



THE  
MISCELLANEOUS WORKS  
OF  
ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.A.S.

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VOL. V.

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SERMONS.  
VOL. I.

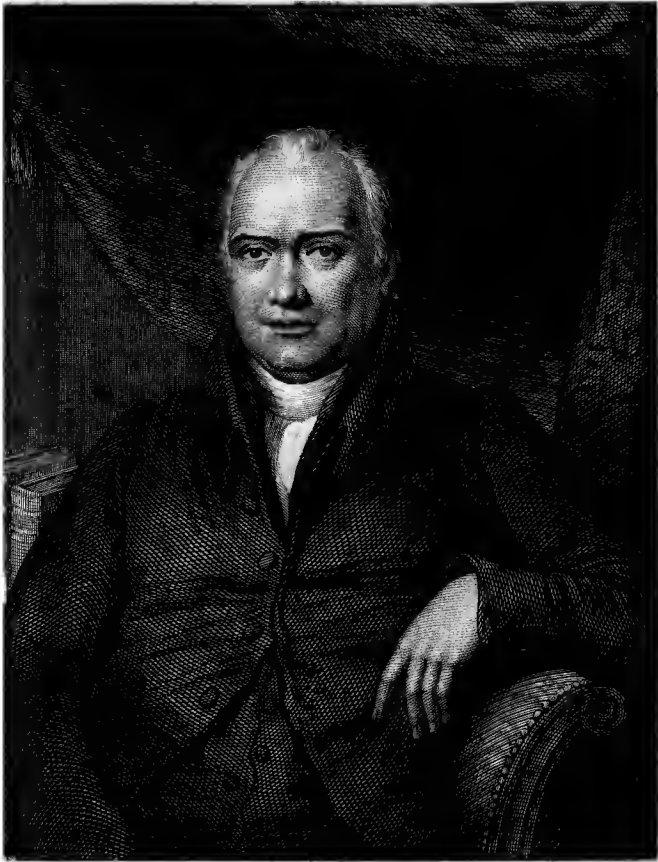
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# DISCOURSES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

RELATIVE TO THE

BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ;

AND HIS WORKS,

IN CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND GRACE.

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.A.S., &c.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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# A D V E R T I S E M E N T

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

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DURING my long ministerial life I have written but very few Sermons, most of which have been already published ; and, for want of time and health, they have been permitted to get out of print. I wished to have re-published those, and to have added a few more which I had prepared for the press ; but the editors having got most of my MSS., without properly consulting me, announced a volume of *original* Sermons, for which I was not prepared. Many were brought to me which were said to have been “taken down by short-hand writers;” but when I came to peruse them, I found I could make no kind of use of them. They were neither in *language* nor in *matter* anything to which I could creditably, or with a good conscience, set my hand. I afterwards understood that my enunciation, though distinct, was too *rapid* to be caught by those artists, in consequence of which many *half-sentences* appeared, and the *reasoning* was marred, unconnected, unfinished, and indeed sometimes contradictory to itself. This was the

case, particularly with several which had been taken down some years ago at the instance of *some gentlemen*, who, believing that I was near death, for I was then in a bad state of health, thought they could oblige the public, and *themselves*, by having my last discourses ready by the time I might be interred! Their good intentions have been hitherto frustrated—and I think it was well for all concerned, and who might have been concerned, that such *odds and ends* never appeared; and this imperfect taking down was nearly the same in all; for, let the artists be whom they might, I found, on examining the fruits of their labours, that they had to a man given me a *strange language*, worse by many degrees than my own; that they had often perverted my sense, misrepresented my criticisms, and confounded my reasoning.

Should any Discourses be offered to the Public, said to have been preached by me, that have not been rewritten by myself, and published or left with my signature to be published, should my executors think proper, I here certify that they are none of mine.

Several of the Discourses in the present Volume are little else than *sketches*—some others are not sufficiently expanded; but of the whole, I hope, the least that can be said is, that they contain *nothing* but the *truth*, though they may not have embraced the *whole* truth.

Those who know me, and it is not likely that many others will read this volume, will not be surprised to find that I show no indifference to that religious Creed which I have long professed, and which I have, with much pains and conscientious assiduity, collected from the oracles of God. The doctrines it contains have been

my support and comfort for half a century ; and I believe they will continue to be so till mortality is swallowed up of life.

As I believe that *just notions* of GOD are the foundation of true religion and of all rational worship, I have endeavoured to introduce such in the discourses on the "Being and Attributes of God." Some think it is always best to leave such difficult and sublime subjects untouched. I am not of this mind, and I am sorry that this notion has prevailed so much ; through it many are weak, and all easily stumbled, that have got under its influence. What can we rationally believe, and how can we worship, if we have not tolerably correct notions of Him in whom we live and move, and from whom we have our being? If spared, I may resume even this subject, and endeavour to calculate with greater accuracy several matters that might be considered in exacter detail.

Some of the discourses on this subject may be thought to be too *scientific*, or that they *affect* to be such. I can say, I *affect* nothing, and I have inserted nothing, even in the sermon on Jer. x. 11, where so much is said on the celestial bodies, which I do not think fairly deducible from the text, and which I believe to be well calculated to prove and illustrate the truth of the prophet's assertion. I wish I had a little more time and health to have re-written them all, and to have filled up those which exist merely in outline.

As far as I have proceeded, I have aimed in all to exhibit the most momentous truths of divine revelation ; and as far as I could, the deepest working of the Divine Spirit on the soul of man.

After all, it is with great diffidence that I permit this

volume to appear in public. I know it is easy to find faults, and it may be peculiarly so to find them here ; yet I hope that these well-meant discourses will be well received by all the people of God ; and I trust the God of that people will grant them his blessing.

A. C.

*Heydon Hall, Middlesex, May, 12, 1828.*

## GENERAL PREFACE,

EMBODYING REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER, WRITINGS, &c.,  
OF DR. ADAM CLARKE.

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EXCLUSIVE of mere outlines, there will be found nearly thirty sermons more in this department of the series of Dr. Clarke's Miscellaneous Works, than in any previous edition; and most of them, though bearing the superscription and strongly impressed intellectual image of their author, sustaining a peculiar and distinctive character of their own. The truth is, in one class of sermons the excellent author is seated in his *study*; in another, he is found occupying the *pulpit*; and it is only in the latter that a person, who never had the privilege of hearing him, can come at his real character as an apostle of God, or satisfactorily discriminate between the student and the preacher. This was a point which, during life, his stated hearers could easily decide, by comparing his printed with his oral discourses; and this will account sufficiently for any either real or apparent inequality between some of the earlier and some of the later discourses in these volumes; the former having been expressly prepared for the press, and the latter being intended simply for present use and a limited circle, as food for the affections and intelligences of his auditory. When he wrote, he wrote not only for the generation moving around him, but for posterity. When he preached, he assumed more of the character of a person standing by the highway, who, on seeing the multitudes pass along, many of whom he might never see again, was anxious to give them a word of wholesome advice, to aid them during the

remainder of their journey. Hence, in the one case, fewer appeals to classical authority, less pains-taking, less formality, and more frequent addresses to the *hearer*; in the other, direct addresses to the *reader*, accompanied frequently with those quotations, with those references, and with that kind of matter, which is more adapted to the retirement of the closet, and for research, than for the momentary pause of a hearer from the bustle of life,—never forgetting, in either instance, the holy and the useful. He was so completely transformed from the student into the preacher, that he seemed to combine two persons in one, leaving the one in the study, and bringing the other into the house of God, full of holy fervour, simplicity, and heavenly wisdom. In this consisted the charm of his ministry as a learned man, and in this was to be found the advantage of his hearers.

From the forty-sixth sermon and onward, Dr. Clarke may be generally calculated upon as in the PULPIT, among his people; and though each sermon is not to be considered as comprising the whole of what was delivered on the occasion, yet the substance is there, in the particular train of thought pursued, and language employed.

Though he had a *plan* in the pulpit, and that plan was perceptible, in most instances, to the more intelligent part of his hearers, it was rarely ever announced with the formality of a division and sub-division; and never with the jingle and parade which distinguish many modern pulpit discourses. The plan was unfolded by degrees, in the execution of the several parts. The whole was loose, free, easy, and yet not careless; all being poured forth like one unbroken stream, with here and there a powerful rush, setting all around on the move; deep, yet simple as the element itself, clear and refreshing, and without any apparent effort. In cases where order was the least perceptible, the fine flow of thought and of feeling in which he indulged, was invariably taking within its vast and sweeping motion, whatever of the useful came in its way on its route to the ocean of eternity, whither he was always, after due preparation here, conducting his hearers. Numerous as

might be the windings of an argument through which he conducted his auditors, it was still, like the same stream, working out its own natural bed amidst the mountains and over the plains, coming, as it were, from the heights of the understanding, and finally settling down into the heart, in fixed and steady purpose. To one plan he never could be confined, and was disposed to ridicule the system of "button making," as the great Robert Hall denominated the modern manufacture of a sermon; and which the doctor himself, in his "Letter to a Preacher," notices in the expressive but sarcastic language of "three heads and a conclusion." He generally pursued the track which the subject seemed to suggest, or to require; and, loose as it occasionally might appear, it was the looseness of exuberance,—a rich tree, untrained to the wall, with its branches gracefully bending with fruit, instead of running along, at the bidding of the gardener, in straight horizontal lines; the negligence, in short, of ease and of wealth. There was nothing to remind the hearer of a person deformed in his shape, or stunted in his growth, being indebted to mere show or appearance, to exhibit himself to the best advantage; nothing like a neat outline without filling,—a mere skeleton in the case of a surgeon, to look at, without either substance to make it comely, or life to give it feeling and motion; the MAN, the *entire* man was there, both in feeling and in intellect.

With his plan, he was still the pure child of nature, ranging at liberty; hence, he was not only discursive, but occasionally *excursive*: but then his excursions as a preacher of the gospel were, in theology, what those of Wordsworth's are in poetry, in his poem under that title; they were always in place, always in keeping with the subject, and left a charm which would have led to a regret of their omission, in a rehearsal of their companion thoughts. He had too much good sense, and too little self-denial, not to give utterance to a useful thought that might cross his way, and which was calculated to tell at the *time*, because of its adaptation to another place, another page, or another occasion. And although this might be sometimes found in alliance with



the momentary indulgence of imagination, it was still found associated with truth and with fact, and sustained the character of a delightful ramble from the beaten track. Not a little of this is to be perceived in the sermon entitled, "The High Commission." The fact is, he never fixed his mind exclusively upon his *text*; and so, like the fly, confined to the spot on which it alights, and with limited vision, seemed capable only of taking in one object at a time, and that object immediately before him; nor did he, though neither text nor context were disregarded, confine himself to the connecting passages; sufficient attention was paid, if not ample justice done, to both; the *whole* BIBLE was his book, and the *mind* of God in that *book*, from beginning to end, in reference to *man*, was *one*, as to the restoration of man to the divine image. He often took up some broad, general truths, and showed the bearing of one part of God's word and God's economy of grace upon another, and the relation of each part to the whole; the one answering the other like an echo, only less powerful, because more distant; and then, after having ranged, like the bird of the sun, along the broad expanse of heaven, he would have dropped down upon the text, like the same bird upon its food,—would have dissected it with the finest discrimination, and have handed round suitable portions to the varied characters and conditions of his hearers; and all, with a freedom and grace not to be found in any of his writings, except in some letters on religious subjects written in early life to his Mary.

His plan was mostly *expository*; and this, of all others, without great care and great labour, will lead to a certain stiffness and abruptness in manner. But though Dr. Clarke was in an eminent degree an expounder of God's word, he was, as just stated, at the most remote distance from anything like inflexibility in the pulpit. With great compass and reach of mind, enlarging and bringing remote objects near, like the instruments adapted to the solar system, there was nevertheless very often a great deal of closely-webbed and microscopic thought,—a great deal of minute criticism, one thought very often thrown back upon another, each depen-

dant upon the other, and the whole brought up again with the combined effect of a piece of beautiful mechanism to the eye,—though still the mechanism of nature rather than of art, after the audience had been let into the secret of its several parts. Not a word of importance escaped notice, or was permitted to pass without explanation ; instances of which may be seen in the sermon on “ Life, the Gift of the Gospel ; the Law, the Ministration of Death,” &c. ; and yet, as will be perceived there, without the hesitancy, dryness, and balancing mood of a lexicographer, preparing a work for the press. He spoke from his general knowledge, as well as from a knowledge of the original of the particular text under discussion ; and while the one aided him in the different shades of meaning attached to the same word in different connexions, the other, like a fountain, was constantly welling forth of its abundance, refreshing and enriching the vineyard of the Lord. His biblical knowledge, his oriental researches, and his skill in criticism, were always apparent, but so sanctified by piety, and so unostentatiously employed in the house of God, that his more acquired accomplishments appeared natural,—so natural indeed, as to resemble shoots from a parent stock, rich in native fruit.

In his regular preaching, as in the sermons presented to the public, several of the *same truths* would occasionally turn up in his remarks on different texts. But as he was not in the habit of hackneying the same text from place to place, and had no fixed spot on paper for certain views, by writing upon every passage on which he preached, it was impossible, in every instance, to recollect what had been advanced ; and hence, truths which had taken up their abode in the *mind*, rather than their residence upon *paper*, would have issued forth, not at stated seasons, but casually ; or like a person from his dwelling, as occasion required. There were great leading truths which occupied his mind, and which run through the Bible, linking themselves to the present and eternal destinies of man ; and some of these were employed as servants of all-work, because of their adaptation to sacred purposes. But even these were varied in

expression ; and not only so, but, like so many orbs revolving on their axes, were presenting the auditory with *new views*,—new, as occasioned by the unusual shinings forth of his own mind, and the more than ordinary influence of the Spirit of God at the time ; as well as new in their *use* to the hearers, and in their *application* to other subjects ; and perfectly aware of repetition, a reference in some instances is made to preceding observations, and reasons assigned for still further discussion and investigation. This, however, instead of palling, is a refreshment to the memory ; and an old thought, brought to a new text, brings with it so many new companions, that, like an old friend, it is welcomed the more on account of its associates,—never failing to yield variety and life to the whole. Even in cases where a quotation is repeated, on the same subject from the same author, as the one from Shakspeare, in the sermon on “The Decalogue,” and in that on the “Two Important Questions,” the accompanying remarks, though referring to the same topic, differ in their general complexion.

When Dr. Clarke *did* preach more than *once* on the same text, as John iii. 16, and Matt. vi. 33, 34, instances of which will be found in the sermons on “The Love of God to a Lost World,” and on “The Doctrine of Providence,” he never pursued the same path ; but, though going to the same place, took his hearers to it by a different line of road. Part of the secret of this has been explained, in what has been stated on his rarely *writing* in the way of *preparation* for the pulpit ; and a further explanation will be found in the length of time which must necessarily have elapsed before he came round to the same text, in the regular course of his reading, to which reading there is a reference in the sermon on “The Christian Race.” He had a large oblong volume, called his text book, in which there were divisions for dates, the lessons for the day, together with book, chapter, and verse. Each chapter, having been previously examined, had the verse or verses distinctly marked, which offered themselves as candidates to his notice as texts. This plan cost him a great deal of labour and close attention ;

but when completed, as he informed the writer, it amply rewarded him ; for by adopting it, he was never without a text on any day during the year ; while his general knowledge of the sacred writings, and an application of the mind to the selected passage, soon furnished him with a sermon, or such a portion of instruction or spiritual food, as was calculated to feed the flock of God. Such a plan secures something in the shape of *certainty* to the preacher. A minister may be placed in circumstances in which he may find himself at a loss for a text ; and when the mind is left at large, with the fingers turning over the sacred pages, it is like a vessel at sea, with the pilot undetermined, nor even knowing by what point of the compass to steer. But on adverting—say to the three chapters for the day, which, by doubling a few of the shorter, will take a person through the Bible in the course of a year ; and whence from one to sometimes eight or ten texts have been already selected, all of which have previously impressed the mind as capable, through reflections arising out of them, together with their connexions, of furnishing a sufficient quantum of suitable instruction for a service, it will rarely be the case, that one or other of such chosen portions of truth will not fasten upon the mind, and the mind upon them, resting like a bark, easy and at anchor. Something in the shape of *variety*, too, is secured to the people. As there will generally be found a greater number of texts than can be preached on in the course of the same day, as there is not divine service every day, and as the calendar of the year is shifting from the same day of the week, there will be an almost constant change : years will roll on before the whole of the texts can be discussed ; passages omitted on the non-preaching days at one period, will (and especially in the constant whirl of an itinerant ministry) occupy a place in another. Hence, another advantage : it conducts a preacher of the gospel, like a commentator, through the whole Bible, and thus familiarizes the mind, not only with the sacred text, but with the labours of the best biblical scholars. There is one objection to the plan ; it may give rise to a desultory mode of preaching, and the people will,

in consequence, be in danger of being presented with undigested matter. This will depend a good deal on the mind that is brought to work it, and the matter with which that mind is furnished. A novice could not be expected to be fully prepared for it, though he might in the course of time grow into it; and the mere memoriter preacher would be as deficient in daring as the other would be defective in materials. Still, the plan has numerous and important advantages, and was peculiarly adapted to the genius that struck it out. Dr. Clarke, favoured with ready utterance and an extensive vocabulary, both in his own tongue and that of others, and a mind stored with biblical and general knowledge, could have strewed—if not flowers, a goodly portion of *fruit*, along any path in which he was disposed to walk. His internal resources are especially visible in the thirty-second sermon of this collection, on “Divine Revelation,” in a “Postscript” to which, he states to his readers, that he had “no authorities at hand” on its delivery, and had “consulted none” on committing it to paper and to the press; and yet there—in the Zetland Isles, remote from his literary work-shop, his study and his library—there he is seen moving, and is read by the islanders, like a portable Cyclopædia.

As he never wrote an entire sermon with a view to deliver it, so, when he did *write*, which was extremely rare, it was little more than a mere *outline*. When he had preached on a text, and found unusual enlargement in the delivery, he was *then* induced sometimes to commit it to paper. And such was the case with some of the more elaborate discourses now presented to the public. He did not carry his sermon as a whole from the study to the pulpit, but often, in the reverse way, brought his sermon out of the pulpit into the study. This is by no means to be understood as insinuating a want of *preparation*; but only so far as previous preparation proceeded, the mind was much more concerned than the pen—more attention was paid to thoughts than to words. He helped himself in his study, but still left a vacancy for God to work in, while in the pulpit; and when assisted in an extraordinary manner

there, he returned with the holy suggestions as so many valuable appendages, or more properly treasures, and added to his own what God had thus given him in the exercise of his sacred office.

It was subsequent to the labour of the pulpit, too, when induced to write at length, that he strengthened his various positions, occasionally entered upon a new plot of ground, on which time, place, occasion, or people, would not allow him to point a foot, and appealed to the chapter and verse of his authorities. Had his regular pulpit addresses possessed the same literary character, and been adorned with the philosophy of some of his written discourses, he would not only have manifested a want of judgment, but in that want would have deviated from the path of usefulness, as the minister of a plain and unlettered people. But he stooped from his heights, in his ordinary sermons some of which, as has been already intimated, are to be found towards the close of the collection, in order to accommodate himself to his hearers. The sermon "On the Being and Attributes of God," which commences the collection, and the same "Being and Attributes" as exhibited in other sermons, rarely ever embraced a discourse in the pulpit, except once, before a Sheffield conference, at the request of the president; and even then, or on other occasions, the planetary system, as sometimes exhibited, never entered the chapel. The sermon on "The Plan of Human Redemption" had been taken to the pulpit, and back from the pulpit to the study, as already described, and finally sent to the press. The text, however, turned up again in the course of Scripture reading, and the venerable preacher was induced to take it at Whitby, when there, in connexion with his second voyage to the Zetland Isles, in which the writer accompanied him; but though only a few months after the original had been put into the hands of the printer, it was, though in the leading points the same, perfectly dissimilar from the one in print, and more generally adapted to the capacities and state of Christians in humble life, who have little time for reading, and are anxious chiefly for the every-day bread which cometh down from

heaven ; the preacher, apparently, withholding more erudite matter, and filling up, though in perfect harmony with his subject, with such remarks as were on a level with the thinkings of the lowest of his congregation.

The practice of enlarging in the laboratory, on his retirement from the pulpit, will also account for the unusual *length* of some of the sermons, as those "On the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments," "The Lord's Prayer," "The Nature and Design of the Holy Eucharist," &c., &c. He was rarely *long*, and never *tedious*. This *after-work* is referred to by himself in the Advertisement to his sermon on "Christ crucified:" "The substance of the following discourse," he remarks, "was preached at the opening of a chapel in the country, in the year 1825. Not only the substance but the plan is the same ; but several of the points are considerably expanded, as I wished to speak more in detail on subjects of a nature entirely analogous to those in the text, and which I could not well introduce in an *occasional* sermon."

Two or three things may appear in the course of perusal, to the reader of taste and judgment, as defects ; and did they apply generally, they might be estimated as such. Hence, in the second sermon on "The Love of God to a Lost World," and in that on "The Gift of a Saviour," the expressions, "wire-drawing," "cart-rope drawing," and "the world together by the ears," may be interpreted into a want of taste in the preacher ; but those sermons were written simply as delivered, without any view to publication, and are given by a friend merely as *specimens* of *ordinary addresses*, when pastor and people were at home with each other, and on more than usual terms of familiar endearment ; nor does the speaker forget, in the latter instance, what he owes to his hearers, in the apology he makes. His good taste is discernible in the sermon on "The Disease and Cure of Naaman," where it prevents him from entering into the forbidding details of the leprosy so fully as he otherwise might have done. In the same sermon, it might be inferred, that he was in the occasional habit of indulging in

the playful. But the repetition of the "Abana and Pharpar men," which actually palls through indulgence, and the wish to fix a blur, by the apparent desire of giving currency to a new coinage, enters into no part of the general standard of apostolic dignity, which Dr. Clarke fixed for himself in public, and which he almost as uniformly observed. The same may be said with regard to the pleasant manner in which he treats the alchymists, in the discourse on "Death Unavoidable," and the seeming desire to give rise to another title, the "Sign-seekers," to designate another class of people, in the sermon on "Christ Crucified, a Stumbling-block to the Jews, and Foolishness to the Greeks." Nor is it to be supposed, though well able to deal in it, that he indulged in the sarcastic, which is apparent in the discourse on "Peter's Character of the Dispersed among the Gentiles," where he speaks of persecution being condemned by all, except the *Holy* Roman Catholic Church, and where he alludes to the *titles* and *humility* of the pope, so directly at variance with each other; or that, as in the same sermon, in the use he makes of the arithmetical mode of multiplying blessings, in the way in which a schoolboy attends to numbers, he ever indulged, in what may be denominated ingenious trifling. It was one of his fixed principles, that every particle of useful knowledge should, by a Christian minister, when at all within the rules of propriety, be brought to bear upon his pulpit labours, for the benefit of his hearers, in the elucidation and enforcement of scriptural truth. And even in the latter instance, he was teaching his auditors, like pupils, to *learn* from everything. For this, he has an example in one of the creations of one of the noblest poets, whose character is said to have

" Found tongues in trees, books in running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything." ..

To persons familiar with Dr. Clarke's Commentary on the Scriptures, it will be perceived that he never hesitates to quote from himself. But as there is often the honesty of acknowledgment, as every man has a right to eat the fruit of



his own labours, and as it is not to be supposed that a man who had carefully examined the meaning of every passage, was likely to have conflicting views on the same subject, it is only what may be expected, that the same definitions will often occur, while the reader is amply remunerated in these, by the preacher expatiating at large on each separate topic.

As to the arrangement of the sermons in this collection, there has been no attention paid to chronological order; and as little, with the exception of a few of the earlier, to subject. Variety, rather than order, has been consulted; and hence, in the case of dates, the reader is taken back occasionally, instead of forward, to particular periods.

Not, however, to dwell longer on the sermons thus presented to the public, their distinctive character and peculiarities, together with the piety and mind observable in them, it may not be altogether out of place to turn more fully from them to the MAN. He has already been seen in his intellectual character, in connexion with these compositions; but he does not yet stand out sufficiently in bold relief to the eye; and though what may be further advanced may bear upon what has been stated, it will still only be in the way of additional evidence to support the same facts and positions. And here the writer may be permitted to draw upon himself, in mingling with the present, some remarks which he offered in a funeral sermon which he preached on the death of Dr. Clarke.

On any one throwing the mind back on the first sixteen years of the life of "little Adam Clarke," as he was then designated, who is at all acquainted with it, he will soon find, by selecting a few incidents, that, when concentrated in him, they form so many scattered rays of light brought into a focus, all contributing either less or more to point him out as a luminary emerging from obscurity, and destined for something beyond a dimly-discerned satellite—destined, to shine beautifully bright with other stars, either singly or amid that galaxy, streaming with light along the sky, and which contributes to the splendour of the midnight heavens.

There was scarcely anything ordinary in his movements, in ordinary cases and circumstances. His parents, though dignified in ancestry, and respectably connected with the living, were in a comparatively humble situation in life, in consequence of which he laboured under many disadvantages. They, nevertheless, directed their attention to the cultivation of his mind and of his morals, the father severely intent upon the improvement of the former, and the mother sedulously engaged in grounding and perfecting the latter. But however well qualified for their separate tasks, they found, that while their tyro manifested good moral feeling, and amazing precocity for other things, he evinced, till some time after other children have made considerable progress in letters and figures, an utter inaptitude to take in the commonest elementary principles of an initiatory education. All of a sudden, a change took place, when about seven or eight years of age—a change somewhat analogous in letters to that which is styled “a new creation” in religion, after which he strided along the path of knowledge, like Asahel over the plains and mountains of Judea, who “was as light of foot as a wild roe.” When traced through the several gradations of childhood, boyhood, and youth, till entered into his teens, several unobtrusive intimations will be found of something extraordinary in character. He was inured to hardness, so as to become almost impervious to cold;—industry and early rising settled down into the fixed form of a habit;—amusement was generally indulged only so far as it connected itself with the harmless in juvenile pastimes;—he had a nature possessed of exquisite tenderness and sensibility, and though liberal in the extreme, was so much the economist as to sigh and mourn over needless indulgence in his parents;—blessed with tolerable regularity of conduct, and a regard for the ordinances of religion, he preserved a rigid attention to moral, while ignorant of evangelical truth;—favoured with a buoyancy of spirit that might have proved fatal to others, he was preserved in the midst of its indulgence from incessant intoxication at the fountain of human delight;—an insatiate thirst

after knowledge was ever perceived by those around, often seeking to satisfy himself in the profound and mysterious, being especially inquisitive respecting everything that seemed to link itself to the invisible world and the soul of man, subjecting himself to pain, and fear, and inconvenience in its acquisition ;—a taste for the Greek and Latin classics was acquired ;—judgment commenced its decisions in passing sentence upon, and in attempting to improve the literary defects of others ;—improvements were grafted on experience with the wisdom of age ;—a memory was discernible which, when he had stooped to pick up the smallest particle of an incident, a conversation, or a passing event, could bear about the whole through every changing scene of life ;—early prejudices were seen to strike their roots, which were afterwards found to be not only serviceable to himself, but to constitute some of the peculiarities and excellences of his manhood ;—a partiality for the antique was visible at a period when a love of novelty is the predominant passion ;—books were prized above rubies ;—not satisfied with philosophizing on natural objects beneath his feet, he elevated his eye to heaven and was enamoured with the pure azure and the host of stars over his head ;—and all this before he escaped from youth, and before his conversion to God ! Here were stirring some of the elements, the peculiarities, and characteristics of genius ; and there is scarcely anything allied to the useful, the excellent, and the good in the great man, in which he did not excel. As the sapling oak *virtually* possesses the trunk, the foliage, and the acorn-fruit of the old tree, towards which it is perpetually growing and putting forth its strength, and at which, if its vegetable life is spared, it will *actually* arrive ; so, Adam the younger bid fair to be all that was actually beheld and admired in Adam the elder, being the subject of a special providence, as if spared for important public purposes, in the accomplishment of which he was to flourish and tower above many of his fellows.

