

him who was lately so disobedient all that can gratify the desires of his parental heart. The affection in both cases is called love: but it was that which is styled the love of benevolence—a love which finds its gratification in doing good to its object, however unworthy that object may be—that urged the parent on in the diligent use of means for reclaiming and reforming his son; and it was when these efforts were crowned with success that the love of complacency could be exercised, and satisfaction could be found not only in the efforts made to promote the welfare of him who was regarded with so deep an interest, but in him in whose behalf the efforts had been made.

With respect to those whom he saves, God's love of benevolence was set upon when he viewed them as lying in their blood. They were offensive—loathsome in his sight; but he nevertheless set his love upon them *to do them good*. It is with respect to this that the apostle John says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"—it is with respect to this, the originating principle of all the good that God's saints can ever enjoy, that the same apostle says, "We love him, because he first loved us." It is, however, with respect to the delight which God takes in those who respond to his love, who walk before him as dear children, that our Saviour says "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." He beheld with a love of benevolence those who like lost sheep had gone astray, and he sent his Son to seek and to save that which was lost. It is when they at length return to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls—when, having recognised the voice of the Good Shepherd, they hear and keep his words—it is then that he *delights in them*, and the light of his reconciled countenance is made to shine upon them. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed, and therefore when Ephraim gives himself up to idolatry, God says, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" But when Ephraim says, "What have I to do any more with idols?" "Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy; then does God

say, "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." In such a case the Church experiences the faithfulness and lovingkindness of him who hath said, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." God rests here with complacency or delight. From those whose hearts thus respond to his love, causing them to exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee," God does not withdraw. On the contrary, they are an habitation of God through the Spirit.—In the case of every such individual Christ says, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it."

How close the union and how strong the affection betwixt the Father and the Son, when the love which the saints bear to the Son is to be met with such a requital in the Father's love! If any man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him. Yet would not the Father spare even this Son, but delivered him up, that we through him might live for ever. How high too the privilege, how unspeakable the blessedness of those whose fellowship is thus established with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ! Well may they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. How holy ought they to be who are brought into this near fellowship with God! He loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, and therefore if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth.—Let believers then give themselves more and more to the contemplation of Christ's glorious excellencies. Let them seek to drink more deeply into his Spirit. Let them never forget that it is in him only that they can confidently and joyfully meet with that God who is a consuming fire. Let those who as yet may be strangers to this blessedness seek it in Christ. He is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person. No man can come to the Father but by him. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and it is the will of God that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.