

A sermon, preached on the death of Mr. N. Aspden, surgeon : before a respectable audience, in the Methodist Chapel, Blackburn, on Sunday, September 30th, 1798. With enlargements, and illustrated with notes / by T. Wood.

Contributors

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A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE DEATH
OF

Mr. N. Aspden, Surgeon,

BEFORE

A respectable Audience,

in

THE METHODIST CHAPEL,



On SUNDAY, September 30th, 1798.

WITH ENLARGEMENTS,

and

ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES.

BY T. WOOD,

----- It were profane
"To quench a glory lighted at the skies,
"And cast in shadows his illustrious close."

Young.

Blackburn :

PRINTED AND SOLD BY HEMINGWAY AND
NUTTALL :

Sold also by J. DOUGLASS, BLACKBURN; Mrs. SÉRGENT,
PRESTON; and J. HARTLEY, ROCHDALE.

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18. 10. 1880



THE Author, having been solicited to publish the following Sermon, has, in complying with the request, taken the liberty to fill up some chasms, and add a little more light and shade, where he thought necessary. He has also interspersed a few Notes at the foot of some of the pages, illustrative of important points in Christian theology. The Elogy he proclaims over the deceased is, that he is numbered among those, who shall be had in everlasting remembrance. As to the Sermon, he has only to say, that he has endeavoured to speak and write, with soberness and truth, and hopes it will be read with attention and candour. And he feels himself gratified, that the several hundreds of people, who, stimulated by sincere respect to the deceased, came to hear the Sermon, but could not get within the walls of the Chapel, will now have the opportunity of reading it at their own habitations.

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A SERMON, &c.

I *Thessalonians*, iv. 13.

“ I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU TO BE IGNORANT, BRETHREN,
“ CONCERNING THEM THAT ARE ASLEEP, THAT YE
“ SORROW NOT, EVEN AS OTHERS, WHICH HAVE NO
“ HOPE.”

MAN is formed, by the great Author of nature, propitious to the social life: he gives ample proof of this, in his domestic, civil, commercial, and religious intercourse. Yet, the Christian religion, is wisely designed, and commodiously adapted, to improve his social powers, by impregnating them with principles of more catholic, more permanent, and more exalted benevolence.

The apostle Paul having heard, that some of the members of the Christian church, at Thessalonica, had departed this life; and that surviving friends and relatives were much affected thereby---having lost their society, their counsel, and friendship; he, wishing to lessen their immoderate grief, and administer consolation to their sorrowful hearts, assures them, upon the foundation of revealed religion, that they should meet them again, in a better world, embrace each other, and part no more. In our text he says, *I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have*

no hope : And in verse 14, we learn what he means by the term *asleep*, namely, *sleeping*, or dying, *in Jesus*.

Our deceased, and much valued friend, being fully persuaded in himself, that his affliction would baffle the skill of the ablest physicians, and soon terminate in ghastly death, frequently made use of these words, to console his relatives on the expected event : and, looking forward, he realized death with pleasure, felt unshaken at its approach, and rejoiced in certain hope of felicitating joys beyond the grave.

That the text may be rendered useful to us, who are assembled together on the present mournful occasion, I shall endeavour to consider,

FIRST, what *sleeping in Jesus* supposes ;

SECONDLY, what it implies ; and

THIRDLY, view the words, as designed to comfort surviving relatives on the death of their friends, *that they sorrow not, even as others which have no hope*.

And FIRST, this *sleeping in Jesus*, supposes the speculative knowledge of the doctrines of the Christian religion, when alive in the body. The scriptures suppose man to be a fallen, guilty, miserable, helpless, and lost creature, under the curse of the law of God, and liable to everlasting punishment : They affirmatively declare this to be our case. *By one man, (viz. Adam, says St. Paul) sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that (or rather, in whom, i. e. in Adam) all have sinned ; sinned, and come short of obtaining the glory of God, or eternal life, by the first covenant of God with man (a).*

Adam,

Adam, the federal head of mankind, having sinned himself, and introduced sin into the world, all his posterity, are *conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity (b)*. The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, *speaking lies (c)*. Moses, speaking of the antediluvians, says, *And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every, or, the whole, imagination of the thoughts, and the purposes and desires, of his heart was only evil continually, or every day (d)*. David, describing the corruption of a natural man, says, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. : they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy : there is none that doeth good, no not one (e)*. Jeremiah's testimony, to the truth of this, is, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked (f)*. And our Lord confirms the whole, where he says, *From within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness (g)*. We have one uniform testimony, of the great degeneracy of man, from the beginning of the bible to the end of it; and the truth of these records is confirmed by the experience of all ages, and generations of men, from the beginning of the world, to this present time : the necessary consequence of which is, *that every mouth is stopped, none innocent, and all the world is become guilty before God (h)*.

As

(b) Psa. li. 5. (c) Psa. lviii. 3. (d) Gen. vi. 5. (e) Psa. xiv. 1---3. (f) Jer. xvii. 9. (g) Mark vii. 21, 22. (h) Rom. iii. 19.

As the Christian religion supposes man to be in this wretched, miserable state, by nature and practice; so it also brings him *good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, namely, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord (i)*. The name of the Saviour is * *Jesus, (k)* a name that is big with salvation, and imports nothing less than complete deliverance; deliverance from Sin, its guilt, dominion, pollution, and curse; from Satan, his power, service, malice, and government; from the World, its spirit, maxims, and snares: and also, it gives the certain enjoyment of grace here, of pardon, peace, and holiness; and the full possession of glory hereafter, of the vision of God, the society of angels and saints, and pleasures, infinitely great, and eternally new.

This Saviour, Jesus Christ, is God and man, in one person. As God, he is the second Person in the

ever

(i) Luke ii. 10, 11.

(k) Matt. i. 21.

* Jesus is our Lord's personal name; not a name merely of office, as the names Christ, Messiah, Mediator, &c. are. It was not given him by private fancy, as parents give names to their children; not by Mary his mother, nor by Joseph his reputed father; but by God himself, by the ministration of an angel, before his conception and birth, communicated first to Mary, and then to Joseph. Joshua in the Hebrew, and Jesus in the Greek, are of the same signification, both meaning a Saviour. There were two Joshuas, under the Old Testament, who were illustrious types of our Jesus; Joshua the son of Nun, Israel's captain at their first settlement in Canaan; and Joshua the son of Josedech, that was their high-priest at their return from the Babylonian captivity. The former of these Joshuas, is twice, in the New Testament, called Jesus. Acts vii. 45. and Heb. iv. 8. Joshua, the successor of Moses, was first called Hesea; but Moses upon the borders of Jordan, to confirm the faith of the Israelites of God's giving them victory over the Canaanites, under the command of Joshua, prefixed the first syllable of his own name, the name Jehovah, to Joshua's, making it Jehoshua; which signifies, Jehovah shall save by Joshua; or, Jehovah shall be with Joshua, to save you. Numb. xiii. 16. Jehoshua, by contraction Joshua, and with the Greek termination, Jesus.

ever blessed and glorious Trinity. This is a doctrine unknown to the religion of nature; but it is most clearly revealed in the holy scriptures. We read there of three glorious Persons, under the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We find that each of these is distinct from each other; distinct personal properties and actions are ascribed to them; and the divine essence belongs to all three. *There are THREE that bear record in heaven; the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST: and these THREE are ONE (1):* This is a plain revelation of the Trinity. Here are three persons, or personal substances, manifestly distinguished from one another; since otherwise there could not be this threefold witness; and yet their unity is expressly asserted. This prime article of Revealed religion, is indeed mysterious; and so must every thing, that concerns the nature of God, be to us. We do not pretend to explain the *mode* of it, because that is not revealed, and consequently is inexplicable, covered with impenetrable darkness. We believe the fact, but how it is so, we know not, and therefore do not believe any thing about it.

