in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, to the glory of God by us.” Here you must feel much weakness, must meet with many enemies, pass through many scenes of trial, and temptation, and affliction; and this may be attended with many fears. These fears would be just, if you entered upon the warfare in your own strength; but behold the Lord your Righteousness is also your Strength. He sends you not to the warfare at your own charges; his promise is your stay and your support: fear not; triumph in hope, give him the glory now, and soon you shall triumph with him, where sin, sorrow, and enemies are no more. You shall, in the end, acknowledge that not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord hath spoken, but all hath come to pass (Josh. xxiii. 14); and that what he has spoken with his mouth, he hath fulfilled with his hand. (1 Kings viii. 15.) The Arm of the Lord shall again awake, to lead his people through the deep seas of affliction and of death. All the ransomed shall pass over, and the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Sion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

ESSAY XII.

Wisdom — The Wisdom of God.

IT seems to be one of the designs of God, in the mystery of redemption, to confound the pride of all human wisdom, and to stain the splendour of its glory. If his ways in general are above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts, here, especially, both in the plan and conduct of the design, we find “a height, a depth, a length, and breadth, which passeth all understanding.” But not only does the display of this in the Gospel, the result of Infinite Wisdom, rise so far above our comprehension, but there are so many things connected with that display which are contrary to expectation, and confounding to the reasoning of man, that he boldly ventures to dispute its facts, and to disbelieve and deny the truth or excellency of its doctrines. The person of Christ, the work of Christ, and the doctrines connected with both his person and his work, as manifested in the dispensation of Redeeming Love, are subjects calculated to engage the powers of angels, and into which angels desire to look with reverence and devout admiration; but man, because he cannot comprehend the whole, ventures to dispute and to revile. Hence, as in opposition to that weakness, which was attributed to a crucified Christ by his enemies, he is styled, “Christ the Power of God;” so in opposition to that foolishness which men attributed to him and the doctrines of his word, he is styled also, “Christ the Wisdom of God.” And fact itself has proved, that “the weakness of God is stronger than men, and that the foolishness of God is wiser than men;” for “where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?” What have all their plans and philosophical

systems availed for the reformation and happiness of mankind? They all sink into darkness and contempt, as totally inefficient, beneath the effect of the light and glory of that Gospel which they foolishly despise. The God of Wisdom, hath thus confounded the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nought the understanding of the prudent: he hath made foolish the wisdom of this world; *i. e.* he hath manifested the foolishness of their wisdom, by the simplicity of preaching, which they accounted foolishness. A crucified Christ has prevailed, to effect what none of them can pretend to have effected; *viz.* it discovered to man, the nature, the glory, the perfections, the salvation of God; and still leads the humble sinner to the experience of its enlightening, sanctifying power in time, and to the enjoyment of all its blessings through eternity. As the great object and subject of this dispensation is Christ, and *Christ crucified*; as all its plans are laid in him, executed by Him, and all its blessings treasured up in Him, He is the sum of all its wisdom. He is indeed, essentially the Wisdom of Jehovah; Wisdom itself in the abstract, and spoken of as such in the Old Testament; because in Him it dwells, or rather He is it. It is, as it were, himself: it shines forth from Him, is exhibited by means of Him, and shall do so for ever. By this then is presented before us another view of that glorious person, all the views of whom in the Scriptures are calculated to raise our admiration still higher. It shews the prejudices and folly of those who deny his glory, the foundation of our faith, the sincerity of our hope, or the security of our prospects, as sustained by Him, who, being himself the *Wisdom of Jehovah*, is suitable to be made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that we may glory and rejoice in Him.

In considering Christ as *the Wisdom of God*, it will be necessary to follow much the same course, as when considering him under the character of *the Power of God*. We shall be led to the same conclusions, and learn again some of the same lessons of instruction. This is a same

ness, however, which never cloy the mind of the believer: he hopes eternally to be employed in contemplating the same object, in all its various parts and glories, which, though ever the same, will be for ever new. In his Divine person, he will appear essentially the Wisdom of Jehovah; perfectly so in his mediatorial character; and all the discoveries of Divine Wisdom, in the covenant of redemption, and the dispensation of it in the Gospel, will appear to us as in the person and face, the character and work, of Jesus the Redeemer. Let it captivate every thought into obedience, to this "only wise God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is evident from Scripture that he bears the character and title,

1. *As a Divine Person, one in Jehovah Aleim*, without which it could not with propriety, and in an absolute sense, be applied to him. In this view he is not only said to be *wise*, but he is styled *the Wisdom* (a name which corresponds with that of the Divine Logos, or Word, of the Evangelist St. John), which implies not only that he *has* wisdom, but that he *is* it.

