

the evidence of the divine Inspiration, now proposed to him, arising from the wonderful goodness of the doctrine, and its suitability to all the wants and wishes of an IMMORTAL SOUL. He then must freely cry out, "This is the voice of GOD, and not of man." GOD has said it, and I will believe it. Lord, I do believe this book as copied from thy heart : O ! GOD of truth, I see its goodness ; I love its beauty ; and a whole world of infidels shall not weaken my assent, or drive me from the rock of my salvation. This leads us naturally to another sacred disposition of the soul towards the holy Scriptures.

III. ESTEEM for the word of GOD, as most excellent in itself, and worthy of the highest regard, on account of its intrinsic dignity and glory.

Let us never forget, that the Scriptures are copied from the eternal nature and heart of GOD. Whatever can excite esteem towards an object is to be found in the holy Scriptures—the wisdom and sublimity of the discoveries in this blessed book—the holiness of its laws—the goodness and grace contained in the exceeding great and precious promises—the infallible truth of the historical narrations—the striking manner of drawing characters—the beauty and alluring virtue of the best examples, with the fulfilment of all the prophecies, and the infallible assurance

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of the eternal salvation of all who fly to Christ by faith. These excellencies should produce and cherish in us the highest esteem for this glorious and godlike book : and if we farther observe how abundantly the Scriptures are stocked with the most lively images and striking figures, which contain the highest beauties and express the passions in the most moving language, surely we must say this book is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely !

IV. DESIRE after the true knowledge of the SENSE of Scripture, and ardent prayer for the possession of the infinite GOOD contained in the PROMISES, constitute another disposition of the true christian. What will it avail to give my assent to the divine Inspiration of the Scriptures, if I have no clear and saving knowledge of the meaning of this revelation, and no enjoyment of its blessings !

True grace in the heart of a christian will prompt him to search into the genuine sense of every part of the word of God, especially the law and gospel, and the glorious predictions of the old and new Testament ; * and with equal ardour he will desire to possess a large measure of the blessings contained in the promises ; which are requisite to refine and ennoble our natures, to illuminate our understandings, to regulate our
wills,

* Rules for understanding the Scriptures will be given in Vol. II.

wills, to pacify our consciences, to purge our passions, and to raise us by degrees into all the dignity, perfection, and happiness, that an immortal soul can enjoy to eternity in the presence of God.

The promises are exceeding great and precious, in every point of view ; whether we consider the greatness and variety of the blessings contained in them—the manner in which they are expressed by the great and condescending God—the certainty of their fulfilment to all true believers—and the happy effects and consequences of them in the souls of all real christians in the world.*

Every day we want a promise of an INTEREST in a covenant GOD, to give us his love, his vital presence, his powerful protection, and bountiful supply of all our wants : such a promise we have in Heb. viii. 6. I will be to them a God. Every day I want an heart to KNOW GOD : such a promise we have in Jer. xxiv. 7. I will give them an heart to know me, that I am Jehovah ; and they shall return to me with their whole heart. Every day I want a promise that I shall be enabled to LOVE GOD : such a promise there is in Deut. xxx. 6. I will circumcise thine heart to love the

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* See a rich and copious collection of the promises, 12mo. by the late Dr. Samuel Clark, of St. Alban's. His introduction is full of admirable sense and wisdom.

LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live. Every day I want a promise of the PARDON of all my SINS: such a promise there is in PS. cxxx. 4. There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared. —See Dr. Owen's admirable and copious discourse on this verse, in his Exposition of the 130th PSalm. 8vo. Sold by Keith. —Note, All those persons who love gospel pardon, with vital holiness, are surely forgiven by GOD! Every day I want a promise of JUSTIFICATION by the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST: such a promise there is in 1 Cor. i. 30. Of GOD he is made unto us righteousness. We are made the righteousness of GOD in him. 2 Cor. v. 21. Every day I want a promise of a NEW HEART: such a promise there is in Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you. I will take away the heart of stone, (i. e. a stubborn will) and give you an heart of flesh, i. e. a soft, sensible, warm heart towards GOD and all heavenly objects. Note, A new heart implies new apprehensions of the illustrious power and grace of Christ, his fitness to save, his fulness to satisfy our wishes, and his beauty to endear himself to our souls. It also implies new determinations of the will and choice towards Christ our wisdom, as a prophet to remove our ignorance: our righteousness and redemption, as a priest to
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remove our guilt and slavery : sanctification, as our king to subdue our stubbornness, remove our rebellion, and restore the lost image of God's holiness to our souls. Every day I want a promise of victory over sin, and a power over the vile inclinations, the polluted passions, and vicious tastes of my soul : such a promise there is in Micah vii. 19. He will subdue our iniquities. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Rom. vi. 14. Ye, through the spirit, shall mortify, i. e. suppress and weaken the deeds, i. e. the impure emotions of the body ; and thus ye shall live, i. e. a life of sanctification and joy. Rom. viii. 13. Every day I want to live above the spirit and unlawful love of the world : such a promise there is in John xvi. 33. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me by the cross of Christ. Gal. vi. 14. Every day I want STRENGTH against all the fraud and force of the temptations of the devil : such a promise there is in 1 Cor. x. 13. No temptation hath taken you, but such as is common to man ; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted, and tryed, or put to the proof, above that ye are able to bear ; but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations. 2 Pet. ii. 9. The
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God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet shortly, (en tachei) in a short time, or very speedily. Rom. xvi. 20. We are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Cor. ii. 11. Ye shall be able to stand against the wiles, (methodeias) the methods of the devil. Eph. vi. 11. Every day I desire to have a promise of WISDOM and PRUDENCE from GOD, to direct me in every step of my moral and religious conduct : such a promise there is in Jam. i. 5. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of GOD, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not : he does not reproach us for our past foolishness, and numberless imprudencies : he will not cut us to pieces with sharp words ; but will give us wisdom with all the generosity of a GOD. Every day I want a promise of being the BETTER FOR EVERY THING that befalls me, and of being the WORSE FOR NO EVENT which happens to me in the course of divine providence : such a promise there is in Rom. viii. 28. All things work together for good to them that love GOD. —See a glorious demonstration of this truth in CHARNOCK ON PROVIDENCE, 8vo. and in Flavel on Providence, 12mo. and in the great and good Fleming on the Fulfilment of the Scriptures, part I. 12mo. and folio ; with Fleming verified, 12mo. pr. 9d. Sold by Keith.—Every day I want a promise of the supply of all TEMPORAL BLESSINGS : such promises abound all

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through

through the book of GOD. Verily thou shalt be fed. Pf. xxxvii. 3. My GOD shall supply all your need. Philip. iv. 19. All things shall be added to you. Matth. vi. 33. Do we want honour? * GOD will bring us to honour, i. e. the esteem and veneration of men, while we strenuously walk in the line of duty. Them that honour me, I will honour; while those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Riches and honour are with me. Prov. viii. 18. She, i. e. wisdom, shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. Prov. iv. 8. If any man serve me, him will my father honour. John xii. 26. Do we want riches? GOD will give us riches, i. e. a competent supply of food and raiment, and a satisfaction of mind with that competency: this is true riches. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Ye are of more value than many sparrows. Matth. x. 30, 31. If GOD so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O! ye of little

* HONOUR is a state of distinction and dignity in the estimation of GOD so as to be beyond the reach of just disdain, and above the force of rational and deserved suspicion. True religious honour consists in standing in the most honourable connexions with Christ—in possessing the most worthy dispositions like Christ—in exerting the most honourable actions and graces to the glory of Christ—and in enjoying the honourable love and approbation from the heart and language of Christ. This honour infinitely transcends all the distinctions, and titles, and empty bubbles, that monarchs and worlds can bestow upon the proud and haughty sons of men.

