

tonian system of the natural world, which rules every particle of matter, from the vast mass in the body of the sun, to the least grain of dust under our feet: not an atom, that God has made, is exempted from this law for one moment through universal nature.* And thus it is in the moral world with respect to the grand law of love: it binds every rational mind that God has made, to universal and eternal love to God and our fellow-creatures. From this law God will never depart; it never can be relaxed for one moment, with respect to any one rational creature in heaven, earth, or hell: the eternal and immutable rectitude of God binds it down on every conscience in the world: and in the church of Christ his law is farther explained, beautified, extended, and enforced, beyond all that reason ever knew. By this law I am bound to esteem God as the most excellent existence in himself—to desire his presence above all things—to bear the most ardent good will to him, as worthy to receive all possible good—and to de-
light

* Of all the philosophical writers I ever read, no man equals the most sagacious and devout Mr. Andrew Baxter, in his Enquiry into the Nature of the human Soul, with the Appendix; and his Dialogues, filed Matho. I say, no man equals him for incessant attention to the agency of God in the natural world. Justice has not yet been fully done to this great man; but I hope a Time will soon come in which his excellent character shall be set in a fairer light by some friends that love his name. At present I can only hint, that this worthy man was born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in the year 1687, and died at Willingham, in East-Lothian, March, 1750, aged 63. I detest the ingratitude of the present age for paying no attention to his memory.

light in him as the life and joy of my immortal soul. By this law I am bound to love all mankind as myself: and more especially to esteem every true christian as possesser of the most lovely qualities ---to desire their happiness equally with that of my own soul---to bear the most perfect good will to their persons and interests, as worthy to receive all possible good from me. I am bound to delight in their company, to rejoice in their salvation, and do every thing in my power to promote their felicity; and to avoid every thing that may injure their noblest interests, by invading the rights of their consciences, or refusing to allow them all the comforts and privileges of the sons of God.

I can give only a small specimen of that subjection of soul and conscience to the will of God in Scripture, which is so essential to the temper of a true christian.

God commands in his word, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart. Matth. xxii. 37. The christian replies, I will love thee, O! Lord, my strength. Ps. xviii. 1. God says, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. Acts xvi. 31. The soul replies, Lord, I do believe; help thou mine unbelief. Mark ix. 24. God says, Grieve not the holy Spirit.
Eph.

Eph. iv. 30. The soul replies, Thy spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightnes.
 Pf. cxliii. 10. GOD says, Ye that love the Lord, hate evil. Pf. xcvi. 10. The soul replies, I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.
 Pf. cxix. 113. GOD says, be sober, be vigilant. 1 Pet. v. 8. The soul replies, I will keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. 1 Cor. ix. 27. GOD says, How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? Jer. iv. 14. The soul replies, Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Pf. li. 10. GOD commands; Be not proud. Jer. xiii. 15. The soul replies, Lord, my heart shall not be haughty. Pf. cxxx. 1. GOD says, Put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. 1 Pet. iii. 4. The soul replies, I will take heed to my ways, and keep my mouth with a bridle. Pf. xxxix. 1. GOD says, be not slothful in business, but be fervent in spirit. Rom. xii. 11. The soul replies, I will keep thy precepts diligently. Pf. cxix. 4, 8. GOD commands, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Matth. xxii. 39. The soul replies, I would love mine enemies, and do good to them that hate me. Luke vi. 35. If my enemy hunger, I will feed him. Rom. xii. 20. GOD says to his people, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. John xiii. 34. The soul replies, My goodness extendeth to the
 faints,

faints, the excellent of the earth, in whom is all my delight. Pf. xvi. 2, 3. GOD says, Do justly, love mercy. Micah vi. 8. The soul replies, Let INTEGRITY and UPRIGHTNESS preserve me. Pf. xxv. 21. I have an ardent regard for the rights of all men, and feel a fixed determination to preserve those rights inviolate. GOD commands us to an unfeigned love of the brethren with a pure heart fervently. 1 Pet. i. 22. The soul replies, I love the brethren, and I will love them for ever. Therefore I am assuredly passed from death unto life. 1 John iii. 14.