As God, he is also an eternal, necessary, self-existent, and independent Being. The holy scriptures ascribe to him the proper names of the supreme God; all the essential properties, perfections, or attributes, of God; the works which, on all sides, are acknowledged God only can perform, such as the works of creation, providence, and grace, the resurrection of the dead, judging the world, and divine religious

religious worship in the several parts of it.*—He is also man; the eternal *Word was made flesh*, i. e. he assumed human nature (*m*). *God was manifest in the flesh* (*n*), *he took part of flesh and blood* (*o*). He is both God and man in one Person: He was a divine person from eternity; and in the fulness of time he took the human nature into union with the divine, as subsisting in his Person: And therefore, he is stiled *Immanuel, God with us* (*p*), which is a character and name inclusive of his two natures, divine and human. The union of these two natures in the person of Christ, is close and inseparable; yet without mixture and confusion, or transmutation, and without real and personal distinction. This is the wonderful, mysterious constitution of his Person; and it is singular and peculiar to himself; and in which he differs from all others. He is *the mighty God* (*q*), *the great God* (*r*), *the true God* (*s*), *God over all, and blessed for ever* (*t*). And yet, the same Person is man, *the seed of David* (*u*),

eat,

(*m*) John i. 14. (*n*) 1 Tim. iii. 16. (*o*) Heb. ii. 14.
 (*p*) Isa. vii. 14. Matt. i. 23. (*q*) Isa. ix. 7. (*r*) Titus ii. 13.
 (*s*) 1 John v. 20. (*t*) Rom. ix. 5. (*u*) Rom. i. 3.

* "The divinity of Jesus," says an able author, "I conceive to be the chief corner-stone in the edifice of Christianity. Remove this from the building, and the whole fabric immediately totters, the foundation is shaken to the very centre. There appears at once, an evident disproportion between the end and the means, the importance of the object proposed, and the person by whom it was accomplished. And then the great doctrine of atonement and expiation, by the blood of its Author, falls to the ground, and all the rich promises of the gospel are done away."---Again, "The divinity of Jesus is so conspicuous a feature in the gospel, and is supported by evidences which press upon us so closely on every side, that I flatter myself, there is not any one point of Christ's religion more capable of being clearly proved and ascertained, than his claim to a divine nature."

eat, drank (x), encreased in wisdom (y), slept (z), grieved (a), rejoiced (b), was crucified, and died (c). And this mysterious constitution of his Person, qualified him for the work of our Redemption and Salvation. His humanity rendered him capable of obeying and suffering for us; and his divinity supported his humanity under all its requisite, proper work; and stampt upon his obedience and sufferings, a value, dignity, and efficacy, sufficient to the great ends intended thereby, namely, the satisfaction of God's justice, and the purchase of our salvation.

Our Saviour redeemed us, and brought about our salvation, not only by his active obedience to the precepts of the law, given to Adam in a state of perfect innocence, but also, by suffering its penalties, especially in his death. Death was threatened, as the penalty of the transgression of the law (*d*). Christ substituted himself in our place, and bore the penalty of the law for us, that curse and death it threatened. He suffered for us through his whole life; hence is he called, *a man of sorrows (e)*; but eminently on the cross, to which he was nailed, and on which he died. His entire human nature was the subject of his sufferings: he suffered in both soul and body, as is plain from the gospel history. His sufferings, finished in his death, were a proper and full satisfaction to the demands of justice for all the sins of mankind. Their satisfactory, meritorious virtue, was derived from the dignity of his Person. *We were reconciled to God by his DEATH (f), he made peace, through the*
BLOOD

(x) John iv. 7, 31. (y) Luke ii. 52. (z) Matt. viii. 24.
(a) Mark iii. 5. (b) Luke x. 21. (c) Matt. xxvii. 35, 50.
(d) Gen. ii. 17. (e) Isa. liii. 3. (f) Rom. v. 10.

BLOOD of his cross (g), hath redeemed us to God by his BLOOD (h), purchased us with his own BLOOD (i), his BLOOD was shed for the remission of sins (k), for without shedding of BLOOD no remission (l), we are justified by his BLOOD (m), in whom we have redemption through his BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins (n).—These, and a multitude of other portions of the word of God, shew, that Christ's death was a plenary satisfaction, to the demands of infinitely incensed justice, for the sins of mankind *.

That our Saviour might apply the purchased salvation, he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, triumphing over death and hell, and there makes intercession for those he had redeemed; and, by his Spirit sent down from thence for that purpose, as the consequence of his ascension, exaltation, and intercession, he makes obedient souls partakers of that branch of salvation, which consists in an internal work of grace on their hearts, whereby they are quickened (o), renewed (p), forgiven (q) sanctified (r), comforted (s), made meet for (t), and afterward received into glory (u).

oSme

(g) Col. i. 20. (h) Rev. v. 9. (i) Acts xx. 28. (k) Matth. xxvi. 28. (l) Heb. ix. 22. (m) Rom. v. 9. (n) Eph. i. 7. (o) Eph. ii. 1. (p) Rom. xii. 2. (q) Col. ii. 13. (r) 1 Cor. i. 30. vi. 11. (s) Acts ix. 31. (t) Col. i. 12. (u) 1 Tim. iii. 16. John xvii. 24.

* The celebrated Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, when speaking of our Saviour's dying-hour, says, "This was the hour in which Christ atoned for the sins of mankind, and accomplished our eternal redemption. It was the hour, when that great Sacrifice was offered up, the efficacy of which reaches back to the first transgression of man, and extends forward to the end of time; the hour when, from the cross, as from an high altar, the blood was flowing, which washed away the guilt of the nations."

Sermons, vol. 1. p. 121.

Some may ask, Could not God have saved us, without his Son's incarnation, obedience, and sufferings, in our nature and place, or without a satisfaction? I answer, it does not appear to me, that he could, in a consistency with the honour of his justice, truth, and holiness. There was, indeed, infinite power in him, before he made the world; and so, likewise, there was vindictive justice in his nature, before ever there was any sin to punish. This cannot, I think, be denied, without allowing of an absurdity, namely, that he is capable of changing. And his essential justice made it necessary, that if ever sinners be saved, full satisfaction be made for their sins: otherwise, while he glorified his mercy, he would have injured his justice. God had engaged his truth, in denouncing the threatening (x): and it cannot reasonably be supposed, that he should act contrary to his own solemn declaration and sentence: this would not have been consistent with the perfection of his nature, and the honour of his government. Should he have glorified his mercy, in pardoning and saving sinners, without a satisfaction for their sins, after such a sentence, as that just referred to, he would have rendered himself unfit (to speak with reverence) to be trusted or regarded. But in the way of our salvation, devised by his infinite wisdom, all the divine attributes are secured from injury and reproach. His holiness, justice, and truth, are glorified in Christ's satisfaction; and his mercy in our salvation. *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteous-*

B

ness

ness and Peace have kissed each other (y), in this method of divine contrivance. Mercy reigns in righteousness, in the believer's justification and salvation, on the ground of Christ's satisfaction (z). O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (a).

2. This *sleeping in Jesus*, supposes a conviction, and evidence to support that conviction, that Christianity is not a cunningly devised fable, but the only certain scheme of divine mercy, established in the person of Christ, whereby fallen guilty man may be pardoned, restored, and saved. In the scriptures we see, that Jesus Christ is the only channel in which salvation flows; the centre where all the lines of salvation meet; the ladder by which we may climb to heaven; the plank on which we may escape to shore.

If the Christian religion be defensible, *there is none other name (but JESUS) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (b).* And that it is defensible, has often been proved, and might again, to the satisfaction of serious, thinking, unprejudiced persons. Its evidence is clear, powerful, and permanent as the throne of God. The Christian religion takes in all the doctrines and duties, principles and rules, of natural religion. Whatever is agreeable to right reason, and that reason could discover as matter of duty towards God, our neighbours, and ourselves; this the New Testament takes in, and establishes. In a word, it contains the most excellent system of morals in the world. There is nothing valuable in all the writings of

(y) Psa. lxxxv. 10.