Passing on to his conversion to God while yet a youth, his call to the ministry, and the fruit and extent of his

labours as a public teacher, to the latter of which some slight allusion has been made, and there—what is beheld? In an agony, on account of sin, as if hell had rid itself of part of its misery, and poured like a deluge its fiery stream into his soul, he went to his Maker in prayer, fixed, in the open fields near Coleraine, in Ireland, his steadfast eye of faith upon Him who was crucified, and upon whose head it was afterwards his ambition to place the diadem, when, sudden as light from heaven, mercy, flashing from the throne of God, fell upon his spirit, with evidence clear, irresistible, and unspeakably joyous. From that moment he rose a renovated being, and others, seeing the grace of God in him, were glad. He then appeared no longer a distinct being, localized to one place, but seemed to have multiplied into so many different persons, diffusing himself in his labours over a wide tract of country, where, from the frequency of his visits, and the productiveness of his public addresses, he produced the effect of possessing all, while all in their turn seemed to be in the constant enjoyment of himself. Like Timothy, he not only knew the Scriptures, but expounded them, if not in the *letter*, at least in the *spirit*. A light like this was never intended to be placed under a bushel; a city like this never to be erected anywhere but on a hill. The venerable Wesley, like Paul the aged, heard of this youthful Timothy, laid his hand upon him, and sent him unfettered into the vineyard, where he toiled, and suffered, and attended to the culture of the branches of the True Vine. Home was too confined a sphere of labour; he visited England, and England being too circumscribed, he visited “the islands of the sea.” His missionary zeal continued to burn, and at an age when first fires are often extinguished in others, he went forth with his life in his hands, to brave the tempests that rave around Thule’s barren islands, to look, to think, to speak, to act for himself,—to satisfy himself of the genuineness of the work,—to bear up the hands of those whom he had been the instrument of sending out and supporting, among the northern breakers; and thus showing them, that he would not place them in a

situation of peril, from which he himself would for a moment even seem to shrink.

Thrice elevated to the highest official dignity Wesleyan Methodism had to confer, he stood at his death in this respect without a compeer. He was one of those instances of a person who, never seeking for honour, was closely pursued by it; and there is this peculiarity in honour, that when pursued for her own sake, she is so coy as to flee, and so swift of foot as never to be overtaken; while, on the other hand, those who endeavour to evade her, are sure to be followed by her, as she is ever to be found in the wake of unassuming merit. Envy, in his case, might have laboured in vain in the work of detraction; for whatever degree of influence she might have exercised on her own baneful few, he still remained the child of the public—a public ever zealous in promoting the honours of its children, and equally jealous lest any should pluck them out of its hand. Congregations were obtained which few other men could command, collections were secured which no other man could raise. These are facts, and eulogistic as may be the strain of them, founded on statements which have been publicly made, the statements themselves only constituting a tithe of what might be adduced in support of the respective subjects; and the unbought, unbiassed, and unsophisticated testimony of the multitude has only to be asked, in order to be granted, in attestation of their truth. Leaving, however, more general ground, and fixing attention, just like the eye on a piece of Grecian sculpture, redolent of everything but life, upon what more immediately constitutes form and character, a more correct estimate may be formed of the man, by entering a little into detail.

Dr. Clarke's figure, which was rather tall, and towards the close of life, a little inclined to corpulency; his ruddy complexion, in beautiful contrast with his silver locks, which were thrown back, and gave additional openness to his countenance; his dignified, apostolical appearance, and his firm step, are neither suitable for the present occasion, as subjects for amplification, nor yet necessary for the public

to be told, before whom he has so recently walked as a messenger of the churches.

As a preacher, his action was far from varied, and not, perhaps, in every instance, graceful to fastidious taste ; but it was rarely ever otherwise than chaste, and always appropriate. His voice, though not round and melodious, was strong and clear, and though unable at all times to manage its tones, which rendered it in the more logical parts of his discourse, a little monotonous, yet when the argument was brought to a close, and the people were wound up to conviction by it, there were outbreakings in the voice, as well as outpourings among the people, rarely heard and rarely witnessed, except from himself, and under his own ministry. It was like the wand of Moses smiting the rock ; the heart was touched, and the eyes were instantly suffused with tears ; or like the children of Israel, when, as with one voice, they exclaimed, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." One instance, among many, the writer will never forget. The doctor was preaching on the occasion of opening a new chapel. His text led him to dwell on the love of God to man—his favourite theme. After having established the doctrine of universal redemption by a process of reasoning equally original, powerful, and conclusive, and the hearers had apparently brought their hearts and their understandings to the subject—feeling and perceiving more and more the possibility, the certainty of present, personal salvation, he gave a sweep to his arm, drawing it towards himself, and grasping his hand as though he had collected in it several objects of value, and then throwing them, like alms, in the full bounty of his soul among the people—"Here," he exclaimed at the close, in a strain of impassioned feeling, and with one of those sudden and peculiar elevations of voice for which he was remarkable, frequently melting the whole congregation to tears—"Here," said he, "take the arguments among you—make the best of them for your salvation—I will vouch for their validity—I will stake my credit for intellect upon them : yes, if it were possible to collect them into one, and suspend them as you

would suspend a weight on a single hair of this grey head (elevating his hand and pointing to his locks the while); *that very hair* would be found to be so firmly fastened to the throne of the all-merciful God, that all the devils in hell and all the sophistry of the world might be defied to cut it in two." It is an expression, the force of which can only be felt by those who are in possession of the previous reasoning—reasoning like that employed in his sermon on "The Love of God to a Lost World," and to the truth of which there was a sudden burst of responsive triumph from the lips of the auditory, similar to a burst of applause in a political assembly; applause, however, which was restrained within due bounds, because of the sanctity of the place, and the hallowed influence which accompanied the words.

Persons who knew him not, might say, he never rose to eloquence; that imagination was dead within him—that his manner was dry and scholastic—and that his sermons, though argumentative, logical, and acute, and therefore chiefly addressed to the judgment, were calculated to please only the scholar and the mathematician, but not to interest the majority of mankind; persons, it is repeated, who knew him not, might talk and write thus. But he had something more than imagination—and of that he had more than he dared to indulge; he had energies allied to real genius, if genius be what a writer states it is, "strong feeling and judgment," or in two words, "impassioned wisdom." He blended, too, with the wisdom of Solomon, the simplicity of a child. Confessed as it has been, that he was always at home when combatting the subtle objections of infidelity—establishing the truth of Christianity—demonstrating the immateriality of the human soul, and expounding the Scriptures; yet it ought not to be forgotten, that he was equally happy when soaring to the heights, or diving into the profounder depths of Christian experience; accommodating himself equally—as will be perceived in his sermons—to the babe, to the young man, and to the father in Christ. Though he exercised the talents of a master in the field of legitimate

argument, and wielded with mighty energy the weapons of truth, he never failed, while taking with him the head of the scholar, to take also along with him the heart of the humble, uneducated Christian. The Bible appeared like a new book in his hands; the Divine Being seemed to give him a key, and to let him further into its meaning—to give him a clearer and fuller insight into it than most other men. Not only does his Commentary, but all his pulpit expositions bear a stamp of their own. While some ministers enter their studies, commence with a text that seems to impress them, examine it on every side, load it with a number of parallel passages, bring every other text and subject to bear upon it, till there is nothing more to be said upon it by themselves, or left to be said by others; and then, without the loss of a thought or expression previously brought together, by intense application in the closet, deliver the whole in set form to the congregation; the doctor, as will have been perceived by preceding remarks, pursued a plan perfectly dissimilar. Though never loose and declamatory, still there was thought without its apparent labour. The whole had the breath of a morning in May, rather than the staleness of materials that had lost their flavour and sweetness by long and constant use. His mind was like an immense mine, as well—as has been intimated, as an ever and an overflowing stream; he seemed to have read all, to have known all; and from the inexhaustible treasures within, was perpetually giving forth from his fulness. Still, to change the metaphor, it was not a mere forest of thought, tedious and oppressive to the hearer from the multiplicity apparent, always saying every-thing that *could* be said, instead of what *should* be said: he never appeared to exhaust a subject, but when he had preached one hour, seemed as though he could preach another, leaving his hearers always desirous of more, and wondering that he should finish so soon, as well as himself latitude to descant on the same text, with equal richness and variety, at another period.

Many men are to be found with more elegantly formed



minds than Dr. Clarke, but with that elegance, at an immeasurable distance from him in learning and critical acumen. Persons are to be found too, with finer voices, and who have cultivated the art of public speaking, with all its prettinesses, much his superior; but without a ray of his genius; without any of his depth, compass, originality, or wealth of thought. His mind—though in the strictest sense of the term, not an elegant one, was sufficiently elegant to preserve him from offending; his voice sufficiently tuned to please; his speaking sufficiently engaging to attract; and his diction, though remote from the ornate, partly through choice, has generally had the character of being remarkable for its simplicity, its purity, its strength, and its perspicuity. Except in his younger days, he never appears to have paused to turn a period. Profound and elevated as were his thoughts very often, he was never “hard to be understood.” One of the finest compliments ever paid to a great man was unintentionally paid to him by a poor woman in the Zetland Isles. The aged matron referred to, had, with others, heard of his celebrity, and went to hear him preach at Lerwick. On her return home, she remarked with great simplicity, “They say that Dr. Clarke is a learned man, and I expected to find him such; but he is only like another man, for I could understand every word he said.” This is too plain to require comment; and if *learning* and *obscurity* are synonymous with the vulgar, Dr. Clarke was a happy exception.

His memory, already alluded to, was more than ordinarily strong; and it was accurate as it was capacious. He seemed to be a complete walking library; capable on the shortest notice, figuratively speaking, of stepping up and taking down from the shelves of the library of his own mind, volume after volume, and of dealing out at length on almost any topic connected with English or foreign literature. The very first letter he ever received from the divine founder of Methodism, had this sentence in it: “Never forget anything you have learned.” The propriety of the advice can only be seen in connexion with the fact

that he had, being young, been endeavouring, as far as such a thing is possible, to forget, through *neglect*, some things which he had learned in classical knowledge, under the mistaken notion that he might become vain of his attainments. Never was man more faithful to instruction imparted: his stores continued to accumulate to the close of life. It was not barely a subject in the mass that he could grasp and retain, but in its minutest details, recollecting, in many instances, the identical words in which several sentences might be expressed, with the intonations of the voice, the point, and particular bearings of those words both in his native tongue, and in foreign languages. The subjects never assumed the appearance of objects at a distance, seen through a kind of haze, without the possibility of being able distinctly to perceive colour or form; everything seemed to be at hand, ready to take up, and suitable for the occasion. The mist of years appeared to have no influence; there was no dreamy recollection in his relations or remarks; he had a daylight of his own, in which he lived and moved—and the sun being up, he was furnished with both light and shade through its shining, though it was on the former he particularly loved to expatiate.

One thing was especially to be admired and valued in him, and that was the masculine grasp with which he laid hold of the essentials of religion; supporting the stately cedar by a strength of argument to which those were unequal who were meddling with minor twigs—the best adapted very often to their capacities and attainments, as though he had not taken equal care of these, and prevented them from yielding, in every instance, the fruit expected. All his learning was made subservient to the illustration and support of Scripture; and his notes upon the bible are at once his monument and his eulogy. His knowledge was formed in a circle around it, as well as around the cross of Christ—increasing and expanding as he moved; never for a moment losing sight of the sun of truth in the centre, to which, after all, his learning was only beheld by himself as the halo round its disk—dim in the comparison,

and yet derived from itself, and therefore glorious in its degree.

When assailed by a number of pamphleteers, and a few of the periodicals of the day, there was work in his hand, and a dignity in his port, which never allowed him to stoop from his high place, except once, in the *Classical Journal*, because a strictly classical subject, which involved literary character and credibility, to give a reply; and on that occasion, he entered the field like a giant mailed, with a shield impenetrable to the shafts of the enemy, and with weapons not to be resisted by the opposing force at that time against him; while in his bosom there was resident an unoffending spirit, which, from its calmness, its meekness, enabled him, uncomplaining, to go out and come in before the people of God like a weaned child. While such attacks were a proof, as in Dr. Johnson's case, that he was worth combatting; his silence, as in the case of Erasmus, prevented the assailants from receiving the honour, which there was no likelihood of some of them ever otherwise attaining, of being handed down to posterity, and so living in his reply. These observations, however, are not to be interpreted into an approval, on the part of the writer, of every article in Dr. Clarke's theological creed. While he regrets the petty annoyances which were experienced—say on the doctrine of the "Sonship," as it was denominated, yet the doctor had prudence sufficient not to suffer it to form a feature in his oral sermons; prudence [sufficient not to force it upon others in his correspondence and conversations; and honesty enough to inform the candidates for the ministry, that the doctrine was *not* strictly *Wesleyan*, and that it was not *his* place, as *President* of the *Methodist Conference*, to make *his views* the *standard of appeal*, but the *NOTES* and *SERMONS* of *MR. WESLEY*. The result of this was, that the doctrine passed off as one of his own theological peculiarities; two or three good pamphlets were bequeathed to the connexion as legacies in the discussion, and the Conference protected itself against the spread of the doctrine among the preachers.

With all Dr. Clarke's learning, he was perfectly exempt from parade—shunning, rather than courting, public gaze. It was partly owing to this, that a positive promise could rarely be abstracted from him to preach out of his regular place, till near the time; and of two chapels that have required a supply on ordinary occasions, he has selected the least, and gone into the country when it appeared to others that he ought to preach in the town. Now and then, it seemed to take the form of a secret pleasure, in disappointing gadders abroad, who ought to make it a point of conscience to attend their own places of worship. The crowd however, after all, which has an element of its own, and which seems to be the only situation in which some men can breathe and support existence, was, of all others, the situation in which he appeared incapable of living; its gaze, in which some men delight to float and bask, was insufferable. He preferred the home of his own thoughts to that of living abroad in the thoughts and feelings of others. When he stirred from retirement, a sense of duty was the prompter, public good the object; and then, he retired to re-appear in public in another form—in the presence of his readers, through the medium of his writings, and through which he will continue to walk the earth, scattering the seed of eternal truth into every furrow turned up in the soul of the reader by the Spirit of God. It must be ceded, that the same sense of duty leads other men to stir abroad more frequently; and were it not for the ministrations of these *laborious* and *self-denying* men, so far as Wesleyan Methodism goes, much less good would be done than is at present presented to the religious eye: and if their presence were not as welcome as the return of spring, they would cease to be *invited* so *often* to the *same place*, as they would cease to be invited at all, if their popularity were not based on *piety*, *talents*, and *usefulness*.

He had his peculiarities; but where is the objector that has not his own; and, though blind to them, that does not appear more singular—not to say ridiculous to others, than those of the deceased did to himself? And where are the

objectors that have an equal claim to peculiarities either of *opinion* or *manner*, from possessing equal ability to examine and to act for themselves? Persons of very inferior minds may object; but as they have their price, and cannot raise themselves one inch higher in intellect than the public, who have a general knowledge of their standard value in the market—will allow, their remarks will go for nothing. And after all, to what does it often amount, more than this; that his peculiarity was not *mine*: but what does this imply, but that both have them, and from our personal inferiority, our own is the least conspicuous of the two; and as to the ground of *right* to entertain them, perhaps the one is as tenable as the other. His peculiarities of *conduct* were the result of *order*, and only appeared when brought to bear upon the irregularities of others, and when separated from the reasons upon which they were founded. His peculiarities of *opinion* were generally the result of learning, research, and experience. But even the *peculiarities* of great men, when *harmless*, are entitled to be treated with deference. They may have reasons for them beyond the ken of humbler minds, and may not deem it necessary to declare to every obtruder what those reasons are. But whatever may have been the peculiarities of Dr. Adam Clarke, he goes through the world without a stain upon his moral character, without any shiftings in his professions and principles; and with all the essentials of Christianity in his creed. Even his occasional dogmatisms, sometimes more apparent than real, were the *dogmatisms* of a settled conviction of the truth, and arose from the importance of the subject, and the virulence with which that subject was often opposed. And though there might be the occasional appearance of *literary display*, as in the “Advertisement” to the sermon on “Salvation by Faith;” yet that will be found less in the Spirit of Hezekiah than at first might appear; done, not so much with a view to display his *treasures*, as to inspire the *confidence* of his *readers*.

Possessed of a greatness which, in some men, would have

collected around itself a degree of awe, he was nevertheless accessible to all. There was no appearance of the magistrate on the bench, no affected reserve; he lived, not in the fear, but in the affection of his brethren. Nor had he, in reference to the people, in consequence either of his spirit or his manner, ever to complain that their sun had set upon him, or, through any partial eclipse, had ever to make up lost ground. His favour in the eyes of the preachers and of the people was invariably on the increase. The sun of their approbation was nearer its meridian altitude at the close of life—at the last Conference he attended, which was in the month on which he died, and shone more brightly upon him and around him than at any former given period: and it is not too much to state, that, when otherwise, there is some radical defect; something objectionable in those who, as they advance in influence, whether in civil or religious society, diminish in glory. Real merit will always command its price in Methodism; and though it may be called to pass through the cloud and through the storm, it will come out the same in substance as it entered; or, to change the allusion, if the person is seen, like a sea-bird, dipping for awhile under water; so, with the same bird, re-appearing in another quarter, shaking its silver plumage, he too will anon be seen, gay, unsullied, and in his proper place and position, skimming along the smooth expanse of water, where all is serenity below, and all is sunshine above. Instances of this are too recent, and too notorious, to render specifications necessary.

Yet honoured as Dr. Clarke was, at home and abroad, from colleges and elsewhere, his honours, like his real literary acquirements, sat upon him with an ease and grace, as if they had been created only for himself; and there was an agreement between those honours and public feeling, which is not always the case with persons receiving them—being unable to appeal to the documents of published works or extraordinary attainments; and thus provoking the laugh of the learned, or the sneer of the crowd, owing to a want of suitability between the decorations and

the wearers. His honours were not the result of favour, but of merit: the public saw, and heard, and felt; and like the laurels that entwine the brow of the victor, they only excited the plaudits of the multitude. Based on genuine worth in the outset, his works were ever afterwards equal to the highest honours conferred. He reflected back as much light by his literary exertions, as could possibly have been derived from what colleges and instituted societies could impart, inasmuch as they receive their very existence from the labours of such men: and he could say in the midst of all, "None of these things move me." He was unchanged in his spirit and demeanour; the same humble, affable, courteous being as before, whether to poverty in rags, or childhood in the arms. In this respect, he passed on his way, like a person gorgeously appalled, without being sensible of it; like one of the celestial intelligences arrayed in the borrowed costume of earth, whose nature, whose bright interior so far surpasses anything that earth can yield, that the drapery, if felt at all, is only felt as *laid on* rather than *required*, having without it achieved everything equal to that exalted nature, and worthy of the superior order of beings to which he belongs.

No man was more extensively known out of the pale of the church to which he belonged than Dr. Clarke. To the character and writings of no man is Wesleyan Methodism more indebted for the respectability it has attained, and for the influence it has exercised upon the mass of mankind, as to the productions of his pen. In no instance, since the days and the decease of the venerated Wesley, had a death in the body excited more interest, or awakned a more general public sympathy. He was a man whose society was courted by the learned; with whom a prince of the House of Brunswick delighted to associate; to whose pen the translations of the British and Foreign Bible Society were indebted; and in whose labours that society gloried; of whose aid the British government stood in need for the purpose of decyphering and arranging its records;

and one who, in the opinion of that government, entered upon its own imperishable pages, will be handed down to posterity—the writer employs the precise words, as “A man of EXTENSIVE LEARNING and INDEFATIGABLE INDUSTRY;” his theological works exhibiting him meanwhile to successive generations, as an exalted CHRISTIAN, and an able DIVINE.

In the minutes of Conference for 1833, and in the Wesleyan Magazine of the same year, for September, the opinion of the ministers assembled is expressed in no ordinary language respecting this great man. Glad of the opportunity of not only giving publicity to their own sentiments, but of giving wider circulation to those of the founder of Methodism, they remark: “Mr. Wesley, who was an admirable judge of character, hesitated not to affirm, ‘Adam Clarke is doubtless an extraordinary young man, and capable of doing much good.’” They then proceed, “For nearly half a century did he continue to perform the most important labours as the servant of God and of mankind, in various departments of the vineyard of the church, with great integrity, and with an industry which perhaps has never been surpassed. The natural strength of his mind and the range of his literary and biblical acquirements, were, in the opinion of competent judges, far beyond the common standard even of those who have attained considerable rank among men of learning and research. Without at all presuming that he was free from defects, either as a man, a preacher, or a writer, we may yet safely place him, in all these characters, among the great men of his age. He was highly distinguished by his extraordinary attainments in oriental literature, which appears to have been one of the most favourite studies of his life, and by means of which he has often shed a new and profitable light upon the sacred text. Of his writings in general, it may be confidently said, they have added largely to the valuable literary and biblical stores of the country. The ability and fervent zeal with which for so many years he preached the gospel of the grace of God to enraptured



thousands, in almost every part of the united kingdom, will long be remembered with the liveliest gratitude to their divine Redeemer, by multitudes to whom his labours were greatly blessed, both as the means of their conversion, and of their general edification. No man in any age of the church was ever known for so long a period to have attracted larger audiences; no herald of salvation ever sounded forth his message with greater faithfulness or fervour; the fervour of love to Christ and to the souls of perishing sinners; and few ministers of the gospel in modern times have been more honoured by the extraordinary unction of the Holy Spirit in their ministrations. To this unction chiefly, though associated with uncommon talents, must be attributed the wonderful success and popularity of his discourses. In preaching he had the happy art of combining great originality and depth of subject, with the utmost plainness of speech and manner. Nor was this simplicity at all destroyed, but rather augmented, by the glow and animation of his soul when applying the offer of salvation to all within the sound of his voice, and reasoning strongly on the vital doctrines of the gospel. The ardent feeling which in others sometimes leads to a rapid invention of elegant or pompous language, in him was confined to the increased accumulation of great and noble sentiments. His favourite and most successful subjects in the pulpit were, the love of God to fallen man, the atonement, repentance, faith in Christ as the grand principle of the spiritual life and of practical holiness, together with the undoubted assurance of adoption by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. On these subjects he would often rise to the genuine grandeur of evangelical preaching, pouring forth like a torrent the unostentatious eloquence of a benevolent and loving heart. Energy, indeed, was one very peculiar characteristic of his mind. Nor was he less remarkable for sensibility, and all the tenderness and sympathy of an affectionate disposition. He could be "gentle, even as a nurse cherisheth her children;" yet when environed with great difficulties in

the prosecution of his noble objects, he seemed, from the extraordinary vigour and determined purpose of his soul, to conquer them with ease. His moral character was above all suspicion, and above all praise. In this particular, no cloud, no speck was ever seen to darken the horizon of his life. In prayer he was simple, spiritual, devout, and sometimes singularly ardent. His piety was sincere and deep, and eminently practical; the very reverse of that sensitive but unsound feeling which loves to flourish on the subject of experience, but serves not God in a conscientious obedience to all the precepts of the gospel. He was almost a perfect model of diligence in duty. The ingenuity and energy with which he husbanded his time, and carried forward the arduous plans of usefulness in which he was constantly employed, formed one of the most distinguished features of his admirable character. He was a warm-hearted, faithful, affectionate, and constant friend. And in all the relations of domestic life, as a husband, a father, and a master, he was true to the duties which belong to them,—most indulgent, kind, and sympathizing; always happy in the bosom of his family, and always labouring, by every art in his power, to make them also happy. He was uniformly a firm, attached, and zealous Methodist; and in promoting the interests of our great cause, may be said to have been ‘in labours more abundant.’”

Such, in this extract,—penned by one, since laid low—himself one of the mighty—the Rev. David M’Nicol—such is the estimate of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of the character of Dr. Adam Clarke, and it is here brought forward in support of several of the preceding remarks—remarks grounded on opinions not hastily formed, nor yet without the means of forming them. On this subject, two or three closing observations will perhaps not appear much out of place.

It is now nearly thirty years since the writer of the present article entered the itinerant ministry. During the whole of that period, everything connected with the author of these sermons has been matter of deep and curious

interest. Dr. Clarke was looked upon by him, in the aggregate, as a 'statue of thought,' as a rare creation of God, with specimens of which the world is only occasionally indulged, the lapse of centuries sometimes intervening between the appearance of characters so extraordinary for intellect and learning. It was with the writer as it is with some men who look upon an extraordinary work of human art, which astonishes by its magnitude, and throws the mind, while contemplating the mechanism, harmony, and proportion of the several parts, into a kind of mystical absorption, the person visiting it again and again, discovering, in the course of each successive survey some new beauty, some secret spring, and always leaving it with a resolution to repair to it on future occasions, and as early and frequently as possible.

He was too remarkable a personage for the writer not to feel an anxiety on entering his presence, though remote from that which induces a man to seek an interview with a superior, as a feast for the vanity of the soul in after life, remaining satisfied with the bare power to state the fact, without ever having treasured up a single thought beyond the recollection of such interview, or being able to appreciate the qualities of the heart, or the powers of the mind. Impressed with the doctor's superiority, and the writer being twenty years his junior, his presence was entered with the views and sensibilities of a pupil; it was entered for the purpose of knowing, and that which was worth knowing was deemed of sufficient value to preserve. It may be further observed, not by way of ostentation, for sufficient insignificance was felt in the comparison, that the writer was admitted to a freedom of intercourse not enjoyed by all, which may be easily traced, without affecting voluntary humility, to the general value the doctor attached to sincerity and affection, in whomsoever they might be found, whether in infancy or old age. Add to a correspondence of years, the writer was with him in different parts of England; voyaged with him on the deep; in the storm and in the calm; circumnavigated with him the Zetland

Isles ; crossed and re-crossed with him the Irish Channel ; visited the scenes of his childhood and youth, walking meanwhile by his side, when early days seemed to waft over his patriarchal spirit like the breath of heaven, through the sudden inspiration of which he seemed to renew his strength like the eagle, though upwards of seventy, and live over again, both in feeling and in mind, his boyish days, while noticing the incidents, circumstances, and persons associated with each particular place ; and in all this the venerable doctor had a faithful and affectionate observer as his companion ; one who permitted nothing to escape, but who felt, at each step, like a person coming upon hidden treasure. The writer, in short, has seen him in sickness and in health, at home and abroad ; by day and by night ; in public and in private. Bringing to the subject such a class of feelings, and such opportunities, it is not presumptuous in him thus to offer an opinion. To do justice to the subject, he is aware, requires talents commensurate with those of the author ; but a child is not despised for lisping the praise of a parent ; a pupil is not to be blamed for eulogizing the kindness and ability of a master ; a friend is permitted to speak well of a friend. Talent itself will never supply the lack of sincerity and cordiality ; and sincerity, the writer is persuaded, will not have to deplore the absence of approving friendship, warm as may have been his feelings, and laudatory as may have appeared his sentiments.

Wesleyan Methodism has produced many rare men. These, like good seed sown in good ground, have taken deep and permanent root, and lifting their lofty heads to the skies, have yielded an abundance of rich and wholesome fruit, extending their wide-spreading branches for the shelter and repose of the volant, bright-plumaged birds of heaven. They are men whose names are written, not on the sand of the sea-shore or of the desert, to be effaced by the first wind, or washed away by the first returning wave, but engraven on the rock, as are the names of the holy and useful of every age, and of every section of the

Christian church: and the name of ADAM CLARKE will be seen and read, like some of the classic inscriptions of Greece and of Rome, for generations to come. He is one of those, the recollection even of whose private virtues will ever be green in the memory of the blessed in the records of the militant church; one of those gone to join the church triumphant; gone, fresh as a rose—though in age, newly plucked from the soil of Sharon, to breathe in balm and in bloom on the banks of that river, whose streams make glad the city of God.

JAMES EVERETT.

*Newcastle-Upon-Tyne,*  
*Aug. 26, 1836.*

# SERMONS.

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## SERMON I.

### ON THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

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JEREMIAH x. 11.

כדנה תאמרון להוב אלהיא די־שמיא וארקא לא עברו יאברו  
מארעא ומן תחרת שמיא אלה :

*Kidena temerun lehom ; Elahaiya di-shemaiya ve-arka la ábadu, yeabadu mearáa, u-min techoth shemaiya elleh.*

“ Thus shall ye say unto them ; The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.”

It is a singular circumstance that this verse, as the reader may observe, is written in the Chaldee language ; that it is the only verse so written in the whole of this prophet ; and that it should be written in this language, without any notice being taken of it by the prophet himself.