But we must stop our hand; for you see, my dear reader, there would be no end, if we were to enter minutely into all the duties and graces of the christian life: let it suffice, at present, to observe, that there is not a true believer on earth but, in his best moments, aims to please GOD in all things, and wishes to do it at all times: and he ardently desires to know the whole will of GOD, in order to perform it without any reserve, or stated allowance in sin; and he wishes to be sincere and consistent with his principles in his thoughts, words, and actions. No man can enjoy any solid comfort in his soul, if he is destitute of the above disposition: for then only can we say, we are not ashamed when
we

we have respect to all God's commandments.*
Pf. cxix.

X. ZEAL for the HONOUR of the holy SCRIPTURES, and for the PROPAGATION of their glorious EVIDENCES and DISCOVERIES through the WORLD, is another essential BRANCH of the true CHRISTIAN TEMPER.

Zeal is a mixed passion, composed of the most vehement love, and high degrees of rational, fervent anger; for whatever object a man sincerely loves, he desires to see it honoured with the highest distinction and respect; and he rises into a vivid ferment of anger to see it undervalued, despised, and trampled under foot with contempt and scorn.

The

* The GRAND TEST of a true CHRISTIAN'S OBEDIENCE to the WORD of GOD consists in the following things:

1. To mortify his dearest lusts; signified by the command to pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand. Matth. v. 29, 30. And to cut off a right foot. Mark ix. 45.

2. To forgive the keenest and worst personal injuries, upon repentance of the offender, even to seventy times seven. Matth. xviii. 22. Luke xvii. 4.

3. To deny ourselves daily, in our self-will and self-righteousness; and to take up our crosses and follow Christ. Matth. xvi. 24. Mark viii. 34. Luke ix. 23.

4. To do good for evil: if our enemy hunger, give him meat; if he thirst, give him drink: and overcome all evil with good. Prov. xxv. 21. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

5. To hate father and mother, husband or wife, houses, lands, and children; yea, our own life, when any of these come in competition with the glory and cause of Christ. Luke xiv. 26.

6. To

The Bible is a book of such transcendent worth, that it deserves and demands the utmost honour from men and angels.

The honour of the holy Scriptures consists in the following things:---they are the product of the eternal understanding of GOD, and the copy of the grace and justice of his heart---they stand closely connected with all the divine perfections, and contain the whole plan of the moral government of GOD from the beginning to the end of the world---they are sealed with the blood of the Son of GOD, and were infused into the minds of wise and holy men by the eternal Spirit---they have been the grand means of converting millions of men from sin to holiness, and from misery to happiness †---they contain a clear discovery of all
good

6. To be heartily willing to lay down our lives for the brethren, because we perceive and feel the love of GOD in laying down his life for us. 1 John iii. 16.

7. To confess our connexion and attachment to Christ, as the Son of GOD and our redeemer, with a daring intrepidity before the whole world; being fully convinced, that if we confess him, he will acknowledge us before his father; and if we are ashamed of and deny him before men, he will be ashamed of us and deny us before his father and his holy angels at the last judgment. Matth. x. 32, 33. Luke xii. 8, 9.

N. B. These seven glorious acts constitute the grand CRITERIONS, or MARKS of sincere and universal obedience to the will and word of GOD.

† All the light and wisdom; all the life, and strength, and beauty, of holy souls; all their support and consolation in the duties of religion, in the troubles of life, and terrors of death, have flowed from the holy Scriptures for thousands of years past. The church of GOD hath lived upon the Scriptures, and, by their means, has triumphed over all her enemies to this very day; and will do so to the end of the world. What a state of dignity, honour, and usefulness do the Scriptures hold in GOD'S empire!

good and bad characters that ever have been, or ever shall be, in GOD's rational creation---they have been punctually fulfilled in the natural and moral world to the present hour, and are now fulfilling in the world. GOD is resolved to support their credit and authority with all the wisdom of his mind, the grace and vengeance of his heart, and the power of his omnipotent arm. These sacred and lively oracles must survive all their enemies, and triumph over all opposition. Kings and beggars must bow or break to pieces, and be grinded to powder under their force. GOD is determined to trample all resistance to the Scriptures under his feet. Their dignity will farther appear in a most illustrious manner, when they shall become the grand instrument of blessing the whole world of mankind, and spreading knowledge, holiness, and happiness all over the earth.

They will appear the standard and rule of GOD's universal judgment at the last day, and will shine forth in their final accomplishment before devils, men, and angels. Yea, farther still, when ten thousand times ten thousand ages are rolled off beyond the day of judgment, these Scriptures will be then fulfilling in the torments of the damned, and the happiness of the righteous: and thus the threatnings of justice, and the promises of grace shall never, never have an end.