little faith ! Matth, vi. 30. He that spared not his own son, will he not with him freely give us all things ? Rom. viii. 32. Do we want health and pleasure ? GOD has promised, that the ways of Christ shall be health to our flesh and marrow to our bones : his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. Prov. iii. 8—17.— See Henry's admirable book on the Pleasures of vital Religion, 12mo.—Do we want the strong consolations of GOD under all the troubles and distresses of life ? such promises we have in rich abundance in Pf. xci. I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him. Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt honour me. Pf. l. 15. I will strengthen them in the Lord. Zech. x. 12. Do we want sanctified afflictions ? and the presence of Christ in all our sorrows ? such sweet assurances of his presence we have in Isai. lxiii. 9. In all their affliction he was afflicted, the messenger of his presence saved them : in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and bare them all the days of old. We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities : he is a merciful and faithful high priest. Heb. ii. 14. It is really astonishing to observe how richly Christ has provided all possible supports under the troubles of life, and has secured to the believer the glorious sanctification
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of all kinds of affliction, so that all things shall work together for good. Every day we want the assistance of GOD in our duties, conflicts, and trials: such a promise there is in Rom. viii. 26. The Spirit himself helpeth our weakneses: such a promise there is in John xiv. 26. The Spirit of GOD, the comforter, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication. Zech. xii. 10. Ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the irregular and impure desires and actions of the body. Rom. viii. 13. Every day we want a promise of perseverance in grace: such a promise there is in John x. 28. My sheep shall never perish. Who shall separate us from the love of GOD? Rom. viii. 35. I will never turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Jer. xxxii. 40. This GOD is our GOD for ever and ever. Ps. xlviii. 14. Because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19.

V. BENEVOLENCE, DELIGHT, and GLORY in the holy Scriptures, are a rich and precious disposition of the true christian towards them.

BENEVOLENCE considers an object as worthy to receive good, or as deserving our best affection. Every true christian feels an hearty good will to the holy Scriptures. We have the sensation of good will to an object, when we consider that

object as capable of receiving good, and worthy of that good, and of being made happy by the communication of good. Now, in strict propriety of thought, living and intelligent agents are the usual and the first objects of benevolence; and, properly speaking, we cannot be said to have such a benevolence towards the Scriptures, as to communicate any thing towards their happiness, because happiness belongs to living and intelligent beings. But any thing may be said to be the object of benevolence, or good will, when we wish it to prevail and prosper; when we desire it may be respected and loved by mankind: and in this sense all true believers have the highest benevolence towards the precious and immortal book of GOD: they wish it may be made conspicuous and honourable in the world: they wish it may prevail and prosper in the churches of Christ: that the word of the Lord may have a free course, and may run and be glorified. 2 Thes. iii. 1. They love to hear and see converted sinners glorify the word of the Lord. It gives them high pleasure to have it said, as in Acts xii. 24. The word of GOD grew and multiplied.

DELIGHT in the LAW and GOSPEL is a most glorious and essential property of the true christian temper.

I delight in the law of GOD after the inward
man.

man. Rom. vii. 22. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Pf. i. 2. Unless thy law had been my delight I should have perished in my affliction. Pf. cxix. 92. O! how love I thy law: it is my meditation all the day. Ver. 97.

Delight is a mixture of love and joy in an object that appears beautiful and good, that is nicely adapted to our taste, and suited to promote our happiness. The new and holy nature of a christian is a quality or fitness to converse with all the wonderful discoveries of the word of God: and it may be set down as an ETERNAL AXIOM in practical religion, "That a real believer never has a greater love to the gospel of Christ than he hath to the law of God." He loves the law of God, as it is the copy of the divine holiness: as it is fulfilled by Christ in the sinner's room, for his justification: and as it is a rule of our obedience and loyalty in the hands of Christ, our king. That man who loves the gospel, equally loves the law in those three views of it: and he that loves not the law, most certainly loves not the gospel, but is a real, rank antinomian in the fight of God.