(z) Rom. iii. 25.

(a) Rom. xi. 33.

(b) Acts iv. 12.

of the Heathen philosophers, but what is to be found in the Christian religion. All the laws of justice, charity, meekness, gratitude, patience, and all the rest, that they have recommended in their books, are recommended by Christ and his Apostles, in a better light, delivered with greater authority, and enforced with higher motives and arguments, than the most admired and famous sages among the Heathens possibly could do. It happily supplies all the defects of natural religion, or the light of nature. Indeed, had men preserved their integrity and purity, the light of nature would have taught them their duty, in the whole compass and latitude of it, without any supernatural revelation : But mankind being fallen, human nature is so much depraved, and human reason so much impaired, that it is very defective, and insufficient to direct us in all the concerns of religion. There are two points, in which it leaves us hopeless and helpless, and at an utter loss ; namely, the right manner of worshipping God, and the terms on which sinners may assuredly expect and find acceptance with him. But the Christian religion supplies these, and all the other defects of natural religion.

In the New Testament, we have the history of the completion of many ancient prophecies, the verification of many dark types and figures, and a most exact and remarkable correspondence with the whole system and design of the Jewish institution ; in which there is a perpetual reference to the Messiah to come : at whom almost all its rites and ceremonies, and most of its predictions, do manifestly point. The writings of the New Testament assure us, that Jesus Christ

came into the world, and that all the prophecies were fulfilled in and by him, that did expressly refer to his life and passion, according to the clear sense of the Jewish doctors. They assure us, that he came into the world at the time and period fixed by Daniel's prophecy; in the manner foretold by Isaiah and Jeremiah, being conceived and born of a virgin; and that, by a wonderful interposition of providence, he was born at Bethlehem, the place from whence was to come forth, He who was to be ruler in Israel. These writings assure us, that he came of the nation, tribe, and particular family, from which it was prophesied he should descend, being of the seed of Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, the tribe of Judah, and family of David. His circumstances of life, doctrine, miracles, sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, exactly answered the prophecies concerning them: In short, he answered all those characters, which the prophets of former ages had given of the Messiah. The Old and New Testament, have a mutual dependence upon, and give mutual testimony to, the truth of each other*.

The

* "The scheme of Prophecy, considered in its first opening, its gradual advance, and its final and full completion in the advent, the ministry, the death, and resurrection of the Messiah, and the extensive progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, together with its blessed influence on individuals, societies, countries, and the whole race of mankind: is an object the greatest, and most sublime, that imagination can conceive; and the most pleasing and important that the human mind can contemplate."

Rev. Dr. White's Sermons, at Brampton Lecture, p. 307.

For a view of the accomplishment of scripture Prophecies, the reader may consult, with great advantage, bishop Newton's *Dissertations*, Brown's *Harmony of the Scripture Prophecies*, and *History of their Fulfilment*; and Simpson's *Key to the Prophecies*.

The miracles which our Saviour wrought, were incontestible proofs of his divine commission, and a confirmation of the truth of his doctrine. When he entered on his public ministry, he declared, that he was come with a commission from God, to accomplish the work of man's redemption and salvation: and for a proof of his commission, and confirmation of the doctrine he preached in pursuance of it, he wrought many miracles; *i. e.* he performed many amazing works, evidently, and confessedly, above all human power and skill to effect *. These he wrought in an instant, and usually by speaking a word; in places of the most public resort, in cities, and synagogues, and open fields; in the presence of multitudes of his enemies, as well as friends. And in all his most public miracles, there was always some circumstance or other which plainly shewed, that they were intended for the conviction of those who saw them. Further, his resurrection, or raising himself from the dead, was the greatest miracle he wrought; and whatever arguments are brought for the certainty of it, are so many reasons

B 3

for

* Our Saviour raised the dead, Jairus' daughter---the widow of Naim's son, as they were carrying him to his burial---and Lazarus, after he had been dead four days. These are proper miracles: raising the dead is above all the natural powers and capacities even of the angels themselves, though they excel in strength; it is the prerogative of God alone, Rom. iv. 17. If a man, or an angel, can raise the dead, he may as easily make men, for it requires the same power to restore life, as to give it: if he can turn water into wine, he can create the vine; and if he can create any vegetable or animal, he may by the same power, form whole worlds; if he can do all this, he must be omnipotent, and so, be God. On this ground we ought to reason, as Nicodemus justly did, *Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* John iii. 2.

for our belief of his doctrine : for if he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead, as the Apostle asserts he was (c), there can be no room left for any rational men to doubt of the truth of whatever he came to teach. These miracles wrought by Christ, were such attestations from God, as plainly confirmed the doctrine he preached. For it is impossible for the God of truth, to attest a falsehood, or to support a forgery by his almighty power. Would he concur, by the power of miracles, with an imposture, and own a person who only abused him, and deceived mankind ? We cannot suppose so great an absurdity, and what is evidently inconsistent with the perfections of God's nature, and with his moral government of the world.

The illustrious triumph God gave the gospel at its first publication, is worthy of our attention and faith. The Apostles were honoured with amazing success, though they had no secular terrors to affright them, no secular rewards to bribe them, no dazzling eloquence to enchant them : On the contrary, the want of these were pleaded against them. Yet their testimony was received, and their converts were so fully satisfied with the evidence, which the Apostles gave them of their divine mission, that they encountered great persecution, and cheerfully ventured estate, liberty, and life itself, on their persuasion of the truth of the facts they asserted. And their converts were not a few ; James speaks of the myriads of believing Jews (d). And we read of Christian churches

(c) Rom. i. 4.

(d) Acts xxi. 20.

churches in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, Thessalonica, Philippi, Laodicea, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Phrygia, Crete, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, and in many other places; insomuch that one of the Apostles could say, that Christ had so wrought by him, as to make the Gentiles obedient, not only in word and profession, but in deed too, and that from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum (e). The success was amazing, and will appear so, if we consider the low education of the Apostles, and that all the learning and wit of the Greeks and Romans were employed to ridicule the gospel they preached, and run it down; and that the princes and potentates of the earth drew their swords against it, and armed their legions for the destruction of the professors of it. Had the infidel wits of our age seen the Apostles, and a few other plain men, who had been educated among the lowest of the people, going out, armed with nothing but faith, truth, and goodness, to encounter the power of princes, the bigotry of priests, the learning of philosophers, the rage of the populace, and the prejudices of all; they would have derided the attempt, and said, as Sanballat did long before, *What will these feeble Jews do?* (f) But had they seen the event, surely they must have owned, with the Egyptian Magi, in a less illustrious miracle, *That it was the finger of God* (g). This illustrious triumph, this amazing success of the gospel, at its first publication, evidently argues an extraordinary interposition of God in its favour, or as

Luke

(e) Rom. xv. 18, 19. (f) Neh. iv. 2. (g) Exod. viii. 19.

Luke, the historian, expresses it, that *the hand of the Lord was with the apostles, and so a great number believed, and turned to the Lord (h).*

And he that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself (i); hath an internal, experimental evidence of the truth, excellency, and efficacy of the Christian religion, in his own soul. The gracious change of his nature, prevailing purity of his heart, inward peace and consolation, and ardent breathings of his soul, after the full image of God on earth, and the complete enjoyment of God in heaven, is, to himself, a witness of the truth of Christianity. He has the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of his sins (k): the peace of God, which passeth all understanding (l), in his conscience; and the love of God shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto him (m). Hence he has such an assurance of God's love to him, in Jesus Christ, that he, in the confidence of faith, aided by the Spirit of God, cries, *Abba Father* *; the
Spirit

(h) Acts xi. 21. (i) 1 Joh v. 10. (k) Luke i. 77.

(l) Rom. v. 1. (m) Rom. v. 5.