In Ezra and Daniel, though the greater part is written in Hebrew, yet there are considerable portions in both which are written in the pure Chaldee or Chaldaio-Syriac, which was in use about the time of the Babylonish captivity ; but in almost every instance where it

is introduced, it is distinctly noted, and the reader is apprised of the change of language ; e. g., The Chaldee part of Daniel begins chap. ii., ver. 4, and continues to the end of chap. vii. ; it is formally introduced thus : “Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac :” and the reason why this is done is sufficiently evident from the circumstances of the case ; for as the Chaldeans had a particular interest both in the history and prophecies, from chap. ii. 4 to the end of chap. vii., the whole is written in Chaldee ; but as the prophecies which remain concern times posterior to the Chaldean monarchy, and particularly relate to the church and people of God especially, they are written in the Hebrew tongue, this being the tongue in which God chose to reveal all his counsels given under the Old Testament relative to the New. [See also Ezra iv. 7, “The letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.”]

As, therefore, the text contains a message to the Babylonians, it is sent in their own language. The Chaldee Version makes it the beginning of the copy of the epistle which the prophet sent to the rest of the elders of the captivity who were in Babylon. Some have doubted its authenticity ; but it is found in all the ancient versions, and in every MS. that has hitherto been collated, one of the 13th century excepted ; besides, it is strictly in unison with the context ; and although Dr. Blayney is not very friendly to it, yet he acknowledges that “it is deduced by direct inference from the prophet’s words, and that it was perhaps usually read in this section of the prophet, in the assemblies of the people, in order that they might have their answer always ready, whenever they were molested on the point of religion, or importuned to join the idolatrous worship of the Chaldeans.”—Thus shall ye say unto them, “The gods

that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens."

From this declaration we learn—

I. That creation, or causing that to exist that had no existence before, is the work of an almighty, self-existent, and eternal Being.

II. That the works of creation give demonstration of such a Being.

III. That creation implies also conservation or providence ; and that such providence or conservation contains in it demonstrative proofs of the continued existence of such a Being.

IV. That as life, breath, and all things come from and depend on such a Being, every intelligent creature should give him adoration and worship.

*But what KIND of a Being is this God ?*

1. All men, who think rightly on the subject, understand God to be a living and rational Essence.

2. And that this Essence is the most excellent and perfect of all essences.

3. The perfections of a rational essence are threefold : (1) In the understanding ; (2) In the will ; and (3) In the faculty of working.

(1) In the understanding, there must be wisdom.

(2) In the will, there must be goodness.

(3) In the faculties of working, there must be power and might.

Now absolute sovereignty, in each of these, constitutes the SUPREME GOD ! Let us consider these points more particularly :—

1. The Being called GOD is allowed, by all who think rightly on the subject, to be a living rational Essence.



A. He is an Essence, i. e., something that exists, and exists distinctly from everything ; and is an independent Essence or Being ; it exists of and by itself ; is not connected with any other in order to be preserved in existence ; so that were all other essences destroyed, this would still subsist, and this must imply that this Essence must be underived, else it could not be independent ; and the destruction of its principle must necessarily involve its destruction also, for all effects must cease with their producing causes.

2. As therefore this Essence is independent and underived, existing of and by itself, it must also be eternal ; for as it is the first cause, and independent of all other kinds of being, so it cannot be affected by any other ; and cannot destroy itself, for this would suppose it to possess a power superior to itself, which is absurd ; and as nothing else can destroy it, and it cannot destroy itself, it must therefore be eternal.

3. If all other beings be derived beings (i. e., cannot be the cause of their own existence), and this is the only first and unoriginated Cause ; therefore, all others must owe their being to it, and be dependant on it. This Being, then, is the Creator and Preserver of all things ; and this is the general notion entertained of God.

B. I have said above that this Being is considered as a living Essence ; this distinguishes him from matter—from all chaos, or first seeds, or principles of things ; and from all *inertia*, or *vis inertiae*—that disposition of matter by which it resists all endeavours to alter its state of rest ; and as life implies an active, operative existence, so it is properly applied to God, from whose life comes the living principle of all things, and by whose activity or energy comes all life, and all the operations of animate and inanimate beings.

C. He is also called a rational Essence. As reason

implies that faculty whereby we discern good from evil, right from wrong; so in the divine Essence it implies a boundless knowledge or sagacity, by which it comprehends all ideas of all things that do or can exist, with all their relations, connexions, combinations, uses, and ends. Such a rational Essence is God; and as he is the Cause of all being, so all reason, sagacity, knowledge, and understanding come from him.

2. Thus we find that he is the most excellent and most perfect of all living and rational essences; and whatever excellence or perfection is found in any being, must be derived from himself.

D. This essence is the most excellent. Excellence signifies a surpassing or going beyond others, in grand or useful qualities. Whatever of this sort we see in any being, whatever we hear has been possessed by any, and whatever we can conceive possible to be possessed by any,—God excels all this, and infinitely more than this; and therefore he is the most excellent of all essences.

E. This essence is the most perfect. Perfection signifies anything complete, consummate; in every respect made and finished; so that nothing is wanting, nothing is redundant; and in a moral sense, what is entirely pure, unblamable, and immaculate; or that which in every moral and spiritual respect has consummate excellence; so God, as being the Cause of all that is great, good, immaculate, and excellent, is himself the most perfect of all essences; for we can conceive of nothing that can be added to his excellence to make it greater or more perfect than it is; and we can conceive of no perfection that he does not possess in an absolute and unlimited manner.

It has been stated that the perfections of a rational essence are threefold: (1) *Understanding*; (2) *Will*; and (3) *The power or faculty of working*.

(1) *Understanding*. In this there must be wisdom ; “the knowledge of the best means to accomplish the best end,” and the proper comprehension of this end. Reason implies understanding, i. e., the proper conception of a thing, what it is, why it is, and of what use ? Wisdom sees how it is to be employed ; and superintends the employment or operation till the end be produced.

(2) *Will*, according to Mr. Locke, is that power which the mind has to order the consideration of any idea ; or, the forbearing to consider it ; or, to prefer the motion of any part of the body to its rest ; and *vice versa*. *Will*, in God, is that which he chooses or determines to do, or leave undone. Now, as an excellent, perfect, and wise Being cannot will, or wish, or desire anything that is not good, wise, useful, and proper to be done ; so the will of God is ever influenced by his goodness ; therefore he can never make a bad or improper choice, nor determine anything that is not good in itself, and good or proper to all those who may be objects of its operation. As will implies desire, and God’s nature is good, so his will or desire must be good,—good in itself, and good to all those whom it affects ; hence he must be good in all his actions, and good to all his creatures, in all his determinations and providential dispensations towards them.

(3) *The power or faculty of working*. This implies what is done, what can be done, and what ought to be done. What his understanding sees to be right, his will knows to be good, and desires as such, his power brings into being and effect. All that he has done, is just and good ; all that can be done, he can do ; and all that ought to be done, he has done, or will do.

4. From his nature it appears he is unbounded in his understanding and wisdom ; unlimited in his will and goodness ; und uncontrollable in his faculty of working.

He has, therefore, these three perfections of a rational essence ; and he has them in an absolute manner ; and, consequently, that absolute sovereignty that characterizes the SUPREME GOD.

As my text binds me to consider those arguments in favour of the being of a God, which are principally furnished by creation, or a consideration of what are called *the works of nature* ; I cannot enter into those which are drawn from the *à priori* mode of argumentation ; nor into those in general which belong to *metaphysics* ; there are a few, however, produced by the schoolmen, and especially by Thomas Aquinas, which are very simple, are level to most capacities, and appear to me powerfully convincing. The *five arguments* following are those to which I particularly refer :—

1. The argument deduced from rest and motion.
2. From the necessity of an efficient cause, or from cause and effect.
3. From possibility and necessity.
4. From gradation ; or the different degrees of perfection and excellence in natural things.
5. From the government of affairs ; or the wise tendency in all things to produce the most beneficial results.

These I shall little more than state, without arguing them at large ; to pass them by wholly might be considered a culpable neglect.

The being of God, says this eminent schoolman and divine, may be proved in five ways. The first and most manifest is the proof deduced from motion. It is certain, and agrees with the testimony of the senses, that there is motion in the universe ; but what is moved, is moved by some agency, and nothing is moved except according to the power inherent in that which operates ; for motion proceeds only so far as the power of the mover extends. Motion is nothing else than the bringing anything from

the capability of being moved, into the act ; but from the capability of motion nothing can be brought into the act unless by some active agent ; as heat in act (i. e., fire) makes wood which is capable of heat become actually hot, and thus it is acted upon and altered. It is not possible that the same thing should be both active and only capable of action at the same time, but it must be either the one or the other ; what is not actually hot cannot be at that same moment potentially hot, as it must then be potentially cold ; it is, therefore, impossible that in the same moment and in the same way anything should be both the mover and the moved, or, which is the same thing, self-motive ; it is necessary, therefore, that everything which moves should be moved by something else ; if, too, that by which it is moved be itself moved, it is necessary that it should be moved by another, and that by another ; yet this does not proceed *in infinitum*, because then there would be no first mover, and consequently nothing moving another ; because secondary motions only arise from the first impelling cause, as a stick moves not except according as it is moved by the hand ; therefore it is necessary to arrive at some first mover which is itself moved by nothing ; and *this all understand as the Deity.*

The second way is from the necessity of an efficient cause ; for we find in all sensible things that there is a series of efficient causes ; nor has it ever yet been found, nor is it at all possible, that anything should be its own efficient cause (i. e., the origin of its own being), because thus it would be prior to itself, which is impossible ; nor in efficient causes can we proceed *in infinitum*, because in all efficient causes, detailed according to order, the first is the cause of the middle, and the middle of the last, whether the middle be many or one only ; the cause being removed, the effect is removed also ; therefore, if

there had not been a first efficient cause, there would neither have been a last nor a middle ; but if we proceed *in infinitum* with efficient causes there will be no first efficient cause, and thus there will be neither ultimate effect nor medial efficient causes, which is manifestly absurd ; it is therefore necessary to suppose some first efficient cause ; which *all call God*.

The third way is deduced from possibility and necessity, thus : we find in nature certain things which may exist or may not exist, as those which we see generated and again corrupted, and consequently may be or may not be ; it is impossible that all those things which are thus should always exist, because it is possible for them not to be, as is proved by their non-existence ; if therefore all things might possibly not have existed, then at some time nothing was in nature ; but if this be true, then nothing had now been, because what does not exist cannot begin to be, except through the agency of what does exist ; if, therefore, nothing had existed, it would have been impossible that anything could have begun to exist, and thus now there would have been nothing, which is manifestly absurd ; therefore all entities are not merely possible, but it is requisite there should be something necessary in nature ; but every necessary existence either has the cause of its necessity from another, or it has not ; but we cannot proceed *in infinitum* in necessary existences, which are the causes of their own necessity, any more than we can in efficient causes, as is proved above ; it is requisite, therefore, to suppose something that necessarily exists by itself, not having the cause of its necessity from a foreign source, but being the cause of this necessity to others ; *this is what all agree to call God*.

The fourth way is taken from the degrees found in nature ; in nature there is found something either more

or less good, and true, and noble ; and thus of other things of the same kind ; but more and less are predicated of different things according to the different degrees in which they approach anything that is great ; thus, that is hotter which approaches nearest to that which is hottest ; there is therefore something which is most true, most good, and most noble, and consequently existing in the highest degree ; for those things that are most true are the highest existences, as has already been proved ; but what is called the summit of its kind in any genus is the cause of all which are of that genus ; thus, fire, which is the greatest warmth, is the cause of all warmth, as must plainly appear ; there is, consequently, something which is to all entities the cause of being, and of goodness, and of every perfection ; *and this we call God.*

The fifth way is taken from the government of affairs ; we see that those things which are without any kind of thought, i. e., natural bodies, work together to a certain end, which appears from this, that always or most frequently they work in such a manner as to produce the best result ; from which it follows that they arrive at this end, not from chance, but from design ; but those things that want thought cannot accomplish a design unless directed by something thoughtful and intelligent, as an arrow by the marksman ; therefore there is something intelligent by which all natural things are directed to a particular end ; *and this we call God.\**

But we must not imagine that reason or good sense permit us to suppose that there might, or might not have been such an essence as is called God, for God exists necessarily, &c. (*See below.*)

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\* Vide Thomæ Aquinatis, Summa Totius Theologiæ. Article III., conclusio. vol. i., p. 5. Ant. 1624.

Some of the ancients had a few right notions of the nature of a First Cause.

Plato calls God *ὁ ἀγαθος*, or *το ἀγαθον*, the *Good Being*, or the *Supreme Good*, because he dispenses good to his creatures.

He calls him *το κάλλος*, *Beauty*, because in his essence he is ever equal, regular, and full of proportion and harmony.

He calls him *ἡ ἀληθεια*, *Truth*, because he is the source whence all truth and right principles proceed.

He calls him *πατηρ*, *Father*, because he is the source and principle of all things.

He calls him *ὁ ἀρρήτος*, or *ὁ ἀλαλητος*, the *Ineffable*, because there is neither genus, nor species, nor difference, nor parallel which can be applied to him. He is beyond our expressions and our thoughts, for He is a pure spirit, and we neither speak nor think of anything that is not corporeal or an object of our senses, or analogical to some sensible forms.

1. GOD exists necessarily, i. e., such a being as God is must exist; it is impossible that there should not be such an essence as God; and by the necessity of his existence, he must have existed always, and everywhere, and must do so to *eternity*. But he exists after an incorporeal manner, not like that of men, but after a manner wholly unknown to us. He is destitute of body, and all bodily shape; and therefore cannot be seen, heard, or touched. We have ideas of the attributes of God, but do not know the substance even of anything; we see only the figures and colours of bodies; hear only sounds; touch only the outward surfaces; smell only odours; and taste savours; and do not, cannot, by any sense, or any reflex act, know their inward substances; and much less can we have any notion of the substance of God.



Therefore, it is grossly absurd to worship him under any shape or form ; for of these, in reference to God, we have no ideas, as his substance to us is, and ever must be, absolutely inconceivable. Thus, all image-worship, and even the attempt to worship him by symbols and emblems, must be a species of idolatry. Symbols, or emblems, must be the patterns of ideas ; but as we know nothing of his substance, so we can form no emblem or symbol of his nature.

2. Sir Isaac Newton thought it better to define God, not according to his nature, existence, or perfections, but from his dominion. It is the dominion of a spiritual being or Lord, that we call *God* ; true dominion, true God ; supreme dominion, supreme God ; feigned dominion, false God.

3. From such true dominion it follows, that the true God is living, intelligent, and powerful ; and, from his other perfections, that he is supremely perfect. He is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient ; that is, he endures from eternity to eternity, and is present from infinity to infinity.

4. He governs all things that exist, and knows all things that are to be known. He is not eternity nor infinity ; but he is eternal and infinite. He is not duration nor space ; but he endures and is present. He endures always, and is present everywhere ; and by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes the very things, duration and space, eternity and infinity.

5. It is strange that the doctrine of real absolute and external space should have induced some philosophers to conclude it was a part or attribute of God ; or that God himself was space ; inasmuch as incommunicable attributes of the Deity appeared to agree to this ; such as infinity, immutability, indivisibility, and incorporeity ; it being also uncreated, impassive, without beginning or

ending ; not considering that all these negative properties belong to NOTHING. For nothing has no limits ; cannot be moved, nor changed, nor divided ; nor is it created, nor can it be destroyed. See *Siris.*, sect. 270.

6. It is therefore his presence that constitutes this space, without which it could not exist ; and since every particle of space is always, and in every indivisible moment, everywhere, the Creator and Lord of all things cannot be never or nowhere.

He is omnipresent, not only virtually but substantially ; for POWER without substance cannot exist.

7. All things are contained and move in or by him, but without any mutual passion ; he suffers nothing from the motions of bodies ; nor do they undergo any resistance from his omnipresence.

8. We know God by his properties and by his attributes, by the most wise and excellent structure of things, and by final causes ; but we adore and worship him on account of his dominion ; for God, setting aside dominion, providence, and final causes, is nothing else but fate and nature. See *Newton.*

It is on his creation of all things, and his government of the heavens and the earth, that God has placed the demonstration of his being and his right of worship.

Hence we learn—

PROP. I. That creation, or causing an existence where there was no being previously, is the work of an almighty, self-existent, and eternal Being.

1. It appears to have been an universally received truth, that the heavens and the earth could not have produced themselves ; that so much order and economy could not have been produced by accident or chance ; that everything that was made must have a maker, and that this maker, who was the cause of all, could have no cause of his own being ; and that he who had no

beginning could have no end ; and that this being who is called God, or by some other name expressive of the same idea, should be acknowledged and adored.

2. The word creation has two senses, 1. It signifies the production of some being that had no antecedent existence ; and in the Bible it means the production of the visible heavens, with all their host of stars and planets, primary and secondary, and the earth or terraqueous globe, with all its solid and fluid parts, atmosphere, and vapours. 2. It means the arranging, ordering, and decorating that which was created, and producing a particular kind of being, out of matter already made ; thus God CREATED fish and fowl out of the waters, and man and beast out of the earth, and caused the trees, plants, flowers, and every kind of herbage, to spring out of the ground ; but the materials out of which these were formed were brought into being by the first creative act. And God is represented as spending six days in arranging, ordering, and decorating the whole.

3. Now as creation, or the production of beings that had no existence before, is properly the act of an unlimited power ; the production of different kinds of beings out of matter totally dissimilar from those beings, is also properly called creation ; because it requires the same unlimited power and skill to produce them, as it required to bring the first matter, or materials out of which they are formed, into being. To say, the earth and heavens, &c., have been created out of nothing, is both incautious and unphilosophic ; for this intimates that nothing produced the substance or first matter out of which these things were formed ; but the only proper definition is the production of some thing or things, being or beings, that had no antecedent existence. There was *ubi*, or space, but there was no being to occupy that space. Creation peopled this *ubi*, or space. Space is

not being or substance, and consequently cannot produce substance of any kind. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, “out of nothing, comes nothing,” is a true maxim; but where there was nothing, the power of God can cause something to exist that had no previous existence. This is a maxim equally sound, and equally acceptable to the common sense and reason of man.

He, therefore, who *created the heavens and the earth is God*; those beings, real or imaginary, which have not created those things are not gods; if they exist at all, they are dependant and destructible, and of them it may be said, with the strictest propriety, *they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens*. And thus it is proved, that creation, or causing that to exist that had no previous existence, is the work of an almighty, self-existent, and eternal Being.

PROP. II. The works of creation give demonstration of such a being as is above-described. This appears,—  
 1. In the vastness of their masses. 2. In the multitude of their number. 3. In the immensity of their distances. 4. In the velocity of their motions. 5. In the skill of their arrangement. And 6. In their final cause, or object of their creation.

1. The vastness of their masses. Though there be only a few of the heavenly bodies whose bulk can be ascertained, yet these are sufficient to demonstrate the omnipotence of the Creator, though we have reason to believe that most even of these are among the least of the celestial host.

a. In computing the magnitudes of the heavenly bodies, it is usual to take the earth as the radix of comparison, and having ascertained its bulk, to show that such and such planets, &c., are so many times larger or less than it. Now, it is well known, that the diameter of the earth, i. e., the length of a line passing through

its centre, from the Zenith to the Nadir, or from the South to the North Pole, would be 7,954 miles.

The diameter of the Moon is found to be 2,172 miles ; therefore, the Earth being considered as one, the Moon is one forty-ninth of the Earth's bulk.

The diameter of Mercury is 3,191 miles ; therefore, he is one-fifteenth of the bulk of the Earth.

The diameter of Venus is 7,630 miles ; therefore, she is eight-ninths as large as the Earth.

The diameter of Mars is 4,135 miles ; therefore, he is one-seventh of the magnitude of the Earth.

The diameter of Herschel is 34,457 miles ; therefore, he is eighty-and-a-half times greater than the Earth.

The diameter of Saturn is 79,405 miles ; therefore, he is nine hundred and ninety-five times greater than the Earth.

The diameter of Jupiter is 86,396 miles ; therefore, he is one thousand two hundred and eighty-one times greater than the Earth.

The diameter of Saturn's ring is 185,280 miles ; but of this ring there is no proportional bulk given, because it is not a solid globe.

The diameter of the Sun is 886,473 miles ; therefore it is one million, three hundred and eighty four thousand, four hundred and sixty-two times greater than the Earth.

Now all these points have been demonstrated in such a way by astronomers, that not a doubt remains of their general accuracy ; and yet the largest of these heavenly bodies, to common observers, does not appear as large as a coach-wheel ;—e. g., the sun, though more than a million of times greater than the whole terrestrial globe ! The next in apparent largeness, e. g., the moon, no greater than a common-sized plate. Venus and Jupiter like luminous patches, and the rest of the planets like

lucid points. And yet the planet Jupiter, which we sometimes call the morning and sometimes the evening star, is not less than twelve hundred and eighty-one times larger than the immense globe on which we live.

b. Now when it is considered that all these perform their various revolutions in the immensity of space, without ever deviating from the path prescribed for them, and yet are hung upon nothing, what evidence do they not give of an intelligent Being, infinitely greater than themselves, whose power is unlimited and irresistible; who alone could frame, can guide and sustain such tremendously enormous masses!

2. As to the solar system, the number of luminous and illumined bodies can easily be ascertained, though the quantity of their masses is inconceivable to common minds.

Of this system the sun is the centre; and around him, at different distances, what are called the planets, primary and secondary, revolve.

Mercury, the nearest, revolves around him in eighty-seven days, twenty-three hours, fifteen minutes, and forty seconds. This is his sidereal, and therefore his complete revolution.

Venus revolves in two hundred and twenty-four days, sixteen hours, forty-nine minutes, and eleven seconds.

The Earth, with her satellite, the moon, in three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours, nine minutes, and twelve seconds; and the moon around the earth in twenty-seven days, seven hours, forty-three minutes, and twelve seconds.

Mars, in nearly two years; or one year, three hundred and twenty-one days, twenty-three hours, thirty minutes, and thirty-six seconds.

Jupiter, in nearly twelve years ; or eleven years, three hundred and seventeen days, fourteen hours, twenty-seven minutes, and eleven seconds.

Saturn, in twenty-nine years and a half ; or twenty-nine years, one hundred and seventy-six days, fourteen hours, thirty-six minutes, and forty-three seconds.

And Herschel, in eighty-four years, twenty-nine days, and twenty-nine minutes.

Some of these planets have satellites, or secondary planets, that revolve around them as they do about the sun : the moon is a satellite to the earth. Of such secondaries, Jupiter has four, which answer the same end to him as the moon does to our earth ; Saturn has seven, and Herschel has six.

Besides these, there have lately been discovered four other planetary bodies, which revolve in vast orbits in the space between Mars and Jupiter. These are called Ceres, Pallas, Juno, and Vesta. These, with the sun, the primary of all, make thirty planets ; and these, together with the comets, constitute what is now termed the Solar System. But what are these, however immense in themselves, and in the system which they constitute, when compared with those other bodies which we call stars ; and to distinguish them from the planets, call them fixed, as the former change their places, which the latter do not appear to do !

Though we have had different catalogues of these fixed stars made by very accurate astronomers, yet those catalogues depended on the power of the glasses by which the starry vault has been examined. We find more and more discovered in proportion to the power and accuracy of the instruments employed ; so that had we higher powers, and proportionate strength in our optic nerves, there would be no end to the numbers that

would be there found out ; and hence we may safely say that those heavenly bodies are innumerable. Again, as it is most probable that every star is a *sun* like ours, and some of them perhaps much greater ; and each is the *centre of a system*, in which a multitude of primary and secondary planets may and do revolve, so that every part of what we call infinite space is occupied ; and that that space is constituted by the presence of God, which presence fills eternity ; and that on him all suns, planets, and every kind of beings depend ;—how inconceivable, then, must the Creator be, and what argument can be better calculated to prove his being than the enormous magnitudes and infinite multitude of these masses ! Well, then, might the prophet say, “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.” He alone, who is before, and has made all things, is eternal ; all other beings must perish and be annihilated, if detached for a moment from his superintendence and energy.

3. But the distances of those bodies from each other, and from the earth, is a farther proof of the being and perfections of this great first Cause. I shall produce in order the greater bodies that belong to our system.

		<i>English Miles.</i>
Mercury's <i>mean distance</i> from the Sun		36,973,282
Venus'	Do.	69,088,240
Earth's	Do.	95,513,794
Mars'	Do.	145,533,667
Jupiter's	Do.	496,765,289
Saturn's	Do.	911,141,442
Herschel's	Do.	1,822,575,228

But their distances from the earth are of more importance to us.



			<i>English Miles.</i>
Earth's <i>least distance from the Sun, is</i>			93,908,984
Mercury's	Do.	<i>Earth,</i>	52,376,602
Venus'	Do.		27,339,176
Moon's	Do.		222,920
Mars'	Do.		35,357,826
Jupiter's	Do.		376,944,330
Saturn's	Do.		766,223,200
Herschel's	Do.		1,642,663,450

Thus we find that the moon, the nearest planet to our earth, is never less than two hundred and twenty-two thousand, nine hundred and twenty English miles distant from its centre.

And that Saturn, who may be easily discovered with the naked eye, is never less than 766 million, 223 thousand, 200 miles from the earth.

But it is well known that the planet Herschel is still more remote, and yet may be seen without the aid of a glass ; for he is never less removed from the earth than 1642 million, 663 thousand, 450 English miles ; and his distance may amount to upwards of two thousand and two millions of miles ! And yet, take in this immense orbit, which includes those of all the other planets, and it is but a speck when compared to the incomprehensible distance of the fixed stars ; and they are altogether but as an atom or indivisible point, when compared with illimitable space. And what is this space in comparison of Him who inhabits eternity, and constitutes eternity by his eternal existence !

4. The velocity with which the planets revolve in their orbits is an additional proof of the being and the power of the Creator.

The sun, which is 1 million, 384 thousand, 462 times larger than the earth, though fixed in the centre, yet

revolves round his own axis in 25 days, 14 hours, and 8 minutes.

Mercury's hourly motion in his orbit is 111 thousand, 256 miles.

		<i>English Miles.</i>
Venus revolves, <i>per Hour</i> , at the rate of		81,398
The Earth	Do.	75,222
The Moon	Do.	2,335
Mars	Do.	56,212
Jupiter	Do.	30,358
Saturn	Do.	22,351
Herschel	Do.	15 846

But even the quickest of these motions is the crawling of a worm when compared to the velocity of light, which is proved to fly at the rate of nearly 200,000 miles in a second!—a particle of light projected from the sun arrives at the earth in eight minutes and a quarter. That light is a substance is easily demonstrated. Notwithstanding this inconceivably rapid motion, it is found to be progressive, and may be measured; it may be stopped in its progress, or its direction may be changed; it may be condensed into a smaller, or dispersed over a larger space. It is inflected when passing near to another body, which proves it to be subject to gravitation; and it produces chemical changes in many bodies, exists in them in a state of combination, and may be disengaged by the exertion of new affinities.

Were not its particles inconceivably small, their momentum, or the force with which they must fall on any

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\* The preceding numbers are accurately calculated upon the position that the mean horizontal solar parallax is eight seconds of a degree and three-fifths, combined with micrometrical measurements of the disks of the planets at their various angular distances from the sun.

body on which they may impinge, in the rapidity of their motion, must tear such body to pieces ; yet, says an accurate philosopher, Dr. Murray, it is doubtful whether the momentum they do possess is capable of being ascertained by the most delicate mechanical contrivance. From an experiment of this kind it has been calculated, that the quantity of matter in the rays of light collected by a concave mirror of two feet in diameter, would not amount to more than one twelve hundred millionth part of a grain ! And how many particles of light must be in these accumulated rays ? Light is only one of the innumerable creatures which God has made ; and yet this one exhibits such proofs of his eternal power and skill as cannot be successfully controverted. In making the heavens he has made this light, this most subtile, useful, and astonishing of all the subjects with which we are acquainted. What limited power, what bounded skill, could produce such a creation ? Had nothing else been created, it would have required the omnipotence and omniscience of God to have produced even this one ! Well, then, may it be said with the prophet, “The gods who have not made the heavens”—who have not created the light, “shall perish from under these heavens.” The nature, properties, and especially the velocity of this one creature, are completely demonstrative of the agency of a Being omnipotent and eternal !