This is a name which occurs frequently in an absolute sense in the Book of Proverbs; where Wisdom personified is most justly applied to the person of the Divine Logos, the Word or Wisdom of the Father; for who besides could assert, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was?" &c. "When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." Do we not here immediately recognize the adorable Son of God, eternally with the Father, engaging in the counsels of eternal love to man, and "whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting?" (Compare Prov. viii. 22—31; Micah v. 2: see also Prov. viii. 1, 11, 12, 17, 21.)—The title of Wisdom

cannot in this view belong to any creature: a creature may be wise, but all the wisdom which it possesses is derived and dependent, however great and extensive. The term, "the Wisdom," cannot therefore be applied to such, but in a highly figurative and comparative sense. He that is Wisdom itself, must be Jehovah; but the Lord Jesus Christ is the Wisdom, and therefore He is Jehovah. He who is the Wisdom of God, must also be God himself; for wisdom in this respect is not used to imply an attribute in the Godhead, but that which is the very essence of Godhead. And if in this view it be applied to Christ, as it evidently is, then he must be also God. In the same manner, therefore, in which God is said to have "created all things by Jesus Christ," he is said to have created them by Wisdom. "The Lord by Wisdom hath founded the earth: by understanding he hath established the heavens." (Prov. iii. 19: compare Psa. xxxiii. 6, and Ephes. iii. 9.) But as the title refers to him principally, as coming forth eternally from the Divine essence, in all the acts and works of Jehovah, being the Person in the Trinity by whom are made all the discoveries of the wisdom of God, which otherwise must for ever have been hid within himself, so still, in his

Mediatorial person, as God incarnate, he is the medium by which the perfections and acts of Divine Wisdom are displayed.—In his human nature all the fulness of Wisdom rested, communicated by the Eternal Spirit. He filled his human nature with the fulness of his Divine influence, when he was poured upon him, and into him, without measure, as "the Spirit of Wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;" to make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, that he should not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. (Isa. xi. 2, 3.)

In his complete person, as God-man, Immanuel, is made the brightest display of Divine Wisdom. Angels could never have conceived nor accomplished such a mysterious union. It will be the wonder of eternal ages, unfolding

still more and more the unsearchable Wisdom of the Eternal Jehovah; and it is perhaps to his eternal designation in this character, that the sacred writer alludes in Prov. viii. 22, where he describes the setting up of Wisdom from everlasting. The fulfilment of his engagement in this character, with all its fruits and benefits to mankind, is beautifully symbolized by the enigmatical representation of Wisdom building her house, hewing out her seven pillars; killing her beasts, and mingling her wine, and furnishing her table, that she might invite the simple and the sinful to forsake the foolish, and live; and to turn in and enjoy the rich provisions of her love. (chap. ix. 1—6.) In this Divine person all the treasures of Wisdom are said to be laid up, and all the fulness of the Godhead to dwell. His infinite Wisdom embraces the past, the present, and the future, in one vast eternal glance: or rather, the Divine nature and intelligence knows no past nor to come. All is one eternal present *now*. (Rev. i. 8.) He knows the possibility of things as well as the realities; what might have been as well as what is. He searches the most hidden places, and sees into the most invisible recesses, and pierces into the very heart. The Wisdom and Knowledge of Jehovah are described by the Psalmist in a most solemn and impressive manner. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways: for there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it." (See Psa. cxxxix. 1—12.) What mortal can attain a knowledge so sublime and so minute! Yet this infinite knowledge is in Jesus. It is He who is described by the Apostle as the essential Word or Wisdom of Jehovah; "as quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and

marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart: neither is there any creature that is not manifest in HIS sight; but all things are naked and open to the eyes of HIM with whom we have to do." (Heb. iv. 12,13.) He is represented in his glorified human nature as having his eyes like a flame of fire, penetrating through all: and in every ascription of praise from the heavenly host, the Wisdom, as well as the power and glory, are continually ascribed to him. (Rev. v. 12, and vii. 12.) These views exalt the personal glories of our Redeemer, and are no doubt comprehended in the name. But its more peculiar design seems to be, to impress upon our minds that most interesting doctrine,