* The Apostle says, *Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus*, Gal. iii. 26; admitted into this honourable and happy relationship to the blessed God, by believing in Christ. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts; crying, Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6: that is, disposing and enabling the sons of God, to pray with filial confidence, and holy ardour. Both these are implied: filial confidence in the word *Father*; holy ardour, or vehemency of desire, in the doubling of the word *Abba, Father*; that is, *Father, Father*: for the word *Abba*, signifies *Father*. The word is used in two different languages; *Abba*, a Syriac word, the common language of the Jews, at that time; *Father, Pater* in the original text, used among the Greeks, or Gentiles; to shew, that this is the common privilege of all the sons of God, in all nations and tongues; who approach before God, with holy confidence, and yet with becoming reverence, as children do to their earthly fathers.

Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God (n); he has fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (o): And thus is he introduced into the spiritual world, and has an intercourse with eternity. The soul has spiritual senses, as well as the body has natural ones: hence, we read of hearing Christ's voice (p), seeing his glory (q), tasting his goodness (r), and smelling his ointments (s); and these senses are the only medium, by which an intercourse between Christ and our souls can be opened and maintained; saving faith cannot subsist and act without them. If material objects cannot be perceived by man in his present state, but through the medium of one or other of his bodily senses, by parity of reason, spiritual objects cannot be discovered, but through one or other of the senses which belong to the inward man. God being a Spirit, cannot be worshipped in truth, unless he is known in spirit. You may as soon imagine, how a blind man, by reasoning on what he feels or tastes, can get true ideas of light and colours, as how one who has no spiritual senses opened, can, by all his reasoning and guessing, attain an experimental knowledge of the invisible God. Till professors see the necessity of believing, in this manner, they rest in a refined form of godliness. To the confidence of the Antinomians, they may, indeed, join the high profession of the foolish virgins. They may even crown their partial assent to the truths of the gospel, with the zeal of the pharisees, and the regularity

(n) Rom. viii. 16.

(o) 1 John, i. 3.

(p) John, x. 3.

(q) John xi. 40.

(r) 1 Peter, ii. 2.

(s) Song iv. 10.

gularity of moralists: but still they stop short of the *new creation*, the *new birth*, the *life of God*, in the soul of man. Nay more, they stumble at some of the most important truths of Christianity, and think the discoveries, that sound believers have of Christ, and the spiritual world, are enthusiastical delusions, or, at least, extraordinary favours, which they can very well do without. Thus, even while they allow the power of godliness in others, they rest satisfied without experiencing it in themselves *.

3. This

* See the Rev. John Fletcher's very valuable *Letters on the Spiritual Manifestation of the SON of GOD*.---Letter 1st.

To confirm the truth, that a regenerate soul has his spiritual senses opened, and made capable of discerning what belongs to the spiritual world, as a new-born infant has its senses unlocked, and begins to see, hear, and taste, what belongs to the material world into which it enters, the same late pious author says, in the same letter "I shall add the testimony of our own excellent church. As she strictly agrees with the scripture, she makes also frequent mention of spiritual sensations, and you know, that *sensations* necessarily suppose *senses*. She prays, that God would 'give us a *due sense* of his inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ' (a). She begs, that he would, 'make us know and *feel* there is no other name than that of Jesus, whereby we must be saved' (b). She affirms, that true penitents feel 'the burden of their sins intolerable;' (c) that godly persons '*feel* in themselves the workings of Christ's Spirit;' (d) that 'the Lord presently speaks to us in the scriptures, to the great and endless comfort of all who have any *feeling* of God in them at all;' that 'godly men *felt*, inwardly, the Holy Ghost inflaming their hearts with the fear and love of God, and that they are miserable wretches, who have no *feeling* of God within them at all: (e) and, that 'if we *feel* the heavy burden of our sins pressing our souls, and tormenting us with the fear of death, hell, and damnation, we must *steadfastly behold* Christ crucified, with the *eyes* of our heart.' (f) Our church farther declares, that 'true faith is not in the mouth and outward profession only, but liveth and *stirreth* inwardly in the heart,

(a) Thanksgiving. (b) Office for the Sick. (c) Communion.
(d) 17th Article. (e) Hom. on certain places of scripture.
(f) 2 Hom. on the Passion.

3. This *Sleeping in Jesus*, supposes also a compliance with the terms of the gospel, the terms upon which salvation is offered. That there are certain terms, or conditions, in the gospel, to be complied with, in order to enjoy salvation by Jesus Christ, is evident from the whole tenor of Revelation. John the Baptist, the forerunner of our blessed Saviour, came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, *Repent ye : for the kingdom of heaven is at hand :* and he insisted on those, who came to his baptism, *to bring forth fruits meet for repentance* (t). Our Saviour says of himself, *I am come to call sinners to repentance* (u). And, after his resurrection, he left this in charge with his Apostles, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, that repentance, and remission of sins, should be preached in his name, among all nations :* and, for

(t) Matt. iii. 1, 2---7, 8. (u) Matt. ix. 13.

heart, and that if we *feel* and perceive such a faith in us we must rejoice :’ (g) that ‘correction, though painful, bringeth with it a *taste* of God’s goodness :’ (h) that, ‘if after contrition, we *feel* our consciences at peace with God, through the remission of our sin, it is God, who worketh that great miracle in us ;’ and she prays, that, ‘as this knowledge and *feeling* is not in ourselves, and, as by ourselves, it is not possible to come by it, the Lord would give us grace to know these things, and *feel* them in our hearts.’ (i) She begs that ‘God would assist us with his Holy Spirit, that we may *hearken* to the voice of the good Shepherd.’ (k) She sets upon asking continually that the Lord would, ‘*lighten our darkness,*’ and deliver us from the two heaviest plagues of Pharaoh, ‘*blindness, and hardness of heart,*’ (l) And, she affirms, that, ‘if we will be profitable hearers of the scriptures, we must keep under our *carnal senses*, taken by the outward words, search the inward meaning, and give place to the Holy Ghost,’ whose peculiar office it is to open our spiritual senses, as he opened Lydia’s heart.” (m)

(g) Hom. on Faith, 1st and 3d part. (h) Hom. on the fear of Death, 2d part. (i) Hom. for Rogation week, 3d part. (k) Hom. on Repent. 2d part. (l) Even. Prayer and Litany. (m) Hom. on certain Places of Scrip.

for their encouragement, he says, *And lo, I am with you, and your successors in office, faith, and practice, alway, even unto the end of the world ; confirmed with, an, Amen (x).* In consequence, and by virtue of which, the Apostles went forth, after the day of Pentecost, and preached every where, that men should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance, the Lord working with them, and bearing them witness, and confirming the word, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost (y). Man having revolted from his Maker, broken his laws, despised his authority, abused his mercies, and incurred his heavy displeasure, he must, upon the gospel scheme, be sensible of his immoral conduct, sorry for his numerous offences, renounce the evil of his ways, and return unto God by true repentance, or he cannot be pardoned and saved. Repentance, according to the late excellent Bishop Horne, implies, light in head, sorrow in the heart, confession in the mouth, and reformation in the life. The Holy Spirit convinceth the world of sin (z) ; produces godly sorrow in the heart (a) ; leads to confession in the mouth, and reformation in the life (b).

Faith toward our Lord Jesus, is as requisite unto salvation, as repentance toward God (c). Our Saviour said unto his Apostles, a little before his ascension into heaven, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature : He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned (d).*

Repentance,

(x) Matt. xxviii. 20. Luke xxiv. 47. (y) Mark xvi. 20. Acts xxvii. 20. Heb. ii. 4. (z) John xvi. 8. (a) 2 Cor. vii. 10. (b) Prov. xxviii. 13. (c) Acts ix. 21. (d) Mark xvi. 16.

