

and then, in a fit of honesty or low spirits, complain that Christianity does not make them as good and as happy as they were led to expect from that assurance, that "great peace have they who love the Lord," and that "they who wait on him shall want no manner of thing that is good;" when they lament that the paths of religion are not those "paths of pleasantness" they were led to expect; their case reminds one of a celebrated physician, who used to say, that the reason why his prescriptions, which commonly cured the poor and the temperate, did so little good among his rich luxurious patients, was, that while he was labouring to remove the disease by medicines, of which they only took drams, grains, and scruples; they were inflaming it by a multiplicity of injurious aliments, which they swallowed by ounces, pounds, and pints.

These fashionable Christians should be reminded, that there was no half engagement

ment made for them at their baptism ; that they are not partly their own and partly their Redeemer's. He that is "bought with a price," is the sole property of the purchaser. Faith does not consist merely in submitting the opinions of the understanding, but the dispositions of the heart : religion is not a sacrifice of sentiments, but of affections : it is not the tribute of fear extorted from a slave, but the voluntary homage of love paid by a child.

Neither does a Christian's piety consist in living in retreat, and railing at the practices of the world, while, perhaps, her heart is full of the spirit of that world at which she is railing : but it consists in *subduing* the spirit of the world, resisting its temptations, and opposing its practices, even while her duty obliges her to live in it.

Nor is the spirit or the love of the world confined to those only who are making a figure in it ; nor are its operations

tions bounded by the precincts of the metropolis, nor by the limited regions of first-rate rank and splendor. She who inveighs against the luxury and excesses of London, and solaces herself in her own comparative sobriety, because her more circumscribed fortune compels her to take up with the second-hand pleasures of successive watering-places, if she pursue these pleasures with avidity, is governed by the same spirit: and she whose still narrower opportunities stint her to the petty diversions of her provincial town, if she be busied in swelling and enlarging her smaller sphere of vanity and idleness, however she may comfort herself with her own comparative goodness, by railing at the unattainable pleasures of the watering-place, or the still more unapproachable joys of the capital, is governed by the same spirit: for she who is as vain, as dissipated, and as extravagant as actual circumstances admit, would be as vain, as dissipated, and as extravagant as the gayest

gayest objects of her invective actually are, if she could change places with them. It is not merely by what we do that we can be sure the spirit of the world has no dominion over us, but by fairly considering what we should probably do if more were in our power.

The worldly Christian, if I may be allowed such a palpable contradiction in terms, must not imagine that she acquits herself of her religious obligations by paying in her mere weekly oblation of prayer. There is no covenant by which communion with God is restricted to an hour or two on the Sunday : she must not imagine she acquits herself by setting apart a few particular days in the year for the exercise of a periodical devotion, and then flying back to the world as eagerly as if she were resolved to repay herself with large interest for her short fit of self-denial ; the stream of pleasure running with a more rapid current, from having been interrupted by this forced

forced obstruction. And the avidity with which one has seen certain persons of a still less correct character than the class we have been considering, return to a whole year's carnival, after the self-imposed penance of a Passion week, gives a shrewd intimation that they considered the temporary abstraction less as an act of penitence for the past, than as a purchase of indemnity for the future. Such bare-weight protestants prudently condition for retaining the Popish doctrine of indulgences, which they buy, not indeed of the late spiritual court of Rome, but of that secret, self-acquitting judge, which ignorance of its own turpitude, and of the strict acquirements of the divine law, has established supreme in the tribunal of every unrenewed heart.

But the practice of self-examination is impeded with one clog, which renders it peculiarly inconvenient to the gay and worldly : for the royal prophet (who was, however,

however, himself as likely as any one to be acquainted with the difficulties peculiar to greatness) has annexed as a concomitant to "communing with our own heart," that we should "*be still*." Now this clause of the injunction annihilates the other, by rendering it incompatible with the present habits of fashionable life, of which *stillness* is clearly not one of the constituents. It would, however, greatly assist those who do not altogether decline the practice, if they were to establish into a rule the habit of detecting certain suspicious practices, by realizing them, as it were, to their own minds, through the means of drawing them out in detail, and of placing them before their eyes clothed in language; for there is nothing that so effectually exposes an absurdity which has hitherto passed muster for want of such an inquisition, as giving it shape, and form, and body. How many things which now silently work themselves into the habit, and pass current without inquiry,

quiry, would then shock us by their palpable inconsistency! Who, for instance, could stand the sight of such a debtor and creditor account as this:—*Item*; So many card-parties, balls, and operas due to me in the following year, for so many manuals, prayers, and meditations paid beforehand during the last six days in Lent? With how much indignation soever this suggestion may be treated; whatever offence may be taken at such a combination of the serious and the ludicrous; however we may revolt at the idea of such a composition with our Maker, when put into so many words; does not the habitual course of some go near to realise such a statement?

But “a Christian’s *race*,” as a venerable Prelate\* observes, “is not run at so many *beats*,” but is a constant course, a regular progress by which we are continually gaining ground upon sin, and approaching nearer to the kingdom of God.

\* Bishop Hopkins.

Am I then ridiculing this pious seclusion of contrite sinners? Am I then jesting at that "troubled spirit" which God has declared is his "acceptable sacrifice?" God forbid! Such reasonable retirements have been the practice, and continue to be the comfort of some of the sincerest Christians; and *will* continue to be resorted to as long as Christianity, that is, as long as the world, shall last. It is well to call off the thoughts, even for a short time, not only from sin and vanity, but even from the lawful pursuits of business and the laudable concerns of life; and, at times, to annihilate, as it were, the space which divides us from eternity:

"Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,  
And ask them what report they bore to heaven,  
And how they might have borne more welcome news.

Yet as to those who seek a short annual retreat as a mere form; who dignify with the idea of a religious retirement a week in which it is rather unfashionable to be



seen in town; who retire with an unabated resolution to return to the maxims, the pleasures, and the spirit of that world which they do but mechanically renounce; is it not to be feared that such a short secession, which does not even pretend to subdue the principle, but merely suspends the act, may only serve to set a keener edge on the appetite for the pleasures they are quitting? Is it not to be feared that the bow may fly back with redoubled violence from having been unnaturally bent? that by varnishing over a life of vanity with the transient externals of a formal and temporary piety, they may the more dangerously skin over the troublesome soreness of a tender conscience, by laying

This flattering unction to the soul?

And is it not awfully to be feared, that such devotions come in among those vain oblations which the Almighty has declared he will not accept? For, is it not among

the delusions of a worldly piety, to consider Christianity as a thing which cannot, indeed, safely be omitted, but which is to *be got over*; a certain quantity of which is, as it were, to be taken in the lump, with long intervals between the repetitions? Is it not among its delusions to consider religion as imposing a set of hardships, which *must* be occasionally encountered in order to procure a peaceable enjoyment of the long respite?—a short penalty for a long pleasure? that these severe conditions thus fulfilled, the acquitted Christian, having paid the annual demand of a rigorous requisition, she may now lawfully return to her natural state; and the old reckoning being adjusted, she may begin a new score, and receive the reward of her punctual obedience, in the resumed indulgence of those gratifications which she had for a short time laid aside as a hard task to please a hard master: but this task performed, and the master appeased, the mind may discover its natural

bent, in joyfully returning to the objects of its real choice? Whereas, is it not clear on the other hand, that if the religious exercises had produced the effect which it is the nature of true religion to produce, the penitent *could* not return with her old genuine alacrity to those habits of the world, from which the pious weekly manuals through which she has been labouring with the punctuality of an almanac as to the day, and the accuracy of a bead-roll as to the number, was intended by the devout authors to rescue their reader?

I am far from insinuating, that this literal sequestration ought to be prolonged throughout the year, or that all the days of business are to be made equally days of solemnity and continued meditation. This earth is a place in which a much larger portion of a common Christian's time must be assigned to action than to contemplation. Women of the higher class were not sent into the world to shun society,

society, but to improve it. They were not designed for the cold and visionary virtues of solitudes and monasteries, but for the amiable, and endearing, and useful offices of social life : they are of a religion which does not impose idle austerities, but enjoins active duties ; a religion of which the most benevolent actions require to be sanctified by the purest motives ; a religion which does not condemn its followers to the comparatively easy task of seclusion from the world, but assigns them the more difficult province of living uncorrupted in it ; a religion which, while it forbids them to " follow a multitude to do evil," includes in that prohibition the sin of doing *nothing*, and which moreover enjoins them to be followers of him " who went about doing " *good*."

But may we not reasonably contend, that though the same sequestration is not required, yet that the same *spirit* and *temper* which one hopes is thought necessary by all during the occasional humili-

liation, must, by every real Christian, be extended throughout all the periods of the year? And when that is really the case, when once the spirit of religion shall indeed govern the heart, it will not only animate her religious actions and employments, but will gradually extend itself to the chastising her conversation, will discipline her thoughts, influence her common business, and sanctify her very pleasures.

But it should seem that many, who entertain a *general* notion of Christian duty, do not consider it as of universal and unremitting obligation, but rather as a duty binding at times on all, and at all times on some. To the attention of such we would recommend that very explicit address of our Lord on the subject of self-denial, the temper directly opposed to a worldly spirit: "And he said unto them  
 "ALL, if any man will come after me,  
 "let him deny himself, and take up his  
 "cross DAILY." Those who think self-denial not of *universal* obligation, will  
 observe

observe the word *all*, and those who think the obligation not *constant* will attend to the term *daily*. These two little words cut up by the root all the occasional religious observances grafted on a worldly life; all transient, periodical, and temporary acts of piety, which some seem willing to commute for habitual thoughtlessness.