That all the displays of the Divine Wisdom, from eternity, in the ways and acts of God, have been made to creatures, through and in the person of the Son.—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John i. 18: compare xiv. 9, &c.) As "by him all things were created," the displays of *creative* Wisdom are the emanations only of the Wisdom of God in Christ Jesus. As He is the Head over all in providence, all the manifestations of Divine Wisdom in the conducting of it are but by and through the person of Christ, since all Wisdom in the direction of universal providence is by Him; for, "by him, and through him, and to him, are all things." The Apostle, however, when he uses this title, is evidently speaking of the plan and conduct of redemption, and the discovery of it in the Gospel. This he tells us is "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God," by which, when "He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness," shines into the heart, in spiritual illumination, he gives "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face" (or person) "of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 4—6.) Here, as every other Divine attribute, so the Wisdom of God eminently shines, glorifying our Jesus as all-sufficient to support the faith, and realize the hopes of all his people.—We behold it shining,

1. *In the glorious plan and work of redemption through Christ Jesus.*—"Herein," says the Apostle, "he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." (Eph. i. 8.) And as in this wonderful economy the infinite Wisdom of Jehovah is manifested to man, more than in all his other works, the Gospel which reveals it is called Wisdom. The plan itself is styled the Mystery which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God (Eph. iii. 9); the Mystery of Christ (Eph. iii. 3, 4); the Wisdom of God in a Mystery (1 Cor. ii. 7); the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. (Col. ii. 2.) The Gospel dispensation is "the Revelation of the Mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 25, 26.) And its intent is this; "that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known, by the church, *the manifold Wisdom of God.*" What words could be found more calculated to impress our minds with the deepest solemnity, and the utmost reverence! And yet they raise our expectation of inconceivable glories, to infuse the most genuine simplicity and fervent zeal, in investigating its unsearchable and sublime truths. We cannot be surprised to find in that investigation many discoveries far beyond the reach of human powers; and which, when revealed, elude, in various ways, our researches. Man, by mere reason, could never have thought of discoveries which are suited only to the simplicity of faith, giving implicit credit to the word and truth of the Lord; glories which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and which would never have entered into the heart of man to conceive. (See 1 Cor. ii. passim.) The glorious plan and purpose of Divine mercy to save sinners, the most exalted being before the Throne could never have devised. Thus wise intelligences are represented as stooping down to pry into this mystery; and no doubt are discerning in it daily, more and more of the Divine Wisdom; and the eternal

contemplation will unfold, to saints and angels, an eternal subject of increasing knowledge, and everlastingly growing delight. The first grand doctrine of revelation, which is altogether the testimony of Jesus, is itself "*the great mystery of godliness*;" the most astonishing wonder in the plan which Eternal Wisdom has devised, God manifest in the flesh, God become man, the Word made flesh; He who was in the form of God taking upon himself the form of a servant! This mystical union will ever excite the admiration, as it will ever employ the powers, of men and angels; and yet so as never to be fully comprehended. In this it becomes us rather to adore unsearchable Wisdom, than rebelliously to cavil, or rashly to deny that, in the nature of fallen creatures, He should come to obey, to satisfy, and to honour his own law; that God in this way should appoint justice should be satisfied, and mercy triumph; that full satisfaction should be given for sin, and a free pardon to the sinner, the full purchase of spiritual and eternal blessings be made by the blessed Redeemer; and yet bestowed as free gifts of sovereign grace to the sinner. (Eph. i. 7.) These are considerations which, when properly considered, will be discovered as involving in them mysteries which none but the Divine Wisdom could have devised or revealed. The infinite Wisdom of Jehovah alone could know how to reconcile his attributes, in discovering mercy to sinners who had deserved his wrath, and to render mercy triumphant in the exaltation of justice. But, lo, "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other" (Psa. lxxxv. 10, 11), in the person of Immanuel, and are all equally and eternally glorified in his work of redemption. When again we take a view of the means by which the plan of sovereign grace has been effected, here we are overwhelmed with astonishment and delight. The whole of this transaction is, however, represented as "his own purpose and grace;" as taking place according to the counsel of Jehovah. It is so represented as if the result of deliberation and consultation, in conformity to the views and conduct of men, who in their most