Repentance, however genuine, and future obedience, however perfect, cannot atone for the crimes we have already committed. Natural religion cannot furnish a remedy for guilt. Man has sinned, is guilty, and has a fearful looking for of judgment. The Christian religion alone provides us a Saviour, to save us from our sins, and all obligation to punishment. This Saviour is received by faith. True faith accepts of Christ, as a prophet and king, for instruction and government; as well as a priest, for justification, and salvation; but, as it justifies the sinner, it fixes solely on him as a priest. As it was in the priestly office of Christ only, that the justice of God found complete satisfaction for sin; so it is in that only that God proposes him to our faith, in order to our justification by his righteousness: *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation* *, *through faith in his blood* (e). Faith views him as atoning God, satisfying justice, and expiating sin, by the sacrifice of himself. *By grace, procured by Christ of the Father, are ye saved, through FAITH: not of works, lest any man should*
C boast.

(e) Rom. iii. 25.

* The word *propitiation*, properly signifies the *mercy-seat*. The Apostle alludes to the mercy-seat under the Jewish dispensation, which was a signal type of Christ. The mercy-seat was in the holy of holies, and placed between the shechina, the symbol of the divine presence, and the ark, wherein was the law; the one was above, and the other below the mercy-seat, which, as it were, covered the broken law from the eye of God. It was from above the mercy-seat, that God shewed himself propitious to his people, as being appeased by the great propitiatory sacrifice, offered on the day of atonement, with the blood of which the mercy-seat was sprinkled once a year. Heb. ix. 11---14.

boast (f). Being justified by FAITH, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ (g). In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory (h) in him, by whose righteousness they are saved. Therefore, salvation is of FAITH, that it might be by grace (i). And, as he that believeth on Jesus, is not condemned, but has pardon, peace, and everlasting life; so, on the other*

(f) Eph. ii. 8. 9. (g) Rom. v. 1. (h) Isa. xlv. 25.
(i) Rom. iv. 16.

* Some may object here, and say, Though the Apostle Paul says we are *justified by faith*, yet the Apostle James says, *that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*, James ii. 24. To this I answer, The two Apostles had to do with different sorts of persons, speak of different sorts of faith, and of different sorts of justification.

St. Paul had to do with self-justiciaries, Pharisees, who trusted to the works of the law, done without faith in Christ, as meritorious of justification in the sight of God, and substituted their own works in the place of Christ's merits; these the Apostle Paul told, that sinners are justified before God, by faith alone in Christ. The Apostle James had to do with licentious libertines, who contented themselves with a bare speculation, or mere outward profession, of the Christian religion, without holiness of life; on those he pressed the necessity of good works.

The *faith* St. Paul speaks of, is a *living* faith, a vital operative principle, productive of gospel holiness and obedience: The *faith* James speaks of, is a *dead* faith, a dead empty notion in the head, that produceth no good works in the life.

The *justification* St. Paul speaks of, is justification before God, by which a man has his sins forgiven him, is constituted righteous in his sight, and entitled to eternal life: The *justification* St. James speaks of, is a *declarative* justification before men, or the declaring and evidencing to the world, by our works, that we are justified before God. The former, is by a vital faith; the latter, by good works: that is, the holiness of our lives is declarative of the truth and reality of our faith, and of our justification before God by it.

If we read with attention St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and St. James's General Epistle, we shall see that St. Paul asserts, that all works of ours, both in whole and in part, are excluded from being our justifying righteousness before God; and that St. James asserts, that good works are necessary to evidence to ourselves and others, that we are of the number of God's justified ones. Good works do this, as they declare our faith to be unfeigned, a faith of the right kind, and as they shew our union to Christ to be real, that we are one spirit with the Lord.

other hand, *he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM (k).* *He that believeth not, while his state of probation in this world lasts, shall be damned, in the world to come: be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION*, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (l).*

4. And, lastly, this *sleeping in Jesus*, supposes, constancy in the faith and profession of the gospel, progress in holiness, and perseverance to the end. Many things conspired, to shake the confidence, and overthrow the faith, of those that now rest in Jesus, after they first believed: such as, the number of bad examples, the prevalency of error, the corruption of their own nature, the blandishments of sense, the insinuations of company and acquaintance, the sophistry of pretenders to reason, in opposition to revelation, and

(k) John iii. 18---26. (l) 2 Thess. i. 9.

Here, some persons may ask, How can it be consistent with the justice of God, to punish the transient acts of sin with eternal misery? To this I answer, 1. The evil and demerit of sin is not to be measured by the time in which it is committed. 2. The evil of sin is inconceivably aggravated by the majesty of Heaven, against whom it is committed. 3. There are none sent to hell, but who, could they have lived for ever on earth, would have sinned for ever. 4. The finally impenitent, carry all the malignity of sin along with them into hell, and there they continually sin against God. 5. Hell was the sinner's own choice; not formally or intentionally, but virtually and interpretatively; for they may be said to chuse the end, who chuse the means that are necessarily connected with it. 6. Since a God of unexceptionable justice and equity has threatened the wicked with eternal misery; there must surely be such a malignity in sin, as bears a due proportion to so dreadful a punishment. 7. And as God hath threatened the wicked with this punishment, it must be owned, he can inflict it, consistent with the perfections of his own nature.

and the confidence, wit, and banter, of athiestical scoffers, at a future state of recompences :—All those worldly objects, that are most apt to affect us, through the medium of carnal sense, or weak passion ; such as, riches, and pleasures, and honours, on the one hand ; and affliction, pain, poverty, disgrace, and persecution, on the other :—And the mighty forces, of the princes of all the infernal legions, who throng the air, and darken heaven, and croud this lower world ; formidable, because numerous, invisible, politic, powerful, malicious, and of unwearied application, to destroy the souls of men. Now *faith*, which is *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence, or conviction, of things not seen* (*m*) ; which substantiates *things not seen*, brings distant objects near, and makes them stand true in the mind, just as the object we look at is in the eye, the form we love ever in the memory, where recollection clothes it, and fancy gives it a thousand charms (*n*) ; now faith, I say, gave them the victory. By this, they saw the emptiness, uncertainty, shortness, and disappointing nature of all worldly good things ; and the short continuance of the trials, troubles, and sufferings of the present life ; and looking forward, they had a clear and affecting view of eternal happiness and misery : and so were stimulated with motives much more forcible to induce them to keep on in the way of duty, than any worldly consideration could be to draw them from it. And also, by this faith, there were assured of such divine aid and succour, as would be sufficient to enable them to

(*m*) Heb. xi. 1.

(*n*) Robinson's Village Sermons, p. 321.

to overcome the greatest difficulties, and triumph over the most formidable enemies, in the road to eternal life. By faith, therefore, they who now *sleep* in Jesus, not only professed godliness, and endured for a season, but persevered in well-doing; and as they first lived to God by faith, and walked in his way through life by it, so they died in it, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life* (n).

Having considered what *sleeping in Jesus* supposes, I now come, in the SECOND place, to shew what it implies.

And we are not to suppose, when the body dies, that there is a cessation of progressive motion in the whole man. The Apostle's description of the death of the righteous, or faithful servants of God, is, that they *sleep in Jesus*. By this metaphor, the happy death of good and holy persons is often expressed in scripture. So David, Solomon, Jchohaphat, and Hezekiah, in the Old Testament, are said to have *fallen asleep*. And our Lord uses it of Lazarus, in the New Testament, *Our friend Lazarus SLEEPETH* (o); that is, he is dead. And the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the resurrection, says, *We shall not all SLEEP*, that is, we shall not all die; *but we shall all be changed* (p): it is meant of those who shall be alive at Christ's second coming. It is usual with the inspired writers to express the death of the saints by the term *sleep*. But here we must consider, that this *sleep* relates only to the body, and not at all to the soul.

C 3

There

(n) Jude 21. (o) John xi. 11. (p) 1 Cor. xv. 51.