The law of God bears such an impression of the wisdom, goodness, holiness, majesty, dominion, justice, truth, and beauty of God, as must needs be exceedingly agreeable to every regenerate

rate soul in the world. Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it. Pf. cxix. 140 — This psalm is the anatomy of the real christian's heart: 'tis the finest piece of EXPERIMENTAL DIVINITY that ever was written: it lays open the various heavenly emotions, passions, and tastes of the believer's soul towards the word of GOD; and is most richly adapted to our daily use, to assist us in meditation, and in self-examination into our heart and frame towards GOD and Christ. I cannot wish my dear reader a greater happiness, than that he may feel every hour the same high relish for the Scriptures of GOD, which the psalmist felt and tasted in all the course of years* which he spent in penning this admirable psalm.

'Tis this delight in the word of GOD which distinguishes a true christian from all the hypocrites in the world. No hypocrite ever did, or ever will (whilst in that character) delight in the holy law, and the holy gospel of GOD. None but renewed souls have an hearty approbation of the vast extent and purity of the divine law, and a cordial delight in the grand and holy design of the glorious gospel. The believer delights in the discoveries of the gospel, because they wonderfully improve his understanding; and he delights in the privileges and blessings of the
gospel,

* It is very probable that this psalm was more than twenty years in finishing, and may properly enough be stiled a COPY of the BELIEVER'S DIARY.

gospel, because they satisfy the will with good, comfort the conscience, and cheer the heart. DELIGHT is called the great MASTER BEE in the hive of human passions, whose tone and motions govern and guide all the rest. And in the gospel of Christ we have every grand, new, and beautiful discovery to please and enrich the human mind : we have the most abundant good to refresh and delight all our powers. Yea, we may advance higher still, and affirm, that the Scriptures afford matter of the highest glory to true christians.

GLORYING is the opposite to shame ; and as shame is a mixture of sorrow and self-love, attended with self-contempt ; so glorying is a mixture of joy and self-love, with an high degree of self-approbation, arising from our interest in an infinite good, and our vital union with the grandest personage in the universe. I glory in an union of heart with GOD—an union with the eternal nature, will, and affections of GOD. I glory in the rich and precious privilege of adoption into GOD's family, which is a greater honour than to be the highest angel in heaven. I glory in all the exceeding great and precious promises, sealed by the blood of Christ, and ratified with the oath of GOD, who cannot lie ; who cannot perjure himself or take his own name in vain by a false oath. I glory in the eternal Spirit of GOD : I rejoice in his omnipresence, and his vital agency

in the souls of all true christians : we may love ourselves, and rejoice in our own existence as far as we have good ground to hope we are the subjects of his sacred agency, and the temples of his holy majesty : his presence felt in the soul is the most glorious spring of the brightest holiness, the richest source of motives to the purest morals, and the most dignified conversation. I glory in a special providence, revealed in the Scriptures, as inspecting, guiding, and smiling on all the affairs of every real christian in the world. I glory in the prospect of eternal life beyond the grave, and of victory over death in my passage to that life of holiness and happiness.

VI. GRATITUDE to GOD for a DIVINE REVELATION is another affection which is essential to the true christian. Gratitude is a mixture of complacency and benevolence : it arises from a deep and powerful sense of good, freely and intentionally bestowed on us by a kind and generous benefactor, who was not indebted to us, or under any natural necessity to communicate good to us : and our gratitude is mightily increased, if we are conscious of our unworthiness to receive benefits, and if we know that we have been very guilty and provoking to the person who bestows favours upon us.

Now, if ever there was a call for gratitude in its highest exertion, from the poorest man to the richest

richest benefactor—from a rebellious subject to a forgiving monarch—from a returning prodigal to a compassionate father—from a rescued captive to a powerful redeemer; surely much more is gratitude due from us to our benefactor, father, and friend; who has bestowed upon us the unspeakable gift of a divine revelation.