important concerns are used so to act that they may act wisely; and that it may impress us with the unsearchable wisdom of God, which has been exercised in the sovereign purposes of his love. The means themselves are very different from what the wisdom of man would have proposed: his condescension is our exaltation; his death the cause of our life; his humiliation, poverty, and sorrows, the means of our glory; his contempt, of our honour; his agony, his sufferings, and his cross, of our salvation. (See Isa. liii.) Here every thing, in its outward appearance, was the very reverse of what man would or did expect; it excited not only the wonder of the Jewish people, but an indignant despising of his person and his cause. Yet, justified by the event, we behold the admirable wisdom of God in effecting, by the weakest and most unlikely means, the most glorious of all his purposes. In this plan of salvation, nothing can more effectually excite our astonishment and delight, than the union of sinners in the person of Christ, and the union of Christ with the persons of his people; whereby he became sin for them, and they become righteous in him. And yet, is not this the admirably constituted method of their justification and acceptance, and the firm security of their life and everlasting salvation? (See 2 Cor. v. 21; compare Isa. xlv. 24, 25; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.) This truth is the most sublime, most interesting, and most elevating of all the grand truths of revelation. They are one with Christ, and Christ one with them*; He bearing their person, they bearing his before God; and thus becoming virtually united in all that he did, in all that he suffered, in all that he obtained; how deep the mystery, how glorious the consequence! Yet no doctrine in the whole of revelation is more clear or more decisively maintained. (See John xvii. 21, and xv. 1, &c.; Eph. i. 22, 23.) To be in Christ is the great privilege of the Christian, and is spoken of through the whole word of God as the immediate cause of enjoying his blessings. In Christ Jesus we have

* See the Homily on *Justification*.

access ; in Christ we are built up as the habitation of God ; in Christ we are made new creatures ; in Christ all the promises of God are yea and amen, to the glory of God by us. Such a system of redeeming love unites in it infinite wisdom with infinite grace, and provides and secures the greatest blessings to guilty, ruined, and helpless sinners. In the person of this Saviour, in the work which he has performed, in his union with the church, and the blessings he has obtained, a mystery of Divine Wisdom will be eternally unfolding. "The wisdom of this world," or of the prince of this world, can never comprehend its amazing extent. The mind of the inquisitive reasoner with difficulty receives or submits to it as the testimony of God : yet, without the mysterious plan devised in the counsels of Jehovah, how sure had been the destruction of guilty sinners ! Glory be to that Wisdom and that Grace, which so adjusted the eternal purpose, and which has made it known to us by his Holy Spirit ! As this is the sole design of Revelation, let us ever remember that it is our truest wisdom to study to be acquainted with that revelation, and implicitly to submit to its decisions. This is the word of Wisdom which discovers to us the person and offices of Him who is the Wisdom of God : never can we, without this, become wise unto salvation. All our most boasted wisdom independently of, and opposed to, revelation, will prove but folly, and in its effects destructive to the soul. But to reject the Gospel, because it does not agree with some previous principles which our imaginations have conceived, which, in the darkness of nature's ignorance, have been entertained as truths, and which the pride of the mind induces us to hold fast, is the most fatal error of delusive reasoning. The truth which a Christian seeks after is, "*the truth as it is in Jesus.*" His truest wisdom is to know Christ, to come to him, to sit as a teachable disciple in his school, to be instructed by him, and implicitly to receive the words of his lips. And the more we discern the true character of Christ, as exhibited in his word, the more shall we see his suitability for the work in which he has engaged, and the

confidence which he justly requires of us. We shall see that, as the wisdom of God, he is the complete, the infallible, the never to be deceived, the never decaying fountain of light and knowledge; suited to be the Surety, the Guide, the Head, the Saviour of his people, from eternity to eternity.