5. In the skill of their arrangement. This must have particular reference to that principle by which the heavenly bodies are influenced. This principle is termed gravity or attraction. Gravity, when it refers to a body tending to another ; and attraction, when it refers to the body to which the former gravitates. In the first case, the weight of the body seems to be the cause of its gravitation or descending ; in the second, its descent seems to be the effect of an attractive power in that

body to which it gravitates; but the principle is the same in both cases. Relative to this point, the five following positions or laws have been admitted among philosophers:—

1. Gravitation takes place among the most minute particles of bodies.

2. It is in proportion to the masses of all bodies.

3. It varies inversely as the squares of the distances.

4. It is transmitted instantaneously from one body to another.

5. It acts equally on bodies in a state of rest, and on those which, from their motion in the direction of its action, should seem to avoid a part of its influence.

The first of these positions is a necessary result of the equality which exists between action and re-action; every particle of the earth attracting it, as the particle itself is attracted by it.

The second, the proportionality of the attractive force to the masses, is demonstrated in the earth, by experiments on pendulums, oscillations of which are of the same length, of whatever substance they may be composed. And it is proved in the celestial regions, by the constant relation which exists between the squares of the periodic times of bodies revolving about a common focus, to the cubes of the greater axes of their orbits.

Thirdly. That the force of gravity varies according to the inverse squares of the distances, is manifest from that state of almost absolute repose which appears in the perihelia of the planetary orbits. A remarkable property of this law is, that if the dimensions of all the bodies in the universe, their mutual distances and velocities, were to be augmented or diminished proportionally, they would describe curves entirely similar to those which they now describe; and their appearances would be exactly the same. For the forces which animate

them being entirely the result of attractions proportionate to the masses divided by the squares of the distances, they would be augmented and diminished proportionally to the dimensions of this imaginary universe.

Fourthly. This gravity is transmitted instantaneously from one body to another, and from the sun to the whole of the system ; and this transmission, we are authorized to conclude, is made in an indivisible instant, to the extremities of the planetary system. But however this may be, we have no means of measuring the time in which gravity is transmitted ; as the action of the sun has already taken place in all parts of his system. Nor can such action be arrested in any case, in order to show by experiment what time may be required for its re-communication.

As to the fifth position, it is universally evident ; nor has anything ever been observed to have taken place to intimate that this is not an absolute law, invariable and without exception. [See *La Place*.] All the parts of every body in the solar system gravitate to their centre ; and while each body has its own centre of gravity, to which all its particles gravitate, the whole planetary system has a common centre of gravity, to which the planets, satellites, and comets all tend. It is by this that they are all kept in their proper places, so that, in the trackless immensity of space, they, in their various revolutions, never miss their way one hair's breadth. Nor have the periods of their revolutions been either lengthened or shortened beyond certain assignable limits, since they were formed and projected by the hand of God. Here, as the wise man has said, "God has formed everything in number, weight, and measure"—all is in due proportion, in proper magnitude, and in measured distance ; and though their relative magnitudes are various, yet their arrangement is such, that they can

never come in collision with each other, nor ever miss their orbit. Here, then, the skill of the Creator appears manifest; and thus we find, that the wisdom displayed in the solar system itself is a proof of the being and perfections of Him "who made the heavens and the earth," as the text intimates.

To make this more plain, we may observe that the centre of gravity is a point within a body, through which, if a plane pass, the segments on each side will be of equal weight.

The common centre of gravity of two bodies is a point situated in the right line joining the centres of the two bodies, so that, if the point be suspended, the two bodies will equiponderate, and rest in any situation. See the common steel-yard.

When any number of bodies move in right lines, with uniform motions, their common centre of gravity moves likewise in a right line with a uniform motion. And the sum of their motions estimated in any given direction, is precisely the same as if all the bodies in one mass were carried on with the direction and motion of their common centre of gravity.

Bodies moving in curve lines have what are called centrifugal and centripetal forces. The centrifugal force is that by which a projected body flies off, or endeavours to fly off in a straight line, without respect to gravity, to any resisting medium, or to any centre. The centripetal force is that which acts upon a projected body, drawing it out of a straight line, and obliging it to take a curvilinear direction. All the planets are influenced by these two forces: and these forces must be in certain proportions, that the planets may perform their respective revolutions. The centripetal force, which is the effect of the Sun's attraction (which constitutes the planet's gravitation), is prevented from causing the planet to fall to

the Sun, as its centre, by the centrifugal force, or the quantum of projectile power impressed upon the planet at its creation. These two forces, by an harmonious adjustment to each other, cause the planets to revolve in their orbits. The centripetal force will not permit the planet to fly off ; the centrifugal force will not permit it to fall in. These forces God has proportioned to each, in reference to the distances of the planets among themselves, and from the Sun, their primary ; and to the quantity of matter in each planet. Physically speaking, to make the projectile force balance the gravitating power so exactly, as that the body may move in a circle, the projectile velocity of the body must be such as it would have acquired by gravity alone, in falling through half the radius of the circle.

But when it is considered that all the planets and their satellites in the solar system revolve round the sun,—what a prodigious attractive power must he have to draw them all towards himself ! And what an amazing power must it have required to put all these planets into such rapid motions at first ! Amazing, indeed, to *us*, says the enlightened Mr. Ferguson, because impossible to be effected by the strength of all the living creatures in an unlimited number of worlds : but noways hard for the Almighty ; whose planetarium comprehends the universe.

6. The final cause, or object of creation, gives equal proofs of the being and perfections of the Creator.

Every intelligent artist works in reference to some end. Such an exertion of skill and energy as appears in the works of creation, must have had for its object, what was sufficient to justify such exertion. It is not enough to say, that he made all his works to show forth his glory. He had no need to contemplate his own works to be satisfied with the exertion of his power and

wisdom. This would suppose that his gratification depended on his own work. He needs not the exertions of his eternal power and Godhead to minister to or augment his happiness; for, although he cannot but be pleased with every work of his hands, as all that he has created is very good, yet it was not for this end; but it was in reference to a great design, that they were created and still subsist. This design was the *formation and eternal beatification of intelligent beings*. He therefore made MAN in his own image, and in his own likeness; he made him immortal, rational, and holy. He endowed him with intellectual powers of the most astonishing compass. He made him capable of knowing the Author of his being in the glory of his perfections, and of deriving unutterable happiness from this knowledge. He rendered him capable of ascertaining the motions of the planets, and the laws by which they are governed; capable of numbering the stars, and weighing the sun. He has given him an understanding, by which he walks through the heavens, and analyses every part of the globe that is under his feet. In a word, he has set him over all the works of his hands, and put all things living under his authority. All sheep and oxen, with whatsoever walks through the paths of the deep. He has given him that knowledge which is power; by which both the animate and inanimate creation is brought under his dominion, and becomes obedient to his will. Such a being alone is capable of contemplating the works of God, and deriving the highest pleasure from this contemplation. The formation of such a being, even for this purpose, sufficiently justifies the exertions of the divine power and wisdom in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

But we shall see this more clearly, when we consider the fulness of his design in the creation of man. He



made him immortal, a transcript of his own eternity. He cannot wholly die—cannot be annihilated ; but must exist, and exist intellectually, to all eternity. He has made him holy, that he might be for ever capable of union with HIM who is the source and fountain of all purity. And his eternal happiness is to consist in his eternal union with this Being ; seeing him as he is, knowing him in his own light, and endlessly receiving additional degrees of knowledge and happiness out of his fulness. To manifest his goodness and kindness yet more, he has designed that man should propagate his own kind, and multiply on the earth for thousands of years. Thus, innumerable immortal spirits are brought into being, in reference to each of which God has the same gracious design. An eternal spirit, such as that of man, is of infinite value ; and has been justly said to be of more worth than the whole terraqueous globe, with all the suns and planets which God has formed. And if one such spirit outvalue all these,—of what worth must innumerable spirits of this kind be ! To create such spirits, of such powers, for such an end, demonstrates an infinite kindness, as well as an infinite skill ; and thus these works of God in their final cause, or the object of their creation, give demonstration of the existence and perfections of that Being by whom they were formed.

It is no solid objection to this argument, that man has fallen from God and happiness, into sin and misery. This does not at all affect the design of God. The fall was no part of his design : he made not *Death*, neither hath pleasure in the destruction of the living. But he foresaw this ; and to remedy the evil, in his vast love to the world, God gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that they who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And although sin has entered into the world, and death by sin ; in consequence of which, we

must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again ; yet God hath devised means that his banished should not be expelled from him. And to accomplish this end, Jesus Christ assumed human nature, and *by the grace of God tasted death for every man.* He has sent his Spirit and gospel into the world to convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment ; and offers a free and full salvation from sin and all its consequences, to every soul of man. By this dispensation of mercy and goodness, millions of millions of immortal spirits have already been saved ; millions more are now on their way to glory ; and this work shall go on till the earth shall be no more. All may be saved ; for God has not doomed a single soul to eternal perdition ; and the eternal restoration of even one of these immortal souls is a sufficient justification of God's work in the creation, while even foreseeing the lapse of man. Thus, the works of God give demonstration of the Being already described.

PROP. III.—Creation implies conservation or providence ; and such conservation or providence contains in it demonstrative proofs of the continual existence of the supreme first Cause.

It is allowed on all hands, that the work of creation was finished and perfected at the time when it is said, “ In the beginning God created the heavens and earth,” when at the conclusion of the sixth day, he reviewed his works and pronounced them very good ; and that, since that time, no new being has been brought into existence, at least in what is called the solar system. But, to accomplish the great design of God, what was made by so much skill, should be preserved by a continual energy, and a universally superintending providence. Now, to continue an effect, the producing cause must continue its energy. The stream from the fountain will not con-

tinue to flow, unless the fountain itself supply the requisite quantum of water. All effects depend on their causes ; so that when the cause ceases to act, the effect ceases to exist. We have already taken a view of the motions of the celestial bodies, and the physical causes of those motions. But what is that gravity or attraction ? What are those centrifugal and centripetal forces, which are so strikingly evident in all the revolutions of the planets ? Can this gravity, whatever it may be, exist of itself ? Can those centripetal and centrifugal forces preserve themselves with unexpended energy ? If so, they are not effects, they are absolute causes ; and such causes as must be underived and independent, and consequently eternal : but we have seen that no such causes can exist, because self-existence and independence belong to that Being only who is called God. Whatever therefore exists, must exist by and through him. Every being, animate or inanimate, depends on him. As he was their creator, so he is their preserver. And as it required a certain measure of power to produce them, so it requires the same measure to preserve them. Every effect will decrease or increase according to the decreased or increased action of the cause that produced them. And if it cease to act, though itself may remain, yet the effect will wholly cease to exist. Again, should the cause act disorderly, the effect will partake of the same. If the effect continue to be exactly the same, as it has always been known to be ; then the cause evidently acts in the way it has ever done ; the force is the same, and the direction the same. Hence we find that it requires the same force and direction to preserve the effect, as took place in the beginning, where such effect became first manifest.

This reasoning will apply to all the works of creation. They continue to exist, because the same power continues

to act on them ; their order and harmony continue also the same, because the producing cause gives the same direction to each part, that it may accomplish the purpose for which he gave it being.

But in so complicate a system as the universe, where a multitude of particular and special, as well as general ends must be accomplished, not only a preserving, but a specially directing power must be in continual activity. Hence the need of what is called providence ; or, in other words, God's plan of governing the universe, and influencing and directing all subaltern or secondary agents, so that they may accomplish his gracious designs, and all violence and confusion be prevented. Again, as much natural evil has entered into the world by means of moral evil, it is necessary that there should be everywhere present, an almighty and over-ruling providence, to curb and restrain the moral evil that works in and by the passions of men ; and to counteract, and in various cases suspend, the operations of certain natural agents, which, being in a state of violence and confusion, would produce baneful effects, if left merely to their own energies and results. For, since the fall, the earth has been cursed on account of man's rebellion ; and in consequence, much confusion and disorder have been produced ; and, as that rebellion continues, these disorders continue ; for, nature itself seems to arise in opposition to the offender. And were not the principles which produce storms, tempests, earthquakes, pestilence, and plague, counteracted, curbed, and often suspended in their operations ;—or, while permitted to exert themselves with all their natural violence and malignity, a particular direction given to them that their strength may be expended in such a way, and in such points, as may be innocuous to man ;—what ruin and desolation

would there not be in the world ! Thus, the thunder-storm, that might slay thousands, has rarely human life for its victim ; the tornado and tempest exhaust themselves on the waves of the sea, or the uninhabited forest ; and the pestilence that walketh in darkness, is generally confined to the arid desert. These destructive causes, which exist in millions, are seldom let loose against man ; and though it be perfectly right that vice should be punished, and the vicious corrected, to show that the justice of God slumbereth not ; yet, in all cases, we may say, judgment is God's strange work, and he delighteth in mercy.

Nothing is more frequently and more impressively recommended in the oracles of God, than *prayer*. Now, prayer not only necessarily supposes the *being of a God* (for he that cometh unto God, must know that HE IS), but also the providence of God. For why should we pray to him to avert evil, if we do not acknowledge that he exercises a universal providence in the world ? Why should we pray to be preserved in and from dangers, if we be not convinced that he has sway everywhere, and that all things serve the purposes of his gracious will ? And why should men in every place, who pray and make supplication, expect to be heard, unless it be an incontrovertible truth, that God is omnipotent, and that he can and will so interfere with, and interpose in, the matters that concern them. And should evil be coming against them in direct course, he can divert it from that course, so that it shall pass them by, or, averting it, turn it entirely back, so that it shall have no operation near them ; or, if he permit it to come on, convert it to their great spiritual advantage, by counterworking the bad effects which it would otherwise produce, and thus by his providence (in answer to their prayers), working to-

gether with his grace, cause all those things which would otherwise be mischievous, to work for their present good and future happiness.

That God has general laws by which he governs the universe, I am fully aware ; I see them through universal nature : and that he has a general providence suited to those laws, I equally believe : but, as all generals imply the particulars of which they are composed, so I believe God has his particular laws ; and, suited to them, his particular providence, adapted to every occurrence, and applicable to all possible varieties of persons, place, and circumstance ; that nothing can occur to which he cannot adapt a particular influence, by which that occurrence shall be so directed, or counteracted, as to prevent the evil, and produce the necessary good.

And should there be occurrences which appear to be under the control of no particular laws, and should there be no natural means to meet such occurrences, guide their operation, or direct their mal-influence ; so sovereign is he, that without laws and means, he can, by the omnific volitions of his own mind, counterwork the evil, and produce the good. And this he is constantly doing, in numberless cases, in answer to prayer. And indeed every answer to prayer is a proof as well of this particular and especial providence, as of his innate and eternal goodness.

I conclude, therefore, that the conservation and government of all things by the power and providence of God, are proofs of his continual being, and most beneficent agency. And though the acts of providence are not creative but conservative acts, and nothing new has been added since the creation of the world ; yet so has this providence operated, that nothing has been lost of all that his power has produced ; and everything continues by this gracious superintendence to answer the same

design, which at the beginning was conceived in his own infinite mind.

PROP. IV. That, as life, breath, and all things come from and depend on such a Being, every intelligent creature should give him adoration and worship.

Having already proved that there is an infinite and eternal Being, the first cause or creator of all things ; it follows necessarily that all animate and inanimate beings derive their existence from him, and are dependant upon him. Life is his gift, and flows from him ; he is represented as inspiring the very breath of all animal beings, and endowing them with those principles by which, as means, those beings are preserved. He has adapted the lungs for respiration, and has given the air to inflate them. All motion, voluntary or involuntary, proceeds from him ; and by his continued energy the existence of every being is preserved. *In him we live, move, and have our being*, is a truth which cannot be successfully disputed. Every state of being has its proper attributes, and every kind of being its peculiar privileges. Each, in proportion to the powers and perfections with which it is endowed, and the necessities of its state, shares the solicitude and attention of its Maker. MAN, who appears at the head of the creation, is distinguished by a variety of peculiar privileges. On him, the most affectionate regards of his God seem to be concentrated : the condescending goodness of the Divine Being towards man has filled reflecting minds with astonishment and gratitude : “What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?” says Job, “that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him ? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?” chap. vii. 17, 18. “Thou hast,” says David, “made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour ; thou madest him to have dominion over the works

of thy hands ; thou hast put all things under his feet : the sheep, the oxen, the beasts of the fields, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea," Ps. viii. 5—8. All this shows him to be God's vicegerent upon earth ; which is the highest honour he can possibly possess previously to his being raised incorruptible, and placed on the throne of his Lord and Saviour :—" To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. 21.

By right of sovereignty, such a Being demands the homage of his intelligent creatures ; but man, in a peculiar manner, by virtue of obligation and gratitude, should render this to his Maker, his Preserver, and his Redeemer ;—obligation, the utmost man can receive ; and the greatest that even God himself can confer ; the gift of his Son, and through him, the throne of his glory

The proposition states, that " every intelligent creature should give such a Being adoration and worship."

1. By *adoration*, we are to understand that reverence that is due to the highest and best of Beings. The original word, *adoratio*, signifies that act of religious worship which was expressed by lifting the hand to the mouth, and kissing it, in token of the highest esteem, and the most profound reverence and subjection. It implies a proper contemplation of his excellencies, so as to excite wonder and admiration ; and of his goodness and bounty, so as to impress us with the liveliest sense of his ineffable goodness to us, and our deep unworthiness. It implies the deepest awe of his Divine Majesty, while even approaching him with the strongest sensations of filial piety ; a trembling before him, while rejoicing in him ; the greatest circumspection in every act of religious worship ; the mind wholly engrossed with the object, while the heart is found in the deepest prostration at his



feet. The soul abstracted from every outward thing—no thought indulged, but what relates to the act of worship in which we are engaged ; nor a word uttered in prayer or praise, the meaning of which is not felt by the heart ; no unworthy conception of such a Majesty permitted to arise in the mind, the same worshipping in spirit and in truth. No carelessness of manner, no boldness of expression permitted to appear—the body prostrated, while the soul, in all its powers and faculties, adores. No lip-service, no animal labour allowed to take place. Nothing felt, nothing seen, but the supreme God, and the soul made by his hand, and redeemed by his blood.

2. *Worship*, or *worship*, implies, that proper conception we should have of God, as the great Governor of heaven and earth, of angels and men. How worthy he is in his nature, and in the administration of his government, of the highest praises we can offer, and of the best services we can render! Every act we perform should bear testimony to the sense we have of the excellence of his majesty, and the worthiness of his acts. *Speak, Lord! thy servant heareth*, is the language of the true worshipper ;—he seeks to know the will of his Lord, that he may do that will. Every prayer is offered up in the spirit of subjection and obedience ; and in the deepest humility he waits to receive the commands of his heavenly Master, and the power to fulfil them. He feels that he cannot choose :—he knows that his Lord cannot err. *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, is not an unmeaning petition while proceeding from his mouth. His soul feels it—his heart desires it. Obedience is the element in which his soul lives, and in which it thrives, and increases in happiness. In his sight God is worthy of all glory and praise, and dominion, and power, because he is not only the fountain of being, but

also the source of mercy. He waits on his God ; and he finds that this God waits to be gracious to him. He finds also that this God who is his friend, condescends to be his companion through life : therefore his heart is fixed ; nor is he afraid of any evil tidings, for he trusts in the name of the Lord. He draws nigh to God in every act of worship, and has communion with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Ghost. He is kept in perfect peace, for his mind is stayed upon God, because he trusts in him. All his powers are sensible of this truth—Thou God seest me : and his experience proves that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. In such persons, Jesus sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. But, oh, how far are Christians in general from this adoration and worship ! All acknowledge that there is a God ; all acknowledge that this God is, as is before described :—but who worships him aright ? We have the language of praise, and the language of prayer, but who has the spirit of these duties ? In most solemn assemblies, how little of the spirit of this devotion is found ? We are struck with anything but God ; and feel anything but his presence. We do not worship him aright, and therefore we know little of his power to save. Oh, when will it be that man shall live in commerce with his Maker, and in every act of adoration and worship, receive the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul !—However this may be, the conclusion is indisputable, that “seeing life, breath, and all things come from, and depend on Him ; every intelligent creature should give him adoration and worship.”

#### CONCLUSION.

This verse may be considered as a prophetic declaration of the total and final destruction of idolatry through-

out the habitable globe. It may be assumed by every Christian missionary, as his message from God to every heathen nation.—He may ask, Who are your gods? What are their attributes? Where do they exist? What evidence have you that they have any being? Can you suppose that these stocks and stones are either eternal beings, or worthy representations of such beings? What history have you of their lives and actions? Of what authority are those histories? Do the actions they record bear any semblance to the acts of beings worthy of adoration and praise? When you have offered prayers to them, have they heard you? Have they delivered you, when in trouble? Have they saved you from your sins? Have they changed your hearts? Have they removed your evil tempers, and saved you from your degrading and brutish lusts? By preaching or believing their doctrines, is any man made wiser or better? Do you think that these logs of wood, masses of stone, and uncouth forms of metal, ever made the heavens and the earth? Or that they represent any such beings? Speak!—We despise and defy them.—If they be gods, let them arise and plead their own cause.—Let them do good or evil, that we may see that they have an existence. They do nothing—they can do nothing. They are neither worthy of fear nor adoration. They are senseless; and they that made them, are like unto them; and so are all they that trust in them. They are neither creators nor preservers.—Therefore, *they shall perish from the earth, and be destroyed from under these heavens.*

Never was there a time since the commencement of idolatry in which this declaration was in such a rapid state of fulfilment. Under the missionary system, whole nations have changed or cast away their gods. In almost every part of the globe, and island of the sea, Christian missionaries are proclaiming *the God that made the hea-*

*vens and the earth, and the Christ that redeemed a lost world by his blood:* and false gods and false worship are falling before them. With the truth of God, civilization and happiness go hand in hand;—the savage is rising into man, and the man into a saint. Darkness and cruelty, the inseparable concomitants of idolatry and false worship, are retreating from one strong hold to another, and are able to maintain themselves in none. The decree is gone forth. The Most High has proclaimed,—“Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.”

Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

*London, Sept. 6, 1826.*

## SERMON II.

### THE WORSHIP WHICH GOD REQUIRES FROM MAN.

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JOHN iv. 24.

*Πνευμα ὁ Θεός· και τους προσκυνουντας αυτον, εν πνευματι και αληθειαι δει προσκυνειν.*

“God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

To which may be added, from the preceding verse :—

*Και γαρ ὁ Πατηρ τοιουτους ζητει τους προσκυνουντας αυτον.*

“For the Father seeketh such to worship Him.”

THIS is the first, the greatest, the most sublime, and the most necessary truth that can be presented to the human intellect. It is the basis of all correct theology, and the foundation on which true religion rests. It is properly the first principle of all science, the most interesting to angels and men, and the first to be studied by every intellectual being. Superior to this, wisdom has nothing to teach; and more important than this, men and angels have nothing to learn. It has no need of any formal introduction; and to compare its magnitude and importance with any other subject in the whole compass of knowledge, would be to lessen and degrade

it. As the truth it contains could be taught only by Him who is its subject, so it can be seen only in its own light. The careless and the vicious cannot apprehend it; from such alone it is hidden; but the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err in it; for though hidden from the wise and prudent, it is revealed even to babes.

This great subject, as expressed in the text, contains two distinct propositions: the first relates to God and his NATURE; the second, to the *worship* he requires: from which follows a *corollary*.

I. God is a Spirit, and should be worshipped.

II. They who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.

III. The Corollary; such worshippers God seeks and delights in.

I. God is a Spirit.

The writer of this gospel in another place says, "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," chap. i. 18.

The evangelist seems to intimate, that, previously to the advent of Christ, the supreme Being was not fully known, because not fully revealed; and that Jesus gave that plenary revelation which was necessary to complete and perfect whatever had gone before. Now, simple and obvious as it may seem, have we in the whole oracles of God besides a parallel text to this? Where, except in our text, is this saying, or one substantially the same, GOD is a SPIRIT? It is not in the *law*, it is not in the *prophets*, it is not in the Jewish commentators, and it has no parallel among the wise men of Greece or Rome. It is a declaration of God that was never made before, and contains an application or practical use of that declaration which, till now, was not fully understood, either by Jew or Gentile. On this

saying the pure spiritual fabric of the church of Christ has been built ; and it has been, continues, and will be the touchstone by which true from spurious Christianity, pure from corrupt worship, shall be distinguished, to the end of time. It has distinguished the simple worship of God, as instituted by Jesus Christ, from that compound and superstitious service which has been invented by fallen and apostate churches, and practised by worldly and carnally-minded men. It is the hedge of the evangelical law ; and the true model, according to which all right conceptions of God, and all ordinances and acts of divine worship, are to be regulated. This is one of those sayings of Jesus Christ, of which it may be asserted, “Never man spake like this Man.”

When our Lord says, GOD is a SPIRIT, the term God is the first that presents itself to the mind, not the term Spirit. The first is considered as an axiom—there is a Being who is termed  $\delta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ , GOD ; the second designates his nature ; this God is a *Spirit*. The term God, of which the other is spoken, is that which necessarily comes first under consideration.

1. Every being, person, or thing has some peculiar name by which it is known and distinguished, and which is therefore essential to that being, person, or thing. The term God, which is the same as good, or the good Being, is not the name by which this Being can be essentially known and distinguished ; nor does the Greek term  $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  *Theos*, the Latin *Deus*, or the Hebrew אל *El*, אלוה *Eloah*, or אלהים *Elohim*, convey this essentially distinguishing name ; but we have it in what has usually been termed the Tetragrammaton among the Greeks, the name of *four letters* ; and *Shem hamphorash*, the *unutterable* name, among the Jews ; viz., the name יהוה *YEHVEH*, or YEVE, or JEHOVAH. This is the name which the Supreme Being has taken to himself—the

name by which he will be known, and which only is proper to him; all others being only attributes or designations of some qualities or perfections in the divine nature.

2. This name, JEHOVAH, God himself says, is *his name for ever, and his memorial to all generations*, Exod. iii. 15. Though he had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob under other names, such as *God Almighty*, yet by his name JEHOVAH he had not been known unto them, Exod. vi. 3; they had not known the Supreme Being by a name which was peculiarly his own, and which, beyond all others, best expressed his eternity, self-existence, and self-sufficiency. He is what he ever was, and what he ever will be; and he ever will be what he is and was. This name is therefore proper to himself; it shows him in no kind of relation to anything he has made, and is as proper to him as *Adam* or man is to the human being, or any man's own proper name is to himself. This is a subject of considerable importance; and could we know the true pronunciation of the *Tetragrammaton*, it would be pleasing to hear all his children and all his worshippers accosting him by his real name.

3. This Being, by whatsoever name called or known, is usually defined "An immaterial, intelligent, and free Being, of perfect goodness, wisdom, and power; who made the universe, and continues to support it, as well as to govern and direct it by his providence." By his immateriality, intelligence, and freedom, he is distinguished from fate, nature, destiny, necessity, chance, soul-of-the-world, and from other fictitious beings acknowledged by the Stoics, Polytheists, and Spinosists, as well as by all other sorts of atheists, idolaters, bad Jews, and spurious Christians. [*See the preceding Discourse.*]

4. This Jehovah is a Being of such infinite perfec-



tions, that no defect in him can be imagined ; nor can we conceive anything that might raise, improve, or exalt his nature. Because he is an infinite fulness, nothing can be added ; and because he fills all space—the heavens and the earth, and inhabits eternity—nothing can be taken away from him. Whatever exists must necessarily be his creature, or an effect produced by him, the supreme first Cause. As he is independent and self-sufficient, he needs nothing that he has made : from eternity he existed without any other kind of being ; and when he chose to create innumerable beings, of endlessly varied natures, and possessing various degrees of relative perfection, he still continued to be the same independent Being, all others deriving their existence and support from him.