There is indeed scarcely a more pitiable being than one who, instead of making her religion the informing principle of all she does, has only just enough to keep her in continual fear; who drudges through her stinted exercises with a superstitious kind of terror, while her general life shows that the love of holiness is not the governing principle in her heart; who seems to suffer all the pains and penalties of Christianity, but is a stranger to "that liberty" "wherewith Christ has made us free." Let it not be thought a ludicrous invention, if the author hazard the producing a real illustration of these remarks, in the instance of a lady of this stamp, who, returning

from church on a very cold day, and remarking with a good deal of self-complacency how much she had suffered in the performance of her duty, comforted herself with emphatically adding, "that she hoped however it would *answer*."

But there is no permanent comfort in any religion, short of that by which the diligent Christian strives that all his actions shall have the love of God for their motive, and the glory of God, as well as his own salvation, for their end; while to go about to balance one's good and bad actions one against the other, and to take comfort in the occasional predominance of the former, while the cultivation of the principle from which they should spring is neglected, is not the road to all those peaceful fruits of the spirit to which true Christianity conducts the humble and penitent believer. For, after all we can do, Christian tempers and a Christian spirit are perhaps the true criterion of a Christian character, and serve to furnish the

the most unequivocal test of our attainments in religion. Our doctrines may be sound, but they may not be influential; our actions may be correct, but they may want the sanctifying principle; our frames and feelings may *seem*, nay they may be devout, but they may be heightened by mere animal fervour; even if genuine they are seldom lasting; and to many pious persons they are not given: but it is the Christian tempers which most infallibly indicate the sincere Christian, and best prepare him for the heavenly state.

But I am aware that a better cast of characters than those we have been contemplating; that even the amiable and the well-disposed, who, while they want courage to resist what they have too much principle to think right, and too much sense to justify, will yet plead for the *palliating* system, and accuse these remarks of unnecessary rigour. They will declare “that really they are as religious as they can be; they wish they were better;”  
 “they



" they have little satisfaction in the life  
 " they are leading, yet they cannot break  
 " with the world; they cannot fly in the  
 " face of custom; it does not become  
 " individuals like them to oppose the tor-  
 " rent of fashion." Beings so interesting,  
 abounding with engaging qualities; who  
 not only feel the beauty of goodness, but  
 reverence the truths of Christianity, and  
 are awfully looking for a general judg-  
 ment, one is grieved to hear lament  
 " that they only do as others do," when  
 they are perhaps themselves of such rank  
 and importance that if they would begin  
 to do right, others would be brought to do  
 as they did. One is grieved to hear them  
 indolently assert, that " they wish it were  
 " otherwise," when they possess the power  
 to *make* it otherwise, by setting an example  
 which they know would be followed.  
 One is sorry to hear them content them-  
 selves with declaring, that " they have  
 " not the courage to be singular," when  
 they must feel, by seeing the influence of  
 their

their example in worse things, that there would be no such great singularity in piety itself, if once *they* became sincerely pious. Besides, this diffidence does not break out on other occasions. They do not blush to be quoted as the opposers of an old mode or the inventors of a new one. Nor are they equally backward in being the first to appear in a strange fashion, such an one as often excites wonder, and sometimes even offends against delicacy. Let not then diffidence be pleaded as an excuse only on occasions wherein courage would be virtue.

Will it be thought too harsh a question if we venture to ask these gentle characters who are thus intrenching themselves in the imaginary safety of surrounding multitudes, and who say "We only do as others do," whether they are willing to run the tremendous risk of consequences, and to *fare as others fare*?

But while these plead the authority of Fashion as a sufficient reason for their conformity

formity to the world, one who has spoken with a paramount authority has positively said, "Be ye *not* conformed to the world." Nay, it is urged as the very badge and distinction by which the character opposite to the Christian is to be marked, "that the friendship of the world is *enmity* with God."

—Temptation to conform to the world was never perhaps more irresistible than in the days which immediately preceded the Deluge. And no man could ever have pleaded the *fashion* in order to justify a criminal assimilation with the reigning manners, with more propriety than the Patriarch Noah. He had the two grand and contending objects of terror to encounter which we have; the fear of ridicule, and the fear of destruction; the dread of sin, and the dread of singularity. Our cause of alarm is at least equally pressing with his; for it does not appear, even while he was actually obeying the Divine command in providing the means  
of

of his future safety, that he *saw* any actual symptoms of the impending ruin. So that in one sense *he* might have truly pleaded as an excuse for slackness of preparation, "that all things continued as they were from the beginning;" while many of us, though the storm is actually begun, never think of providing the refuge: though we have had a fuller revelation, have seen Scripture illustrated, prophecy fulfilling, with every awful circumstance that can either quicken the most sluggish remissness, or confirm the feeblest faith.

Besides, the Patriarch's plea for following the fashion was stronger than you can produce. While you must see that many are going wrong, he saw that none were going right. "All flesh had corrupted his way before God;" whilst, blessed be God! you have still instances enough of piety to keep you in countenance. While you lament that *the world* seduces you, (for every one has a little world  
of

of his own,) your world perhaps is only a petty neighbourhood, a few streets and squares; but the Patriarch had really the contagion of a whole united world to resist; he had literally the example of the whole face of the earth to oppose. The "fear of man" also would then have been a more pardonable fault, when the lives of the same individuals who were likely to excite respect or fear was prolonged many ages, than it can be in the short period now assigned to human life. How lamentable then that opinion should operate so powerfully when it is but the breath of a being so frail and so short-lived,

That he doth cease to be,  
Ere one can lay he is.

You who find it so difficult to withstand the individual allurements of one modish acquaintance, would, if you had been in the Patriarch's case, have concluded the struggle to be quite ineffectual, and sunk under

der the supposed fruitlessness of resistance,  
 " Myself," would you not have said? " or  
 " at most my little family of eight persons  
 " can never hope to stop this torrent  
 " of corruption; I lament the fruitlessness  
 " of opposition; I deplore the necessity of  
 " conformity with the prevailing system:  
 " but it would be a foolish presumption  
 " to hope that *one* family can effect a  
 " change in the state of the world."

In your own case, however, it is not certain to how wide an extent the hearty union of even fewer persons in such a cause might reach: at least is it nothing to do what the Patriarch did? was it nothing to preserve himself from the general destruction? was it nothing to deliver his own soul? was it nothing to rescue the souls of his whole family?

A wise man will never differ from the world in trifles. It is certainly a mark of a sound judgment to comply with it whenever we safely can; such compliance strengthens our influence by reserving to  
 ourselves

ourselves the greater weight of authority on those occasions, when ~~our~~ conscience obliges us to differ. Those who are prudent will cheerfully conform to all its innocent usages; but those who are Christians will be scrupulous in defining which are really innocent previous to their conformity to them. Not what the world, but what the Gospel calls innocent will be found at the grand scrutiny to have been really so. A discreet Christian will take due pains to be convinced he is right before he will presume to be singular: but from the instant he is persuaded that the Gospel is true, and the world of course wrong, he will no longer risk his safety by following multitudes, or his soul by staking it on human opinion. All our most dangerous mistakes arise from our not constantly referring our practice to the standard of scripture, instead of the mutable standard of human opinion, by which it is impossible to fix the real value of characters. For this latter standard in

some cases determines those to be good who do not run all the lengths in which the notoriously bad allow themselves. The Gospel has an universal, the world has a local standard of goodness: in certain societies certain vices alone are dishonourable, such as covetousness and cowardice; while those sins of which our Saviour has said, that they which commit them "shall not inherit the kingdom of God," detract nothing from the respect some persons receive. Nay, those very characters whom the Almighty has expressly and awfully declared "He will judge\*," are received, are admired, are caressed, in that which calls itself the best company.

But to weigh our actions by one standard now, when we know they will be judged by another hereafter, would be reckoned the height of absurdity in any

\* Hebrews, xiii. 4.



transactions but those which involve the interests of eternity. “How readeſt thou?” is a more ſpecific direction than any comparative view of our own habits with the habits of others: and at the final bar it will be of little avail that our actions have riſen above thoſe of bad men, if our views and principles ſhall be found to have been in oppoſition to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

Nor is *their* practice more commendable, who are ever on the watch to pick out the worſt actions of good men, by way of juſtifying their own conduct on the compariſon. The faults of the beſt men, “for there is not a juſt man upon the earth who ſinneth not,” can in no wiſe juſtify the errors of the worſt: and it is not invariably the example of even good men that we muſt take for our unerring rule of conduct: nor is it by a ſingle action that either they or we ſhall be judged; for in that caſe who could be

saved? but it is by the general prevalence of right principles and good habits, and Christian tempers; by the predominance of holiness, and righteousness, and temperance in the life, and by the power of humility, faith, and love in the heart.

## CHAP. XIX.

*On the leading doctrines of Christianity.—*

*The corruption of human nature.—The doctrine of redemption.—The necessity of a change of heart, and of the divine influences to produce that change.—With a sketch of the Christian character.*

THE author having in this little work taken a view of the false notions often imbibed in early life from a bad education, and of their pernicious effects; and having attempted to point out the respective remedies to these; she would now draw all that has been said to a point, and declare plainly what she humbly conceives to be the source whence all these false notions and this wrong conduct really proceed: the prophet Jeremiah shall answer: “ It  
“ is because they have forsaken the foun-  
“ tain of living waters, and have hewn  
“ out

“out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.” It is an ignorance past belief of what true Christianity really is: the remedy, therefore, and the only remedy that can be applied with any prospect of success, is RELIGION, and by Religion she would be understood to mean the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It has been before hinted, that Religion should be taught at an early period of life; that children should be *brought up* “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The *manner* in which they should be taught has likewise with great plainness been suggested; that it should be done in so lively and familiar a manner as to make Religion amiable, and her ways to appear, what they really are, “ways of pleasantness.” And a slight sketch has been given of the genius of Christianity, by which her amiableness would more clearly appear. But this, being a subject of such vast importance, compared with which every other subject

sinks into nothing; it seems not sufficient to speak on the doctrines and duties of Christianity in *detached* parts, but it is of importance to point out, though in a brief manner, the mutual dependance of one doctrine upon another, and the influence which these doctrines have upon the heart and life, so that the *duties* of Christianity may be seen to grow out of its *doctrines*: by which it will appear that Christian virtue differs *essentially* from Pagan: it is of a quite different kind: the plant itself is different, it comes from a different root, and grows in a different soil.