There is a soul in man, distinct from the body. And the soul is the principal part of man, according to that of Hierocles, *Thy soul is Thee, thy body Thine, and thy outward goods thy Body's*. The body is the habitation of the soul, and the only instrument by which it acts. The body is solid, extended, inert, and divisible; the soul is possessed of the powers of sensation, perception, retention, consciousness, reflection, reason and will *. These powers are so great, that we can explore nature, span the surface of the earth, dive into its capacious seas, and there discover the numerous progeny of the watry tribe:—We can travel through our own spherical system, from planet to planet, tell their dimensions, measure their distances, and follow them through their various revolutions:—We can pass the boundaries of our own, and climb into other systems; and from thence into eternity itself: ascend from cause to cause, from the creature to the great Creator, who is the First Cause of all things, and, with eyes of faith, gaze upon that glorious luminary of the moral world, and plunge, amazed, overpowered, and delighted, into the infinite abyss of his divine perfections.

The

* The powers of the soul take in objects of all sizes; yet they are not in the soul, as bodies in a material place, where the greater take up more space than the less: for the thought of a mile, or ten thousand miles, doth no more fill or stretch the soul, than that of a foot, or an inch, or a mathematical point. And whereas all matter has its parts, and those extended, one without another, into length, and breadth, and thickness, and so is measurable by inches, yards, or solid measures; there is nothing of measurable extension in any thing belonging to the soul, neither length, nor breadth, nor thickness; nor is it possible to form an idea of a foot of thought, a yard of reason, a pound of wisdom, or a quart of virtue.

See Scott's Christian Life, 2d edit. vol. v. p. 14.

The soul is immortal in its own nature: it once began to be, but will never cease to exist. When the whole length of time is elapsed, it will live in immortal vigour, and its existence run parallel with the duration of eternity. It is of the same nature with angelic beings; a pure, unmixed, simple substance, altogether spiritual and immaterial, not compounded of corruptible principles, or consisting of dissimilar, jarring, separate parts; and so has nothing in its nature that tends to a dissolution. The death of the soul cannot be effected by second causes*; and God, the First Cause, the Father or Creator of the soul, hath assured us, he will never deprive it of its existence. Some of the Heathen philosophers attribute a proper eternity to the soul; but say that it was torn off in time, from the substance of God, and would in time be again resolved into that substance. This they explained, by a vessel filled with sea-water; which, swimming awhile upon the ocean, does, on the vessel's breaking, flow in again, and mingle with the common mass. We are greatly indebted to God for Revelation, which assures us of the future, distinct, and personal existence of the soul.

Now it is quite opposite to the nature of the soul, and its essential properties, to *sleep* in the grave with
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* The following lines of the celebrated Mr. Addison, are strongly and beautifully descriptive of the immortality of the soul---

The soul, secur'd in her existence, smiles
At dissolution, and defies its power.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth---
Unhurt, amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds.

the body. It is not capable of sleeping, it is essentially vital and active; it always acts, and cannot but act. The soul is a thinking being; and thought is as essential to it, as extension is to the body *. Our souls are awake, when our bodies are asleep, as appears from our dreams and visions in the night; they are in action, when our bodies are at rest. Consciousness enters into the very essence of the soul, and is inseparable from its being; and therefore, it is impossible it should fall asleep.

That the soul, at the death of the body, does not fall asleep, appears evident from scripture testimonies. Solomon, speaking of death, says, *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit, or soul, shall return unto God who gave it* (q): that is, at death, the material body goes downward into the grave, and the soul, the spiritual part, returns immediately to God, to be judged and disposed of by him. The words of our Saviour are decisive in this case: he says, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* (r). From which we learn, that the one may be killed, while the other is alive; and from which we are to conclude, that the soul is out of the reach of persecutors, that second causes cannot kill it

(q) Eccl. viii. 7. (r) Matt. x. 28.

* In the fourth volume of the Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society, of Manchester, the reader will find a very valuable paper, by Dr. Farrier, proving, by evidence apparently complete, that every part of the brain has been injured, without affecting the act of thought; the reasoning of which memoir, being built on matters of fact and experience, appears to have shaken the modern theory of the Materialists from its very foundation.

it, that it cannot die, and that it exists, after the death of the body, in a separate state, either of happiness, or misery, according to its behaviour in the body.

Besides, it is clear to a demonstration, that this was the settled persuasion of the primitive Christians: The Apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, *Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.* Here the Apostle represents himself and companions, and all holy Christians, as belonging, in different respects, to two several countries. By their natural birth, and while they live in the mortal body, they belong to this world. Here they came into being, and this is at present their residence. So that it may, on these accounts, be called their *home in the body*. But then, as they are new-born, born of God, they belong to another and better country, where Christ, their Lord, dwells; this, as saints, is their more proper home. Now, while in the body, in this world, they are absent from the Lord, in the other. The Apostle shews, how they were absent from the Lord: *For we walk by faith, not by sight: i. e. in the present state and world, we have not an immediate sight of Christ our Lord, as we shall have, when in heaven; but walk by faith, which is the evidence of things not seen.* God hath revealed the future state of happiness, and hath promised it to his people, and upon his testimony they believe it, and on the foundation of his promise, hope for it; and so walk by this faith, and are saved by this hope. Faith is the great leading, influencing principle of the Christian's life and walk.

Upon

Upon this principle, he is able to say, Though the heavenly state is invisible to me, while in this world, yet I am fully persuaded of the truth of it, and of happiness after death; and that when absent from the body, I shall be present with the Lord; shall certainly enter into his glory, and be admitted into a state of immediate vision and enjoyment, upon the dissolution of my present frame. The case being thus, the Apostle declares which of these he, and his faithful brethren, would choose, if they had their desire: *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord* (f); i. e. We should be much better pleased, to leave the body, and go home to the Lord; we are willing to die, for the sake of being with the Lord; this is what we approve of, in our most deliberate judgment of things. This arose to such a pitch in this Apostle, that he was reduced to a strait. He says, *I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better* (t); i. e. His willingness of further service to the church, on one side; and his desire of being with Christ, on the other, pressed him hard. His own desire, was to depart, and be with Christ: this he accounted far better for himself: This indeed was, of all other things, the most delightful to his soul, and the proper satisfaction of his highest hopes.

Our Lord promised the penitent thief, on the cross, that he should be *with him in paradise* that very day (u). While the Jews were stoning Stephen, he recommended

(f) 2 Cor. v. 6--8.

(t) Phil. ii. 3.

(u) Luke xxiii. 43.

recommended his soul into the hands of Christ, in these words, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*; and having said this, *he fell asleep*; i. e. he died (x). And when Lazarus died, he was carried by angels into *Abraham's bosom* immediately; that is, into heaven, the palace of God, and the habitation of angels and glorified saints. Saints are the charge of angels in this world, and their delightful associates in heaven, for ever. *Abraham's bosom*, is an expression that denotes the ease and rest that holy souls there enjoy, as a child in the bosom, or a ship in the haven; and also, the dear affection that glorified spirits bear to one another.

Now, that *sleep* is a very proper and just representation of death, will appear, if we consider the agreement between the two ideas, between sleep and death. And first, they that are asleep, are insensible of every thing that passes without them; they neither see nor hear any thing, their senses are so closely bound up, that the soul can have no communion with external objects: In like manner, they that are dead, and shut up in the grave, have no farther any thing to do with the world. This is represented in the book of Job, in an elegant manner: *Thou changeest his countenance, and sendest him away. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them* (y). *They know not any thing that is done under the sun* (z). *When their breath goeth forth, they return to the earth: and in that very day their thoughts perish* (a); i. e. their purposes and designs for this world,

(x) Acts vii. 59--60. (y) Job. xiv. 20, 21. (z) Ecc. ix. 5, 6.

(a) Psal. cxlvi. 4.

world ; as it is explained in Job, *My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart (b)*.