5. A great philosopher of our own country contemplates God, not as is usually done, from his perfections, his nature, existence, &c., but from his dominion. The word GOD he thinks to be a relative term, and has regard to servants. It is true, it is used to denote a being eternal, infinite, and absolutely perfect ; but a being with all these attributes, without dominion, would not be GOD. *Lord* and *God* are frequently interchanged ; but every *Lord* is not *God*. It is the dominion of a spiritual being or Lord that constitutes GOD ; *true dominion*, true GOD ; *supreme dominion*, the *supreme* GOD ; *feigned dominion*, the *false* GOD. He governs all things that exist, and knows all things that are to be known : he is not eternity nor infinity, but he is eternal and infinite. He is not duration nor space ; but he endures always, is present everywhere ; and by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes the very things duration and space ; eternity and infinity. [*See the preceding Discourse.*]

6. This self-existent Being is usually considered either

absolutely or relatively ; absolutely, as he is in his own nature ; relatively, as he stands related to his creatures, and as he is considered by his worshippers. To define the essence of this Being is wholly impossible. All definitions of God are nominal, not real ; not what the nature of that self-existent Being is which we call God, but what we mean by the word God.

7. Every worshipper of God allows that he worships that self-existent Being, for no other reason but because he is God ; that is, because he is Lord and Sovereign. A perfect being, without dominion, would be only an object of contemplation and admiration, not of worship ; for worship implies a payment of homage, and acknowledgment of subjection, which, were there no dominion, cannot be due ; and is due only in proportion to the dominion. The holiness, power, and goodness of the divine nature, are the attributes which the mind particularly contemplates, in all its considerations of this self-existent and eternal Being.

8. But to assist us in all such contemplations, and to prevent us from forming any gross conceptions of this Being, our Lord says, *He is a Spirit*. He is nothing like man, nothing like matter, nothing like any of the creatures that he has made. For although he be a Spirit, and have created innumerable spirits, yet he has nothing in common with them. He is a SPIRIT, an impalpable substance of a widely different kind. As far as his nature transcends all created nature, so far does his spirituality transcend the spirituality of all created spirits.

9. Spirit is defined “an uncompounded, immaterial substance.” Let us not be alarmed at the word substance, which many confound with matter. Substance is subsistence, whether material or immaterial ; but spirit is immaterial substance, and consequently uncompounded

and indivisible. And from the ineffable spirituality of the divine nature, we can at once conceive that he has no parts: he is unlimited, infinite, and eternal. He cannot be seen by the eye, but he may be perceived by the mind. He is not palpable to the hand, but he may be felt by the soul. By his mighty working, the most powerful and salutary changes may be wrought in the mind, which it at once perceives to be supernatural, and which, from the holiness of the effects, it knows to be the work of God. This mental feeling or perception of the divine working our Lord compares to the action of the wind: "The wind bloweth where it listeth; ye hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8. Thus the mind, which is a spirit, is sensible of the operations of the divine Spirit upon it; but it is the effect of the divine influence, and not the divine nature, that the soul feels. God is never known *per se*, but is perceived only by his operations.

10. The Jews were gross in their conceptions of the divine nature, and the Samaritans were yet more so. The former supposed that God could not be worshipped but at Jerusalem, and with no other rites and ceremonies than those commanded by the law, and superadded by the elders: the Samaritans, without any correct idea of this nature, for they worshipped they knew not what, confounded him with idols, and paid him an idolatrous worship: to instruct and correct both, Christ tells them that God is a SPIRIT; that neither in that mountain (Gerizzim), nor yet at Jerusalem, the Father should be exclusively worshipped; but the true worshippers, who worshipped in spirit and in truth, should worship God acceptably in any place and in all circumstances.

11. But though our Lord might intend by this declaration to wean off the Jews from their superstitious

attachment to rites and ceremonies, in the performance of which they placed all their hopes of God's favour, both in time and eternity, yet it is probable that the principal idea which he wished to implant, and which he wished to convey by the term spirit, as applied to God, was that of inspiring energy; and it is in reference to this that he uses the similitude taken from the wind, referred to above. And it is worthy of remark, that the word, as expressed in three of the principal languages of the world, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, implics and includes in it the idea of inspiration, breathing in, or communicating a divine afflatus. I call these the principal languages of the universe, as the first contains the revelation of God to the Jews; the second, the revelation of God to the Gentiles; and in the third, the doctrines of divine revelation were most generally diffused, especially through Europe and the isles of the sea.

12. The word in Hebrew for Spirit is רוח *ruach*, from רָוַח *ravach*, "he breathed."

In Greek it is πνευμα, from πνεω, "to breathe."

And in Latin, *Spiritus*, from *spiro*, "I breathe."

And it is not less remarkable, that where God is asserting his own eternity, Rev. i. 8, he says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; which is, and which was, and is to come, the Almighty." And this he repeats, ver. 11, and in chap. xxi. 6, and xxii. 13. As these letters, A and Ω, *alpha* and *omega*, form the first and last of the Greek alphabet, so God is the first and the last, from eternity to eternity; and is an infinite Spirit, inspiring and giving life to all things; for these two letters conjoined form the Greek verb αω, "I breathe," and are used by the supreme Being, as if he had said, "I am the universal Spirit, speaking all things into existence, and by my all-inspiring energy preserving everything in being." And when these observations are

collated with the account given in Gen. ii. 7, of the creation of man : “ And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul ;” we shall be convinced yet more of their propriety. The first life was produced by an inspiration of God ; the first human soul was the effect of this inspiration ; and the inspiring energy of God, which produced this immortal spirit, continues to sustain its existence. And that new life which is promised in the gospel, is the effect also of divine inspiration ; for “ if a man be not born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” “ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Of the nature and necessity of such a change, this most important saying of Jesus Christ puts us continually in mind :—*GOD is a SPIRIT ; in HIM ye live, move, and have your being ; by his Spirit ye are quickened ; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding !* God, therefore, assumes this character, not only to show his simple, uncompounded nature, and his all-pervading energy ; but especially to manifest himself to man as the inspirer and maintainer of life, that men might know they must live in continual commerce with their Maker, and that without him they can do nothing. Well may the truly devout say :—

“ O, may I *breathe* no longer than I *breathe*  
*My soul to him, who gave my soul to be ;*  
 With all its infinite of prospect fair.”

II. The second proposition is, They who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

This divides itself into two heads : First, The worship must be a spiritual worship. Secondly, It must be regulated according to truth.

First, It must be spiritual ; under the law there were many carnal ordinances—a very extensive and expensive sacrificial system, accompanied by various workings and a multitude of burdensome rites and ceremonies ; these were only representations of good things to come, and were not the truth. Our Lord therefore may intimate by this saying, that the Mosaic dispensation was about to end, and that of his gospel to take place, in which all types and ceremonies were to have their accomplishment, because the truth represented by them was now come.

The worship itself must be spiritual ; performed under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of the Almighty.

The heart must be engaged in it ; without which no religious act can be acceptable in the sight of God. Those who draw near with their lips only are an abomination to him. But before we proceed farther in this consideration, it will be necessary to define the term *worship*, in order to see what is intended by it.

1. The word *worship* we retain from our ancient mother tongue, the *Saxon*, *poþſhip*, *worthship*, the state of worth, from *peoþian*, to estimate ; what is becoming and worthy—what is suitable to the dignity, majesty, and purity of the Creator. The mind must conceive aright of him, estimate him in his excellence, in his state of worth or dignity, as being infinitely excellent, and so, worthy of the adoration of all his creatures. And without this due conception, this proper estimation of the dignity of the divine nature, all our acts of worship are mockeries.

2. The word *προσκυβειν proskunein*, used by our Lord, signifies to crouch down as a dog before his master. This creature, beyond all other domestic animals, feels his dependance on his master for support, and gratitude

to him for food and maintenance. When called by his owner, he runs to and prostrates himself before him ; and, with eyes full of inexpressible earnestness, affection, and submission, waits to receive and execute the orders of his master. This is, so far, a true pattern of the worship we owe to God ; it should be humble, submissive, affectionate, prompt, and obedient. A consciousness of dependance—gratitude, for favours received—love, in return for love—and obedience, as expressive of that love and obligation—are essential to true worship. But these are feelings and dispositions which cannot be acquired by any without the divine inspiration.

3. *In spirit*, therefore, does not merely imply that our hearts and souls must be engaged in every act of worship, but it intimates also that these souls must be themselves inspired by the breath of the Almighty. His spirit alone can enlighten our eyes, give us to feel our necessities, raise up strong desires and affections, and lead us to adore worthily, pray fervently, praise gratefully, and obey lovingly ; *without me*, says Jesus, *ye can do nothing* ; and when the natural backwardness of man to all spiritual exertions is considered—when his general forgetfulness of God, and rebellion against him, are taken into question,—how can it be expected that such a creature, with such dispositions, can ever offer to God a pure and holy worship, without the especial and continual *influences of his Holy Spirit* !

4. *In spirit*, must necessarily be opposed to that shameless farrago of senseless rites and ceremonies, by which some apostate or fallen churches have encumbered and disgraced the church of Christ. The Greek and Roman churches have each contributed their mortal share to the contamination of the pure worship of God. Saints and angels,—in the numerous hosts of which are many names of saints never sanctified, and of angels never created,—

have engrossed the affections, while they have distracted the attention of millions of silly men and women, who, leaving the word of God, have taken for divine revelations, the commandments of men ; and thus, have made the word of God of no effect by their traditions. There is scarcely a place of worship on the whole continent of Europe where a person, who has properly contemplated the divine nature, and is acquainted with his Bible, can witness an act of worship worthy the Majesty of God, or any religious acts that can be termed a reasonable service. The Church of Rome, especially, in every country where it either prevails or exists, has so blended a pretended Christian devotion with heathenish and Jewish rites and ceremonies ; two parts of which are borrowed from pagan Rome ; the third, from the Jewish ritual, ill understood, and grossly misrepresented ; and the fourth part, from other corruptions of the Christian system. Nor is the Protestant Church yet fully freed from a variety of matters in public worship which savour little of that simplicity and spirituality which should ever designate the worship of that infinitely pure Spirit who cannot be pleased with anything incorporated with his worship that has not been prescribed by himself, and has not a direct tendency to lead the heart from earth and sensual things to heaven, and that holiness, without which none shall see the Lord. The singing, as it is practised in several places, and the heathenish accompaniments of ORGANS and musical instruments of various sorts, are as contrary to the simplicity of the gospel, and the spirituality of that worship which God requires, as darkness is contrary to light. And if these abuses are not corrected, I believe the time is not far distant when singing will cease to be a part of the divine worship. It is now, in many places, such as cannot be said to be



any part of that worship which is in spirit and according to truth. May God mend it !

The second head contained in this proposition is,—This infinite Spirit should be worshipped IN TRUTH.

We have already seen that this may be considered as partly applying to the cessation of Mosaic rites and ceremonies, which were shadowy representations of the *Truth* that was to be fully revealed under the gospel dispensation. But truth here must have a farther meaning. It is not merely sincerity, in opposition to show and hypocrisy—meaning what we say, and doing what we promise—but it implies also the directions received from God's truth—*Divine Revelation* ; which on this most important subject tells us, “There is no name given under heaven among men, whereby they can be saved, but Jesus Christ ;” and the voice from heaven says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : HEAR HIM !” Now, when we hear him, we hear—“No man cometh unto the Father, but by me ;” and “Whatsoever ye ask of the Father in my name, he will give it unto you.” Hence we learn, that all worship must be directed to God through Christ. It is through his worthiness, and sacrificial merit alone, that we can come to God, or be heard by him. It is through his blood that we have an entrance to the holiest ; for in, or through that blood, we have redemption ; and to be redeemed from death, and saved from our sins, is the grand end of all acts of religious worship. Never were words better calculated to express this sentiment than those in the following collect : “Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the

blessed hope of everlasting life which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen." Without prayer there can be no worship; as no man can expect to receive spiritual help, unless he pray for it; and if he receive not spiritual help, he cannot worship God in the spirit. And we may add, unless he acquaint himself well with the truth—the *Holy Scriptures*, he cannot pray as he ought; as without their direction, he cannot know his wants, nor those promises which insure the blessings which he needs; he must, therefore, at all opportunities, hear them read, preached, and expounded; read them himself with the deepest attention and seriousness; mark every portion that is suited to his state, whether it be a threatening or a promise; learn to know himself, his God, and his Redeemer, his interest and his duty, by all such hearing, reading, and marking; and he must inwardly digest the whole, so that they shall become a species of nourishment to his soul, that he may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and feeling a growing meetness for that eternal life promised in the Scriptures, he may embrace it, and ever hold it fast, that he may never be moved away from the hope of the gospel. Being thus always prepared, he may wait upon the Lord without distraction; and under the influence of the Spirit, and the direction of the *Truth*, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

III. COROLLARY. These alone can worship God acceptably; and our Lord adds, "For the Father seeketh such to worship him." Strange words! This unoriginated, infinite, self-sufficient, all-perfect, and independent Spirit, calls himself our FATHER, teaches us to pray to him under this character, with the most gracious assurances that we shall not pray in vain. He calls himself

our Father, to encourage us to come to him for all the good we need. Prayer is a part of the worship which God expects from his human creatures. "ASK (says he), and you shall receive ; SEEK (says he), and you shall find ; KNOCK (he adds), and it shall be opened unto you." This is the voice of a Father. Now, would any man that had the heart of a parent give his hungry dying child a stone, when he asked for bread ? would he give him a serpent, when he asked for fish ? or would he give him a scorpion, when he entreated for an egg ? surely NO ! And would God, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, do otherwise ? His word says, NO ; His Spirit says, NO ; His Church says, NO ; and his own eternal and loving nature says, NO. God the Father will, for Christ's sake, for his own Name's sake, and for his Truth's sake, give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. Have not the fathers of our flesh cared for us, laboured for us, fed us, clothed us, instructed us, and defended us ? Have they not even risked their lives for us ! And what will not our heavenly *Father* do ? Is it not from Him that all love, all bounty, all affection, all parental tenderness proceed ? And when the streamlets are so abundant, what may not be expected from the fountain—rather from the shoreless, bottomless, inexhaustible OCEAN—of eternal LOVE ! He is seeking for those who pray and adore, seeking for an opportunity to do them good, seeking to save them, to pardon, sanctify, and seal them heirs of eternal life. He is seeking for those who pray and adore ; but where does he find them ? Are you who read such ? Does God, who searches and knows the heart, see in you the ardent sigh, the humble importunate petition, the flowing tear, the penitential pang, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness ? Does he hear from each of you the expression of the whole of

these indescribable feelings,—“Save, Lord, or I perish!” “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee!” “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!” Then, he that was seeking has found you; you are the worshippers whom he has sought; and he is now come to save you with all the power of an eternal life. Let us adore him for his past long-suffering; let us ever implore him for his mercy; let us thank him for his past favours; and let us live a life of loving obedience to him here, that we may live with and praise him for ever and ever! Amen.

Let us for a few moments review the whole.

1. There is a GOD, the Cause of all things, the Fountain of all perfection, and the Source of all being; without parts or dimensions, for he is ETERNAL; filling the heavens and the earth, pervading, governing, and upholding all things, for he is an infinite SPIRIT.

2. This God can be pleased with that only which resembles himself; therefore, he must hate sin and sinfulness; and can delight in those only who are made partakers of the divine nature. And he alone is the great inspirer of the human soul.

3. As all creatures were made by him, so all owe to him reverence and obedience. But to be acceptable to this pure and infinitely wise and holy Spirit, the worship which is offered must be of a spiritual nature; must spring from the heart, through the influence of the Holy Ghost; and it must be in truth; not only in sincerity, but performed according to that *Divine Revelation* which he has given of himself to man.

4. A man worships God when he conceives aright of his majesty and of his mercy. He worships him in spirit, when, under the influences of the Holy Ghost, he brings his understanding to be illuminated, his judgment

to be informed and corrected, his will to be influenced. all the purposes and passions of his heart to be refined and purified ; and he worships him in truth, when every act of his religious life is guided and regulated by his word. They who thus worship God are pleasing to him, live holily and happily, die triumphantly, and shall rise and reign with him gloriously to all eternity.

Reader, This is the portion which God in Christ has intended for **THEE** !

## SERMON III.

### THE PLAN OF HUMAN REDEMPTION.

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GALATIANS iv. 4—7.

4. Ὅτε δε ηλθε το πληρωμα του χρονου, εξαπεστειλεν ὁ Θεος τον υιον αυτου γενομενον εκ γυναικος, γενομενον ὑπο νομον.
  5. Ἴνα τους ὑπο νομον εξαγοραση, ἵνα την υιοθεσιαν απολαβωμεν.
  6. Ὅτι δε εστε υιοι, εξαπεστειλεν ὁ Θεος το Πνευμα του Υιου αυτου εις τας καρδιας ὑμων, κραζον, Αββα, Ὁ Πατηρ.
  7. Ὡστε ουκ ετι ει δουλος, αλλ' υιος· ει δε υιος, και κληρονομος Θεου δια Χριστου.
4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law ;
  5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
  6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
  7. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son ; and if a son then an heir of God through Christ.

THE observations which I am about to make upon these very important passages, I shall introduce with the three following propositions, which have acquired the power of incontrovertible axioms among religious people.

I. God is too wise to err.

II. He is too holy to do wrong.

III. He is too good to be unkind.

I. His wisdom is seen in the order and arrangement of his plans. Confusion is the offspring of folly : order

belongs to wisdom, and invariably proceeds from it. Hence, every work of wisdom must be properly planned, and have proper time for its commencement, and proper place for its establishment. Previously to creation there were neither time nor space ; for time signifies measured and limited duration, and space signifies that in which time has its admeasurement and limitation, and the place in which created beings exist.

Time and space are properly consequences of creation, and could not previously have existed. All was eternity, and this was inhabited by God. The revolutions of the heavenly bodies ascertained time ; the place where created beings exist is space. Without a creation we can have no idea of time ; without created beings we can have no proper idea of space : for what is unlimited space, and what is infinite duration, but eternity ?

Mr. Locke and others say, “ We acquire the idea of time in general, by considering any part of infinite duration as set out by periodical measures : ” but what parts can infinite duration have ? We must have the idea of time, before we can form any conception either of parts or duration. Absolute time, which is considered without relation to bodies, or their motions, is either an accurate expression, or another word for eternity : for time is no other than a mode of duration, marked by certain periods and measures ; but chiefly by the revolution of the planets around the sun, or what is called the revolution and motion of the sun, which is not accurate. Space is generally conceived to have modes of existence, such as distance, capacity, extension, and duration.

When considered in length between two bodies, it is the same as distance.

When considered in length, breadth, and thickness, it is the same as capacity.

When it is considered between the extremities of mat-

ter, which fills the capacity of nature with something solid, tangible, and moveable, it is the same as extension.

And when it is considered as always existing in all or any of the above modes, it is the same as duration.

Absolute space, which is considered without regard to anything external, always remaining the same, being infinite and immoveable, is either a confused idea expressing nearly the same as time, or is here confounded with eternity. I contend, therefore, that both time and space necessarily suppose creation, and, independently of that, convey no accurate idea.

When God by creation had struck time out of eternity, he appears to have divided it into certain portions or periods, each being what the apostle calls here a *πληρωμα* *pleroma*, a full round, or complete revolution in itself. So there was, 1. A *pleroma* for the patriarchal state, the duration of which was about 2,000 years, commencing with the Creation, and extending to the giving of the Law. 2. This was followed by the legal or Jewish *pleroma*, which commenced with the exodus from Egypt, and passed down to the incarnation of Christ, embracing about the same period. And 3. The Christian *pleroma*, which, commencing with the birth of our Lord, probably will include the remainder of time, to the end of the world. It is to this last that the apostle here alludes, *οτε δε ηλθε το πληρωμα του χρονου*. *but when the fulness of the time was come*; when that point arose, in which God had determined to manifest his great designs in the redemption of the world, “he sent forth his Son, made, *γενομενον* (rather *γεννομενον*, *born*), of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,” &c. Thus when the *pleroma* was completed, when the purposed revolution that was to usher in the Messiah arrived,—before which it would have been improper to have introduced him, and after



which it would have been equally improper to have delayed his manifestation,—God's wisdom that cannot err, having laid the plan, brought it to existence by his power and providence.

But it may be asked, If sin entered into the world nearly as soon as the first man was created ; and if, without the incarnation of Christ, its influence could not be counteracted, nor the souls of men saved,—why was the manifestation of the Messiah delayed for nearly 4,000 years ?

1. This is a captious question, meriting little notice, and may be sufficiently answered by the proposition now under consideration,—God is too wise to err. A Being infinitely wise and intelligent, never can do anything either foolish or unnecessary. He does always what is right, and in that time in which it is best to be done. Had the incarnation been necessary before, it would have taken place ; had it been improper then, it would have been delayed. This is sufficient to satisfy the reason and common sense of every candid inquirer.

2. As to the reason why God should have done it then, and not before nor after,—this is hidden in the divine mind, and is probably such as can only be comprehended by himself.

3. But the question is in itself absurd, because it involves subjects that concern the infinite free agency of God alone, and are consequently beyond the comprehension of man. For, as well might it be asked, Why did God delay the creation of the world and man so late, that it took place, according to the best reckonings, only between five and six thousand years ago ? To this I answer, it was all eternity before ; that eternity is an infinite now before God. In whatever point creation had commenced, eternity must have preceded ; and were it only to commence now, an indivisible eternity must

have preceded, being neither less nor more than what it then was. Existence must begin somewhere, and it is equal where that existence commences. There must be an equal eternity before, and an equal eternity after. It is therefore absurd to ask, when we have to do with eternity, Why did not God begin the work of creation ten thousand, a hundred thousand, or millions of millions of years before? There must be a *now* of commencement, and that *now* must be the same, neither sooner nor later, in any point of eternity.

4. But if the question had any just ground to stand on, even in appearance, all its force is destroyed by the consideration that, when sin took place, the promise of redemption was made—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." And Jesus was, from that hour, considered as the sacrifice for sin; for he was "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. And to this very determination do the following Scriptures refer: John xvii. 24: "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Eph. i. 4: "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. i. 18, 20: "Ye were redeemed—with the precious blood of Christ—who was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." And through this divine intention, all the offerings of the patriarchs, and sacrifices of the Jews, had their efficacy; and millions were saved through the blood of the cross, who lived and died some thousands of years before Jesus expired on it. This is a farther proof of the wisdom of God's plans, and that *He is too wise to err*.

II. *He can do nothing wrong*. This rests on his holiness and justice. What he plans must be as holy as it is wise, and as necessary as it is holy; for he can do nothing that is useless. These three points meet in the Incarnation of Christ,—*wisdom, holiness, and what is*

indispensably *necessary*. 1. Nothing but God's *wisdom* could have found it out. 2. Nothing but his *holiness* could have required it ; and 3. So *necessary* was it, that nothing else could have availed for the salvation of the world. These are positions which are capable of the most satisfactory proof, and have been often demonstrated.

III. *He can do nothing that is unkind*. This is founded on his goodness and his mercy. 1. Through his goodness he made man ; and made him capable of union with himself, that he might be happy through his goodness. 2. Everything he does, in the administration of his providence, is good, and manifests his kindness. He sends his rain upon the just and the unjust ; and causes his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good. 3. Everything that he permits to be done, though without a direct tendency in itself to promote the good of his followers, he overrules or counteracts so as to make it work together with his providence and grace, in such a way as to promote the welfare of them that trust in him. Here they may rest satisfied, that whatsoever he does is the best that CAN be done, and is all that SHOULD be done ; being what is just and necessary.

I. All this may be applied to the scheme of human redemption.

1. MAN, being made in union with God, formed a part of the heavenly family.

2. MAN, fallen into sin, lost this union, could be no longer a child of God, nor be entitled to any of the family rights, because no longer a partaker of the Divine nature.

3. GOD purposes to restore man to forfeited rights and privileges ; but in order to this he must bring back his sonship ; but this must be by adoption, as the natural filiation is irrecoverably lost.

4. In order to this, Jesus Christ is born of a woman,

and thus assumes the nature of man; that this nature might be ennobled and dignified by a union with his own.

5. The incarnation of Christ is a mystery that cannot be comprehended by the human mind: how, in the man Christ Jesus, the fulness of the Godhead bodily could dwell, surpasses the power of human reason; but it is not more difficult than the union of the soul and body of man. We believe the latter to be a fact; the former is not less so. Our own power of ratiocination is a proof that we have an immortal spirit. The miracles of Christ prove his indwelling Deity.

6. Whatever he suffered or did, as God manifested in the flesh, was for man; and must have reference to all those who are partakers of human nature: and if it can be proved that the whole human race sprang from one human pair, then the benefits of Christ's incarnation must extend to every human soul. This argument cannot be refuted.

II. But why should Christ suffer?

1. He suffered for man, in consequence of his purpose to redeem man. 2. For this very purpose he became incarnate. 3. He put himself in the place of the whole human race, for the very purpose of suffering in their stead. 4. We have already seen that God can do nothing that is either wrong or useless. 5. As God, he had a right to assume man's nature,—and as Sovereign, to expiate the offences of man by his sufferings in that nature. 6. It was right that he should do so—else he had not done it. 7. It was necessary—for he can do nothing that is useless. 8. By his incarnation and suffering he made an atonement for their sins. 9. It is a maxim in law and justice, that the goods of the spoiler shall recompense the spoiled, and that the nature that transgresses shall either suffer or compensate. On this principle, Christ acted as the representative of, and sub-

stitute for, man : and thus, not only made an atonement for iniquity, but, by his merit, acquired a right for man to be restored to his forfeited privileges, and to be brought back by adoption into the heavenly family. 10. Nothing can be clearer from the Scriptures than that God willed all this : he had a right to do so—it was just to do so—for his will is ever holy, just, and good.

III. In what state was man to render all this necessary ?

(1) He was out of the family, and cut off from all its rights.

(2) He was under the law, under its curse and condemnation, because he had sinned.

(1) He was out of the family.—Having lost the divine image, he could no longer be in the favour of God, and could no longer be considered as a part of that family. And he must be restored to it, in order to regain its rights and privileges. We have already seen that the recovery of his natural filiation was utterly impossible ; and the only way of being restored to the family was by adoption ; and this is so important a point, that it requires a particular consideration.

1. Adoption, *adoptio*, from *ad*, to or into, and *opto*, I choose, called *υιοθεσια* by the Greeks, from *υιου θεου*, the making or acquiring a son, signifies the act of receiving a stranger into a family, and conveying to him all the rights, privileges, and benefits belonging to a natural or legitimate child,—the receiving the child of a stranger into a family where there was none.

2. This did not exist in the Jewish law, it was properly a Roman custom, and among them was regulated by law ; and it is to adoption, as practised among the Romans, that the apostle alludes in this place, as well as in various others in his epistles.

3. Among the ancient Romans, every house had its

altar, its religious rights, and its household gods. All these being considered as most sacred, were ever to be continued in that family; and on this account, if the family were in danger of becoming extinct through want of children, adoption was admitted, that the family and its sacred rites and gods might be preserved. This was one of the laws of the very ancient TWELVE TABLES, so celebrated in the history of ancient Rome. The words, as I find them in Pothier's most accurate edition of the "Pandects of Justinian," are as follows (the reason of the law being set down at large): "*Sacra privata perpetua manento*, "Let private sacred things (or household gods) remain for ever."

4. It may be necessary to introduce the whole passage, though I have given the substance of it above: *Adoptivus originem hanc apud Romanos, fuisse censent doctores; quod cum unaquoque familia, sacra sua privata, focus et aras haberet, de quibus lege xii. Tab. cautum erat, SACRA PRIVATA PERPETUA MANENTO; omni ope nitebantur Romani, ne illa sacra interirent: adeoque, deficiente prole naturali, curabant aliquem per adoptionem in suam gentem et familiam et sacra transire, ut per illam hæc sacra perpetuarentur.—Lib. i., Pandectar, Tit. vii., art. 1, vol. i., p. 24.*

"The learned suppose this to have been the origin of adoption among the Romans: That each family should possess its own private sacred things (or household gods), its hearths and altars, concerning which in the laws of the *Twelve Tables* it was ordered, *Let the private sacred things remain for ever*. The Romans strove by all means to preserve those sacred things from perishing; and therefore, in the failure of natural offspring, they took care that some one should be adopted into the race and family, and the possession of the religious rites of the family, that so these privileges might be perpetuated."

5. When then a child was to be adopted into a strange family, his father took him, and presenting himself and his son before the magistrate, and five witnesses who were Romans, he said, *Mancipo tibi hunc filium qui meus est*, "I emancipate to thee this my son." Then the adopting father, holding a piece of money in his hand, and at the same time taking hold of the son, said, *Hunc ego hominem jure Quiritium meum esse aio, isque mihi emptus est hoc aere*, &c., "I declare this man to be my son according to the Roman law, and he is bought by this money;" and then gave it to the father, as the price of his son, &c.