It will be seen how the humbling doctrine of the corruption of human nature, which has followed from the corruption of our first parents, makes way for the bright display of redeeming love: how from the abasing thought that "we are  
" all as sheep going astray, every one in  
" his own way:" that none *can* return  
to the shepherd of our souls, "except  
" the Father draw him:" that "the  
" natural man *cannot* receive the things  
" of

of the spirit because they are spiritually discerned: how from this humiliating view of the *helplessness*, as well as the *corruption* of human nature, we are to turn to that animating doctrine, the offer of *divine assistance*. So that, though human nature will appear from this view in a deeply degraded state, and consequently *all* have cause for humility, yet not one has cause for despair: the disease indeed is dreadful, but a physician is at hand, both able and willing to save us: though we are naturally without "strength, our help is laid upon one that is mighty."

We should observe then, that the doctrines of our Saviour are, if I may so speak, with a beautiful consistency, all woven into one piece. We should get such a view of their reciprocal dependence as to be persuaded that without a deep sense of our own corruptions we can never seriously believe in a Saviour, because the substantial and acceptable belief in Him must

always arise from the conviction of our want of Him; that without a firm persuasion that the Holy Spirit can alone restore our fallen nature, repair the ruins of sin, and renew the image of God upon the heart, we never shall be brought to serious, humble prayer for repentance and restoration; and that, without this repentance there is no salvation: for though Christ has died for us, and consequently to him alone we must look as a Saviour, yet he has himself declared that he will save none but true penitents.

#### ON THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN CORRUPTION.

To come now to a more particular statement of these doctrines. When an important edifice is about to be erected, a wise builder will dig deep, and look well to the foundations, knowing that without this the fabric will not be likely to stand. The foundation of the Christian religion,

out

out of which the whole structure may be said to arise, appears to be the doctrine of the fall of man from his original state of righteousness; and of the corruption and helplessness of human nature, which are the consequences of this fall, and which is the natural state of every one born into the world. To this doctrine it is important to conciliate the minds, more especially of young persons, who are peculiarly disposed to turn away from it as a morose, unamiable, and gloomy idea: they are apt to accuse those who are more strict and serious, of unnecessary severity, and to suspect them of thinking unjustly ill of mankind. Some of the reasons which prejudice the inexperienced against the doctrine in question appear to be the following.

Young persons themselves have seen little of the world. In pleasurable society the world puts on its most amiable appearance; and that softness and urbanity which prevail, particularly amongst persons



sons of fashion, are liable to be mistaken for more than they are really worth. The opposition to this doctrine in the young, arises partly from ingenuousness of heart, partly from a habit of indulging themselves in favourable suppositions respecting the world, rather than of pursuing truth, which is always the grand thing to be pursued; and partly from the popularity of the tenet, *that every body is so wonderfully good!*

This error in youth has however a still deeper foundation, which is their not having a right standard of moral good and evil, in consequence of their already partaking of the very corruption which is spoken of; they are therefore apt to have no very strict sense of duty, or of the necessity of a right and religious motive to every act.

Moreover, young people usually do not know themselves. Not having yet been much exposed to temptation, owing to the prudent restraints in which they have been kept, they little suspect to what lengths in vice they themselves are liable to be transported.

transported, nor how far others actually are carried who are set free from those restraints.

Having laid down these as some of the causes of error on this point, I proceed to observe on what strong grounds the doctrine itself stands.

Profane history abundantly confirms this truth: the history of the world, being in fact little else than the history of the crimes of the human race. Even though the annals of remote ages lie so involved in obscurity, that some degree of uncertainty attaches itself to many of the events recorded, yet this one melancholy truth is always clear, that most of the miseries which have been brought upon mankind, have proceeded from this general depravity.

The world we now live in furnishes abundant proof of this truth. In a world formed on the deceitful theory of those who assert the innocence and dignity of man, almost all the professions, since they would have been rendered useless by such a state  
of

of innocence, would not have existed. Without sin we may nearly presume there would have been no sickness; so that every medical professor is a standing evidence of this sad truth. Sin not only brought sickness but death into the world; consequently every funeral presents a more irrefragable argument than a thousand sermons. Had man persevered in his original integrity, there could have been no litigation, for there would be no contests about property in a world where none would be inclined to attack it. Professors of law, therefore, from the attorney who prosecutes for a trespass, to the pleader who defends a criminal, or the judge who condemns him, loudly confirm the doctrine. Every victory by sea or land should teach us to rejoice with humiliation, for conquest itself brings a terrible, though splendid attestation to the truth of the fall of man.

Even those who deny the doctrine, act universally more or less on the principle. Why do we all secure our houses with bolts,  
and

and bars, and locks? Do we take these steps to defend our lives or property from any particular fear? from any suspicion of this neighbour, or that servant, or the other invader? No:—It is from a practical conviction of the common depravity; from a constant, pervading, but undefined dread of impending evil arising from the sense of general corruption. Are not prisons built, and laws enacted, on the same practical principle?

But not to descend to the more degraded part of our species. Why in the fairest transaction of business is nothing executed without bonds, receipts, and notes of hand? Why does not a perfect confidence in the *dignity of human nature* abolish all these securities; if not between enemies, or people indifferent to each other, yet at least between friends and kindred, and the most honourable connections? Why, but because of that universal suspicion between man and man, which, by all we see, and hear, and feel,

is

is become interwoven with our very make? Though we do not entertain any *individual* suspicion, nay, though we have the strongest *personal* confidence, yet the acknowledged principle of conduct has this doctrine for its basis. "I will take a receipt, though "it were from my brother," is the established voice of mankind; or, as I have heard it more artfully put, by a fallacy of which the very disguise discovers the principle, "Think every man honest, "but deal with him as if you knew him "to be otherwise." And as, in a state of innocence, the beasts, it is presumed, would not have bled for the sustenance of man, so their parchments would not have been wanted as instruments of his security against his fellow man \*.

\* Bishop Butler distinctly declares this truth to be evident, from experience as well as Revelation, "that this world exhibits an idea of a Ruin;" and he will hazard much who ventures to assert that Butler defended Christianity upon principles unconsonant to *reason, philosophy, or sound experience.*

But

But the grand arguments for this doctrine must be drawn from the Holy Scriptures : and these, besides implying it almost continually, expressly assert it ; and that in instances too numerous to be all of them brought forward here. Of these may I be allowed to produce a few ?

“ God saw that the wickedness of man  
 “ was great, and that every imagination  
 “ of the thoughts of his heart was only  
 “ evil continually : ” — “ God looked upon  
 “ the earth, and behold, it was corrupt ;  
 “ for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon  
 “ the earth. And it *repented* the Lord  
 “ that he had made man on the earth, and  
 “ it *grieved him at his heart* \*.” This is a picture of mankind *before* the flood ; and the doctrine receives additional confirmation in Scripture, when it speaks of the times which followed after that tremendous judgment had taken place. The Psalms abound in lamentations on the de-

\* Genesis, vi.

pravity of man. "They are *all* gone  
"afide; there is *none* that doeth good, no  
"not *one*."—"In *thy* sight," says David,  
addressing the Most High, "shall *no man*  
"living be justified." Job, in his usual  
lofty strain of interrogation, asks, "What  
"is man that he should be clean, and he  
"that is born of a woman that he should  
"be righteous? Behold the heavens are  
"not clean in *His* sight, how much more  
"abominable and filthy is man, who  
"drinketh iniquity like water?"

Nor do the Scriptures speak of this corruption as arising only from occasional temptation, or from mere extrinsic causes. The wise man tells us, that "foolishness is  
"bound up in the *heart of a child*:" the prophet Jeremiah assures us, "the *heart* is  
"deceitful above all things, and desperately  
"wicked:" and David plainly states the doctrine: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive  
"me." Can language be more explicit?

The New Testament corroborates the Old. Our Lord's reproof of Peter seems to take the doctrine for granted: "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of *man*;" clearly intimating, that the *ways of man* are opposite to the ways of God. And our Saviour, in that affecting discourse to his disciples, observes to them that, as they were by his grace made *different* from others, therefore they must expect to be hated by those who were so unlike them. And it should be particularly observed, as another proof that the world is wicked, that our Lord considered "*the world*" as opposed to him and to his disciples. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you\*." St. John, writing to his Christian church, states the same truth: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

\* John, xv. 19



Man in his natural and unbelieving state is likewise represented as in a state of *guilt*, and under the displeasure of Almighty God. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him."

Here, however, if it be objected, that the heathen who never heard of the Gospel will not assuredly be judged by it, the Saviour's answer to such curious inquirers concerning the state of others is, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." It is enough for us to believe that God will judge all men according to their opportunities. The heathen, to whom he has not sent the light of the Gospel will probably not be judged by the Gospel. But with whatever mercy he may judge those who, living in a land of darknes, are without knowledge of his revealed law, *our* business is not with them, but with ourselves. It is *our* business to consider what mercy he will extend to those who, living in a Christian country, abounding with means and ordinances, where the Gospel is preached in its purity;

rity; it is *our* business to inquire how he will deal with those who shut their eyes to its beams, who close their ears to its truths. For an unbeliever who has passed his life in the meridian of Scripture light, or for an outward but unfruitful professor of Christianity, I know not what hope the Gospel holds out.