GREAT

GREAT and IMMORTAL GOD! what veneration, love, and honour, doth thy book deserve and demand! Forgive me, that I almost dishonour thy Scriptures, whilst I attempt to praise: pity the poverty and littleness of my understanding, and forgive the coldness, the indifference, the ingratitude, and irreverence of my heart: fire my passions into the most ardent devotion, and graciously accept my feeble, but sincere attempt to do everlasting honour to thy holy word!

Let us now take a prospect of the most weighty motives to excite us to pay eternal attention to the Scriptures, and exert the most vigorous, wise, and unbounded zeal for their honour, and the propagation of their glorious contents through the British empire.

Let the following train of thoughts have their full force on all the springs of action within us, to animate us to the most godlike public spirit to our last hour on the bed of death.

GOD the Father is exceedingly zealous for the honour and propagation of his divine revelation: GOD the Son has the revival of the credit of his word deeply and powerfully at heart: GOD the holy Spirit values the book which he himself inspired, above all the worlds his hands have made: the sublime doctrines of grace deserve and demand our utmost zeal: GOD will be very zealous
for

for those servants of his who are ardently zealous to propagate the discoveries of his heart far and wide, at home and abroad.

How can the zeal of a rational human soul be expended if it is not laid out for the honour and credit of the word of God? What a small part of the world are capable of zeal for the glory and display of the Scriptures? and how few in the church of Christ are zealous to proclaim the glad news of salvation? How detestable is neutrality and lukewarmness concerning this blessed and God-breathed book? How must the Lord Jesus abhor a coldness and indifference for that book which he bought with his blood and soul? What cursed mischief has lukewarmness towards the Scriptures done in all ages? and what astonishing objects of the invisible world are there ever near us, to rouse us to the most vivid and flaming zeal! Objects so new, so grand, so lovely, and so awful, that if we were not blind, or sleepy, and half dead, would work us up to the utmost fear, and terror, and wonder, and love of God's book.

Zeal for the honour and spread of God's word is the only way to escape Christ's terrible rod, which now hangs over this kingdom! The only way to escape ruin is to rouse up all our powers to the most mighty zeal for the glory of the SCRIPTURES! Zeal will purge out our lusts---
will

will beautify the soul---and advance Christ's glory in the churches, by the display of his gospel. How much great and good work may zeal for the Scriptures do: amongst magistrates and subjects---nobles and commoners---rich and poor---preachers and people---parents and children---tutors and scholars---masters and servants. True zeal would spread the triumphs of personal and domestic religion through cities, towns, and villages, and bring back again the beauty and glory of the reformation from popery. The sin and misery of millions of men, who are without the word of GOD, should excite our most indefatigable zeal!

Love to our own souls should excite our zeal for the Bible. This is the best way to advance in the peace and satisfaction of our own consciences: in the strength, purity, and joy of our own minds. Patterns of zeal, in all the best and worst ages of the church, should excite a noble zeal for GOD and his word. 'Tis astonishing to read of brave and generous souls, even in the dark periods of the church, who have manifested an intrepid and daring zeal for GOD.

What glorious prophets, kings, priests, apostles, martyrs, fathers, and blessed heroes, have discovered an ardent and inextinguishable zeal for GOD! whilst, on the other hand, how many trifling, puny, narrow souls have been zealous

for false religions, and the vain inventions of men : they have spent the zeal and rage of their little souls for the tithing of mint, annise, and cummin ; whilst the grand essentials of the law and gospel of GOD have been neglected, forgotten, and lost !

How zealous are the devils and bad men against the word of GOD ! to deny the inspiration---to destroy the authority---to deprave the doctrines---to diminish the blessings---to pervert the grand designs---to mangle and impoverish the promises---and break the laws ! And shall not this consideration rouse up all the blood and spirit of your nature to defend the dignity and display the glory of divine revelation.