6. Every Roman father had the right of life and death over his children, even as they had over slaves. In the case of adoption, this right was surrendered by the natural father to the adopting father, and the person adopted entered into this new family, as if it were his own naturally. He took his adopting father's name, and had a legal right, not only to food, raiment, and all the comforts of life, but also to the inheritance, all the relatives of the new family bore the same relation to the adopted, as if they had been naturally his own; and in all privileges, rights, and legal transactions, he was the same as if he had been born in that family.

7. But he was still amenable to the laws, and must be in every respect obedient, attentive to the family honour, and to its interest. In case of rebellion against the parent, he might be put to death; for the adopting father had the same authority over the adopted son as his own natural father had.

8. As a father might disinherit his son, so might the adopting father disinherit the adopted. For it must be considered that the adopted son, while he stood in the state and privileges of a natural child, had no privilege beyond such.

Without extending the parallel further than strictly necessary, we may observe,—

1. That as man had lost all the privileges of his natural filiation, to regain them, he must be received into the family by way of adoption. This was the only mode.

2. This adoption supposes that he is entirely cut off from the old family, having no longer any legal relation to or connexion with it.

3. That he is received into the new family, to be entirely under the rule and government of his adopter; to be employed as he shall choose to employ him; and to be entirely at his disposal in body, soul, and spirit.

4. That as by this transaction he becomes an heir in the new family, so he is to enjoy those privileges while he acts according to the law in that case provided, and to the rules and constitutions of the father's house.

5. That his old consanguinity is now changed. That he is considered of the same blood with the new family, standing no longer in any filial relationship to any other.

6. That he takes the very name of his adopting father, and is to be in every respect conformed to that family.

To apply these more particularly.

1. Man, having sinned against God, ceased to be his son; for in order to constitute filiation, it is essential that the child share the same nature with the father. As God's nature is holy, pure, and perfect, when man sinned, he lost his conformity to this nature; he lost the image of God in which he was created, and became unholy, impure, and imperfect.

2. To restore him, the way of adoption only was left; and that could not have taken place, had not a previous adoption taken place, viz., the adoption of human nature by Jesus Christ; therefore, says the apostle, *in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, born of a woman:*



thus he adopted human nature, our flesh and blood, that he might make proper way for the adopting of our whole nature, flesh and spirit, into the family of God.

3. This adoption therefore supposes, and absolutely requires, that he be cut off from the old stock, and grafted into the new ; leaving behind him all his sins, sinful habits, sinful companions, and sinful dispositions ; being no longer of his old father, the devil, nor in any respect doing his lusts, performing his will, or associating with his followers ; and that, as the old consanguinity is changed, he now stands in relation only to God, holy angels, and holy men ; and that he is bound to maintain in every respect the honour, dignity, and respect of the divine family into which he is adopted.

4. In being adopted by God, he is no longer his own, he is God's right ; body, soul, and spirit, belong to his heavenly Father. He is ever to feel himself absolutely at the disposal of God ; and is bound, if he would enjoy the privileges of the family, to take God's word for the rule of his life, and God's Spirit for the regulator of his heart and affections.

5. And this obedience to the will of the Father, and conformity to the Ruler of the Family, are founded on the state of salvation into which he is brought, and the ineffable privileges to which he has now a right : he is an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ Jesus.

6. That as by this adoption he acquires a new nature, so he has a new name—he is called after God, a son of God, a child of God, an heir of God. But properly the family name is *saint* : all the adopted children are called to be SAINTS ; for holiness becomes God's house and family for ever. Where there is no saintship, there is no adoption, and consequently no heirship, and no inheritance. To this most important part of the adoption the apostle alludes, Rom. viii. 14, *As many as are led by*

*the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, and they receive the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father, ver. 15. And in consequence of this adoption, they are to be conformed to the image of God's Son, ver. 29, who will at last change their vile body, and make even it like unto his glorious body, according to the energy whereby he is able to subdue even all things to himself, Phil. iii. 21. Thus they have the family name, the family nature, and the family privileges; and these are inseparable from each other; for, as one of our nervous writers has said, Every man is either a SAINT or a BRUTE.*

(2) But men were not only out of the family, having neither rights nor hopes, but they were under the LAW.

The law here, though generally understood to signify the Mosaic law, both moral and ritual, more properly means the moral law itself, by which every human being is bound to "love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself." Where this law is written in the heart, universal obedience will be secured. He that loves God, will keep his commandments; he that thus loves his neighbour, will do him no hurt, but, on the contrary, every kind office. On every human soul this law is binding, even naturally considered; for it was the law under which man was made. But the law, as given by the ministry of Moses, explained, enforced, and sanctioned this law; and all its sanctions are summed up in these fearful words: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." To be made under the law, is to be made under the obligation to keep the law; and if broken, the being made under it, signifies to be liable to its curse. As all therefore have broken this law, have sinned against God and against their neighbour, they are cursed of the Lord, are exposed to his wrath, and to everlasting perdition.

Jesus our Lord was incarnated, that he might redeem them that were under the law, *ἵνα εξαγοράσῃ*, that He might buy or purchase them back. This refers to the act of adoption ; the adopting father, as we have seen, laying down a sum of money, and declaring, as the law in that case required, the person adopted to be his son, and to be purchased with that money which he then laid down, and which the natural parent accepted. But the price paid down in this redemption is no less than the blood and life of Christ Jesus ; and to this circumstance St. Peter refers, when he says, “Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot,” 1 Peter i. 18, 19. And therefore they are exhorted to be obedient children, not fashioning themselves according to the former lusts in their ignorance ; but as he who had called (adopted) them was holy, so should they be in all manner of conversation, ver. 14, 15. The wealth of universal nature could not have availed to buy back the souls whose inheritance had been forfeited by being sold under sin. It required that price, all price beyond, to procure the right and privileges of this heavenly adoption for a ruined and lost world.

IV The apostle adds, that now being adopted and made sons, God had sent forth the spirit of his Son into their hearts ; and here he shows the privileges of the state into which they were brought.

In order to accomplish man's salvation, God sent forth his Son, *εξαπεστειλεν ὁ θεος τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ*—he sent him from himself—him who was the *Eternal Logos*, that lay in his bosom. He sent him forth to be incarnated by the energy of his own Spirit, in the womb of the Virgin ; and when he had said, done, and suffered all that became him

as the Messiah and the Redeemer of man, and had purchased eternal redemption for us, and appointed his apostles and their successors to proclaim repentance and remission of sins in his name, and had sent forth his Spirit to give energy to their words; then, to as many as turned from their sins by repentance, and laid hold on the sacrificial offering of Christ by faith, that same Spirit he hath sent forth (*εξαπεστειλεν*—sent it from his Son Jesus, as Jesus was sent forth from himself), attesting their redemption, to every penitent and believing soul which he had purchased by his blood.

It is not therefore a heavenly or Christian disposition of the heart, from which the believer collects the evidence of his salvation, and through that infers its certainty; it is from the Spirit of God himself, a Spirit as truly sent forth to bear this witness as Jesus was sent forth to purchase the blessing by his passion and death. And this Spirit and his testimony Jesus Christ had particularly promised, John xiv. 16, 17, and characterizes him as the Spirit of truth, that proceeds from the Father, and should testify of him, John xv. 26; for such matters as these were of too great importance to be left to the conjectures of men; as some would be liable to bear their own testimony that they were in the divine favour, to whom God had witnessed no such thing.

This adoption is manifested to believers *two* ways:—

I. NEGATIVELY; and II. POSITIVELY.

I. NEGATIVELY. Showing that those circumstances are absent which, if present, would necessarily disprove it.

1. By the removal of their guilt—giving them ease and peace of conscience.

2. By taking away their darkness, and diffusing throughout their souls his heavenly light.

3. By removing their burdensome, miserable sense of guilt; so that they no longer feel self-condemnation, be-

yond which the soul cannot suffer an evil more distressing on this side eternity. Hence they feel no longer that dreadful apprehension of God's wrath, that fearful looking for a fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries.

II. POSITIVELY. Showing that those circumstances are present, the presence of which necessarily proves it.

1. The Holy Spirit is sent forth to witness with their spirit. He is to bear his testimony where it is absolutely necessary—where it can be properly discerned—where it can be fully understood—and where it cannot be mistaken, viz., in their hearts; or, as St. Paul says, Rom. viii. 16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit." The Spirit of God with the spirit of man—Spirit with spirit—intelligence with intelligence—the testimony given and received by the same kind of agency. A spiritual agent in a spiritual substance.

2. This witness is not borne in their passions, nor in impression made upon their imagination; for this must be from its very nature doubtful and evanescent: but it is borne in their understanding, not by a transitory manifestation, but continually; unless a man, by sins of omission or commission, grieve that Divine Spirit, and cause him to withdraw his testimony, which is the same thing as the divine approbation. And God cannot continue to the soul a sense of his approbation, when it has departed from the holy commandment that was given to it. But even in this case, the man may return by repentance and faith to God, through Christ, when pardon will be granted, and the witness restored.

3. Wherever this Spirit comes, it bears a testimony to itself. It shows that it is the Divine Spirit by its own light, and he who receives it is perfectly satisfied of this. It brings a light, a power, and conviction, more full, more clear and more convincing to the understanding and

judgment than they ever had, or ever can have, of any circumstance or fact, brought before the intellect. The man knows that it is the Divine Spirit, and he knows and feels that it bears testimony to the state of grace in which he stands.

4. So convincing and satisfactory is this testimony, that a man receiving it is enabled to call God HIS FATHER, with the utmost filial confidence. Surprised and convinced, he cries out at once, “Abba, Father! My Father! My Father!” Having as full a consciousness that he is a child of God as the most tenderly beloved child has of his filiation to his natural parent. He has the *πληρωφορια πιστεως*, the full assurance of faith—the meridian evidence that puts all doubts to flight.

5. And this, as was observed above, continues—for it is the very voice of the in-dwelling Spirit; for *κραζον*, “crying,” is not only the participle of the present tense, denoting the continuation of the action; but, being neuter, it agrees with *το πνευμα του υιου αυτου*, the SPIRIT of his Son—so it is the Divine Spirit which continues to cry, *Abba, Father!* in the heart of the true believer. And it is ever worthy to be remarked, that when a man has been unfaithful to the grace given, or has fallen into any kind of sin, he has no power to utter this cry. The Spirit is grieved and has departed, and the cry is lost! No power of the man’s reason, fancy, or imagination can restore this cry. Were he to utter the words with his lips, his heart would disown them. But, on the other hand, while he continues faithful, the witness is continued; the light, and conviction, and the cry are maintained. It is the glory of this grace that no man can command this cry, and none can assume it. Where it is, it is the faithful and true witness; where it is not, all is uncertainty and doubt.

But this is not the only privilege of the godly: though

by it they hold communion with God, yet it is continually in effect saying, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest." For they are begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by faith, through the power of God, unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 3—5. Hence says the apostle in the text, "If sons, then heirs."

The sonship or adoption we have already seen ; the heirship now follows. An inheritance may be acquired three several ways : 1. By purchase. 2. By gift. 3. By natural right. In this last way, the children of the family only can inherit—they must be children, either natural and legal, or adopted, in order to have this right.

1. As the inheritance mentioned here must be of infinite value, it cannot be purchased ; and the persons in question, being all sinners, and having come short of the glory of God, have nothing to pay.

2. It cannot be acquired by gift ; for the persons of whom we speak have sinned, and are under the curse of the law ; and God being infinitely one, and all his attributes in absolute harmony, he can do nothing by mercy and bounty, that has not the full approbation of his holiness and justice,

3. The inheritance by natural or adoptive right is that alone which can be intended here ; hence the apostle says in a parallel text, Rom. viii. 17, "If children, then heirs." And in the text, the apostle, reasoning on their adoption, says, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant (*δουλος*, a *slave*), but a son." The slavery and disgrace of the sinful state were now ended ; and, being received into the heavenly family, they were ennobled by the admission, and enriched by the inheritance. The children of the family alone have a right to the paternal

inheritance ; none can inherit that have not this family right ; hence no soul can ever obtain heaven that is not born of God. Vain, therefore, is the expectation of heaven when we come to die, if we have not formed a part of the family of God while in life.

But it may be necessary to speak more particularly on the nature of this inheritance. It is generally considered the state of eternal glory ; which implies three things :—1. An absence of all suffering, pain, sin, and evil. 2. The presence of all good, both of the purest and most exalted kind. And, 3. The complete satisfaction of all the desires of the soul, at all times, and through eternity, without the possibility of decrease on the one hand, or of satiety on the other, or of any termination of the existence of the receiver or the received. This is ineffably great and glorious ; but the apostle exceeds all this by saying, *an heir of God*. It is, therefore, not heaven merely ; it is not the place where no ill can enter, and where pure and spiritual good is eternally present ; it is not merely a state of endless blessedness in the regions of glory ; it is **GOD HIMSELF**—God in his plenitude of glories—God, who, by the eternal communications of his glories, meets every wish, and satisfies every desire of a deathless and imperishable spirit, which he has created for himself, and of which himself is the only portion. To a soul composed of infinite desires, what would the place or state called heaven be, if God were not there ! God, then, is the portion of the soul, and the only portion by which its infinite powers can be satisfied. How wonderful is this lot ! A child of corruption, lately a slave of sin and heir of perdition—tossed about with every storm of life—in afflictions many, and privations oft—having perhaps scarcely a place to lay his head—and at last prostrated by death, and mingled with the dust of the earth—but



now, how changed ! The soul is renewed in glory—the body fashioned after the glorious human nature of Jesus Christ, and both joined together in an indestructible bond, clearer than the moon, brighter than the sun, and more resplendent than all the heavenly spheres ; for having conquered and triumphed in the church militant, it is now sat down with Jesus on his throne, as he, having overcome, is sat down with the Father on the Father's throne. Hallelujah ! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth ! And his children, his followers, and confessors, shall reign with him for ever and ever ! Amen !

V As God never does anything without a reason and a proper object, so he concludes this wonderful display of his mercy to sinners in their adoption and glorification, by adding *δια Χριστου*, through Christ—for Christ's sake—on Christ's account ; intimating that this is done through and for HIM. That no other consideration could have been a sufficient reason why he should have sent forth his Son, and why this Son should have suffered and died.

This incarnation, passion, and death have amply justified the divine wisdom in the plan, and the divine power and goodness in the execution of it. The glory, also, that shall be revealed in the redeemed of the Lord ; the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory which those shall enjoy who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; who have followed Christ in the regeneration, and been faithful unto death ;—all, all manifest the power and mercy of God, *through Christ*.

Add to this, the glory that shall redound to the name of God and the Lamb throughout eternity on this account ; the wonderful, and to us now ineffable, displays that shall be made of the holiness, justice, goodness,

mercy, and long-suffering of God, all exercised in the work of redemption ;—the astonishing mystery of Providence, which has conducted the whole scheme of salvation, through the Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations, to the end of the world, which shall then be unravelled ; all seeming contradictions reconciled ; all apparently insulated operations connected in the one great whole. The discovery in what degrees and manners the Divine energy counter-worked the spirit of evil that was in the world, and preserved man in a salvable state ; and how, for the accomplishment of his most gracious purposes in the salvation of a lost world, he raised one and depressed another, turning the nations upside down ; ever causing all things to work together for good to them that loved him. The wonders of creation, the wonders of providence, and the wonders of grace, all produced, guided, governed, and directed by this sovereign CHRIST ; and notwithstanding the malevolence of Satan and his angels, the opposition and gainsaying of wicked men, and the evil produced by the unfaithfulness of those who professed to be his friends, they shall see all resulting, here, in glory to God in the highest, peace and good will to men ; and, in the other world, issuing in the eternal honour of him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father : to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen !

Thus, then, the fulness of all times prepares for and introduces the fulness of the manifestation of God through his Christ by the eternal Spirit, which shall continue through that duration that is unlimited by time, and which is inhabited by Jehovah himself.

These are subjects, the full discovery and contemplation of which by immortal spirits, exalted and

sublimed in all their powers, cannot fail to afford ineffable satisfaction and delight. Besides, the farther manifestations of God in all the perfections of his nature—each perfection being infinite, and infinitely glorious, shedding endlessly its effulgence upon the beatified spirit, penetrating it by its ardours, and imbuing it with its wisdom, holiness, and truth, must be a source of inexhaustible gratification and happiness ! All this, and ten thousand thousand times more than this, is implied in being HEIRS OF GOD ! To know the rest, we must die ; and to be qualified for the enjoyment, we must die in the Lord. Even so, Lord Jesus !

From the positions laid down in the preceding discourse, it appears,

1. That the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of GOD, are intimately concerned and energetically employed in the work of human redemption.

2. And that this was absolutely necessary from the fallen state and wretched condition of the human race.

3. That it required the adoption of the nature of man, by the ever-blessed Redeemer, in order that he might be qualified, as Mediator and Redeemer, to make a sacrifice for sin.

4. That man, having broken the law of God, and being under the curse, could have been redeemed in no other way.

5. That man, in order to be saved, must be transplanted from the family of the old Adam, and be incorporated by adoption into that of the new Adam ; and thus, being made a child of GOD, he becomes in consequence an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

6. That in consequence of this adoption, he is no longer his own, nor at his own disposal ; but belongs entirely to Him from whom he has received the adoption.

7. That as he bears in consequence a new name, so he receives a new nature, with new relations, connexions, &c.

8. That he becomes entitled to the heavenly inheritance, according to the law of his adoption: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "He that endureth to the end shall be saved; and he that overcometh will I give to sit down with me on my throne, as I have overcome, and sat down with the Father upon the Father's throne."

9. That as the natural child, by rebellion against the father, and treason against the state, might not only forfeit his adoption, and be disinherited, but also lose his life; so the spiritually adopted, who was a branch even in the true vine, may be cut off, if it bring forth no fruit, and be cast into the fire and be burned. So that, though a natural son must be, in reference to his natural father, a son for ever, yet an adopted son is widely different, as he is a son, not naturally, but according to law; and when he breaks the conditions of his adoption, becomes disinherited, unfiliated, and cast out of the family. So, once a son, is not a son for ever; and once in a state of grace, does not imply an infallible necessity of continuance.

10. That when a penitent, believing soul is adopted into the heavenly family, his sins are all blotted out, his nature changed, and he is assured of the present state of grace in which he stands, 1. By the removal of his guilt and condemnation. 2. By the direct witness of God's Spirit that he is received into the heavenly family, and is become a son of God.

11. That of such solemn importance is this testimony, that all the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity join in it; for the text says, *Because ye are sons* (i. e., by this gracious adoption), God (the Father) *hath sent forth the*

SPIRIT (the HOLY GHOST) of *his* SON (the LORD JESUS CHRIST) *into your heart, crying, Abba, Father!* so that in the mouth of these three heavenly Witnesses every word may be established.

12. That the privileges of the adopted children, if they continue faithful, are great and glorious beyond comprehension ; for they are heirs, not merely of the kingdom of heaven, but of GOD HIMSELF ; who alone is, and can be, the adequate portion of the immortal spirit for ever.

13. That all this adoption, its concomitant blessedness and eternal glory, are by and through CHRIST JESUS ; it being only through his incarnation, passion, and death, that the soul can be saved, and God and man reconciled.

14. That no soul profits by Jesus Christ who does not receive in this world redemption in his blood ; and that this redemption necessarily implies, 1. The breaking of the power of sin, so that it has no longer dominion over them. 2. The removal of the guilt of sin ; so that their consciences no longer condemn them. 3. The purification of their hearts from all evil tempers, passions, and appetites ; so that they can love God with all their hearts, and worthily magnify his name, and love their neighbour as themselves.

15. That as every man by nature and practice is under the curse of the law, which he has broken ; so he is in a state of the utmost danger ; for should he die before he receives the adoption, his soul must perish everlastingly.

16. That time is uncertain ; that above all things in the compass of universal nature, it is the least under human control ; that no man can either arrest or treasure up its moments ; that when once past, it is irrecoverably lost ; and this loss may be accompanied with that of an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

17. That while it is called to-day, every man should hear the voice of the Son of God, who is now knocking at the door of every human heart, and crying, Come unto ME, all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

18. That he who turns from his sins—deplores them with a penitent heart, and believes on Jesus as having been incarnated for him, and as having suffered and died in his stead, trusting only in the infinite merit of his blood, shall, as surely as Christ hath suffered for sinners, receive the remission of his sins, and a right to the tree of life, and to that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

Wherefore, as the Spirit and the Bride say, Come !

Let him that heareth say, Come !

And let him that is athirst, Come.

And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely !

He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly ! Amen. Even so, COME ! LORD JESUS !

## SERMON IV.

### GOD'S WILLINGNESS TO SAVE ALL MEN.

*A Discourse on Behalf of the Wesleyan Missions, preached at Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, May 2, 1824.*

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1 ΤΙΜΟΘΗΥ ii. 3—6.

3. *Τουτο γαρ καλον και αποδεκτον ενωπιον του Σωτηρος ημων Θεου*
  4. *'Ος παντας ανθρωπους θελει σωθηναι, και εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας ελθειν.*
  5. *Εις γαρ Θεος, εις και Μεσιτης Θεου και ανθρωπων. Ανθρωπος Χριστος Ιησους*
  6. *'Ο δους εαντον αντιλυτρον υπερ παντων, το μαρτυριον καιροισ ιδιουσ.\**
3. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour :
  4. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.
  5. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus :
  6. "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

IN these and the preceding verses, the apostle enjoins a most important duty, PRAYER, for all sorts, states, and conditions of men ; and this he recommends by motives and arguments the strongest that can be conceived. "I will, therefore, that supplications, prayers, intercessions,

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\* I give the text in the original, because this is frequently referred to in the course of the Sermon.

and giving of thanks, be made for all men ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Prayer for the pardon of sin, and for the obtaining the necessary supplies of grace, and continual protection from God—with gratitude and thanksgiving for mercies already received—are duties which our sinful and dependant state renders absolutely necessary. That intercourse between God and the soul, which constitutes acquaintance with him, is essential to religion and piety. It is a good thing in itself ; it argues a heart dependant on God, and conscious of its dependance ; and it is acceptable to God, because, as it springs from, so it leads to him ; and when it is exercised in behalf of others, it is the means of begetting and extending charity, humanity, and benevolence ; and God crowns it with the blessings for which it is exercised. For these reasons it must be good ; and all good in principle and practice is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

But the words which I have particularly selected, lead to subjects which constitute the basis of all true religion ; and I shall beg leave to introduce them with some general remarks.

1. All institutions, whether human or divine, are founded on certain principles, which give direction and efficiency to those institutions.

2. These principles spring from the reason, propriety, or necessity, that such institutions should be formed ; that such principles should not only be their basis, but ramify themselves through all the rules and regulations formed for the proper conducting of such institutions.

3. These institutions are formed to promote or accom-



plish a particular end ; and such an end as justifies the motives, and sanctions the means and energies, which are required to be brought into action for their accomplishment.

If the institution be divine, it is founded on the perfections of God, and must necessarily partake of his wisdom, his goodness, holiness, and truth. He wills it, because he sees it to be right and proper. His will revealed, is the expression of his ineffable wisdom, holiness, goodness, and truth. Whatever he wills must be right and just in itself, and consequently acceptable to all the attributes and perfections of his nature.

RELIGION is the institution of God ; it expresses his will, it manifests his perfections ; and as it concerns man, for whose sake alone the institution itself was formed and exists, it strongly points out the benevolence of its Author ; because it is framed for the present and eternal good of the human race.

In the verses before us, the apostle lays down the principles of this institution—the end which it proposes—and the means to be employed for the accomplishment of this end.

The divine purpose is first summarily declared :—

I. God wills that all men should be saved.

II. And in order to this, that they should come to the knowledge of the truth.

The TRUTH, which is to be known and acknowledged, is next produced in its essential principles.

(1) There is one GOD.

(2) There is one MEDIATOR between God and men.

(3) This Mediator is particularly characterized as the MAN CHRIST JESUS.

(4) What he did as Mediator is next declared : He gave himself a ransom for all. And,

(5) This system of truth is to be testified to men in due and proper times, that they may acknowledge it, and be finally saved. Of these in order.

I. The purpose of God declared: He wills that all men should be saved. This will or decree is founded on the following principles. 1. He is the *Creator* of all. 2. He made of one flesh and blood all the nations of men, to dwell on the face of the whole earth. 3. He made man in his own image and likeness, that he might be happy. 4. In this original purpose and creating act, he had in view all the posterities of that one human pair which he created. None were created but *Adam* and *Eve*; all the rest came by natural generation from those two. There was no distinction of original families, created at different times, or for different purposes; two persons only were created, and whatever was designed for them was necessarily designed for the whole of their posterity, all of whom were seminally included in this first and only created pair; being properly and physically a part of themselves, and continued partakers of their being. And as God intended that man should spring from man after this creation, so he considered them as one stock, one family, of which himself was the Father and the Head; and however he might in his Providence scatter them over the earth, assign them different habitations, and different bounds to those habitations, yet, in reference to their immortal spirits, and their eternal states, he made no distinction; but, as declared here, willed the salvation of all; for *all men* necessarily takes in the whole posterity of the first pair, and that posterity is a continuation and extension of the being of the human stock. It cannot appear strange, therefore, that God should will all men to be saved; for this necessarily follows from his willing the salvation of any; for that nature has not been divided, and every portion of it falls

equally under the merciful regards of the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

When God purposed the creation of man, he willed his happiness ; and therefore gave him such a kind of being, endued with such capacities and perfections, as could be brought into intimate communion with himself, and were capable of receiving such influences or emanations from the divine perfections, as to constitute an incredible sum of intellectual happiness. When man sinned, and lost by transgression that righteousness and true holiness which constituted the image of God in which he was created, and so lost his happiness, and became sinful and miserable ; God, who is an invariable source of benevolence toward his intelligent offspring, willed his salvation, which implies his deliverance from that state of darkness, sinfulness, and misery into which he had fallen ; his restoration to the Divine favour, by being again made partaker of the Divine image ; and, consequently, his restoration to that state of happiness which he had lost by sin. Therefore, his willing the salvation of all men is only a consequence and revealed expression of that will or divine determination, that the human creature which he had designed to make should be a happy being. And as he was originally happy, because he was holy, so God designed to restore him to holiness, that he might re-possess that happiness which was his portion in the beginning of the creation of God. Whatsoever new forms this design might assume, or through whatsoever new circumstances it was necessary to be manifested, it was still essentially the same in itself, and invariable with regard to its object.

II. But in order that this design might be accomplished, it was necessary that it should be revealed ; and that God, its Author, should be glorified, it was necessary that he should be made known ; and that MAN, its object,

should be duly affected by it, it was requisite that his state, danger, and obligation should be fully declared; and this has been done by the Spirit of God in Moses, in the prophets, and in the writers of the New Testament. In these, the rightcousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; God is made known to man; and man is brought to an acquaintance with himself. This revelation contains the only system of pure theology,—the only rational account of the being and perfections of God—of good and evil—of justice and injustice—of the immortality of the soul—of a future state—of the general resurrection—of what worship God requires—and of the way in which man may be restored to the favour and image of God. The outlines of these important doctrines were revealed in the OLD Testament; the particulars and fulness are brought to light by the NEW. This revelation is termed the TRUTH; and the New Testament particularly, the truth of God, and the truth of the Gospel.

TRUTH is the contrary to FALSITY. Truth has been defined the conformity of notions to things—of words to thoughts; it declares the thing that IS, and AS IT IS. Whereas falsity, in all its acceptations, is that which is not—what is pretended to be a fact, but either is no fact, or is not represented as it really is.

The revelation of God to man, in reference to his salvation, is THE TRUTH, the WHOLE truth, and NOTHING BUT the truth. It bears a strict conformity to the perfections of the Divine nature. It inspires such notions as are conformable to the things of which they are the mental ec-types; and describes its subjects by such words as are conformable to the thoughts they represent.

The revelation of God is the mind of God made known to men; and the mind is not truer to itself than

the Inspired Writings are to the mind and purpose of God.