The natural state of man is again thus described: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; (awful thought!) for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can* be. So then they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God." What the Apostle means by *being in the flesh*, is evident by what follows; for speaking of those whose hearts were changed by Divine grace, he says, "But ye are *not* in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you:" that is, you are now in your natural state: the change that has passed on your minds by the influence of the Spirit of God is so great, that your state may properly be called

called being in the spirit. It may be further observed that the same Apostle, writing to the churches of Galatia, tells them, that the natural corruption of the human heart is continually opposing the spirit of holiness which influences the regenerate. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other:" which passage by the way, at the same time that it proves the corruption of the heart, proves the necessity of divine influences. And the Apostle, with respect to himself, freely confesses and deeply laments the workings of this corrupt principle: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It has been objected by some who have opposed this doctrine, that the same Scriptures which speak of mankind as being *sinners*, speak of some as being *righteous*; and hence they would argue, that though this depravity of human nature may be *general*, yet it cannot be *universal*.

This

This objection, when examined, serves only, like all other objections against the truth, to establish that which it was intended to destroy. For what do the Scriptures assert respecting the righteous? That there are some whose principles, views, and conduct, are so different from the rest of the world, and from what theirs themselves once were, that these persons are honoured with the peculiar title of the "sons of God." But nowhere do the Scriptures assert that even these are *sinless*; on the contrary their *faults* are frequently mentioned; and persons of this class are moreover represented as those on whom a great *change* has passed: as having been formerly "dead in trespasses and sins;" but as "being now *called out* of darkness into "light;" as *translated* into the kingdom "of God's dear Son;" as "having *passed* "from death to life." And St. Paul put this matter past all doubt, by expressly asserting, that "they were all by nature "the children of wrath even as others."

It might be well to ask certain persons who oppose the doctrine in question, and who also seem to talk as if they thought there were many sinless people in the world, how they expect that such sinless people will be saved? (though indeed to talk of an *innocent* person being *saved* involves palpable contradiction in terms, of which those who use the expression do not seem to be aware; it is talking of curing a man already in health.) “Undoubtedly,” such will say, “they will be received into those abodes of bliss prepared for the righteous.”—But be it remembered, there is but *one way* to these blissful abodes, and that is, through Jesus Christ: “For there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved.” If we ask whom did Christ come to save? the Scripture directly answers, “He came into the world to save *sinners*.”—“His name was called Jesus, because he came to save his people *from their sins*.” When St. John was favoured with

with a heavenly vision, he tells us, that he beheld “ a great multitude which no man  
“ could number, of all nations, and kin-  
“ dred, and people, and tongues, standing  
“ before the throne, and before the Lamb,  
“ clothed with white robes :” that one of  
the heavenly inhabitants informed him  
who they were : “ These are they who  
“ come out of great tribulation, and have  
“ washed their robes, and made them  
“ white in the blood of the Lamb ; there-  
“ fore are they before the throne of God,  
“ and serve Him day and night in his  
“ Temple ; and He that sitteth on the  
“ throne shall dwell among them ; they  
“ shall hunger no more, neither thirst  
“ any more, neither shall the sun light  
“ on them, nor any heat ; for the Lamb  
“ which is in the midst of them shall  
“ feed them, and shall lead them to living  
“ fountains of waters, and God shall wipe  
“ away all tears from their eyes.”

We may gather from this description  
what these glorious and happy beings once  
were : they were *sinful* creatures : their

robes were not *spotless*: “They had washed”  
“them, and made them white in the  
“blood of the Lamb.” They are likewise  
generally represented as having been once  
a *suffering* people: they came out of great  
tribulation. They are described as having  
overcome the great tempter of mankind,  
“by the blood of the Lamb\* :” as they  
who “follow the Lamb wheresoever he  
“goeth :” as “redeemed from among  
“men †,” And their *employment* in the re-  
gions of bliss is a farther confirmation of  
the doctrine of which we are treating.  
“The great multitude,” &c. &c. we are  
told, “stood and cried with a loud voice,  
“Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon  
“the throne, and to the Lamb!” Here we  
see they ascribe their salvation to Christ,  
and consequently their present happiness to  
his atoning blood. And in another of their  
celestial anthems, they say in like manner :  
“Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us  
“to God by Thy blood, out of every kin-

\* Rev. xii. 14.

† Rev. xiv. 4.

“dred, and, tongue, and people, and  
“nation.”

By all this it is evident, that men of any other description than *redeemed sinners* must gain admittance to heaven some other way than that which the Scriptures point out; and also that when they shall arrive there, so different will be their employment, that they must have an anthem peculiar to themselves.

Nothing is more adapted to “the casting down of high imaginations,” and to promote humility, than this reflection, that heaven is always in Scripture pointed out not as the reward of the innocent, but as the hope of the penitent. This, while it is calculated to “exclude boasting,” the temper the most opposite to the Gospel, is yet the most suited to afford comfort; for were heaven promised as the reward of innocence, who could attain to it? but being, as it is, the promised portion of faith and repentance, who is compelled to miss it?

\* Rev. v. 9.

It



It is urged that the belief of this doctrine of our corruption produces many ill effects, and therefore it should be discouraged.— That it does *not* produce those ill effects, when not misunderstood or partially represented, we shall attempt to show : at the same time let it be observed, if it be really *true* we must not reject it on account of any of these supposed ill-consequences. Truth may often be attended with disagreeable effects, but if it be truth it must still be pursued. If, for instance, treason should exist in a country, every one knows the disagreeable effects which will follow such a conviction ; but our *not believing* such treason to exist, will not prevent such effect following it : on the contrary, our believing it may prevent the consequences.

It is objected, that this doctrine debases human nature, and that finding fault with the building is only another way of finding fault with the architect. To the first part of this objection it may be remarked, that if man be really a corrupt,  
15 fallen

fallen being, it is proper to represent him as such: the fault then lies in the *man*, and not in the *doctrine*, which only states the *truth*. As to the inference which is supposed to follow, namely, that it throws the fault upon the Creator, it proceeds upon the false supposition that man's present corrupt state is the state in which he was originally created: and also that God has left him unavoidably to perish in it, whereas although "in Adam we die," "in Christ we shall be made alive."

It is likewise objected, that as this doctrine must give us such a bad opinion of mankind, it must consequently produce ill-will, hatred, and suspicion. But it should be remembered, that it gives us no worse an opinion of other men than it gives us of ourselves; such views of ourselves have a very salutary effect, inasmuch as they have a tendency to produce *humility*; and humility is not likely to produce ill-will to others, "for only  
"from pride cometh contention:" and as  
to

to the views it gives us of mankind, it represents us as *fellow-sufferers*; and surely the consideration that we are *companions in misery* is not calculated to produce hatred. The truth is, these effects, where they have actually followed, have followed from a false and partial view of the subject.

Old persons who have seen much of the world, and who have little religion, are apt to be strong in their belief of man's actual corruption; but not taking it up on Christian grounds, this belief in them shows itself in a narrow and malignant temper; in uncharitable judgment and harsh opinions, in individual suspicion, and in too general a disposition to hatred.

Suspicion and hatred also are the uses to which Rochefaucault and the other French philosophers have converted this doctrine: their acute minds intuitively found the corruption of man, and they saw it without its concomitant and correcting doctrine: they allowed man to be a depraved creature, but disallowed his high

high original: they found him in a low state, but did not conceive of him as having fallen from a better. They represent him rather as a brute than an apostate; not taking into the account that his present degraded nature and depraved faculties are not his original state: that he is not such as he came out of the hands of his Creator, but such as he has been made by sin. Nor do they know that he has not even now lost all remains of his primitive dignity, but is still capable of a restoration more glorious

Than is dreamt of in their philosophy.

Perhaps, too, they know from what they *feel*, all the *evil* to which man is inclined; but they do not know, for they have not felt, all the good of which he is capable by the superinduction of the divine principle: thus they asperse human nature instead of representing it fairly, and in so doing it is *they* who calumniate the great Creator.

The

The doctrine of corruption is likewise accused of being a gloomy, discouraging doctrine, and an enemy to joy and comfort. Now suppose this objection true in its fullest extent. Is it any way unreasonable that a being fallen into a state of sin, under the displeasure of Almighty God, should feel *seriously alarmed* at being in such a state? Is the condemned criminal blamed because he is not *merry*? And would it be esteemed a kind action to persuade him that he is *not* condemned in order to make him so?

But this charge is *not* true in the sense intended by those who bring it forward. Those who believe this doctrine are *not* the most gloomy people. When, indeed, any one by the influence of the Holy Spirit is brought to view his state as it really is, a state of guilt and danger, it is natural that *fear* should be excited in his mind, but it is such a fear as impels him "to flee from the wrath to come:" it is such a fear as moved Noah to "pre-  
pare

“pare an ark to the saving of his house.” Such an one will likewise feel *sorrow*; not however “the sorrow of the world which worketh death,” but that godly sorrow which worketh repentance: such an one is in a proper state to receive the glorious doctrine we are next about to contemplate; namely,

THAT GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD,  
THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN  
SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVED ON  
HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE  
EVERLASTING LIFE.

