

GEMS OF THEOLOGY.

NO. I.

ON THE MIND THAT WAS IN CHRIST,—AND THE NECESSITY OF ITS ATTAINMENT.

THE Christian Religion is nobly distinguished from all others,—by the importance and truth of its revelations, the purity and excellence of its precepts, and the extent of its rewards. Whilst it is calculated to benefit the most intellectual and cultivated minds, it is adapted to the capacity of the weak and the unlettered. And while it reveals to unregenerate, and impatient men, the blindness, misery, vileness, and danger, of their condition as sinners: it points out to such, if they will repent and believe the Gospel,—a position to which they may attain, where the noblest titles, the highest honours, the most enduring riches, and exquisite pleasures, shall be enjoyed for ever. This religion finds man a sinner, and makes him a saint. It exalts him in the scale of being from a sensualist, to an angel; from the verge of destruction, to the bliss of paradise.

A religion which accomplishes such things for man, we may justly suppose, will present for our guidance through this life, the purest and most perfect standard of moral excellence. It does this: and directs us to all that is noble, just, generous, virtuous, and of good report, in the lives of scripture characters, that we may be taught and trained for heaven, not merely by the force of repeated precept, but also, by the influence of pleasing, and powerful, example. The holy religion we are enjoined to pursue and attain, requires us to imitate the pure example of Him, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens: but who, by the possession of our human nature, became our brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; our great exemplar, our strong Redeemer, and our guide to glory. In reference to Him, does the Apostle, Paul, say to the Philippian Christians,—“Let the mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus.”

1. The mind of Jesus was one ardently devout towards God. Christ, in his original and all perfect nature, as the Eternal Son of God, possessed of all the attributes of Deity, had received the ardent devotion, the unreserved and sincere homage and worship of all the hosts of heaven; “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is above all things, and by him all things consist.” Coloss. i. 16, 17. To be worshipped and served by the creatures he had made, was his due prerogative, and freely acknowledged by all those pure and excellent beings, who are described as excelling in wisdom and strength. But, when he became the Saviour of men, and assumed our nature to accomplish the Divine scheme of our redemption, he was required, as perfect man, to render that devotion to God his Father, which he himself, in his Divine nature, had repeatedly received from his creatures. As his manhood was perfectly pure, without any wrong bias, any corrupt propensity, any weakness to prevent the employment of its powers from being engaged in the service of God, it

was peculiarly fitted for the purest and most ardent devotion. And never, we have reason to believe, was devotion to heaven so fully possessed, as by our Lord Jesus Christ. It must have existed in him, in a flame more bright, more pure, more extensive, more productive of joy to himself and glory to God, than it can exist in any creature. For, though the nature of Angels, and their nearness to the throne of God, makes their devotion more fervent than that of mankind; and, though even Christ was made a little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of death, yet his humanity was so perfectly innocent and holy, and so intimately united with his perfections as God, that his service rendered to Deity must have been complete, and performed with the most perfect, the most intense devotion,—surpassing that of the purest creatures.

The devotion of Angels consists chiefly of praise. But that of Jesus was connected with the most important petitions,—that he, himself, might perform his work, as the sinner's substitute, faithfully; and that his creatures, and his fellow men, might be the partakers of salvation. Placed, by his assumption of human nature, in the condition of a creature, he made use of his humble position in our world, to exercise and manifest the most ardent devotion to heaven. Empowered not only to intercede with God the Father, in his Divine nature, as his eternal Son, and equal with him; but also put into a condition, in which he could present petitions to the Most High, in the very nature of man, in whose favour he was to plead, he made the best use of his mediatorial powers, in praying constantly on our behalf. He spent whole nights in prayer to God; and was, no doubt, incessantly breathing his wishes to the throne of heaven, in ejaculatory addresses, whilst he was actively engaged in doing good to mankind. And, though we cannot reach the exalted devotion of the blessed Jesus, yet it is our duty, and our privilege, to imitate his ardent piety towards God, and to seek the attainment of so much of a devotional spirit, as the example of Jesus prompts, and the Holy Spirit produces, in the truly faithful and obedient soul.

2. Jesus possessed a mind, full of zeal for the Divine glory. Throughout the public and narrated life of our adorable Redeemer, we see in him zeal, the most ardent and intense, for the glory of God. All his words, actions, and miracles, were influenced by this hallowed principle. If he was incessantly employed in doing good to the bodies and souls of men, it was because his labours had for their object, the Divine glory, as well as the benefit of mankind. If he resolutely opposed the maxims and conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees, and influential men of his own nation, and thus placed himself in the position of a despised, suffering, persecuted, Teacher: it was because the Divine glory was to be maintained in opposition to those, who had made the word of God of none effect, through their traditions. The regard he had to the will of heaven, and the sacred love of truth he possessed, would not allow him to connive at the false opinions, and wicked conduct, of the teachers and rulers of his nation. By his declared opposition to these, he saw that his path must be rough and difficult; and that a nation's rage would aim ruin and

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