How zealous are all sorts of sinners to commit sin, and rebel against GOD ! What pains do they take to serve their lusts ? What labour and expence are they at to gratify their impure passions, and please their vile appetites ? How will they sit up night and day to indulge their furious desires ! What journies will they take ! and what fatigues will they endure to enjoy their insatiable and outrageous inclinations and tastes ! With what zeal do they serve their master, as though they were to be rewarded with an eternal heaven of happiness for their pains ! What a vast number of the devil's apostles are engaged in his service, to propagate his cause, to diffuse his books, to
frequent

frequent his chapels ! to become his faithful martyrs ! to sweat, and bleed, and die for his interest and kingdom in this world ! Surely the zealous slaves of Satan may shame and confound you all ! O ye lukewarm, slumbering christians ! blush ! blush ! and let your cheeks burn for shame, to see the devil's servants more zealous to be damned than you are to be saved, than you are to publish your master's glories, display his grandeur, proclaim his grace, obey his law, and propagate and adorn his gospel ! Lord Jesus, are we thy christians ! either let us change our name, or change our temper and conduct, to act more for thy glory !

The more sacred zeal has been disgraced by low enthusiasts, and sly hypocrites, by their plausible pretensions to christianity, or their absurd zeal for its propagation, the more ought all wise, *rational* christians to exert themselves for its defence and glory. I say, *rational* christians ought to employ their best powers and influence to spread abroad the glories of law and gospel. But who are these *rational* christians ? I answer, all honest free-thinkers are rational christians. But who are honest free-thinkers ? all those who use their understandings to find out the truth, with an upright aim to please God, and glorify him for ever : all those who search impartially and humbly into the evidences and contents of

divine revelation, and who are determined to submit to evidence as fast as it shall arise, and are resolved to follow wherever the word of God shall clearly lead the way. These are the *only* men who have a right to be stiled RATIONAL CHRISTIANS; and such men disdain to call any man master on earth; as they know, to their unutterable joy and happiness, that they have a wise and good, a divine and infallible master in heaven.

Recollect the times when you were zealous for sin and the indulgence of your lusts: and let this pungent consideration rouse you into zeal for God:--O! how many years, months, days, and hours were spent without one good thought of God, or one act of zeal for the honour of the holy Scriptures; and let this stimulate you now to sacred zeal. O! how zealous were you to gratify your insatiable appetites! to indulge your unlawful inclinations, to ferment your passions for animal pleasure! Ah, christians, remember the moment when God began to change your taste for sensual pleasure, and to make an happy exchange of the joys of criminal voluptuousness for the joys of religion and the light of his countenance. O! how sweet is it to lose those sweets of sense and appetite for the sweets of eternal friendship and union with God; and how transporting is the thought, that our best pleasures
are

are but juſt begun, and ſhall never, never have an end. Well may we ſay with good Mr. Matth. Henry, “ I would not change my pleaſures of converſe with GOD in the holy Scriptures for all the delights of the ſons of men, and the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces.”

Gratitude to Chriſt for his grace and love, with the diſtinguiſhing favours of his providence, ſhould fire up our ſouls with zeal for the glory and propagation of his goſpel.

Has he not created your bodies, and built up the ſtructure of your mortal part with exquisite art and benevolence? Did he not breathe into your bodies the breath of life, and give you a rational and immortal ſoul, furniſhed with amazing powers and affections! and if you have any diſtinguiſhed talents of imagination, taſte, and judgment, to whom are you indebted for thoſe ſingular ornaments and capacities to ſerve and bleſs mankind? Has he not ſeated you in England, ſurrounded with goodneſs; in a land where the goſpel ſhines in its native beauty, glory, and power! Hath he not redeemed your faculties from ſlavery and death, that you might be capable of a divine zeal for his word! and has he not bought the celeftial fire of zeal to put into your ſoul and diſfuſe through all the paſſions of the heart! Ought not his diſtinguiſhing and effectual grace to rouse up all your gratitude and ardor!

ardor! Did not his Spirit open your eyes, unstop your ears, enlighten your understandings, bow your stubborn wills, perfect your freedom to heavenly things, and fix your whole souls on God for eternity! And shall not all these infinite and endearing kindneses fire up the zeal and gratitude of your heart!

Zeal, exerted for the honour of the word of God, would clear up your SINCERITY, and scatter your doubts and fears concerning your gracious state, and your interest in Christ. Many of you complain that your salvation is a doubtful thing, and that you know not whether you are the children of God or no. You have great fears concerning your gracious state; and you feel painful sensations at the prospects of death: you are afraid of the approach of the king of terrors, and know not where death will land you in another world! Now, what is the best method you can take to have your doubts banished, your fears scattered; and your hopes of eternal life strengthened, cleared up, and made to rise into a rational joy and a well-grounded confidence! Why, my friends, try what an exertion of zeal for Christ's gospel will do: ardently implore his divine majesty to send down the heavenly fire of his blessed Spirit: this will burn up your dross and rubbish, will drive away the smoke and darkness of your lusts, and raise you
above

above the foggy atmosphere of doubts and fears, into the clear sky of joyful assurance.