Of this doctrine it is of the last importance to form just views, for as it is the only doctrine which can keep the humble penitent from despair, so, on the other hand, great care must be taken that false views of it do not lead us to presumption. In order to understand it rightly, we must not fill our minds with our own reasonings

ings upon it, which is the way in which some good people have been misled, but we must betake ourselves to the Scriptures; wherein we shall find the doctrine stated so plainly as to shew that the mistakes have not arisen from a want of clearness in the scriptures, but from a desire to make it bend to some favourite notions. While it has been rejected by some, it has been so mutilated by others, as hardly to retain any resemblance to the Scripture doctrine of redemption. We are told in the beautiful passage last quoted *its source*—the love of God to a lost world;—*who* the Redeemer was—the Son of God;—the *end* for which this plan was formed and executed—“that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” There is nothing surely in all this to promote gloominess. On the contrary, if kindness and mercy have a tendency to win and warm the heart, here is every incentive to joy and cheerfulness. Christianity looks kindly towards all, and with peculiar tenderness on such as, from humbling views  
of

of their own unworthiness, might be led to fancy themselves excluded:—we are expressly told, that “Christ died for *all* :”—that “he tasted death for *every* man :”—that “he died for the sins of *the whole world*.” Accordingly he has commanded that his Gospel should be “preached to *every creature* ;” which is in effect declaring, that not a single human being is excluded: for to preach the Gospel is to offer a Saviour:—and the Saviour in the plainest language offers himself to all,—declaring to “all the ends of the earth”—“Look unto me and be saved.” It is therefore an undeniable truth, that no one will perish for want of a Saviour, but for rejecting him.

But to suppose that because Christ has died for the “sins of the whole world,” the whole world will therefore be *saved*, is a most fatal mistake: in the same book which tells us that “Christ died for all,” we have likewise this awful admonition: “Strait is



“the gate, and *few* there be that find it;” which, whether it be understood of the immediate reception of the Gospel, or of the final use which was too likely to be made of it, gives no encouragement to hope that *all* will be qualified to partake of its promises. And whilst it declares that “there is no other name whereby we may be saved but the name of Jesus;” it likewise declares

THAT “WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD.”

It is much to be feared that some, in their zeal to defend the Gospel doctrines of free grace, have materially injured the Gospel doctrine of holiness: stating, that Christ has done all in such a sense, as that there is nothing left for us to do.—But do the Scriptures hold out this language? —“Come, for all things are ready,” is the Gospel call; in which we may observe, that at the same time that it tells us that

“all

"all things are ready," it nevertheless tells us that we must "*come*." Food being *provided* for us will not benefit us except we *partake* of it.—It will not avail us that "Christ our passover is *sacrificed*" for us," unless "we *keep* the feast."—We must *make use* of "the fountain which is opened for sin and for uncleanness," if we would be *purified*. "All, indeed, who are *athirst* are invited to take of the waters of life freely ;" but if we feel no *thirst* ;" if we do not *drink*, their saving qualities are of no avail.

It is the more necessary to insist on this in the present day, as there is a worldly and fashionable, as well as a low and sectarian Antinomianism: there lamentably prevails in the world an unwarranted assurance of Salvation, founded on a slight, vague, and general confidence in what Christ has done and suffered for us, as if the great object of his doing and suffering had been to emancipate *us* from all obligations to duty and obedience; and as if,

U 2

because

because he died for sinners, we might therefore safely and comfortably go on to live in sin, contenting ourselves with now and then a transient, formal, and unmeaning avowal of our unworthiness, our obligation, and the all-sufficiency of *his* atonement. By the discharge of this quit-rent, of which all the cost consists in the acknowledgment, the sensual, the worldly, and the vain hope to find a refuge in heaven, when driven from the enjoyments of this world. But this cheap and indolent Christianity is nowhere taught in the Bible. The faith inculcated *there* is, not a lazy, professional faith, but that faith which “*produceth obedience,*” that faith which “*worketh by love,*” that faith of which the practical language is—“*Strive* that you may “enter in;”—“*So run* that you may “obtain;”—“*So fight* that you may “lay hold on eternal life:”—that faith which directs us “not to be weary in “well-doing;”—which says, “*Work out your own salvation:*”—never forgetting

at

at the same time, "that it is God which  
 "worketh in us both to will and to do."  
 —Are those rich supplies of grace which  
 the Gospel offers; are those abundant  
 aids of the Spirit which it promises, ten-  
 dered to the *slothful*?—No.—God will  
 have all his gifts improved. Grace must  
 be used, or it will be withdrawn. The  
 Almighty thinks it not derogatory to his  
 free grace to declare, that "those only  
 "who do his commandments have right  
 "to the tree of life." And the Scriptures  
 represent it as not derogatory to the *sacri-  
 fice* of Christ, to follow his example in well-  
 doing. The only caution is, that we  
 must not work in our own strength, nor  
 bring in our contribution of works as if  
 in aid of the supposed deficiency of His  
 merits.

For we must not in our *over-caution*  
 fancy, that because Christ has "redeemed  
 "us from the curse of the law," we are  
 therefore without a law. In acknowledg-  
 ing Christ as a deliverer, we must not for-

get that he is a law-giver too, and that we are expressly commanded "to fulfil the law of Christ:" if then we wish to know what his laws are, we must "search the Scriptures," especially the New Testament; there we shall find him declaring

THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF A CHANGE  
OF HEART AND LIFE:

Our Saviour says, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God:" that it is not a mere acknowledging His authority, calling him "Lord, Lord," that will avail any thing, except we do what He commands: that any thing short of this is like a man building his house upon the sands, which, when the storms come on, will certainly fall. In like manner the Apostles are continually enforcing the necessity of this change, which they describe under the various names of "the new man;"—"the new crea-

\* Ephesians, iv. 24.

“ture \*;”—“a transformation into the  
 “image of God †;”—“a participation  
 “of the divine nature ‡.” Nor is this  
 change represented as consisting merely  
 in a change of religious opinions, not  
 even in being delivered over from a worse  
 to a better system of doctrines, nor in ex-  
 changing gross sins for those which are  
 more sober and reputable; nor in re-  
 nouncing the sins of youth, and assuming  
 those of a quieter period of life; nor  
 in leaving off evil practices because men  
 are grown tired of them, or find they in-  
 jure their credit, health, or fortune; nor  
 does it consist in inoffensiveness and obliging  
 manners, nor indeed in any merely *outward*  
 reformation.

But the change consists in “being  
 “renewed in the spirit of our minds;”  
 in being “conformed to the image of the  
 “Son of God;” in being “called out of  
 “darkness into His marvellous light.”

\* Galatians, vi. 15.

† 2 Corinthians, xii.

‡ 2 Peter, i. 4.

And the whole of this great change, its beginning, progress, and final accomplishment, for it is represented as a gradual change, is ascribed to

#### THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We are perpetually reminded of our utter inability to help ourselves, that we may set the higher value on those gracious aids which are held out to us. We are taught that "we are not sufficient to *think* any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." And when we are told that "if we live after the flesh, we shall die," we are at the same time reminded, that it is "through the *spirit* that we must mortify the deeds of the body." We are likewise cautioned that we "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" that we "quench not the Spirit." By all which expressions, and many others of like import, we are taught that, while we are to ascribe with humble gratitude every good thought, word, and work, to the influence of

of the Holy Spirit, we are not to look on such influences as superseding our own exertions: and it is too plain that we *may* reject the gracious offers of assistance, since otherwise there would be no occasion to caution us *not* to do it. The Scriptures have illustrated this in terms which are familiar indeed, but which are therefore only the more condescending and endearing. “Behold, I stand at the door” “and knock. If any man hear my voice” “and open the door, I will come in to” “him, and will sup with him, and he” “with me.” Observe, it is not said, if any man will not listen to me, I will force open the door. But if we refuse admittance to such a guest, we must abide by the consequences.

The sublime doctrine of divine assistance is the more to be prized, not only on account of our own helplessness, but from the additional consideration of the powerful adversary with whom the Christian has to contend: an article of our faith by the  
way,



way, which is growing into general disrepute among the politer classes of society. Nay, there is a kind of ridicule attached to the very suggestion of the subject, as if it were exploded on full proof of its being an absolute absurdity, utterly repugnant to the liberal spirit of an enlightened age. And it requires no small neatness of expression and periphrastic ingenuity to get the very mention tolerated.—I mean

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE EXISTENCE AND POWER OF OUR GREAT SPIRITUAL ENEMY.

This is considered by the fashionable sceptic as a vulgar invention, which ought to be banished with the belief in dreams, and ghosts, and witchcraft:—by the fashionable Christian, as an ingenious allegory, but not as a literal truth; and by almost all, as a doctrine which, when it happens to be introduced at Church, has at least nothing

to

to do with the *petes*, but is by common consent made over to the *aïset*, if indeed it must be retained at all.

May I, with great humility and respect, presume to suggest to our divines that they would do well not to lend their countenance to these modish curtailments of the Christian faith; nor to shun the introduction of this doctrine whenever it consists with their subject to bring it forward. A truth which is seldom brought before the eye, imperceptibly grows less and less important; and if it be an unpleasing truth, we grow more and more reconciled to its absence, till at length its intrusion becomes offensive, and we learn in the end to renounce what we at first only neglected. Because some coarse and ranting enthusiasts have been fond of using tremendous terms with a violence and frequency, which might make it seem to be a gratification to them to denounce judgments and anticipate torments, can *their* coarseness or vulgarity make a true

doctrine false, or an important one trifling? If such preachers have given offence by their uncouth manner of managing an awful doctrine, that indeed furnishes a caution to treat the subject more discreetly, but it is no just reason for avoiding the doctrine. For to keep a truth out of sight because it has been absurdly handled or ill-defended, might in time be assigned as a reason for keeping back, one by one, every doctrine of our holy church; for which of them has not occasionally had imprudent advocates or weak champions?