Truth is sometimes put in opposition to what is imperfect, emblematical, and representative ; so, in these words of the Evangelist, "The LAW was given by Moses, but grace and TRUTH came by Jesus Christ," John i. 17. The Mosaic law was a representative system ; it was the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image, Heb. x. 1. The Gospel was the substance ; in it all the outlines are filled up—the representations and types of the Law fulfilled by the exhibition of their realities. The Law made nothing perfect ; it pointed out by shadows and similitudes those better things which were yet to come ; and thus it was the truth,—the fulfilment of the sacrificial system, which offered only representative victims ; but the Gospel brought in and exhibited the true Sacrifice, that Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Now this truth contains especially the following grand fundamental principles.

(1) There is one God. There is one self-existing, infinite, eternal Being, possessed of all possible perfections, and of each in an infinite manner. An eternity of perfections ; and each perfection absolutely so. He is so perfect that no perfection is wanting ; and so absolutely perfect, that no perfection can be added. This God is the Good Being : the Fountain of Goodness—the Source of blessedness. As evil is a privation and imperfection, it cannot exist in him. It has been brought into the creation ; it is not of him : though he permits it, he has not produced it.

" No evil can from him proceed ;  
'Tis only suffered, not decreed :  
As darkness is not from the sun,  
Nor mount the shades till he is gone.'

As he is infinite, omniscient, absolute, and eternal; he can be but ONE; for there cannot be TWO infinities, nor TWO eternals. There can be but one that inhabits eternity—there can be but ONE who filleth all things; and who is the Creator, Possessor, and Preserver of all. This is the first principle of truth, and is the foundation of all religion, all science, all wisdom, and all that can be called TRUTH.

This most august and most perfect of all Beings, and the source whence all existence is derived, is here termed *Σωτηρ ἡμῶν Θεός*, *our Saviour God*—the God who saves man—and the only Being who can save: for the salvation of a lost world is a work which an all-powerful and infinitely good God alone can effect. And such is his goodness, such his love to man, that he assumes this character, and will be known by this name. In this character fallen man needs him most; and in this character he is most prominently exhibited in his own word. He that cometh to him (professeth to worship him), must know that HE IS:—that he is the sole author of existence; and because he is good, and the saving God, he is the Redeemer of them that diligently seek him. They seek him in order to be saved; and they have salvation in consequence of seeking him: which is a reward or recompence, not of debt, but of grace; for God the Saviour does all things for his own name's sake.

There are characteristic attributes which now belong to God, that are not essential to his nature. He is merciful; but before the fall of man, this could not have been one of his attributes: in like manner, he is long-suffering—he is the forgiver of iniquity, transgression, and sin; in a word, he is GOD our SAVIOUR. But though all these spring from his infinite goodness, which ever was, and must be, an essential attribute of his nature, yet it was only in consequence of sin entering into the

world, that his innate essential goodness became necessary to be expressed by these manifestations, and their concomitant acts. Man is a sinner ; and therefore he needs a Saviour. Man has destroyed himself ; but in God is his help. Man cannot give a ransom for his own soul—but this saving God has found out a ransom.

(2) The second principle mentioned by the apostle, as contained in that truth which is necessary to the salvation of the world, is, “ There is one MEDIATOR between God and men.”

The word *Mediator* (Μεσιτης) signifies a middle person : one that stands between two parties, either for the sake of introducing them to each other, that they may become acquainted ; or of reconciling them to each other, who were before at enmity. In no common case can a man become mediator, who is not acquainted with both parties, and has not the confidence of each.

The parties requiring a mediator, in the case before us, are GOD and MEN.

1. MEN, who had sinned against God, and rebelled against their Sovereign ; and so had committed a capital offence, for which they were justly exposed to such an exile and punishment, as should banish them from the presence of God, and from the glory of his power for ever, and consign them to everlasting perdition.

2. GOD, their Creator and Sovereign ; from whom they received their being, and to whom their allegiance was invariably due, but against whom they had sinned, and from whom they had deeply revolted. These fallen spirits God willed to save and redeem from impending ruin. Such was the nature of their sin, and of his holiness, that the original union in which man's happiness consisted, could not possibly be restored, unless God could become such an one as man ; or man be restored to the Divine image ; and thus be brought into that

state of union with him which he had in the beginning. Man, who was a rebel, and not even a penitent, could not expect to be restored to favour; and man, who was a sinner and full of impurity, could not expect to be brought into this union; which could not take place without a moral change, that it was utterly impossible he should work in himself.

This Mediator is particularly characterized as the *MAN Christ Jesus*.

(3) God, who willed the salvation of this fallen creature, found out a suitable Mediator: for “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” As the *Mediator* was the person whose business it was to reconcile contending parties, hence Suidas explains *μεσιτης*, mediator, by *ειρηνοποιος*, a peace-maker. God was justly offended with the crimes of men: to restore them to his peace, Jesus became Mediator. And that Christ might appear to be in every sense proper for this office, the apostle adds, *The MAN Christ Jesus*; as it was necessary he should be incarnated: and thus he who was one with God, in the infinite union of an eternal triune Godhead, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

But we are not to suppose that the mediatorial office of Christ did not begin till after his ascension to heaven, which is the general opinion. Those appearances under the patriarchal dispensation, and also under the Mosaic, of a glorious personage, sometimes called the *Angel of the Lord*,—the *Angel of the Covenant*,—and the *Captain of the Lord's Host*,—who assumes the name *Jehovah*,—and performs acts practicable only by him whose power is unlimited, and whose judgments are just;—have been supposed by the wisest of men, to have been appearances of Him, in the likeness of man, who



in the fulness of time took upon him the form of a man, by being incarnated of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Had man been left just as he was when he fell from God, he in all probability had been utterly unsalvable ; as he appears to have lost all his spiritual light and understanding, and even his moral feeling. We have no mean proof of this, in his endeavouring to hide himself among the trees of the garden, from the presence and eye of him, whom, previously to his transgression, he knew to be everywhere present ; to whose eye the darkness and the light are both alike ; and who discerns the most secret thoughts of the heart of man. Add to this, it appears as if he had neither self-abasement nor contrition ; and therefore he charged his crime upon the woman, and, indirectly, upon God ; while the woman, on her side, charged her delinquency upon the serpent. As they were, so would have been all their posterity, had not some gracious principle been supernaturally restored to enlighten their minds, to give them some knowledge of good and evil—of right and wrong—of virtue and vice—and thus bring them into a salvable state. Now, the gracious Mediator is especially said to be “that true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” John i. 9 ; and it is from this Light that we have conscience : for conscience is neither a principle of light, nor a power of discernment ; but a recipient subject, which is capable of receiving light, and transmitting it to the judgment, in order to enable it to form a proper estimate of the moral conduct of its owner. It is precisely the same to the soul that the eye is to the body. The eye is not light, nor a principle of light, nor can it of itself discern anything ; it is a proper recipient of light, without which there is no vision. As the sun, or, in his absence, borrowed or artificial light, shines upon and through the different hu-

mours of the eye, so objects within the range of vision are discerned ; and as Jesus, the true Light, by his Spirit, shines upon conscience, so a man is capable of forming a just estimate of his spiritual state. This light is both directive and convicting, and affords to every fallen soul a grand antagonist power, by which it may resist evil ; by the proper use of which, those who are brought to God receive more grace ; and for the abuse of which, every man shall be judged in the great day. This light, Jesus, as Mediator, has imparted to all men, in all ages, and in all countries. It is this saving principle that has ever remonstrated against evil, showed man his transgressions, shone upon his guilt, and convinced him of his own helplessness.

After his ascension, this Mediator appeared, and ever appears in the presence of God for us. And thus before and after his incarnation, he was the one Mediator between God and man.

As there can be but ONE God, so there can be but ONE Mediator ; for he who must be Mediator between God and man must partake of both natures. Who else could appear in the presence of God to negotiate the concerns of a whole world ! We have already seen that Jesus the Mediator has all the essential attributes of that God, of whose glory he is the brightness, and of whose person he is the express image : and his incarnation proves that he was made man ; and his manner of life, passion, and death, manifest that his human nature was precisely the same as that of all other men. Thus we find two distinct persons in one being ; for in the Man Christ Jesus dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This subject is considered by many pious men to be one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion, and should be revered and implicitly received ; but is no subject for rational investigation. On such subjects as

these, we perhaps concede too much to those, who, pretending to believe nothing but what they can rationally account for, in fact believe nothing at all. Every attribute of God may be a subject for reason ; and by reasoning upon his attributes, his being and perfections have been demonstrated.

Reason can even look into his eternity ; and when comparing that with all the characteristics and affections of time, can at once conceive that it had no beginning, can have no end, and is in all considerations illimitable and incomprehensible. And He who inhabiteth eternity must be necessarily without beginning of days and end of time,—infinite, unlimited, independent, and self-existent.

Thus far reason can acquire a satisfactory view of eternity, by comparing it with time. Time is duration which had a beginning, and will have an end. Eternity is duration, but differs from time as being without beginning and without end.

Reason, in reference to the incarnation, can at least proceed thus : I have an immortal spirit ; it dwells in and actuates my mortal body ; as then my soul can dwell in my body, so could the Deity dwell in the Man Christ Jesus.

He who can believe that Isaiah or any of the prophets spoke by inspiration, i. e., as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, must believe the possibility of the incarnation of Christ. And he who can believe it possible, that Christ can dwell in the hearts of his followers, can as easily believe that the Messiah or *Logos*, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, *was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. Reason says, if the one were possible, so is the other ; and as one is fact, so may the other be also. The possibility of the thing is evident. God says, the fact has taken place ; that, therefore, which faith saw before to

be possible and probable, it sees now to be certain ; for God's testimony added puts all doubts to flight. The Lord Jesus, the Almighty's Fellow, was incarnated of the Holy Ghost, and was made man ; and by being God and Man, was every way qualified to be Mediator between God and men, as the text declares him to be. God and man met in the person of Jesus Christ ; and God was in this Christ reconciling the world to himself. In both these cases, Reason, without going out of its proper province by meddling with things inconceivable, may arrive at such unimpeachable evidence as may satisfy honest inquiry, and silence doubt. Some of the ancients appear to have thought that the word *ανθρωπος*, *man*, in the last clause of the verse, was a needless repetition ; and therefore read the verse thus : *There is one Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus*. But, that the term is here repeated with manifest design, and that it not only strengthens, but explains the sense, will be evident when the fifth verse is considered. Christ Jesus, who was from the beginning—who appeared to the patriarchs—and who spake by the prophets—really became Man, that he might be qualified to redeem man.

Man must always mediate between man and man.—Angels would be utterly incapable of such an office ; as they could not enter into the feelings, because destitute of the sympathies, of human beings. Hence they have never been employed in this work ; nor are they employed in preaching the gospel, for the very same reason. They cannot apprehend as men, they cannot feel as men, therefore they would be inappropriate, and even the highest of them be useless preachers. God, therefore, preaches to man by man ; and when Jesus undertook to save men, he took upon him the nature of man. He had also the true nature of God ; and as he could, in consequence, properly estimate the requisitions of divine

justice, and feel to the uttermost that the law was holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good ; so, in becoming man, he would feel for the miseries of his brethren, and thus stand a proper, and every way duly qualified, Mediator between God and man : of God, to represent his justice to the sinner ; of MAN, to represent his miseries to the Divine Mercy.

(4) What he did as Mediator, in order to save man, is another principle in the system of revealed truth.

*He gave himself a ransom for all.*

His incarnation might have been supposed sufficient to answer all the purposes of reconciling men to God. Could it be supposed that the good and benevolent God would look on those with indifference who were represented by so august a person—one who shared their nature, who assumed it for the very purpose of recommending them to God, and who, while he felt the sympathies and charities of humanity, was equally concerned for the honour and justice of God ; and who, from the perfection of his nature, could feel no partialities, nor maintain nor advocate the interests of one, against the honour of the other. I believe the reason of man could not have gone farther than this. And, had Revelation stopped here, reason would have thought the incarnation was sufficient ; and that even divine justice could not have withheld any favour from such an intercessor. Even this would have appeared a noble expedient, worthy of the benevolence of God ; and a sufficient reason why he should receive into his favour the beings who were by this incarnation united to him, who from eternity lay in the Father's bosom, and in whom he ever delighted. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts. Had man never sinned, and was only to be recommended to the divine notice, in order to receive favours, or even to obtain eternal life,

this might have been sufficient : but when he had sinned and become a rebel and traitor against his Maker and Sovereign, the case was widely different : atonement for the offence was indispensably requisite ; in default of which, the penalty (fully known to him previously to the offence) must be exacted—"In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die :—for the soul that sinneth, it shall die." On this account, the incarnation alone could not be sufficient ; nor did it take place in reference to this, but in reference to his bearing the penalty due to man for his transgression ; for, without being incarnated, he could not have suffered, nor died : hence the text adds, *who gave himself a ransom for all* ; that is, who suffered death upon the cross for the redemption of the world.

The word ransom in our language is the same as redemption, or the sum paid for the redemption of a captive, and is used in law for the redemption of a capital punishment, due by law to any offence : Horne, lib. 3, cap. *De amerciaiment taxable* ; and hence the etymology of the word *ransom*—French, *rançon*, from *rendre somme*, render or give the sum, i. e., what the law requires for the offence committed.

The word *λυτρον*, from *λυω*, to *loose*, or to pay a price, has, in Greek, nearly the same meaning ; the sum of money required to be paid for the redemption of a captive, and thus to loose or dissolve the obligation the person was under to serve, or to be punished. But the word *αντιλυτρον*, used here by the apostle, signifies properly, a "corresponding price," or ransom—the redeeming life by life. Hence Hesychius interprets *αντιλυτρα*, by *αντιψυχα*—" *Antilutra* signifies those piacular sacrifices in which life is given for life," or the life of one redeemed by the life of another ; and this was the true notion of sacrifice in all ages, and among all the inha-

bitants of the world. Cæsar tells us that it was the opinion of the Gauls, among whom human sacrifices were prevalent, that "the anger of the immortal gods could not be appeased, unless the life of a man was redeemed by the life of another."—*Quod pro vitâ hominis, nisi vita hominis reddatur, non posse aliter deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur.* Com. lib. vi., s. 15. Jesus Christ gave his life for the life of the world; he laid down his life for the sheep. While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; for he was delivered for our offences, and God made his soul (life) an offering for sin. With such assertions the Scripture abounds. The same word, *αντιλutron*, is rendered by Hesychius *αντιδοτον*, *antidote*; but this does not signify merely a medicine by which poison is counteracted or destroyed; but one thing given in the place of another; as in the case above, the life of Christ given for the life of the world. For ALL—that is, for all who had sinned—for all those whose nature he had assumed; for "He took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham;" an expression, by the way, which has been misunderstood and pitifully misrepresented: for it is supposed that by *the seed of Abraham*, the Jewish people are particularly represented. But when was the covenant made with Abraham—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed?" Was it while he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? In uncircumcision, surely, when he represented the whole of the children of men—before the distinction of Jew and Gentile had ever taken place; and the covenant embraced not only all the nations, but all the families of the earth; and is extended to every individual of those families, by those solemn words of the apostle, "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for EVERY MAN." Can the Molochian

doctrine of unconditional reprobation look these Scriptures, or the incarnated JESUS in the face, and not hasten to hide itself in the pit of perdition, from whence it arose! He died for every man:

“ His pardoning grace for ALL is free—  
 For him who forged the dire decree ;  
 For every reprobate, and me.”

(5) This glorious system of truth is to be testified in due time ; and may be thus summed up :—1. There is one God. 2. This God is the Creator of all. 3. He has made a revelation of his kindness to all. 4. He will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. 5. He has provided a Mediator for all. And 6. This Mediator gave himself a ransom for all. As surely, therefore, as God has created all men, so surely has Jesus Christ died for all men. These are truths which the nature and revelation of God unequivocally proclaim ; and which, according to the text, *are to be testified in due time.*

The original words, *το μαρτυριον καιρος, ιδιους*, are not easily interpreted, and have been variously understood. The most authentic copies of the Vulgate have, *Testimoniū temporibus suis*, which Calmet translates, *Rendant ainsi temoignage au tems marquè*, “ Thus rendering testimony at the appointed time.” Wakefield translates, “ The testimony reserved to its proper time.” Rosenmüller, *Hæc est doctrina temporibus suis reservata*, “ This is the doctrine which is reserved for its own times ;” that is, adds he, *quæ suo tempore in omni terrarum orbe tradetur*, “ the doctrine which in its own time shall be delivered to all the inhabitants of the earth.” Here he translates *μαρτυριον*, *doctrine*, and contends that this, not *testimony*, is its meaning, not only in this passage, but in I Cor. i. 6, ii. 1, &c.



Several MSS. read the clause thus: Ου το μαρτυριον καιροις ιδιοις εδοθη,—“the testimony of which was given in its own times.” The oldest printed copies of the Vulgate read the passage thus: *Cujus testimonium temporibus suis confirmatum est*, “The testimony of which is confirmed in its own times;” which our first translation renders, *As his witnessinge is conferm'd in his times*. This is about the sense: Christ gave himself a ransom for all; this, in the times which seemed best to the Divine wisdom, was to be testified to every nation, and people, and tongue. The apostles had begun this testimony; and in the course of the Divine economy, it has ever since been gradually promulgated, and at present runs with a more rapid course than ever.

As God wills the salvation of all men, and has given a revelation of himself, which he wills that every man should hear, understand, and acknowledge; it is necessary that the Bible should be sent to every nation and people, so that in their respective languages they may hear the marvellous works of God.

This design the present generation appears to understand better than those who have preceded us. Hence the earnest, united, and indeed marvellous efforts made by Christians of every denomination, in all countries, to send the gospel of Jesus to all the nations of the earth. Bibles, in almost all the languages of the universe, have been printed in millions, and sent throughout the world.

The British and Foreign Bible Society, and its Auxiliaries, in Europe, Asia, and America, have performed a work in a few years, which former generations could not have believed possible in as many centuries. The apocalyptic angel is flying with increasing celerity, in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, and to every

nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give glory to him,” Rev. xiv. 6, 7; so that from the ends of the earth we have heard songs, even glory to the righteous. Thus the knowledge of God is spreading over the face of the globe; and it appears from the present prospect and continued energetic labours of the excellent agents of this divine institution, that the Bible will shortly be found in all the regular languages “of this babbling earth.” But is this sufficient? Is it enough merely to send the Bible to the different nations of men, so that they may all read the word which the Lord God speaketh unto them?—No: nor was it ever the design of God that his work should end here. The Ethiopian eunuch had in his hand the prophet Isaiah, and was reading it devoutly, even while journeying on the way. To his salvation, the messenger of peace was as necessary as the writings of the prophet; and therefore God sent the evangelist Philip to meet him on the way, and to ask the important question, “Understandest thou what thou readest?”—who answered, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” And although he was reading of Him “who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and in whose humiliation his judgment was taken away;” yet he understood not the truth till Philip, from those passages, preached unto him JESUS!

The whole economy of grace, in the salvation of men, supposes the Bible and the minister of the gospel. The Bible is the divine testimony, the Christian missionary is the advocate. This testimony he pleads on, applies, and enforces, in order to lead men not only to the *knowledge*, but also to the *acknowledgment* (εις επιγνωσιν) of the truth. A man may know the truth without acknowledging it. To acknowledge it, is not only to allow that it is the truth, but to confess it; to feel one's own

interest in it; to be affected by its contents; to be alarmed by its threatenings, encouraged by its promises, and influenced by its precepts. The sacred word is in general superficially considered; it is not duly weighed; it requires the strong exhortations of the messengers of the gospel to stir up the drowsy and careless. God designs that both shall go together; and hence the age that has been distinguished by an unparalleled dissemination of Bibles, has been equally conspicuous for missionary exertions. In almost every instance where the Bible has gone *before*, the missionary has followed *after*; and to them who have received it, the tenor of his first question has been, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" which is the introduction to his preaching unto them Jesus. The truth, the gospel of the grace of Christ, must be proclaimed to men; and it is the duty of all who know it, to diffuse it far and wide; and when it is made known, it is the duty of those who hear to acknowledge and receive it. This is the proper import of the original word—that they may come *εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας*, "to the *acknowledgment* of the truth;" that they may receive it as the truth, and make it the rule of their faith, the director of their life, and the model of their practice.

But in reference to this, the man of God—the missionary—is indispensably necessary. In general, this acknowledgment is brought about only by his means; and what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

I have already stated that it is the duty of every man who possesses the truth to disseminate it, as far and as widely as he possibly can. There are many nations, containing many millions of immortal spirits, who are perishing for lack of knowledge, and starving for want of the bread of life. We have enough and to spare;

the means of diffusion are in our power, and we shall be highly criminal in the sight of God, if we do not use them. God has given the Bible, and God has prepared the men. The first has been given by the inspiration of the Almighty—the latter show that they have received his commission to take it to the ends of the earth.

There are only two ways in which these messengers of peace can be sent to the destitute nations of the world : 1. By divine supernatural agency. 2. By human means, under the direction of Divine Providence.

1. Among all the extraordinary messengers whom God hath sent to announce his will to the nations of the earth, there is no genuine evidence that he ever used any extraordinary or supernatural means to send any of them to the place of his destination. By an especial call, he pointed out the men whom he had commissioned to bear his name among the Gentiles, but he left what has been technically called their *outfit*, to themselves and his people, to be regulated by their own prudence and benevolence, under the direction of his providence. Even Jonah himself, who had such an extraordinary commission to minister to the Ninevites, was left to choose the ordinary modes of conveyance ; and St. Paul and his companions, when sent as extraordinary messengers to the Gentiles, were brought on their way by the brethren, and were obliged in the execution of their commission to subject themselves to the general difficulties of land journeys, and to the perils of ordinary sea voyages. Nor did God choose so particularly to interfere with the general dispensations of his providence, as to prevent even a shipwreck, which occurred in the ordinary course of things, though he exerted his power to preserve the lives of the sailors

and passengers, while he left the ship and its cargo to be destroyed by the storm. Prophets, apostles, evangelists, and all their successors in the sacred history, while they had the positive command *to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*, were left to make their way to the places of their destination, by those means which their own prudence and the benevolence of his people might suggest.

It is true, we have an ancient account that seems to be an exception to this apparently general rule, viz., the miraculous transportation of the prophet Habakkuk from Judea to Babylon (to minister to one of the Jewish captives in that city), whom, it is said, "the angel of the Lord took by the crown, and bare him by the hair of his head; and, through the vehemency of his spirit, set him in Babylon;" and when he had accomplished his mission, the angel conveyed him back in the same manner, and *set him in his own place again* in Judea! But if no prophet were carried in this miraculous way from Judea, to minister salvation to the captives in the land of the Chaldeans; if no apostle were carried miraculously to Syria, to Asia Minor, to Greece, to Rome, to the Islands of the Sea, to preach Christ crucified to the Gentiles; we may safely conclude that the prophet Habakkuk, who had made a mess of pottage for his reapers, was not with it suddenly transported to Babylon, for the infinitely minor purpose of giving Daniel his dinner! This legend has no higher authority than the Apocrypha can confer; and I leave it where I found it, in *The Story of Bel and the Dragon*, ver. 33—39.

2. We are led, therefore, to form the very rational conclusion, that although it is the province of God to prepare, qualify, and commission the preacher, yet it is the duty of his people to equip him for his journey, to find

the means for his conveyance, to bear his expenses, and support him in his work, while he is going forward, taking nothing from the Gentiles.

Now, as there are whole nations in which Satan sits enthroned; as there are, after all that has been done to evangelize the earth, many millions of immortal souls who know not God who bought them, and are a prey to superstition, idolatry, ignorance, cruelty, and wretchedness of every kind; and as Jesus has tasted death for every man, and God wills all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; it is the imperious duty of every Christian soul—of every human mind—to send, as extensively as possible, and with the utmost speed, that gospel of God, which is the only cure for all these evils. While we hesitate, multitudes are perishing for lack of knowledge. We have not done the whole of our duty by merely contributing to the universal diffusion of the Bible; this we should do, and not leave the other undone. We must send the missionary also, to call the attention of the millions, who, if they have even the word of life in their own languages, cannot read it, to the things which make for their peace, and the things whereby they may edify each other. No nation ever was, or, humanly speaking, ever can be saved, where there is neither a prophet to proclaim the righteousness of the Most High, nor an evangelist to comfort those who labour and are heavy laden, by pointing them to that Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

If any farther arguments or motives can be necessary to induce those who have tasted and seen that God is gracious, to send, as far as their influence and means can reach, the gospel of Jesus to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and salvation to the ends of the earth; let **them** consider the following:

God, who made you, says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength." And God, who redeemed you, has said, "Thou shalt do so, and love thy neighbour as thyself;" and adds, "There is no greater commandment than these; and on these hang all the law and the prophets;" to which he adds, "What you would that men should do to you, do even so to them."

Now, 1.—If we love God, will we not keep his commandments? 2. If we love our neighbour as ourselves, will we not labour to make him happy? 3. If we have ever felt the gospel to be the power of God to our own salvation, will we not endeavour to send it to those who are destitute? 4. If we feel bound to do to others as we would wish, on a change of circumstances, they should do to us; then, from what we now know, had they the gospel, and we were destitute of it, how ardently would we desire that they would share with us that heavenly bread! And how hardly should we think of them, if they had the blessing of which we were destitute, and had the means of sending it, which we could not command, if they permitted us to perish while they themselves had bread enough and to spare; and giving, however largely, would not lessen their store! Think of this, and then act under the influence of that conviction which the evidence may bring. 5. There is a maxim in law, "That he who neglects to save life, when it is in his power to do it, is a murderer, as well as he who violently takes it away." What then must God and considerate men think of us, if we permit Satan to murder those souls which, by the grace of God, it is in our power to snatch from the sides of the pit, and pluck as brands from the burning? 6. But this subject is placed in the strongest point of view by God himself: "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the

house of Israel : therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die : if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand," Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8. Will not these words apply to every man, whether in Palestine, England, or elsewhere, who neglects, when it is in his power, either personally or by proxy, to turn a sinner from the error of his ways ? We find from the above, that although the sinner who is not warned *shall die in his sins*, yet his blood shall be required at the hands of the negligent watchmen ; and may we not infer, that the Gentile nations who do not receive that warning which it is in the power of Christians to send, *will die in their sins* ? And surely, if they die in their sins, where God is they can never come. We know that the Gentiles who act according to the dictates of that *light which lightens every man that cometh into the world*, shall on their death enter into paradise ; for, in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him ; but how many of the Gentiles, in any nation of the earth, act up to the dictates of that light ? Out of the millions of heathens, with whom our commerce has brought us acquainted, how few individuals have we ever found, who were living according even to the general rules of justice, righteousness, and mercy ! In millions, scarcely one thoroughly moral character appears ! How awful is this consideration ! Let us remember that vice uncurbed daily gains strength ; and that evil habits become inveterate where there is nothing to counteract them. Myriads are annually sacrificed to superstition—darkness is perpetuated, and becomes thick and gross in consequence—God is not known, and the people are led captive by Satan at his will ! Who will



arise, grapple with the destroyer, and pluck the prey out of his teeth ?

Many excellent men, full of the Holy Ghost and power, are on tiptoe, with their lives in their hand, saying, "Here are we, send us! send us to the dispersed among the Gentiles, to the stupid Hottentots, to the savages of New Holland, to the cannibals of New Zealand, to the uttermost parts of the earth, where God our Father is not known, where Christ our Saviour is not named, where Satan keeps his seat, and where reason and the human form are degraded,—constrained by the love of Christ, we will freely go. Here we are, the messengers of the churches for the glory of Christ."

After such offers (and, through the mercy of God, they are in abundance), these men will be guiltless if not sent. But what a reckoning must those have with the great Head of the Church, who neglect these calls, and will not join hands with God to make the wretched live! Let us all feel and say, "We will not be any longer guilty of our brother's blood: and now, go to, and we will show that the hand of the Lord is upon us for good—that our heart is enlarged—that our hand is as ready as our prayers, and that, in the true missionary spirit, we consecrate our service this day unto the Lord." Amen. Selah.

## SERMON V.

### THE CONFIDENCE OF THE GENUINE CHRISTIAN.

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HEBREWS iv. 16.

*Προσερχόμεθα οὐκ μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα  
λάβωμεν ἔλεον, καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρὸν βοήθειαν.*

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Or, “that we may find grace for timely assistance.”)

