

perance, fortitude, are love diversified by other names. Liberal love, gives supplies to the poor; patient love forgives injuries; and love is the universal cause, which, within its fruitful womb, contains all the particulars of our obedience, and is naturally productive of them all; so that virtually it is all religion; it is godliness, and temperance, and charity, and humility, and righteousness, and patience, being the common cause and parent of them all." All are but emanations of the love of God, branches produced by this root, and streams flowing from this fountain; and whatever precepts are enjoined in the Scriptures, or ordinances established in the church, they must all be regarded as auxiliaries for the maintenance of this divinely implanted principle.

BUT LOVE TO GOD MAY EXIST IN THE SOUL in a state of infantile weakness; it may be genuine and yet immature. "New-born babes" love sincerely, but not vigorously. There are different degrees of love; some love much; others, differently circumstanced, love little; for where the heart is not entirely under the dominion of grace, and the body of sin not totally destroyed, there the love of God is not perfected; it has not the complete occupancy of the heart; depraved principles maintain a struggle for the mastery; the motions of sin work powerfully in the members; "the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," though mortally wounded, is yet in existence; and while any portion of the carnal mind remains, so much of that which is enmity against God continues in operation. Hence, before the Christian principle can reign sole monarch of the affections; before we can love God with all the heart, the old man must be crucified; the enmity must be abolished; "there is no way to deal with enmity but by its abolition or destruction. As every drop of poison is poison, and will infect, and every spark of fire is fire and will burn, so everything of sin, the last and least of it, is enmity," and will destroy. "Mortification abates its force, but doth not change its nature. Grace changeth the nature of man, but nothing can change the nature of sin; it must therefore be destroyed; the old leaven must be purged out, that we may become a new lump." This is done by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, by the accomplishment of God's ancient, but evangelical promise, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." "This promise," saith Henry, "signifies both the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the conscience to purify that, and to take away the sense of guilt, as those that were sprinkled with the water of purification were thereby discharged from their ceremonial uncleanness; and the grace of the sprinkled on the whole soul to purify it from all corrupt inclinations and dispositions, as Naaman was cleansed from his leprosy by dipping in Jordan." Christ was Himself clean, else His blood could not have been cleansing to us; and it is a holy Spirit that makes us holy; "From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you, and I will save you from all your uncleanness." When this promise is fulfilled, sin considered as a principle, becomes extinct; the infection of our nature is healed; the strong man is entirely dispossessed of his palace, and his goods are all spoiled;

and the soul being wholly freed from inbred corruption, will be enabled to love God perfectly.

NOT SO AS TO PRECLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASE, or enlargement; for as the Holy Ghost who is the sole agent by which the love of God is shed abroad in the believing soul, can shine with clearer light, communicate more profound discoveries of the exceeding riches of divine grace, and impress it with a deeper consciousness of the debt of endless gratitude it owes to God, this love will know no bounds to its existence, nor period to its increase; but it will be so far perfected as to hold the entire dominion in the soul, to know no rival disposition, nor feel any opposing principle; for to love God "with all the heart as he requires, implies that our heart be filled with his love, so that no room be left for any other passion." Neither the pleasures of sin, nor the seductions of the world, nor the lures of the flesh, will then be able to hold any ascendancy over the heart, or alienate the affections from the sole object that has engrossed them; for when love has the supreme authority in the mind, every other passion is made its willing captive, and becomes subservient to its sway; and therefore, to use the language of a late writer, it cannot "so properly be said to be in the soul as the soul to be in that, as it is the whole man wrapped up in one desire;" and when this desire centres wholly in God, when he alone sits enthroned in the affections, then "every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" is cast down, and every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

