

self was their conductor, and all nature seems in motion before him. The Jordan at their approach, divides his stream, and opens to them a passage into the promised land. The sun at the command of Joshua, stops short his career, and prolongs the day, till victory has declared for the house of Jacob. The walls of Jericho totter and tumble to the ground at the sound of the trumpet of Israel. Thus did the Lord with a mighty hand, according to his promise, establish his people in the land of Canaan, a land abounding with delights, and flowing with milk and honey.

Considering therefore how often and in what a wonderful manner God has interposed in behalf of man; like a most affectionate parent watching over his favourite child; guarding him from every danger; supplying him with all his necessities; consoling him in his afflictions and distresses; leading him, as it were, by the hand; lifting him up if he happens to fall, and encouraging him to pursue his journey towards the promised land of bliss; pointing out to him the way; removing, or beating down before him every obstacle that might retard its progress, moving heaven and earth for his sake; (and all this which he has done for the Jews in a temporal sense, he has done, and even more, in a spiritual sense for the Christian): considering, I say, all this; what an exalted idea must we not conceive of that love of predilection which he bears him! And how dear to the Deity does not that creature seem to be, for whom he has shewn, and continues to show so great regard, and on whom he heaps such singular favours!

But, alas! how ill does man requite him for so much goodness! and how insensible does he ever shew himself to the endearing expression of so much love! For, as in the case of the Jews we have seen and admired the prodigious effects of God's love to man; so in their conduct may we also trace a striking instance of his hard-heartedness and ingratitude towards his best of benefactors. How often at the very time their God was working the greatest wonders; and, as it were, overturning the very laws of nature on their account; did they not murmur and rebel against him! And scarcely were they well settled in the land of promise, when forgetful of all he had done for them, they began to provoke him by their sins. Yet, when he proceeds to punish, he rather corrects, like an affectionate father, than chastises like an angry or inexorable judge.—Whom ever of his dutiful children did he not readily forgive, on his humble acknowledgment of his fault, and resolution to sin no more! His bowels of compassion are moved at our repentance; and when about to strike, he is still more willing to pardon and to spare. And what return does he expect from man, for so much goodness, for such unspeakable mercy and love? Nothing but what every fond parent would exact from a favorite child. Nothing but his grateful affection; nothing, in a word, but love for love. What moving complaints does he not make at times against this unaccountable ingratitude of man, in not returning him love for love! Hear, O ye Heavens, says he, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken. I have brought u, children, and have exalted them, but they have despised me. The ox knows its owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel knew me not, and my people have not understood. Isa. i. 4. Are not these the moving complaints of the most tender and affectionate of parents, of the most generous and disinterested of lovers? And so much has he done to win our love, that he, who is omnipotent, asks himself what more he could have done. What could I have done, says he, for my vineyard, that I have not done? Have I not expected grapes, and it hath yielded me sour ones. Isa. v. 4. Yet still does he complain that man is less grateful to him, than the most stupid of the brute creation are to those who give them food. The ox knows its owner, and the ass his master's

crib; but Israel knew me not, and my people have not understood.

Sometimes he endeavours, as it were, to bribe our love by the promises he makes us. At other times, he would seem to extort it from us, by the dreadful threats he denounces against those who refuse him their love. Great God, how canst thou stoop so very low, as thus to court and solicit, or even to acknowledge, when freely offered to thee the love of so mean and abject a creature as man! But how can this creature be so insensible to the honour thou dost him, by requiring his love, as not most readily to yield it? Or is it possible that thine own creature, who owes thee all that he has and is, who is stamped with thy own image, and so much preferred to all thy other creatures; to whom thou hast given thy angels, the glorious princes of thy heavenly household, as guardians and tutors to a favourite son; and hast given them in charge to bear him up in their hands lest at any time he dash his foot against a stone. (Ps. xc.) a creature whom thou hast made but to love; and who therefore must necessarily love something else, if he loves not thee; is it possible that such a creature can refuse thee his love, when he reflects but for a moment on all the wonderful effects of thy love to him?

But raise your eyes, Christians! and contemplate a scene still more amazing that breaks in upon us. The Messiah: The Second Person of the adorable Trinity, the injured Deity himself descends upon our earth, takes upon himself our nature, and becomes man for the love of us. What an excess of love could have made the Deity consent to stoop so very low! Thus man, who before was by his nature inferior to the angels, is now by this very same nature made superior to the angels; he being of the self-same nature with the Son of God made man: and in the person of Jesus Christ he is raised infinitely above the highest arch-angels, and all creatures, by being so closely united to the Deity, as to make but one and the self-same person with him.

But to what humiliations did not this God-Man submit, in order to expiate our sins, to cure our pride, and to win our love! He became as a worm and no man, the reproach of men, and the very outcast of the people. Ps. xxi 7. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the ignominious death of the cross. Philip. ii. 8.