A further display of Divine Wisdom has been made in Christ,

2. *In the execution of that glorious plan in his mediatorial person.*—"When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Could we behold the various connections and relations of things, one with another, no doubt but we should discern, that the time itself when the Son of God appeared on earth to accomplish redemption was most suited to the glory of God, and the execution of the work; and is therefore called "*the fulness of time.*" In all his conduct in human nature we behold a fulness of wisdom, far beyond what mortals exercise: for never man *spake* like this man; never man *acted* like him. He appears as the perfection of holiness, the living copy of the Law, the absolute pattern of piety to God, and of righteousness to man. In accomplishing his design, in performing his work, in instructing his disciples, in confounding his enemies, he manifested a wisdom which none could gainsay nor resist. When he overcame in the garden, when he triumphed on the cross, when he conquers death by dying, when he derives his glory from his humiliation, and his highest glory from his deepest sufferings and debasements, and when he rises victorious over all, we stand amazed at the mystery of his redemption.—But,

3. *In bringing the knowledge and power of his salvation into the heart of his people, here peculiarly he must be acknowledged as the Wisdom of God.*—This is the work of the great Prophet alone of the church of God; for as all the discoveries of God are made *in* Christ, so are they made *by* him to his people. What amazing wisdom do they sometimes trace in the way in which he first led them

to prepare their mind for his purposes of mercy towards them, in bringing them under the means of grace, and subduing and counteracting the former prejudices which armed them against his truth, and finally, in making these means effectual for conviction and conversion. The proofs of his Divine Wisdom thus arose in their own hearts, and from their own state; when by it, their prejudices have been softened, and their minds enlightened; when they have been led and taught by his providence, word, and Spirit, and their once stubborn hearts brought down to the obedience of righteousness,—the obedience of faith; they cheerfully confess “that he led them in a way that they knew not, and in paths which they had not known; that he made darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.” Having in his providence revealed himself in his Gospel by his Spirit, he has now revealed himself to their hearts and consciences, according to that Gospel; and they feel that “*none teacheth like him.*” His Spirit being poured forth upon them as the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, they begin to arise from the darkness of ignorance, and to become acquainted with themselves in the light of a holy law; they are convinced of the guilt and exceeding sinfulness of sin; they discover the world in its vanity, God in his holiness, grace, and mercy; Christ in the fulness of his redemption, and the heavenly spiritual blessings of his salvation, in all their reality, suitableness, and glory. Then let his name be ever glorious, since whatever he is, as the Mediator, that he is to and for us: he has engaged to become our Wisdom, to make his people wise unto salvation, and conduct them through to the full enjoyment. If all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid up in him, it is as that rich treasury to which we may go in every perplexity, and ask and find counsel and direction. Happy, therefore, is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that thus getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” O Jesus! be thou my Wisdom, and in all the dangers of the wilderness I shall be safe. This part of the subject having, however, found a separate consideration

under the title of "*Our Wisdom*," it will be sufficient at present to pass on to the wisdom of God in Christ,

4. *In his conducting the concerns of his church, and of all his people, amidst and through all their enemies and dangers.*—It is the sweetest source of consolation to the mind of the believers, that that wisdom which is the *Wisdom of God* is engaged for them, for their direction and preservation. A character inferior to this could never attend to all the concerns of each, in every time, in every age, in every place, and in all their vast connection and extent, in universal nature. But as the *Wisdom of God*, he is capable of conducting them aright and securely, of providing for all their wants, and defeating the projects and the powers of all their enemies, as he led the chosen bands through the wilderness of old. His ways may not always be suited to our comprehension, but they are most wisely adapted to his own glory, and for the benefit of his people; to lead them forwards, and prepare them for the glory that he has provided for them. His infinite Wisdom laid the plan, and adjusted every part of it, in the counsel of eternal love. That same Wisdom is now carrying it on to its accomplishment; and neither enemies, perplexities, difficulties, nor dangers, shall ever interrupt his progress, defeat his designs, or disappoint his fixed purposes of love. His power is almighty; and his infinite wisdom shall direct that almighty power to complete his counsels, and fulfil his promises of grace and salvation to his people. (See more of this under the titles, *the Head of the church*, and *the Head over all things to the church* *.)

Then shall he most eminently appear as the Wisdom of God, when he has conducted them safely through, and brought them to the kingdom of glory; when all the dangers of the campaign are over, and the victory obtained through Him who loved them; when carried safely over and beyond all the storms of the sea of life, and brought to the haven of rest, where they would be; when the dangers of the wilderness are escaped, and all sur-

* Ser. X. Ess. VII.