Again, they that are *asleep* are at rest. While we are awake, we are in motion and business, but at night we retire, and go to rest : So the dead are at rest in the grave. Hence the grave is compared to a bed, *they shall rest in their beds (c)*. The grave is the resting-place of all ; their bodies there rest from all manner of labour, *there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (d)*. The good Christian rests at death from every thing, that was uneasy to him here ; from all the disappointments of life, from all sickness and pains of the body, from all oppressions and persecutions of wicked men ; *there, namely, in the grave, the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest (e)*. And as to their souls, in the future state, there is nothing to disturb their repose, or interrupt their happiness and joy : *they rest from their labours, there is no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away (f)*.

And also the sleep of the body is not perpetual ; we sleep, and wake again. Thus, though the bodies of the righteous sleep for many ages in the grave, as Abel's has done, yet they shall awake again, in the morning of the resurrection. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death (g)* ; as it is written, *I will ransom them from the power of the grave : I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be*

(b) Job. xvii. 11. (c) Isa. lvii. 2. (d) Ecc. ix. 10. (e) Job. iii. 17.

(f) Rev. xiv. 13, and xxi. 4. (g) 1 Cor. xv. 26.

be thy destruction (h). Though after my skin, says Job, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not for another ; though my reins be consumed within me (i). I shall be satisfied, says the Psalmist, when I awake with thy likeness (k). The Prophet says, Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise : awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust (l). And as we awake and rise, after a sound sleep, much refreshed ; so the dead in Christ shall rise with new vigour of nature, and with capacities much enlarged and improved. This is represented by the Apostle, in one general view, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself (m). And he specifies the qualities of the raised bodies of the saints, in four particulars, namely, It, i. e. the body, is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory : It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body (n).

Christ's resurrection is the first-fruits of them that sleep *. In this, we have a demonstration that God

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(h) Hof. xiii. 14.

(i) Job xix. 26, 27.

(k) Psa. xvii. 15.

(l) Isa. xxvi. 19.

(m) Phil. iii. 21.

(n) 1 Cor. xv. 42---44.

* Christ's resurrection is the pledge and pattern of the saints' resurrection : and as he is the head, and they the members, will infallibly infer it. Therefore, to prove Christ's resurrection, is to prove the resurrection of the saints. And the resurrection of Christ is confirmed, not only by his friends, but also by his enemies. Pilate gave an account of the resurrection of Jesus, and the miracles which attended it, to the emperor Tiberias, and the Roman senate, in whose records the account was entered ; to which records, both Tertullian, Eusebius, and others, appealed, in their apologies for the

is able to raise the dead; and he will most certainly do it. Christ, as risen, and appointed to be the Judge of all mankind, will, by his power, bring up the bodies of all the wicked, his enemies, from the grave, to receive their doom from his mouth: but the saints shall be raised by him, as their Redeemer and Saviour, in the way of favour, in order to their full felicity, and to his own honour. The former shall be constrained, against their will, to appear, being brought forth as malefactors to be punished: the other shall cheerfully awake, and at the opening of their eyes, break forth into singing, *O, death, where is thy sting! O, grave, where is thy victory!* Where is now thy power, by which thou didst deprive our bodies of life when on earth? O grave, where is now thy dominion, by which thou didst so long detain us, thy prisoners? O death and the grave, so cruel as to spare none, and so strong as to conquer all; from the
 infant

the Christians. And it is said, that the emperor Tiberias so far believed the report, as to put forth an edict, for burning such alive, as persecuted the Christians, if they could prove nothing against them, but their profession of Christianity. We have something every year like the raising of a dead body. The grain, that is sown in the earth, rots and dies; yet it springs up again fresh and green; its rotting in the earth, is so far from being an hinderance, that it is a proper and necessary preparative, to its rising again. And corn doth not rise in the same figure in which it was sown, but it rises in the same nature. That which was sown wheat, oats, or barley, or other grain, rises the same; but all these rise with stalk, blade, and ear, without which they were sown; the same in substance, but not in condition: So will the bodies of men do; they will be the same in substance, but they will have different qualities from what they had before. And though the same in substance, yet not as to all the same individual numerical particles, of which they consisted before they died. There is no man now living, that is the same, as to the numerical parts of his body, that he was seven years ago; nay, some particles of our bodies are still flying off by perspiration, and new ones added by our daily aliment.

infant to the aged, from the peasant to the king on the throne; ye are now both of you so perfectly conquered, as never more to be! And *thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

I come now, in the THIRD and LAST place, to consider the text, as designed to comfort surviving relatives, on the death of their friends, *that they sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

The Apostle here has an eye to the Heathens, who looked upon the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, as absurd and impossible. Hence, that question of the Apostle, to king Agrippa, *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead* (o) ? Tertullian observes, that it was denied by every sect of the Heathen philosophers: with them it was the subject of ridicule and contempt. The Athenian philosophers, of the Epicurean and Stoic sects, mocked the Apostle Paul, when he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection: they were so ignorant of this doctrine, that they took Jesus and the resurrection, to be the names of some strange deities they had never heard of before. Consequently, when they lost their friends and relatives, they sorrowed without hope, having no certain hope of a future state of happiness for good men, nor of the resurrection of their bodies to eternal life at the last day. But if we have ground to believe, that our relations died in the faith, and *sleep in Jesus*, and that in the morning of the resurrection, they shall awake to a

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blessed

bleſſed immortality, we ſhould keep our ſorrow for them within due bounds.

Let us obſerve, that the Apoſtle doth not forbid Chriſtians a moderate ſorrow for the death of their relations: the Chriſtian religion has no tendency to eradicate our paſſions, but only to correct and govern them. Moderate ſorrow for the death of our beloved relatives is very conſiſtent with, nay very becoming our Chriſtian profeſſion, and is due to their memory, eſpecially if they were pious. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, who was never guilty of the leaſt exceſs, wept over the grave of Lazarus, his familiar acquaintance and friend, inſomuch, that the Jews ſaid, *Behold, how he loved him!* To remain unmoved, when we ſee a father or mother, an huſband or wife, a brother or ſiſter, an intimate acquaintance or friend, die, has ſomething in it very unnatural; eſpecially, when perſons of eminent piety and uſefulneſs are removed by death: not to be moved, is ſtoical apathy, which is oppoſite to the feelings of Chriſtianity. It is only immoderate, exceſſive ſorrow for the death of our relations or others, that the Apoſtle, in the text, diſſuades from.

Indeed, the loſs of relatives and friends, and the appearance of their lifeleſs bodies, is very affecting. To ſee a face, which a little before bleſſed us with ſmiles, now covered with paleneſs, all ghawly and horrid; the ſparkling eye ſunk and fightleſs; the mouth, which a few days before opened with wiſdom and authority, now cloſed in ſilence; the light of life extinguished, and all its enjoyments and comforts

forts at an end; our dearest relatives and friends torn away from our embraces, and confined to the dark and solitary prison of the grave;—is a gloomy and sorrowful scene! yet, aided by revelation, we can follow the souls of our pious departed relatives and friends, to a clime of happiness, large as their desires, and lasting as their duration. Death is to them their passage to God: as it is the conclusion of their natural, so it is the beginning of an eternal life: it is their happy release from all the miseries and troubles of this present evil world, and their introduction to all the pure joys and unmixed pleasures of the heavenly state: it is a dark vale, which when once past, opens to the Christian, the bright, glorious, and permanent scenes of a world of perfect light and consummate felicity. Oh! what a happy change does the believer in Christ make when he changes worlds. His death is the period to all his toils, and the accomplishment of his best wishes: he then receives the end of his faith and hope, the compleat salvation of his soul, and the last day of his life is the first of his glory.

Though pious departed relatives and friends cannot return, to live with us on earth again, and bless us with their company, example, prayers, and advice; yet, the way is open, and we can go to them: If we are now living in the fear and love of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, we are on our way to them, and the time of separation shall not be long. The whole compass of life in this world, is but a short space. We are daily making the journey less. The prospect

brightens as we advance. The New Jerusalem will soon appear, by faith we see the city. Its inhabitants view us with wishful eyes, and wait our arrival. They mark our weary steps, behold our painful conflicts, and rejoice when we are victorious. And when the hour of our departure arrives, we shall embrace each other, meet together above, and part no more for ever.