Draw near in imagination, O ungrateful Christian, to the cross of your Redeemer, and take a view of your God there bleeding a victim for your sins. Consider who he is who suffers, and for whom he suffers. The Creator for the creature: the innocent for the guilty: the offended for the offender. His justice demanded a full and complete atonement and satisfaction for thy sins. His unspeakable mercy, makes himself pay to his justice this debt of satisfaction for which all the creatures, though offered up together in one great holocaust, could never have atoned. Thus, as the Psalmist testifies, Mercy and Truth have met each other;—Justice and Peace have kissed, lxxxiv. 11.

Contemplate thy loving Lord on the cross, his throne of mercy. See his arms stretched out in agonizing supplication for thee. Hear the rabble insulting him and scoffing at the wisdom of the Most High, hid under the mean appearance of a suffering criminal. Behold the torments he endures, and even the anguish of mind he suffers;—and see him, in fine, give up the ghost. Shall the rocks themselves be rent asunder? Shall the dead start from their silent tombs? Shall the sun hide his face for grief and amazement at the death of his Lord? Shall all nature shudder throughout at this dreadful catastrophe? And thou alone, O ungrateful man, thou alone for whom the God of nature suffers and dies, remain unmoved and insensible!

Nor did our loving Lord, upon his departure out of this world, leave us orphans, as he himself so tenderly expresses. He sends us the Paraclete, or

Comforter, who is also the spirit of love, to comfort us in his absence, and to stir up in our heart the fire of charity or divine love, which he had come down from heaven, as he said, to cast upon the earth. (Luke xii. 49.) and which he desired so much to be enkindled in the heart of man. Nay, rather than remain himself separately from man in his humanity, which he had assumed for the sake of man, he has been pleased to institute the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist; and has given his apostles, and their successors, the Bishops and Priests of his Church the power of bringing him down in person upon our altars, and of there rendering present, under the form of bread and wine, his body and his blood, his soul and his divinity; and of distributing this heavenly manna, and presenting this true paschal lamb to the faithful, as the spiritual food and nourishment of their souls. For my flesh is meat indeed, says he, and my blood is drink indeed. And he that eateth me, the same also shall live by me. John vi. 10 55, 59.— Thus has he literally fulfilled his promise made to his disciples, that where two or three are gathered together in his name there is he in the midst of them. Matt. xviii. 20. I will not leave you orphans says he: I will come again to you. As yet a little while and the world sees me not; but you see me because I live, and you shall live. In that day you shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you. John xiv. 18, 19. Yes, Christians, we still see him in the sacrament of the altar, where the unbelieving world sees him not. There he still lives in us, and we in him. There, in a borrowed shape, to try our faith, he still comes to unite himself to us so closely, that it can be said with truth, that as he is in the Father, so are we in him and he in us. Nor does he even hesitate to expose thus his sacred and glorified body to numberless insults, indignities and profanations, as he had done in his mortal state, rather than deprive our souls of their heavenly food, or himself of the pleasure he takes in dwelling with us; for my delight, says he, is to be with the children of men. Prov. viii. 31.

The Angels stand astonished to see such rare predilection manifested by the Deity towards so abject a creature as this poor child of the earth. They adore in silence the free and independent counsel of him who says, he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. Exod. xxxix. 19. Rom. ix. 18. And they look down with amazement on the unaccountable ingratitude of man to God; and on his astonishing insensibility to the expression of such a unbounded love and partial favour.

Our Lord besides, in the superabundance of his mercy to us, has instituted other sacraments, through which, like so many channels, the merits of his sufferings and death might be conveyed to our souls by the worthy frequentation of which, we are duly purified from all the defilements of sin, adorned with innocence and sanctity, and rendered more and more pleasing in his sight, objects of his complacency, and living temples of the Holy Ghost.—Nor has he left any thing undone, that might any ways tend, directly, or indirectly, towards our spiritual advantage. Not to mention the numberless, and too often neglected particular graces, which he imparts to us; his inward calls, and secret inspirations to turn from this deceitful world to him, who is our only true and perfect good: the favourable opportunities he puts in our way to practice good works; and the means he gives us of breaking loose from the ties of sin, and of subduing our evil habits; which means, if once neglected, may never more be offered again. O what mysteries shall be revealed on the great accounting day, when the ways of God to man shall be made manifest;—the secrets of Divine Providence disclosed, and the black ingratitude of the sinner in all its deformity, held forth to the public view of men and angels! What wonder then, if the patience of God so long abused, if his love so often slighted and disregarded, should turn at last into the most detested hatred! The more we love, the more we resent our love's being scorned or neglected: and God, who loves above all, and without all bounds,