mounted by the guidance of their heavenly Leader; and they enter upon the possession of the land of light and glory, the Canaan which is above;—then they will be better able to trace the Wisdom which conducted them; which ordered and arranged every step, disposed every circumstance, and finally completed their faith, and fulfilled all their expectations. In the retrospect, they will assuredly see that “He led them by the right way, to bring them to the city of habitation.” The chief employment of that heavenly world will doubtless be, to trace the wisdom of God in the fulfilment of the counsel of redeeming love. Then shall they mark how the plan was laid in Christ, and accomplished in his person, in his humiliation and victories: they shall discern how wisely it was conducted by his providence, for the calling of his people by his grace; for the leading and guiding them through the world, amidst their corruptions, enemies, and temptations; in the last closing scene of affliction and of death, and in the final exaltation of all his redeemed, to his kingdom of glory. There the Divine Wisdom shall appear in its most illustrious display in the person of Christ; all its purposes consummated, and all its glory developed; the whole shall then redound to the praise of the riches of his grace, and by the church be made known “*the manifold wisdom of God.*”

How suitable to our state is this additional character of the blessed Jesus! how eminently calculated to display and illustrate his own glory! Let us cheerfully submit to all the dispensations of his providence, and the methods of his grace, who is so infinitely exalted in wisdom and understanding: His ways may be above our comprehension: but they are, no doubt, the effect of his Wisdom; yea, it is the infinite Wisdom which is involved in them which renders them unintelligible to finite creatures,—to creatures so ignorant as we. Future providences, even at present, often make his dispensations and dealings plain, which, at the time, were perplexing and distressing. When we look back upon the past, we are compelled to adore him in those scenes in which, while exercised with them, we

were confounded and afraid ; which led us to suspect his goodness and his truth, and excited the doubts and murmurings of unbelief. We ought then to be satisfied in whatsoever way he pleases to lead us, confident that if we could but see and understand his design, we should rather be inclined to admire and adore, than to distrust and to blame. So attached are we to sense and sensual objects, that we are never satisfied but with the things of sense ; and are desirous of seeing and accounting for every path, and every dispensation. But the Lord our Redeemer calls us to the exercise of faith ; and, as Christians, it is our duty and privilege to walk by faith, and not by sense, giving him the credit of his word, and promise of his grace, and faithfulness to fulfil them. Let us not then, in unbelieving distrust, find fault with his dispensations. A man of acknowledged wisdom feels indignant to be called to an account for his determinations by ignorance and weakness. But we may be well assured it is our ignorance, and not his want of wisdom or of love, that causes our perplexity in the ways of providence or grace. We see not the reasons of his ways : these are concealed from us, but perfectly known to him. He sees the end from the beginning ; the whole plan of nature, providence, and grace stands before his infinite mind, which comprehends and embraces the whole, from eternity to eternity ; and the method of conducting and accomplishing the whole will, in the end, magnify the Lord our Redeemer, as the Wisdom of Jehovah. He calls us, therefore, confidently to rest upon his care. Our almighty and only wise God and Saviour is able to attend to all the concerns of his people : the greatest are not above, nor the meanest beneath, his infinite understanding. And if not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge, surely not the least circumstance which can affect his people can be deemed unworthy of his observation. Here is a faithful and all-sufficient security against our own ignorance, the malice or craft of our enemies, and the danger and perplexity of our way. We need much wisdom, yet we have

none; but O the glory of Christ our Saviour! his Divine wisdom is employed unchangeably in our guidance and defence, and shall complete our hopes and joys.

Let, then, my soul sweetly repose in the bosom of my Redeemer; let me rest, without distraction or anxious thought, upon his guidance in all my concerns. He bids me trust in him with all my heart, and not lean to my own understanding; in all my ways to acknowledge him, and he will direct my paths. He calls me graciously to cast my burden upon him, and he will sustain me; and surely he has abundantly proved, in his conduct to all his servants of old, that he knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. (2 Pet. ii. 9.) I cannot find a better, nor a more secure, Friend and Helper: he will uphold me in all, and will guide me through all, to the end. He hath completed the redemption of the cross, and will complete the salvation of his redeemed from his Throne.

What an infinite fulness dwells in Christ Jesus! What a suitableness to the needy sinner, opening still more in every character, and secured by every office, which he sustains! My soul, believe and trust in him, and dismiss all thy anxiety and fears. Engage all thy affections in his love; and devote, my heart, all thy immortal powers to his service, and to his glory. When I arrive above, in the region of the blest, then shall I do it better, ascribing, amongst the glorious company that there surround the throne, the power, the riches, the wisdom, the strength, the honour, the glory, and the blessing, to Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever!

END OF VOLUME V.