Be it remembered that the doctrine in question is not only interwoven by allusion, implication, or direct assertion throughout the whole Scripture, but that it stands prominently *personified* at the opening of the New as well as the Old Testament. The devil's temptation of our Lord, in which he is not represented figuratively, but visibly and palpably, stands exactly on the same ground of authority with other events which are received with-

out

out repugnance. And it may not be an unuseful observation to remark, that the very refusing to believe in an evil spirit, may be considered as one of his own suggestions; for there is not a more dangerous illusion than to believe ourselves out of the reach of illusions, nor a more alarming temptation than to fancy that we are not liable to be tempted.

But the dark cloud raised by this doctrine will be dispelled by the cheering certainty that our blessed Saviour having himself "been tempted like as we are, is able to deliver those who are tempted."

But to return.—From this imperfect sketch we may see how suitable the religion of Christ is to fallen man! How exactly it meets every want! No one needs now perish because he is a sinner, provided he be willing to forsake his sins; for "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners:" and "He is now exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sin." Which

passage, be it observed, may be considered as pointing out to us the *order* in which he bestows his blessings; he gives first *repentance*, and then *forgiveness*.

We may likewise see how much the character of a true Christian rises above every other: that there is a wholeness, an integrity, a completeness in the Christian character: that a few natural, pleasing qualities, not cast in the mould of the Gospel, are but as beautiful fragments, or well-turned single limbs, which for want of that beauty which arises from the proportion of parts, for want of that connection of the members with the living head, are of little comparative excellence. There may be amiable qualities which are not Christian graces: and the Apostle, after enumerating every separate article of attack or defence with which a Christian warrior is to be accoutred, sums up the matter by directing that we put on "the whole" "armour of God." And this *completeness* is insisted on by all the Apostles. One  
prays

prays that his converts may “stand *perfect* and *complete* in the whole will of “God:” another enjoins that they be “*perfect* and *entire*, wanting nothing.”

Now we are not to suppose that they expected any convert to be *without faults*; they knew too well the constitution of the human heart to form so unfounded an expectation. But Christians must have no fault in their *principle*; their *views* must be direct, their proposed *scheme* must be faultless; their *intention* must be single; their *standard* must be lofty; their *object* must be right; their “*mark* must be the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—There must be no *allowed* evil, no *warranted* defection, no *tolerated* impurity, no habitual irregularity. Though they do not rise as high as they ought, nor as they wish, in the scale of perfection, yet the scale itself must be correct, and the desire of ascending perpetual: they must count the degrees they have already attained as nothing. Every grace must be kept in exercise, con-

quests

quests once made over an evil propensity must not only be maintained but extended. And in truth, Christianity so comprises contrary, and as it may be thought irreconcilable excellencies, that those which seem so incompatible as to be incapable by nature of being inmates of the same breast, are almost necessarily involved in the Christian character.

For instance; Christianity requires that our faith be at once fervent and sober; that our love be both ardent and lasting; that our patience be not only heroic but gentle; she demands dauntless zeal and genuine humility; active services and complete self-renunciation; high attainments in goodness, with deep consciousness of defect; courage in reproving, and meekness in bearing reproof; a quick perception of what is sinful, with a willingness to forgive the offender; active virtue ready to *do* all, and passive virtue ready to *bear* all.—We must stretch every faculty in the service of our Lord,  
and

and yet bring every thought into obedience to Him: while we aim to live in the exercise of every Christian grace, we must account ourselves unprofitable servants: we must *strive* for the crown, yet receive it as a *gift*, and then lay it at our master's feet: while we are busily trading in the world with our Lord's talents, we must "commune with our heart, and be still:" while we strive to practice the purest disinterestedness, we must be contented though we meet with selfishness in return; and while laying out our lives for the good of mankind, we must submit to reproach without murmuring, and to ingratitude without resentment. And to render us equal to all these services, Christianity bestows not only the precept, but the power; she does what the great poet of Ethics lamented that Reason could not do, "she lends us arms as well as rules."

For here, if not only the worldly and the timid, but the humble and the well-



disposed should demand with fear and trembling, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Revelation makes its own reviving answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

It will be well here to distinguish that there are two sorts of Christian professors, one of which affect to speak of Christianity as if it were a mere system of doctrines, with little reference to their influence on life and manners; while the other consider it as exhibiting a scheme of human duties independent on its doctrines. For though the latter sort may admit the doctrines, yet they contemplate them as a separate and disconnected set of opinions, rather than as an influential principle of action.—In violation of that beautiful harmony which subsists in every part of Scripture between practice and belief, the religious world furnishes two sorts of people, who seem to enlist themselves, as if in opposition, under the banners of Saint Paul and Saint James, as if those

two great champions of the Christian cause had fought for two masters. Those who affect respectively to be the disciples of each, treat faith and works as if they were opposite interests, instead of inseparable points. Nay, they go farther, and set Saint Paul at variance with himself.

Now, instead of reasoning on the point, let us refer to the Apostle in question, who himself definitively settles the dispute. The Apostolical order and method in this respect deserve notice and imitation; for it is observable that the earlier parts of most of the Epistles abound in the *doctrines* of Christianity, while those latter chapters, which wind up the subject, exhibit all the *duties* which grow out of them, as the natural and necessary productions of such a living root. But this alternate mention of doctrine and practice, which seemed likely to *unite*, has on the contrary formed a sort of line of separation between these two orders of believers, and introduced a broken

and mutilated system. Those who would make Christianity consist of doctrines only, dwell, for instance, on the first eleven chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, as containing exclusively the sum and substance of the Gospel. While the mere moralists, who wish to strip Christianity of her lofty and appropriate attributes, delight to dwell on the *twelfth* chapter, which is a table of duties, as exclusively as if the preceding chapters made no part of the sacred Canon. But Paul himself, who was at least as sound a theologian as any of his commentators, settles the matter another way, by making the duties of the twelfth grow out of the doctrines of the antecedent *eleven*, just as any other consequence grows out of its cause. And as if he suspected that the indivisible union between them might possibly be overlooked, he links the two distinct divisions together by a logical "therefore," with which the twelfth begins:—"I beseech you *therefore*," (that is, as the effect of all I have been inculcating,) "that you present your  
"bodies

“bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to  
 “God,” &c. and then goes on to enforce  
 on them, as a consequence of what he had  
 been preaching, the practice of every Chris-  
 tian virtue. This combined view of the  
 subject seems, on the one hand, to be the  
 only means of preventing the substitution  
 of Pagan morality for Christian holiness;  
 and, on the other, of securing the leading  
 doctrine of justification by faith, from the  
 dreadful danger of Antinomian licentious-  
 ness; every human obligation being thus  
 grafted on the living stock of a divine  
 principle.

CHAP. XX.

*On the duty and efficacy of prayer.*

IT is not proposed to enter largely on a topic which has been exhausted by the ablest pens. But as a work of this nature seems to require that so important a subject should not be overlooked, it is intended to notice in a slight manner a few of those many difficulties and popular objections which are brought forward against the use and efficacy of prayer, even by those who would be unwilling to be suspected of impiety and unbelief.

There is a class of objectors who strangely profess to withhold homage from the Most High, not out of contempt, but reverence. They affect to consider the use of prayer as derogatory to the omniscience of God, asserting that it looks

as if we thought he stood in need of being informed of our wants; and as derogatory to his goodness, as implying that he needs to be put in mind of them.

But is it not enough for such poor frail beings as we are to know, that God himself does not consider prayer as derogatory either to his wisdom or goodness? And shall we erect ourselves into judges of what is consistent with the attributes of HIM before whom angels fall prostrate with self-abasement? Will he thank such defenders of his attributes, who, while they profess to reverence, scruple not to disobey him? It ought rather to be viewed as a great encouragement to prayer, that we are addressing a Being, who knows our wants better than we can express them, and whose preventing goodness is always ready to relieve them.

It is objected by another class, and on the specious ground of humility too, though we do not always find the objector himself quite as humble as his plea, that it is arro-

gant in such insignificant beings as we are to presume to lay our petty necessities before the Great and Glorious God, who cannot be expected to condescend to the multitude of trifling and even interfering requests which are brought before him by his creatures. These and such like objections arise from mean and unworthy thoughts of the Great Creator. It seems as if those who make them considered the Most High as "such an one as themselves;" a Being, who can perform a certain given quantity of business, but who would be overpowered with an additional quantity. Or, at best, is it not considering the Almighty in the light, not of an infinite God, but of a great man, of a minister, or a king, who, while he superintends great and national concerns, is obliged to neglect small and individual petitions, because he cannot spare that leisure and attention which suffice for every thing? They do not consider him as that infinitely glorious being, who, while he beholds at once

all

all that is doing in heaven and in earth, is at the same time as attentive to the prayer of the poor destitute, as present to the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, as if these forlorn creatures were individually the objects of his undivided attention.

These critics, who are for sparing the Supreme Being the trouble of our prayers, and, if I may so speak without profaneness, would relieve Omnipotence of part of his burden, by assigning to his care only such a portion as may be more easily managed, seem to have no conception of his attributes.

They forget that infinite wisdom puts him as easily within reach of all knowledge, as infinite power does of all performance; that he is a Being in whose plans complexity makes no difficulty, variety no obstruction, and multiplicity no confusion; that to ubiquity distance does not exist; that to infinity space is annihil-



ated; that past, present, and future, are discerned more accurately at one glance of his eye, to whom a thousand years are as one day, than a single moment of time or a single point of space can be by ours.