We owe eternal GRATITUDE to GOD the FATHER: that he should of his meer good will, from everlasting, resolve to give such worthless and provoking enemies a divine revelation. Surely his good will could not be excited by any thing foreseen in us as matter of worth and excellence. We could not purchase his good will, it must be intirely UNBOUGHT: we could not constrain or urge him to give us a Bible, it must be UNFORCED: we did not earnestly implore him to give us a revelation; no, we never prayed for it for one moment; it was entirely UNSOUGHT: we did every thing to provoke him to shut us up in eternal darkness: we tried a thousand ways to put out the glimmering sparks of the light of nature, and therefore a divine revelation was most certainly UNDESERVED. And, therefore, if we set ourselves to think of the supreme original cause of a revelation, we can ascribe it to nothing but the pure, intense, and infinite good will of GOD: and when we have studied ten thousand years, yea, millions of ages, we must still assign the
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same cause of such an unexpected and unspeakable blessing. O! the depth of the riches of the sovereign grace of God! What shall we render to God for this unutterable benefit?

GRATITUDE to God the Son; who has conveyed a divine revelation to us in the streams of his precious blood. We never mean to assert, that Christ's obedience and death caused a will in God to give us the gospel: no, this was impossible. On the contrary, we maintain this as a grand truth, that God's love gave Christ, or was the cause of his incarnation, sufferings, and death: and, therefore, grace in God is the sovereign spring of our whole salvation.*

But grace in God the Father, and infinite worth in the obedience and death of Christ, are not opposites; as Christ's righteousness and sufferings did not cause a will in God to save us, so God's will to save us did not in the least add any worth to the obedience and satisfaction of Christ. This arose intirely from the infinite dignity of his person, and the intrinsic worth and excellence of that righteousness and death, considered as a proper price of redemption, a sacrifice for sin, and a full satisfaction to divine justice: consequently, in the eye of holiness, justice, and truth, the
Bible

* The REIGN of GRACE in every part of our salvation, from its first rise to its consummation in glory, is treated with great judgment and strength of thought, and in masculine language, by the Reverend Mr. Abraham Booth. 8vo.

Bible is now become our portion and rightful property through the blood of Christ: and this thought must enhance the worth of the Scriptures in our esteem, and endear the book of God to our souls beyond all conception. Therefore, every time I take the Bible into my hand, it ought to be with this most grateful reflection: "this is the only book in the world that is bought for me with the death of Christ, and comes down to my bosom and soul in the streams of IMMANUEL'S blood: and as without shedding of blood there is no remission, so without the shedding of Christ's blood I should have had NO BIBLE." O! christians, with what adoring gratitude ought you to receive and improve this precious, this blood-bought revelation!

Hail, O! Christ Jesus! true and eternal God; true and holy man; we love thee; we adore thee; we carry our most flaming gratitude to the footstool of thy throne; we lay our souls at thy feet! we owe thee eternal unbounded thanksgivings and praises, for the purchase and gift of a revelation of thy perfections, thine offices, and thy grace. Here we have an immortal volume which, under the agency of thy SPIRIT, will remove all our plagues—scatter all our doubts and fears—level all mountains of opposition in the way to heaven—confound and demolish all our enemies—and suit all our noblest powers and affections. In

this revelation we see our plague of darkness and ignorance removed by light—our plague of guilt removed by a divine and infinite satisfaction—our plague of corruption, filth, and rebellion, removed by sanctifying grace. Our doubts and fears are all scattered : we see thee able to save to the uttermost : we see thee as willing and resolved to save as thou art able : and we see thee sworn into thine office as a saviour, and sealed by God the father, to save millions of souls in every age to the end of the world. We see, in the light of thy revelation, all mountains of opposition levelled into a beautiful plain : holiness, which swore that filthy sinners should never approach the pure nature of God, is now our reconciled friend : justice, which solemnly determined that guilty sinners should be damned for ever, is now become our guardian : and the deepest depths of God's unfathomable heart, which were impenetrable and unknown to men and angels, are now made known, to our astonishment and delight. By thy revelation, O ! LORD JESUS, the charges against us are all answered—the plots laid to ruin us are all unravelled—the powers of sin and hell, which we could never resist, are all confounded and brought to nought. Our understandings are filled with glorious light, our wills are satiated with the richest good, our passions are refined from dregs and pollution,
and