AND HE WHO IS THUS "MADE PERFECT IN LOVE" is crucified unto the world, and the world to him; to unhallowed objects he is no longer wedded, for earth-born joys he no longer lives; for him wealth has lost its splendor, honor its brilliance, and pleasure its attraction; and being dead indeed unto sin, he is "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." God is his all, "his theme, his inspiration, and his crown;" and in the spirit of love he voluntarily offers up himself to the guidance and government of Him to whom his more than all is due; his understanding to contemplate his infinite perfections; his will to submit to his wise and inexplicable dispensations; his affections to adore and reverence His eternal Majesty; his talents to shew forth the glory of His name; and his very life, if necessary, to evince his inviolable attachment to His cause. And as this love knows no rival, neither does it admit of any interruption. It is not a spark emitted from the blaze of worldly prosperity, and fanned by the soft breeze of carnal pleasure; but a flame enkindled by the sun of righteousness, which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown. Like the fire on the altar, it never goes out; it may not always burn with an equally perceptible intensity; there may be seasons when the soul is in heaviness through manifold temptations, when the enemy may come in like a flood, when the body loaded with pains and infirmities may weigh down the mind; but the extent of a Christian's love to God must not be estimated by any ecstasy of feeling, or flights of rapture, for these are often accidental circumstances attendant on this love, rather than properties essential to its existence; but it should be regarded as a predominant and powerfully operative principle of heavenly origin and tendency, drawing the soul into the closest union with its God, making it jealous of His honor, attentive to His ordi-

nance, observant of His precepts, and emulous to behold His Glory.

HE WHO LOVES GOD MOST ARDENTLY will confide in Him most implicitly. One of the chief operations of love is to inspire us with a favorable opinion of the beloved object and in proportion as this prevails we shall rest in that object, confide in his veracity, and believe that he will never desert us. Distrust is the offspring of suspicion, and want of confidence is want of love. Faith, considered as the condition or instrument of justification, must necessarily exist antecedent to and independently of love. "He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him; and he on whom the wrath of God abideth can neither love God nor be loved by him;" but that sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven, and which has been significantly termed the faith of assurance, can never exist without love; for whether the love of God shed abroad in the heart be the ground of the assurance that we are received into the divine favor; or whether the consciousness of that favor gives birth to this love, nothing can be more demonstrable than the fact that faith and love reciprocally and simultaneously operate upon each other. Therefore the apostle declares "faith worketh by love;" which it does, by creating a disposition, presenting objects, and ensuring a reward to love; or, as the expression is more critically and properly rendered, "faith is perfected by love." For perfect love casteth out not only all fear, but all unbelief. Then the Christian's confidence acquires such a maturity of principle and stability of character as to dissipate every gloomy suspicion and hush every distrustful fear.

CHRISTIANITY PRODUCES JOY; "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." But Christian joy is the joy of love; indeed, joy is the usual concomitant of love; nothing can be a source of joy in possession that is not the subject of love in anticipation; no man will rejoice in what he conceives to be an unlovely object, nor in an object in which he can have no personal interest in proportion as the mind appreciates the excellency and desirableness of any object, the heart will rejoice to possess it. They who love God, therefore, cannot fail to rejoice in Him, since to love God is to enjoy Him; and thus David said, "Let them that love thy name be joyful in thee;" intimating that joy in God could spring only from love to Him; and that those in whose hearts the love of God is shed abroad, should avail themselves of their privilege to magnify the Lord, and rejoice in God their Saviour. And in an exact ratio as our love towards God abounds, so will be the abundance of our joy in Him. He who loves God with all his heart rejoices evermore; his privileges are to him never-failing sources of holy enjoyment, and perennial springs of rapturous delight. Every prospect that opens to his view becomes an avenue of gladness to his heart. God is his exceeding joy; in His favor he finds life; and he is full of joy with His countenance. His statutes are his songs in the house of his pilgrimage; his delight is in the law of the Lord, and he rejoiceth in His Word as one that findeth great spoil. Does he frequent the means of grace and the ordinances of religion? He serves the Lord with gladness, and offers in His tabernacles sacrifices of joy. Does he hear the gos-