I shall now come to speak a little of our deceased and much respected friend. Mr. Aspden was born at Harwood, in this neighbourhood. He was educated at Clithero, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Wilson. When his education was finished, his father bound him apprentice to the present Dr. St. Clare of Preston, who then resided in this town: and a letter from the Doctor to him, testifies, that during his apprenticeship, he was assiduous in business, and moral in his behaviour. When he was at liberty to act for himself, he went to London, where he stayed but a little while: from thence he went to Richmond, in Surry, and was with a Mr. Charlton, a person in great practice; and who made Mr. Aspden considerable offers to continue with him. But after being about twelve months in the service of Mr. Charlton, there being a vacancy at Coln, his father wrote to him, and strongly urged him to embrace it; and, though at that time he preferred the situation where he was, yet, prompted by filial affection, and parental authority, he gave it up, and gratified his father's wishes. He went to Coln; where he was successful in business, and much respected by a numerous acquaintance

ance. But what endeared that place and people to him, more than every other consideration, was his being brought to the saving knowledge of God while he was there. In a letter to a friend at Coln, which he wrote a little before his death, after speaking of his sickness, and of the confidence he had in God, that if he were to die in that sickness, that he should go to heaven; he says, "I now remember with gratitude more than usual, the mercies which God bestowed on me and my dear wife, when at Coln, and I fear not but our small beginnings there will end in glory. I'll praise him while he lends me breath." And he adds, "Forget not to remember me to all my dear Christian friends and brethren at Coln; when I get to heaven, I shall praise God for sending me thither."

He joined the Methodists there, in the year 1790, believing that a union with them would be of great advantage to him in a spiritual sense; which he found to be true. He sought the favour of God, in Christ, with all his heart, and found it, which enabled him to rejoice in God his Saviour, and praise him with joyful lips. This experience is agreeable to the word of God; and the excellent liturgy of the church of England asserts, that God pardoneth and absolveth all those that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel.

Though our worthy friend was peculiarly happy in his connections at Coln; yet, when he had been there about seven years, bodily indisposition caused a local separation between him, and his friends and acquaintances;

quaintances ; being afflicted in body, and thinking Blackburn a more favourable situation, he came to live in this town. He soon became a very confidential member of this society ; and, consequently, was chosen a Leader of a class, and was much respected by its members ; was elected a Trustee of this Chapel, and made a Steward of the whole Circuit, which takes in several lesser societies connected with the Society in this town. His genuine and steady piety, and his incessant efforts to do good, endeared him to all his Christian brethren.

In the line of his profession, his connections were large, and his conduct almost unexampled. When called out, particularly on the midwifery business, it was usual with him, either before or after delivery, to acknowledge God, and call upon him for help, or return him thanks for mercies received ; and so directed all around him to God, in Christ, as the great Author and Giver of all good.

He was a Member of the Gentlemen Cavalry of this town : believing, that in the bible, which he made the rule of his faith and practice, religion and loyalty were joined together ; and being sensible of the many privileges, both civil and sacred, we enjoy, under the reign of his most gracious Majesty ; and hearing and seeing gentlemen come forward, and voluntarily enrolling and embodying themselves, to stand by, and defend, our rights and privileges, as men and Britons ; he thought it his duty to join them, which he did, and never deviated from this sentiment to the last.

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I come now to the concluding scene of his life. About three months ago, he was attacked with violent and threatening symptoms of the disorder which issued in his dissolution. He afterwards described it, in the letter already mentioned, as follows: "I am at present a little better, but such are the flattering appearances which my complaint puts on, that I cannot yet have any great expectation of a perfect recovery. I have had a fever, which has attacked me very irregularly, in the afternoon and night, and sometimes very severely. The medical gentlemen whom I have consulted, are now, I think, unanimously of opinion, that it is of an hectic kind, which kind accompanies always a consumption of the lungs. A little time, however, will shew how it will be with me; until when, I intend using every means which men in repute can recommend unto me, and afterward leave the event." And respecting the state of his mind, and his views of futurity, he adds, "Since my attack, I have in general found an abundance of peace. I am surrounded with mercies; I lack no manner of thing that is good: I see no cause for complaining. I have not a doubt, but, if I am to go in this sickness, that the Lord will perfect what is lacking in my soul, and fit me for himself."

In this state of resignation and confidence in God, on Monday the 30th of September, he set out for Liverpool, intending to make a voyage to the Isle of Mann, which a gentleman, of great medical skill, had warmly recommended to him, as the last expedient in his case. But, alas! when he got to Liverpool, his
weakness

weakness was so great, and his complaint so rapid, that it was judged, by gentlemen of the faculty there, very improper for him to proceed, and who urged him to return home immediately, which he accordingly did, with very great difficulty, on Thursday the 13th.

His relations and friends now began to give up every hope of his recovery, and to view him as shortly to leave them, and become an inhabitant of another world. He was resigned to his fate; his placid looks were expressive of the confidence and serenity of his soul. He knew that death could not hurt him, that it had lost its sting, and was disarmed of its terrors; nay, that in drawing aside the curtain of mortality, it would unvail eternity to his view, and open a free passage for his soul, to travel to his redeeming God, the society of the glorified, and the full fruition of his highest wishes.

On the Tuesday morning following, he had a very glorious manifestation of divine love to his soul, and was so unspeakably happy as to praise God aloud. He said, "The Lord passes by indeed, and blesses my soul. What an amazing support is it to the body, as well as the mind! what should I do now without religion? O! bless the Lord!" O religion! thou despised name, what art thou worth? Thy lovers are comfortable in life, happy in death, and triumph for evermore. He was continually lifting up his heart to God: and said to one of the members of his class, "Those are blessed words of our Lord, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the*

the world giveth, give I unto you." And of himself he said, "*Having nothing, yet possessing all things.* What a mercy I ever knew any thing of God."

He was in the same spirit all the succeeding days of his life. He often said to me when I called upon him, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour.* On Saturday morning he wished a hymn sung, and joined in it with great delight: and at prayer repeatedly exclaimed, "Glory be to God." It was a profitable season to those present. On Sunday night he said, "*My heart is fixed, O God my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise.*"

About eight o'clock on Monday night, at which hour he altered much for the worse, he said to Mrs. Aspden, in the presence of many of his relatives and friends who stood round his bed, "I know I must die: and I know I love God: and I know I love Jesus Christ: and I know I am going to glory." And he continued talking of Jesus, and praising him for his goodness, till his tongue so faltered that he could not articulate words. He made one remarkable effort, in shewing the necessity of having our robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; that those so washed, would be admitted through the gates into the city of the New Jerusalem; and that the final neglect of this, would be attended with inevitable damnation.

After this he died apace, breathing shorter and shorter, till, at half past eleven o'clock, he fell *asleep in Jesus*, without either sigh or groan, and his happy soul ascended to heaven, to be for ever with the Lord;
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for if there be a heaven, he is in it (†). His death is an irretrievable loss to his worthy partner, is much regretted by his friends, and is sincerely lamented by the public at large, of the truth of which, this large and very respectable audience is one proof. May heaven support the surviving relatives, especially the Relict of the deceased, and assist them to look forward to the heavenly country, where he now is, and daily prepare for it: and may we all be followers of him, as he was of Christ; that when our days on earth are gone, our reciprocal attachment to each other in time, may be consummated in eternal glory; that when it shall be said of us, as in a little time it shall be, they are dead, it may also be said, they are happy.

† Think'st thou the theme intoxicates my song?
And I too warm? --- Too warm I cannot be.
I lov'd him much; but now I love him more.
--- How blessings brighten as they take their flight!
His flight PHILANDER took; his upward flight,
If ever soul ascended.

YOUNG.