To the other part of the objection, founded on the supposed interference (that is, irreconcilableness) of one man's petitions with those of another, this answer seems to suggest itself: first, that we must take care that when we ask, we do not "ask amiss;" that, for instance, we ask chiefly, and in an unqualified manner, only for spiritual blessings to ourselves and others; and in doing this the prayer of one man *cannot* interfere with that of another, because no proportion of sanctity or virtue implored by one obstructs the same attainments in another. Next, in asking for temporal and inferior blessings, we must *qualify* our petition, even though it should extend to deliverance from the severest pains, or to our very life itself, according to that example of our Saviour:

"Father,

“ Father, *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from me. *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.*” By thus qualifying our prayer, we exercise ourselves in an act of resignation to God ; we profess not to wish what will interfere with his benevolent plan, and yet we may hope by prayer to secure the blessing so far as it is consistent with it. Perhaps the reason why this objection to prayer is so strongly felt, is the too great disposition to pray for merely temporal and worldly blessings, and to desire them in the most unqualified manner, not submitting to be without them, even though the granting them should be inconsistent with the general plan of Providence.

Another class continue to bring forward, as pertinaciously as if it had never been answered, the exhausted argument, that seeing God is immutable, no petitions of ours can ever change Him : that events themselves being settled in a fixed and unalterable course, and bound in a fatal necessity, it is folly to think that we can disturb

disturb the established laws of the universe, or interrupt the course of Providence by our prayers: and that it is absurd to suppose these firm decrees can be reversed by any requests of ours.

Without entering into the wide and trackless field of fate and free will, from which pursuit I am kept back equally by the most profound ignorance and the most invincible dislike, I would only observe, that these objections apply equally to all human actions as well as to prayer. It may therefore with the same propriety be urged, that seeing God is immutable and his decrees unalterable, therefore our *actions* can produce no change in Him or in our own state. Weak as well as impious reasoning. It may be questioned whether even the modern French and German philosophers might not be prevailed upon to acknowledge the existence of God, if they might make such a use of his attributes. The truth is, and it is a truth discoverable without any depth of learning,

all

all these objections are the offspring of *pride*. Poor, short-sighted man cannot reconcile the omniscience and decrees of God with the efficacy of prayer; and because *he* cannot reconcile them, he modestly concludes they are irreconcilable. How much more wisdom as well as happiness results from an humble Christian spirit! Such a plain practical text as, "Draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you," carries more consolation, more true knowledge of his wants, and their remedy to the heart of a penitent sinner, than all the "tomes of casuistry" which have puzzled the world ever since the question was first set afloat by its original propounders.

And as the plain man only got up and walked, to prove there was such a thing as motion, in answer to the philosopher who, in an elaborate theory, denied it: so the plain Christian, when he is borne down with the assurance that there is no efficacy in prayer, requires

no better argument to repel the assertion than the good he finds in prayer itself.

All the doubts proposed to him respecting God, do not so much affect him as this one doubt respecting himself: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." For the chief doubt and difficulty of a real Christian consists, not so much in a distrust of God's ability and willingness to answer the prayer of the upright, as in a distrust of his own uprightness, as in a doubt whether he himself belongs to that description of persons to whom the promises are made, and of the quality of the prayer which he offers up.

Let the subjects of a dark fate maintain a sullen, or the slaves of a blind chance a hopeless silence, but let the child of a compassionate Almighty Father supplicate his mercies with an humble confidence, inspired by the assurance, that "the very hairs of his head are numbered." Let him take comfort in that individual and

minute attention, without which not a sparrow falls to the ground, as well as in that heart-cheering promise, that, as “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous,” so are “his ears open to their prayers.” And as a pious Bishop has observed, “Our Saviour has as it were hedged in and inclosed the Lord’s prayer with these two great fences of our faith, “God’s *willingness* and his *power* to help us:” the preface to it assures us of the one, which, by calling God by the tender name of “Our Father,” intimates his *readiness* to help his children: and the animating conclusion, “Thine is the *power*,” rescues us from every unbelieving doubt of his *ability* to help us.

A Christian knows, because he feels, that prayer is, though in a way to him inscrutable, the medium of connection between God and his rational creatures; the means appointed by him to draw down his blessings upon us. The Christian knows that prayer is the appointed means

of

of uniting two ideas, one of the highest magnificence, the other of the most profound lowliness, within the compass of imagination; namely, that it is the link of communication between "the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity," and that heart of the "contrite in which he delights to dwell." He knows that this inexplicable union between Beings so unspeakably, so essentially different, can only be maintained by prayer; that this is the strong but secret chain which unites time with eternity, earth with heaven, man with God.

The plain Christian, as was before observed, cannot explain why it is so; but while he *feels* the efficacy, he is contented to let the learned *define* it; and he will no more postpone prayer till he can produce a chain of reasoning on the manner in which he derives benefit from it, than he will postpone eating till he can give a scientific lecture on the nature of digestion: he is contented with knowing that

that his meat has nourished him; and he leaves to the philosopher, who may choose to defer his meal till he has elaborated his treatise, to starve in the interim. The Christian feels better than he is able to explain, that the functions of his spiritual life can no more be carried on without habitual prayer, than those of his natural life without frequent bodily nourishment. He feels renovation and strength grow out of the use of the appointed means, as necessarily in the one case as in the other. He feels that the health of his soul can no more be sustained, and its powers kept in continued vigour by the *prayers* of a distant day, than his body by the *aliment* of a distant day.

But there is one motive to the duty in question, far more constraining to the true believer than all others that can be named; more imperious than any argument on its utility, than any convictions of its efficacy, even than any experience of its consolations. Prayer is the com-



mand of God ; the plain, positive, repeated injunction of the Most High, who declares, " He will be inquired of." This is enough to secure the obedience of the Christian, even though a promise were not, as it always is, attached to the command. But in this case, to our unspeakable comfort, the promise is as clear as the precept ; "*Ask, and ye shall receive ;*" — "*Seek, and ye shall find :—Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*" This is encouragement enough for the plain Christian. As to the *manner* in which prayer is made to coincide with the general scheme of God's plan in the government of human affairs ; how God has left himself at liberty to reconcile our prayer with his own predetermined will, the Christian does not very critically examine, his precise and immediate duty being to pray, and not to examine ; and probably this being among the " secret things which belong to God," and not to us, it will lie hidden among those numberless mysteries

teries which we shall not fully understand till faith is lost in sight.

In the mean time it is enough for the humble believer to be assured, that the Judge of all the earth is doing right: it is enough for him to be assured in that word of God "which cannot lie," of numberless actual instances of the efficacy of prayer in obtaining blessings and averting calamities, both national and individual: it is enough for him to be convinced experimentally, by that internal evidence which is perhaps paramount to all other evidence, the comfort he himself has received from prayer when all other comforts have failed:—and above all, to end with the same motive with which we began, the only motive indeed which *he* requires for the performance of any duty,—it is motive enough for him,—that *thus saith the Lord*. For when a serious Christian has once got a plain unequivocal command from his Maker, on any point, he never suspends his obedience while

he is amusing himself with looking about for subordinate motives of action. Instead of curiously analysing the nature of the duty, he considers how he shall best fulfil it: for on these points at least it may be said without controversy, that “the ignorant (and here who is *not* ignorant?) *have nothing to do with the law but to obey it.*”

Others there are, who, perhaps not controverting any of these premises, yet neglect to build practical consequences on the admission of them; who neither denying the duty nor the efficacy of prayer, yet go on to live either in the irregular observance or the total neglect of it, as appetite, or pleasure, or business, or humour, may happen to predominate; and who, by living almost without prayer, may be said “to live almost without God in the world.” To such we can only say, that they little know what they lose. The time is hastening on when they will look upon those blessings as invaluable,

which

which now they think not worth asking for; when they will bitterly regret the absence of those means and opportunities which now they either neglect or despise. "O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter end!"

There are again others, who it is to be feared, having once lived in the habit of prayer, yet not having been well-grounded in those principles of faith and repentance on which genuine prayer is built, have by degrees totally discontinued it. "They do not find," say they, "that their affairs prosper the better or the worse; or perhaps they were unsuccessful in their affairs even before they dropt the practice; and so had no encouragement to go on." They do not *know* that they had no encouragement; they do not *know* how much worse their affairs might have gone on, had they discontinued it sooner, or how their prayers helped to retard their ruin. Or they do

not *know* that perhaps "they asked amiss," or that, if they had obtained what they asked, they might have been far more unhappy. For a true believer never "restrains prayer," because he is not certain he obtains every individual request; for he is persuaded that God, in compassion to our ignorance, sometimes in great mercy withholds what we desire, and often disappoints his most favoured children by giving them, not what they ask, but what he knows is really good for them. The froward child, as a pious prelate \* observes, cries for the shining blade, which the tender parent withholds, knowing it would cut his fingers.

Thus to persevere when we have not the encouragement of visible success, is an evidence of tried faith. Of this holy perseverance Job was a noble instance. Defeat and disappointment rather stimulated than stopped *his* prayers. Though

in a vehement strain of passionate eloquence he exclaims, "I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment:" yet so persuaded was he notwithstanding of the duty of continuing this holy importunity, that he persisted against all human hope, till he attained to that exalted pitch of unshaken faith, by which he was enabled to break out into that sublime apostrophe, "Though he slay me, I will trust in him!"