Zeal for the honour of the Bible will dare to look GOD in the face! because GOD's heart approves of such zeal: he delights in it, and will richly reward it with temporal and spiritual blessings. GOD beholds such a man as he did the great Phineas with triumph and approbation, because he was ZEALOUS FOR HIS GOD, Numb. xxv. 13. and he crowned him with everlasting honour: and he will equally approve of all rationally-zealous christians to the end of the world.

Conscience tells you plainly and pungently, how much time you have lost in lukewarmness and drowsiness, and 'tis high time to rouse up your stupified senses, shake off your slumbers, and awake to your duties, your dangers, and your best interests: and how can you employ yourselves in nobler work than searching the holy Scriptures, and propagating, to the utmost of your powers, the glories of this immortal book.

Zealous souls are nearest to GOD and heaven, and the most likely to come to heaven above all men in the world. If you wish to breathe the air of Paradise, and live in the suburbs of glory, be every day and every hour zealous for the perfection, the dignity, the usefulness, and beauty of the holy Scriptures.

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The zeal of the Son of God for the salvation of your souls, and the agonies he felt in the garden, the insults and cruelties he met with from his enemies, and his torments and horrors on the cross, should sting up your immortal passions to the highest fervour of holy zeal for that gospel which discovers all the glories of his person, and the worth of his righteousness and blood!

Go to Gethsemane! go to Calvary, to fetch the fire of divine zeal! I will express this grand motive in six plain lines, for the use of our weak memories.

Fetch fire from the cold manger in which CHRIST
was lay'd,
Fetch fire from the cold mountain on which
JESUS pray'd;
Fetch fire from the garden in which JESUS bled,
Fetch fire from mount Calvary to which he was
led;
Fetch fire from the cross on which JESUS dyed,
Fetch fire from the water that flow'd from his
side.

Zeal for God's glory, revealed in the gospel, is an eternal grace which will endure as long as God exists: it will flame out in heaven in ten thousand splendors, and brighter than ten thousand suns. Not a lukewarm, drowsy soul will be found in
heaven

heaven to eternity : but all the happy throng will be like millions of the most brilliant, intellectual fires ; all aspiring upwards towards the lofty throne of GOD ; whilst GOD himself will return love for love through an eternal duration. We shall then have a composition of all the finest feelings of the mind, acting and re-acting on each other, to raise each to the most intense vigour and fire, streaming into GOD, and rolling back from GOD again, to increase the mighty flame.*

R E C O L L E C T I O N .

Let us review these MOTIVES or considerations of GOOD to be enjoyed, and EVIL to be avoided,
in

* I cannot forbear inserting a most rich and beautiful passage from the incomparable Dr. Witsius's *Oeconomy of the Covenants*, in his own elegant and energetic words ; which no translation can so well express.

Visionem hanc DEI, qui essentialis veritas est, comitabitur amor sanctissimus simul et suavissimus ejusdem DEI, qui etiam perfecta bonitas est. Neque fieri potest, ut aliter sit. Nam quando intellectus DEUM ipsum, et desiderabilissimas illius perfectiones, non sub fallaci specie, neque sub obscuris ac confusis ideis, uti hic, sed in nativa luce sua, cernit et assidue contemplatur, fieri nequit, quin flagrantissimo earundem amore sancta voluntas exardescat. Beata illa mens, præterquam quod in lumine DEI DEUM ut fontem luminis intueatur, divinæ caritatis flammis undique circumdatur: quibus mutua caritate jugiter respondeat. Facitque ista caritas, ut in præsentia, contemplatione, ac fruitione DEI, nullum tædium, lassitudinem nullam sentiat; nova identidem voluptate, ex summi boni summopere amati intima possessione, et indeclinabili ejus complacentia, animam demulcente. Non enim amor iste amor desiderii, sed exoptatæ pridem fruitionis est. Atque hæc est illa caritas, quam semper manere, etiam fide ac spe pereunte, testatur apostolus. 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

WITSII OECON. lib. 3. chap. 14. § 30.

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