

earnestness inquiring, What must I do to be saved? Is that the answer which God's word returns to such a question? Was it an answer such as that which made David sing of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered? Was it with an answer such as that that the apostle Paul spoke peace to the jailor at Philippi, when he said to him and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Assuredly not. The *good* that was shewed to the jailor, was the Saviour who hath "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." The *good* in which David was made to rejoice, was the grace of him who could wash him thoroughly from his iniquities and cleanse him from his sin. It was this *good* that was made known to fallen Adam, when he heard of the seed of the woman that was to bruise the head of the serpent. This was the *good* on which Abraham's soul reposed, as he believed on him who justifieth the ungodly. The whole system of the ceremonial law was a shadow of that *good*, the body of which is Christ. Of him, this very prophet had spoken in the second verse of the preceding chapter, when he said, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." The words of this first clause, therefore, are a complete and appropriate answer to the preceding questions.—They point to the Saviour. At the same time, they do so in such a way as is fitted to rebuke these backsliders for their ignorance with respect to that which had been so frequently set before them; and to send them back to those ordinances which they could not neglect without endangering their own souls.

Having thus directed them to the Saviour, the prophet still farther reminds them of the return which God expects for so great a benefit: and now "what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." By the very terms of his being, as a moral creature, man is, and must ever be, under the authority of this law, as a rule of duty. Having transgressed it, and incurred its condemnation, he cannot now obtain a title to life by his own obedience to it. His failure in this has not in the slightest degree abated its claim. Nor, whatever some

may have foolishly thought, does the gospel relieve him from its authority. It sets before him indeed a way of acceptance before God, through the righteousness of that Saviour who has both obeyed the precept and endured the penalty, having become "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" but it is not in order that, being thus accepted, he may with impunity continue in the violation of this law. On the contrary, the salvation which it reveals is a holy salvation—it is a *salvation from sin*. Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The faith that unites the sinner to the Saviour is a faith that purifies the heart, and works by love.—The love of God shed abroad in the heart inclines to the duties of new obedience. The grace of God communicated to the soul strengthens for this obedience. The light of the gospel, in all its dispensations, enforces every duty by the constraining argument "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This is the argument with which God introduces the republication of the moral law to his chosen people at Mount Sinai; "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."—This is the argument the constraining power of which had reached David's heart, when he exclaimed, (Ps. cxvi. 12-14), "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." This was the argument to which our Saviour referred, when he said, "If ye love me keep my commandments." This was the argument with which the apostle Paul enforced every duty, when he said, (Rom. xii. 1), "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This is the argument, the power of which the whole body of the redeemed acknowledge, when with the beloved disciple they exclaim "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

How precious then is the light of the