But may we not say that there is a considerable class, who not only bring none of the objections which we have stated against the use of prayer; who are so far from rejecting, that they are exact and regular in the performance of it; who yet take it up on as low ground as is consistent with their ideas of their own safety; who, while they consider prayer as an indispensable form, believe nothing of that change of heart and of those holy tempers which it is intended to produce? Many who yet adhere scrupulously to the letter, are so far from entering

Y 4

into

into the spirit of this duty, that they are strongly inclined to suspect those of hypocrisy who adopt the true scriptural views of prayer. Nay, as even the Bible may be so wrested as to be made to speak almost any language in support of almost any opinion, these persons lay hold on Scripture itself to bear them out in their own slight views of this duty; and they profess to borrow from thence the ground of that censure which they cast on the more serious Christians. Among the many passages which have been made to convey a meaning foreign to its original design, none has been seized upon with more avidity by such persons than the pointed censures of our Saviour on those "who for a pretence make long prayers;" as well as on those "who use vain repetitions, and think they shall be heard for much speaking." Now the things here intended to be reproved, were the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the ignorance of the heathen, together with the error of all those who depended on

on the success of their prayers, while they imitated the deceit of the one or the folly of the other. But our Saviour never meant those severe reprehensions should cool or abridge the devotion of pious Christians, to which they do not at all apply.

More or fewer words, however, so little constitute the true value of prayer, that there is no doubt but one of the most affecting specimens on record is the short petition of the Publican; full fraught as it is with that spirit of contrition and self-abasement which is the very principle and soul of prayer. And this specimen perhaps is the best model for that sudden lifting up of the heart which we call ejaculation. But I doubt, in general, whether these few hasty words to which these frugal petitioners would set the scanty devotions of others and themselves, will be always found ample enough to satisfy the humble penitent; who, being a sinner, has much to confess; who, hoping he is a pardoned sinner, has much to acknowledge. Such an one perhaps cannot  
always



always pour out the fullness of his soul within the prescribed abridgments. Even the sincerest Christian, when he wishes to find his heart warm, has often to lament its coldness. Though he feel that he has received much, and has therefore much to be thankful for, yet he is not able at once to bring his wayward spirit into such a posture as shall fit it for the solemn business; for such an one has not merely his form to repeat, but he has his tempers to reduce to order, his affections to excite, and his peace to make. His thoughts may be realizing the sarcasm of the Prophet or the Idol Baal, "they may be gone a journey," and must be recalled; his heart perhaps "sleepeth," and must be awaked." A devout suppliant too will labour to affect and warm his mind with a sense of the great and gracious attributes of God, in imitation of the holy men of old. Like Jehosaphat, he will sometimes enumerate "the power, and the might, and the mercies of the Most High," in order to stir up the sentiments of

of awe, and gratitude, and love, and humility in his own soul \*. He has the example of his Saviour, whose heart dilated with the expression of the same holy affections. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." A heart thus animated, thus inflamed with divine love, cannot always scrupulously limit itself to the mere *business* of prayer, if I may so speak. It cannot content itself with merely spreading out its own necessities, but expands in contemplating the perfections of Him to whom he is addressing them. The humble suppliant, though he be no longer governed by a love of the world, yet grieves to find that he cannot totally exclude it from his thoughts. Though he has on the whole a deep sense of his own wants, and of God's abundant fullness to supply them, yet when he most wishes to be rejoicing in those strong motives for love and gratitude, alas! even then he has to mourn.

\* 2 Chron. xx 5, 6,

his worldliness, his insensibility, his deadness. He has to deplore the littleness and vanity of the objects which are even then drawing away his heart from his Redeemer. The best Christian is but too liable, during the temptations of the day, to be ensnared by "the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," and is not always brought without effort to reflect that he is but dust and ashes. How can even good persons, who are just come perhaps from listening to the flattery of their fellow-worms, acknowledge before God, without any preparation of the heart, that they are miserable sinners? They require a little time, to impress on their own souls the truth of that solemn confession of sin they are making to Him, without which brevity and not length might constitute hypocrisy. Even the sincerely pious have in prayer grievous wanderings to lament, from which others mistakingly suppose the advanced Christian to be exempt. Such wanderings that, as an old divine has observed, it would

exceedingly humble a good man, could be, after he had prayed, be made to see his prayers written down, with exact interlineations of all the vain and impertinent thoughts which had thrust themselves in amongst them. So that such an one will indeed, from a sense of these distractions, feel deep occasion with the prophet to ask forgiveness for "the iniquity of his *body* things:" and would find cause enough for humiliation every night, had he to lament the sins of his prayers only.

We know that such a brief petition as, "Lord help my unbelief," if the suppliant be in so happy a frame, and the prayer be darted with such strong faith that his very soul mounts with the petition, may suffice to draw down a blessing which may be withheld from the more prolix petitioner: yet, if by prayer we do not mean a mere form of words, whether they be long or short; if the true definition of prayer be, that it is *the desire of the heart*;

then if we pray, and do not believe, it will be as if

if it be that secret communion between God and the soul which is the very breath and being of religion ; then is the Scripture so far from suggesting that short measure of which it is accused, that it expressly says, “ Pray without ceasing : ” — “ Pray evermore : ” — “ I will that men pray everywhere : ” — “ Continue instant in prayer.”

If such “ repetitions ” as these objectors reprobate, stir up desires as yet unawakened, or protract affections already excited, for “ vain repetitions ” are such as awaken or express no new desire, and serve no religious purpose, then are “ repetitions ” not to be condemned. And if it be true that our Saviour gave the warning against “ long prayers ” in the sense these objectors allege ; if he gave the caution against vain repetitions in the sense these believe ; then he broke his own rule in both instances : for once we are told “ he continued *all night* in prayer to God.”

And again, in a most awful crisis of his life, it is expressly said, "He prayed the *third time, using the same words*."

But as it is the effect of prayer to *expand* the affections, as well as to *sanctify* them, the benevolent Christian is not satisfied to commend himself alone to the divine favour. The heart which is full of the love of God, will overflow with love to its neighbour. All that are near to himself he wishes to bring near to God. He will bring the whole human race as objects of the divine compassion, but especially the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. Religion makes a man so liberal of soul, that he cannot endure to restrict any thing, much less divine mercies, to himself: he therefore spiritualizes the social affections, by adding intercessory to personal prayer: for he knows, that petitioning for others is one of the best methods of exercising and enlarging our own love and charity, even

if it were not to draw down those blessings which are promised to *them*. It is unnecessary to produce any of the numberless instances with which Scripture abounds, on the efficacy of intercession: I shall confine myself to a few observations on the benefits it brings to him who offers it.—When we pray for the objects of our dearest regard, it purifies passion, and exalts love into religion: when we pray for those with whom we have worldly intercourse, it smooths down the swellings of envy, and bids the tumults of anger and ambition subside: when we pray for our country, it sanctifies patriotism: when we pray for those in authority, it adds a divine motive to human obedience: when we pray for our enemies, it softens the savageness of war, and mollifies hatred into tenderness and sorrow. And we can best learn, nay, we can only learn, the difficult duty of forgiving those who have offended us, when we bring ourselves to pray for them to Him whom we ourselves daily offend.

When

When those who are the faithful followers of the same Divine Master pray for each other, the reciprocal intercession best realizes that beautiful idea of "the Communion of Saints."

Some are for confining their intercessions only to the good, as if none but persons of merit were entitled to our prayers. Merit! who has it? Desert! who can plead it? in the sight of God, I mean. Who shall bring his own piety, or the piety of others, in the way of *claim*, before a Being of such transcendent holiness, that "the heavens are not clean in his sight?" And if we wait for perfect holiness as a preliminary to prayer, when shall such erring creatures pray *at all* to Him "who chargeth the Angels with folly!"

In closing this little work with the subject of intercessory prayer, may the Author be allowed to avail herself of the feeling it suggests to her own heart? And while she earnestly implores that Being, who



can make the meanest of his creatures instrumental to his glory, to bless this humble attempt to those for whom it was written, may she, without presumption, entreat that this work of Christian Charity may be reciprocal, and that those who peruse these pages, may put up a petition for her, that in the great day to which we are all hastening, she may not be found to have suggested to others what she herself did not believe, or to have recommended what she did not desire to practise? In that awful day of everlasting decision, may both the reader and the writer be pardoned and accepted, "not for any works of righteousness which they have done," but through the merits of the GREAT INTERCESSOR.

THE END.



*Written by the same* **AUTHOR** and printed for  
**T. CADELL, jun. and W. DAVIES, Strand.**

1. **THOUGHTS** on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to general Society. 9th Edition. 2s. sewed.
2. **AN ESTIMATE** of the RELIGION of the Fashionable World. 5th Edition. 3s. sewed.
3. **REMARKS** on the SPEECH of M. DUPONT, made in the National Convention of France, on the Subjects of Religion and Public Education. 2d Edition. 2s. 6d.
4. **SACRED DRAMAS**: chiefly intended for young Persons. The Subjects taken from the Bible.—To which is added, **SENSIBILITY**, a Poem. 10th Edition. 4s. in Boards.
5. **SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS**; a Pastoral Drama. 11th Edition. 1s. 6d.
6. **INFLEXIBLE CAPTIVE**; a Tragedy. 3d Edition.
7. **PERCY**; a Tragedy. 4th Edition. 1s. 6d.
8. **THE FATAL FALSEHOOD**; a Tragedy. 2d Edition. 1s. 6d.
9. **SIR ELDBRED OF THE BOWER**; and **the BLEEDING ROCK**. Two legendary Tales. 3d Edition. 1s. 6d.
10. **FLORIO**; and **the BAS BLEU**. 2d Edition. 3s.
11. **SLAVERY**; a Poem.
12. **ODE TO DRAGON**.
13. **VILLAGE POLITICS**, by **WILL CHIF**. Price 2d.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Also, TRACTS** of the **CHEAP REPOSITORY**, in 3 vols. bound.  
A new Edition completely arranged.





(34) *Handwritten signature*