THE Epistle to the Hebrews is the most important of all the epistles, whether of St. Paul or others. It is a fine comment on the Old Law, and especially on the temple service, the priesthood of Aaron, and the whole sacrificial system of the Jews. In it the author proves that Jesus was the true Messiah, and the end or object of the law. He shows, 1. That he was greater than the angels. 2. Greater than Moses. 3. Greater than Aaron and all the high-priests. 4. That every sacrifice under the law pointed out his passion and death. And 5. That by the shedding of his blood alone, true remission of sins is to be found. The epistle was written chiefly to explain and illustrate the law—to show the superior advantages of the gospel, and to prevent those who had received it from apostatizing to Judaism, to which they were strongly solicited by the enemies of our Lord.

As the Jews presumed much on their ecclesiastical privileges, the splendour and equipage of their temple

service, and saw the simplicity of the Christians' service—that they had no altar, no temple, no priest, no sacrifice for sin, as they had—they would naturally enough address the *Christians of Palestine* thus: “As ye are utterly destitute of all those things, without which there can be no religion, return to us, who have all these privileges, that ye may not die in your deceivings.” To meet such objections, the apostle, ver. 14, says, “We have a great High-priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God; let us, therefore, hold fast our profession.” We have a high-priest; not a descendant of Aaron, nor of any succeeding high-priest; but one much more transcendent, *Jesus, the Son of God*. Aaron and his successors could only pass into the holy of holies, and that only once in the year; but Jesus, our high-priest, has passed into the heavens, of which that was only the type. In this, therefore, our advantages are infinitely higher than yours.

Here is an allusion to the going of the high-priest into the holy of holies on the day of atonement. 1. He left the congregation of the people. 2. He passed through the veil into the holy place, and was not seen even by the priests. 3. He entered through the second veil into the holy of holies, where was the symbol of the Divine Majesty; so Jesus, our High-priest, 1. Left the people to whom he had been long ministering. 2. He left his disciples by ascending through the visible heavens, the clouds, as a veil screening him from their sight. 3. Having passed through these veils, he went immediately to be our intercessor; thus he passed *ουρανους*, the *visible* or *ethereal heavens*, into the presence of the Divine Majesty, *through the heavens*, *διεληλυθορα τους ουρανους*, the *empyreum*, or *heaven of heavens*, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

The inference drawn from these considerations and

facts by the apostle in our text, is exceedingly natural and encouraging. *Having, therefore, such a High-priest* now appearing in the presence of God for us, “let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace,” &c. Far from having anything dismal to apprehend, we have everything excellent to expect and anticipate. God is on his throne of grace; Jesus is before it as Mediator, and we may come confidently up to it, and find a free and full pardon, and a plentiful supply of all our wants.

The allusion to the high-priest and his office on the day of atonement is still kept up. The approach mentioned here is to the כפרת *kaphoreth*, Ἰλαστριον, *propitiatory*, the place of pardon, the place of pacification, or what we call mercy-seat.

This was the covering of the ark of the testimony or covenant, at each end of which was a cherub, and between them, the *shechinah*, or symbol of the Divine Majesty, which appeared to the high-priests, and out of which God conversed with them. Here the great superiority of the privileges of the New Testament above those of the Old is very apparent. For there the high-priest only, and he with fear and trembling, was permitted to approach Him who dwelt between the cherubim; and even this, not without the blood of the victim; and if in anything he transgressed, he might expect to be instantly struck with death.

The throne of grace in heaven answers to this propitiatory, to which the high-priest alone might approach; but to this throne all may approach who feel their need of salvation, and of help in any time of trouble or distress. And they may approach *μετα παρήσιας*, *with freedom*, confidence, and liberty of speech, opposed to the fear and trembling of the Jewish high-priest.

There are too many important particulars here, to

admit of the text being divided into heads, or thrown into the form of propositions. I shall treat these particulars in order.

I. The address of the apostle is made to two classes of persons.

1. Those who want mercy. All who feel that they have sinned, and come short of God's glory ; i. e., every penitent sinner, every backslider, and every weak believer, sensible of the remaining corruption of his heart and longing for the full salvation of God.

2. Those who are in circumstances of necessity or affliction, such as are exercised with trials in their family poverty in their circumstances, afflictions in their persons or relatives, and temptations and diabolical buffetings in their own souls.

II. To all these God is represented as sitting on the throne of grace. God is great, and of terrible majesty everywhere, but particularly on his throne, for that is the seat of judgment, the place whence he dispenses justice and from which who has anything to hope ? and who has not everything to fear ? But in this place it is the throne of GRACE—the very place of mercy ; the source whence bounty is to issue, and from which all the blessings of heaven are to be dispensed. On this God is represented as having sat down, for the mere purpose of dispensing pardon to the penitent, healing to the backslider, purity of heart to the weak believer, succour to the tempted, and suitable help to all the necessitous.

III. Christ is represented as a *priest* and *intercessor* before this *throne*, and also as the *sacrificial offering* itself. Now, there is one consideration of great importance on this subject, and it is this : Christ assumes those characters of *priest* and *sacrifice*, in reference to MAN only. With Christ God is ever well pleased ; with all that he has done, with all that he has suffered, and with

the end and object in reference to which he has lived, suffered, and died, he is well pleased; consequently, he is well pleased to dispense the benefits of his priesthood and sacrificial offering to man. God requires no entreaty to induce him to pardon and save; he is infinitely disposed to do so; and he has an infinite reason for this disposition. This is a grand principle in theology, and a strong encourager of faith. He that believes that God is thus disposed to save his soul, and for the reasons above mentioned, can neither feel backwardness nor difficulty in coming to the throne of grace, in order to obtain mercy. All the difficulties on the doctrine of faith have arisen from not considering this principle; and it is both painful and shameful to see to what magnitude and number these difficulties have been carried. Cases of conscience, cases of doubt, motives to faith, encouragement to weak believers, &c., have been multiplied by systematic preachers, and dealers in "*bodies of divinity*," to the great distraction of the church of God, and confusion of simple souls. And this is occasioned either by their not knowing or not attending to the principle laid down above. Nothing is plainer than the way of salvation by faith in Christ, had it not been puzzled and blockaded or broken up by the thriftless systems of men.

IV. The above persons are exhorted to come that they may obtain mercy, *ἵνα λαβῶμεν ἐλεον*, *that we may take mercy*. There is mercy for the taking. All things are ready; God is on the throne of grace, and Jesus is before it in his mediatorial and sacerdotal character. What we are to receive is mercy; this is opposed, not so much to sin, as to merit. That which is given, for which no equivalent is required or received, is mercy. Not only no sinner can have merit, but neither saint nor angel can have any. The whole hierarchy of heaven live on the bounty of God; Michael, the archangel, who is like God, has no

merit—he is a created, and therefore a dependant being ; whatever glories or excellencies he possesses, he has them from God's unmerited bounty ; he could not deserve his own being ; he cannot merit its continuance ; for the utmost and constant use of all his powers belongs to God his Creator ; and as these powers are God's property, with no kind of use or employment of them can he, or any created being, have meritorious claims upon him, in whom he lives and moves, and from whom he has his being.

But man, who has sinned, especially needs mercy. He has not only deserved nothing good from God, but he has merited destruction. Angels and men have their being and support from God's mercy ; all live by it, both in heaven and earth. And as this mercy of God is infinite, therefore it can hear all claims, receive all the prayers of mankind, and supply all the necessities of angels, sinners, and saints.

V This mercy is to be obtained by coming to the throne of grace. That coming implies, 1. A consciousness of necessity ; 2. A conviction of God's goodness and readiness to save ; and 3. Faith, that he will give what he has promised, needs no proof: this is agreed on all hands. And to this may be added, 4. Earnestness suitable to the pressing necessities of the soul, the urgency of the case, and the danger of the situation. Under these convictions, we must come to the throne of grace.

VI. We are to come also to this throne of grace, that we may find grace. The words used by the apostle here prove that the person who comes cannot be unsuccessful. Where is grace to be sought, but where we know it is to be found? Now grace is to be found at the throne of grace. If we knew the place where a lost thing is, or where a treasure is deposited, we should naturally look there with the fullest conviction of success. Grace signifies not only God's favour and approbation, but also such

divine helps, communications, and influences as are necessary to support and build up the soul, and cause it to increase with the increase of God. MERCY forgives sin and heals backsliding. GRACE strengthens and builds up the soul. Mercy is laid up at the throne of God for every comer; therefore it is said, "Let us come that we may take it." Grace is there laid up, but it must be sought. The favour of God may be obtained, but we must seek it; and the way in which we are to come for MERCY, and the manner in which we are to seek and find GRACE or favour, are matters to us the most interesting and important. Let us hear what the apostle directs in this case.

VII. *Let us come boldly, μετα παρρησίας, with freedom, confidence, or liberty of speech*, in opposition to the fear and trembling of the Jewish high-priest. Here nothing is to be feared, provided the heart be right with God, truly sincere, and provided with the true victim, which is to serve for the great atonement.

*Boldness*, as generally used, does not give us the true sense of the apostle's word. Boldness signifies, 1. Rash and inconsiderate daring, proceeding from pride and vain-glory. 2. Courage and heroism, springing from a consciousness of ability and skill, and a determination to fear nothing while in the way of duty and honour. In none of these senses can the word be used here. Pride, vain-glory, and rashness can have nothing to do in the case of a guilty and condemned sinner, a broken-hearted backslider, or a humble, cautious believer. And to such, courage and heroism, and the objects on which they act, and the ends to which they tend, are equally inapplicable.

But *confidence*, and liberty of speech or address, they whom the apostle invites, may fairly assume.

1. Because they are *invited* to come.



2. Because they come in his *name*, with whom God is well pleased.

And 3. Because they bring that *present* which is worthy of the Majesty and Divinity of the Person to whom they approach. In the eastern countries, no man can come into the presence of a superior without bringing a suitable *gift*; nor can even one of the nobles come into the presence of the monarch, without a suitable present.

After a similar manner we must approach the majesty of God; and the *gift* here is, the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ; *the LAMB without spot* is presented before the throne. The offerer is fully convinced of the worth and dignity of this present; hence he brings it with confidence, and has full liberty of speech—of prayer and supplication before his God. Boldness is here excluded, as well as boasting; but confidence of gaining the divine favour for the sake of the *offering* which he is about to make, inspires him with freedom and power to speak in his own cause; and plead in his own behalf. Come, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace. Know that it is such; and that HE who sits on it is gracious. When you approach, you know you have an intercessor there; he will introduce you—he will recommend your suit—plead in your behalf—give you full liberty to use his name—to appropriate to yourselves the infinite merit of his passion and death, his resurrection and mediation; and to avail yourselves of that indescribable nearness he has to the Father, as his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased; and his affinity to you, as God manifested in the flesh. It is impossible that anything can be added to strengthen this confidence; or, by a more powerful argument, to insure a success which, from the above considerations, must be certain and absolute.

VIII. All men in the present life must be frequently in danger, necessity, and tribulation. DANGERS, from which they cannot by their own strength or wisdom escape; NECESSITIES, which no prudence or providence of theirs can supply; and TRIBULATIONS, through which it will be impossible for them to pass unless they have divine help, both in the water and in the fire. As an encouragement therefore to induce them to make that approach to the throne of grace which is here recommended, the apostle tells them, they are to *find help in time of need*. The words εἰς ευκαιρον βοηθειαν, would be more literally translated, *for timely assistance*. My old MS. Bible has given a good rendering, **And finde grace in conbenable helpe**: that is, the grace suited to our necessities, occasions, and circumstances.

In other cases, assistance may be procured when the case is hopeless; a *post bellum auxilium*—succour when the battle is lost,—a rope thrown from shore, when the man is drowned,—the arrival of the physician when the patient is dead; but God gives help when it is wanted, and as it is wanted.

The word βοηθεια is properly enough rendered *assistance, help, or support*; but it implies assistance afforded in consequence of the earnest cry of a person in distress; for the word signifies to *run at the cry*, θειν εἰς βοηην, or επι βοηην θειν. So even at the throne of grace, or great propitiatory, no help can be expected where there is no cry; and where there is no cry there is no felt necessity; for he that feels he is perishing will cry aloud for help; and to such a cry the compassionate High-Priest will run with assistance. The time of need is the time in which God will show mercy; nor will he ever delay it when it is necessary. We are not to cry to-day, that we may be helped to-morrow, or in some future indefinite

time, or at the hour of death. We are to call for mercy and grace when we need them ; and we are to expect to receive them when we call. This is a part of our liberty or boldness ; *we come up προσερχομεθα*, to the throne, and call aloud for mercy, and God dispenses the blessings we then need.

Divine assistance is continually needed : 1st. To enable us to resist and overcome evil. 2ndly. To enable us to fulfil properly the duties required of us, for without divine help we can do nothing. But 3dly. There are peculiar times and circumstances in which we need especial help, such as these : 1. Sudden trials. 2. Violent temptations. 3. Premature deaths of relatives. 4. Unforeseen and unexpected losses. 5. Sudden calls to extraordinary exertions and to perform duties to which we are not accustomed, or to instances of self-abnegation for which we are but ill prepared. In all such cases, if the help be not as sudden as the call, if it be not as powerful as the case is arduous, we shall fail in the time of trouble, and be wounded in the cloudy and dark day. Hence, there should be a continual coming in heart and mind to the throne of grace,—a continual dependance on the Strong for strength—on the Wise for wisdom—and on the Merciful for salvation ; that we may be able to stand in the evil day ; and having done all, to stand.

How necessary are these heavenly directions ! How much good has been done by attending to them ; and how much evil has been sustained by disregarding them ! He who has not a tender conscience will not feel his continual need of divine help ; and he who does not feel this need will not care for a supply ; and he who does not call for it, cannot be furnished with it, and must therefore fail in the day of battle.

That neither the apostle's exhortation nor the preacher's labour may be lost on us, let us recapitulate and consider :—

1. That there is a throne of grace ; that is, a propitiatory ; the place where God and man are to meet.

2. That this propitiatory, or mercy-seat, is sprinkled with the blood of the true victim—that “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

3. That we must come up to this throne ; and this implies faith in the efficacy of the sacrifice.

4. That we must call aloud or earnestly for his mercy and grace, if we expect him to run to our assistance.

5. That we must feel our spiritual necessities, in order to our calling with fervour and earnestness.

6. That calling thus, we shall infallibly get what we want ; for in Christ Jesus, as a sacrificial offering, God is ever well pleased ; and he is also well pleased with all those who take refuge in the atonement he has made.

7. That thus coming, feeling, and calling, we may have the utmost confidence ; for we have boldness, liberty of access, freedom of speech ; may plead with our Maker without fear, and expect all the help his throne can bestow.

8. That Jesus, who hath entered into heaven for us, who standeth before the throne, is a merciful High-priest, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, sympathizes with us in our trials ; and is ever more disposed to hear and answer than we are to pray.

9. That we should expect to be heard and saved, thus coming ; that we should not doubt of his mercy ; and we should be resolved to follow on to know the Lord, that we may find his goings forth as cheering as the morning, and his return as refreshing as the latter rain ;

and be assured, thus coming, feeling, and calling, that he will guide us by his counsel, and at last receive us to glory.

10. Let those, therefore, who feel themselves in the needful time of trouble, come now with confidence to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help them in their time of need.

Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

## SERMON VI.

### EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION, AND ITS FRUITS.

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#### PHILIPPIANS i. 9—11.

- λ. Και τουτο προσευχομαι, ινα η αγαπη υμων επι μαλλον και μαλλον περισσευη εν επιγνωσει και παση αισθησει·
10. Εις το δοκιμαζειν υμας τα διαφεροντα, ινα ητε ειλικρινεις και απροσκοποι εις ημεραν Χριστου·
11. Πεπληρωμενοι καρπων δικαιοσυνης των δια Ιησου Χριστου, εις δοξαν και επαινον Θεου.
9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment :
10. That ye may approve things that are excellent ; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ :
11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

It is the duty of the people of God to make prayers, supplications, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men ; and as the energetic prayer of a righteous man avails much, most people have highly valued the prayers of the godly made in their behalf, and have earnestly begged a continual interest in the petitions of such ; and all such prayers are valued in proportion to the piety and faith of him that offers them ; for intercessory prayer will ever be available in proportion to the influence a man has with his God. If, then, to have an interest in

the prayers of a private Christian would be not only desirable but a blessing, surely those of an apostle must be invaluable ; as such a person has a nearer intercourse with God, and, from his habits of intimacy with his Maker, is much more likely to prevail.

When the people at Philippi heard how their apostle prayed for them, what confidence must they have felt in prayers thus offered, and what encouragement to expect those blessings which were the subject of his prayer ! and this must have served to increase their confidence, and increase their earnestness at the throne of grace. Well might they say, “ Paul, the apostle of our Jesus, has prayed for us : now let us double our diligence in praying for ourselves.”

But there is an essential difference between the prayers of inspired men and those of private Christians, how good or holy soever they may be ; as the former pray for the church and the world according to direct inspiration, God having determined to grant the blessings for which he excites them to pray. Hence, all such prayers may be viewed as direct promises, and claimed as such by those in whose behalf they are offered. On this principle, the prayer in the above verses must have been considered by the Philippians as containing a series of promises, the fulfilment of which they had a right to expect, if faithful to the grace by which they were thus favoured. “ And this I pray, that your love,” &c. But can *we*, who live at such a distance from apostolic times, take up this prayer in the same light, and expect with equal confidence its fulfilment ? This inquiry may be fully answered by the following considerations : 1. The Church of Christ is a society of godly people, subsisting in various places, through all ages. 2. The Sacred Writings were given to the Church of Christ. 3. Those writings do not come to a particular people, in a par-

ticular place; much less to individuals, nominally or specifically considered; but they are sent to characters and circumstances. 4. All persons, therefore, of the same character, or in the same religious state, and all who are in the same circumstances, are those contemplated by the Divine Spirit in the revelation which he has given. If, then, we are in the same spiritual state, wish for the same blessings, and look to the same unchanging God, through that Christ who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; we have an equal interest in these promises, may claim their fulfilment, and, considering ourselves in the place of the Philippians, receive with meekness that engrafted word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation.

Having premised thus much, I shall now consider the different parts of this important prayer, in the order in which the holy apostle has left them.

I. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more." These words are founded on that declaration of God, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" and our Lord's illustration of it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." These being the *two great commandments*, it has been justly understood that this love is the essence of all religion; as it has been declared by divine authority, that it is the fulfilling of the law. But few have attempted to show the reason why it is so. The mouths of all are full of the assertions, "There is no religion without love." "The Christian religion is the religion of love." "All religion is comprised in love." All this I grant; but on what is this founded? Why may not the Christian religion be called the religion of faith—or of hope—or of humility, or of any other virtue? Where can we find an answer to these questions? I will attempt to give the reason on which this is founded.



II. In order to this, I must make four assertions, neither of which, nor the inference drawn from it, will be disputed. They refer to the state of man, who, made originally perfect by a perfect and holy Being, is not now in the state in which God created him :—

1. He is profligate in his practices ; he is a sinner, and lives in the habitual breach of God's holy law.

2. This wickedness in his practices, proves him evil in his affections ; for out of the heart proceed murders, adulteries, thefts, and sins of all kinds.

3. These evil affections argue wicked motives ; for even a passion that is disposed to evil, will not act without an exciting influence.

4. A motive implies a mover ; and an evil motive, an evil principle as mover. Now the great question is, what is this evil principle ?

III. The first view of the effects of this principle's working, proves that it is something opposed to the government of God, and to the love of our fellow-creature. It is generally termed sin ; but sin, considered in itself, is rather a want of heavenly excellence, than a positive principle ; for it is only when it is described in its effects that it can be stated to be the transgression of the law. But an evil principle is still wanting to account for the conduct of men ; they act so often, not only in opposition to God and to each other, but also to themselves. The general conduct of men is most demonstrably in hostility to their own interests. They are running themselves out of breath for no prize ; they are labouring to make themselves wretched ; and by their unhappy success, moral and natural evil is multiplied in the earth.

Man, not satisfied with destroying his fellows, to whom he is a most inveterate foe, destroys also himself—makes his own life wretched, shortens his days, and ruins his

own soul ! His conduct, therefore, is not only unholy, but it is unnatural. Reason, therefore, can be no director of his ways ; and even the voice of self-preservation, which is said to be the first law of nature, is scarcely ever heard, except in the apprehension of some immediate danger, in which life is most obviously concerned. Nay, he even sins against his own conviction—he knows he is doing wrong, and yet does it. He resolves against it, and is yet overcome, and often laments that there is an evil energy working in him, more powerful than his reason, and in many cases paramount to his own will ; for often, when he would do good, evil is present with him ; and the good that he would do he finds not power to perform. Thus he is brought under bondage to the law of sin and death.

This principle the Holy Scripture terms, the DEVIL or SATAN, “in whom,” it says, “the whole world lieth”—which “deceiveth the whole world, and ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience.” I know it is fashionable in some to deny the existence of this evil principle ; but as those persons deny the whole of Divine Revelation, which they have laboured in vain to disprove, they are worthy of no regard. They are generally men of desperate characters, and desperate fortunes ; and as they will not listen to the voice of reason, nor the Sacred Oracles, they must be left to their own desperation. Satan, who works in the hearts of the children of disobedience, possesses himself of the corrupt nature of man ; produces bad motives in a bad heart, blinds the understanding, excites irregular appetites, and thence bad tempers, evil words, and unholy actions.

This spirit is opposed to the government of God and the happiness of man ; it is enmity to God and hatred to man ; and its opposite is love to both.

IV. LOVE, therefore, is the principle that is to destroy this enmity. But this love is not the passion that is generated in the heart by the sight or description of what is amiable, in reference to animal gratification ; or, as it is defined, passionate affection. Such love is a mere human passion ; but that of which the apostle speaks is a principle, or rather the effect of an energetic spiritual principle. It is, in a word, the love of God ; a love which he inspires, and by which the divine nature is pointed out to us, in those remarkable words of the apostle, "GOD IS LOVE ; and he who dwelleth in LOVE, dwelleth in GOD, and GOD in him." It is a principle that produces harmony, order, and all that is benevolent and beneficent ; in a word, it is the principle of purity and righteousness,—it leads to these excellencies,—lays strong hold on and excites the energies by which they are produced,—it is ever attached to them, prefers them to all things else, and is wholly wrapped up in them. It is the pure, righteous, and benevolent principle, by which God ever acts in all his dispensations to man, and in all his operations in man. It has nothing therefore to do with that earthly animal passion, so well known and celebrated among men. The principle that expels evil is the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Spirit is the agent who directs the operations of this principle of love to the expulsion of the principle of hatred. Love, the opposite to this enmity and hatred, is implanted in the heart ; and thus the evil that leads to all misrule, rebellion, and sin, is cast out ; and love, that dictates nothing but what is in accordance to the divine will and law, takes its place ; and hence, complete subjection to God, and every act of benevolence to man. Thus the love of God, begetting love to God, is the sum and substance of all religion, and

the fulfilling of the law ; because it expels that hatred or enmity, that carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

This love is the incentive to all obedience ; for he that loves God keeps his commandments ; and to such his commandments are not grievous ; for to please those whom we love, is natural to love itself. This love is the religion of the Bible—love to God and our fellows ; breathing nothing but glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will among men. Here then is the reason why religion is called LOVE ; it expels and destroys the principle of hatred and enmity, and restores harmony, order, purity, righteousness, and piety ; benevolence to man, and reverential obedience. Such love must be the fulfilling of the law.

V. The apostle prays that this “love may abound more and more”—that the influence should become greater—the government more extended—and the energy more active ; *iva περισσευη*—this is a metaphor taken from a river greatly swollen by an accession of rain and land-floods, till it fills its channel, overflows its banks, and inundates all the adjacent plains. This love can grow and increase ; it is a sacred leaven that assimilates everything to itself ; and the more we believe, love, and obey, the more power we shall have in believing, loving, and obeying. Every talent that God gives is increased by use : *Use grace, and have grace*, was a maxim of our religious ancestors.

VI. The manner in which this love is to abound, and manifest itself, is next to be considered. “In knowledge,” says the apostle, “and in all judgment,” *εν επιγνωσει, και παση αισθησει*. These point out the constitution of the grand principle of acquisition.

1. In *knowledge*. Knowledge signifies the information gained by trial or experiment ; by lectures, discourses,

conversation, and reasoning on any particular subject ; but here theology, as a science, is particularly concerned. He that wishes to excel, and be what the apostle prays that the Philippians might be (especially while now the means of spiritual knowledge are so many, and blasphemy against the truth so common), must acquaint himself well with the *being* and *nature* of God ; who this Being is, and the arguments by which his existence is proved.

(1) Those *à priori*—which demonstrate the necessity that such a Being must exist. That there must have been one eternal, unoriginated, and self-subsistent Being ; and that it is utterly impossible that such a Being could not have eternally subsisted.

(2) By arguments drawn *à posteriori*—i. e., from things which we see to exist, the manner of this existing, and the end for which they do exist. This comprehends all the works of creation, and the providence by which they are governed and sustained.

1. The number, magnitude, constituent parts, laws, and modes of existing of bodies in the visible HEAVENS—sun, moon, planets, stars, &c. ; their revolutions, various affections, distances, nature, solid contents, mutual relations, connexions, and dependances, gravitation, and usefulness ; all these afford a series of arguments, the most satisfactory and convincing, of the being, knowledge, skill, power, and goodness of God. See Sermon I., p. 15, *et seq.*

2. The EARTH and its productions : vegetation—the great variety of trees, plants, flowers ; their hues, odours, savours, or tastes, medical and culinary uses, &c. ANIMALS—man, beasts, birds, fishes ; their nature, habits, properties, instincts, uses, all arguing the profound skill, wisdom, power, and goodness of that Being, of whose goodness and bounty the earth is full.

In these days, when blasphemy stalks abroad unmasked, and the Bible is treated with malicious and Satanic indignity, every Christian who has it in his power, and especially every Christian minister, should acquaint himself with these arguments. If we cannot know all these in detail, we should acknowledge them in aggregate, from the conviction that God is holy, powerful, wise, and good, and that he has done all things well. And this is probably what the apostle has particularly in view, as he uses the word *ἐν ἐπιγνώσει*, which signifies *acknowledgment*. Every man is bound to acknowledge God, as far as he knows him; and every man is bound to know God as far as he can. Should it be objected, that all the above points could not have been recommended to the church at Philippi, because they could not have the opportunity of gaining this knowledge, I answer, The prayer of the apostle had not for its object exclusively the Christians at Philippi; it has us also in view, and all to whom this epistle shall come, to the end of the world. And there are few persons at present, in these lands, who may not, at a very small expense, and with little labour, gain a general and satisfactory knowledge of all the points mentioned above. See Paley's *Evidences*, and Dr. Derham's works; and particularly those publications of the Society for the diffusion of Useful Knowledge that relate to these subjects.

But besides those things that relate to God, and his works of creation and providence, there are other matters of great importance in the science of theology, in which our love should increase more and more in knowledge.

1. God's revelation of himself in the Old Testament, the Law, the Prophets, and all the other holy writings. In these God is seen in his purity, majesty, and omniscience.

2. His revelation of himself in the New Testament, and particularly by Jesus Christ. The history of this glorious Person, his birth, preaching, miracles, death, and the proofs of all these, by testimony and by facts. His mission of the Holy Spirit, proved in the same way. The proofs of the divine authenticity of the Christian Scriptures, by evident fulfilment of prophecy, testimony of friends and foes, internal and external evidence, the duration of the church of Christ, and the divine power that still accompanies the ministration of the word. All these things should be known, and all should be acknowledged; and when the general proofs of these things are held in memory, we have then the knowledge of the theory of religion; and this satisfies the mind as to the truth and divine origin of the sacred volumes, and the religion founded on them. But thus far it is only a science; and may be known and acknowledged, without producing those salutary effects in which the salvation of the soul is concerned. Hence the apostle adds:—

VII. *In all judgment*—*εν παση αισθησει*—*in all sense*, as more properly expressed in the margin of our Bibles; and which must here signify all spiritual perception and moral feeling. Wiclif translates it *wit*; Coverdale, *experience*; Matthews, *feeling*; and Wesley, *spiritual sense*. In this last sense it certainly agrees best with the scope of the place, and appears to be the apostle's meaning:—

1. *Spiritual sense* produces what is called experimental religion—the life of God in the soul of man. This mental perception, or heart-feeling, answers in religion to palpable experience in philosophy. A simple conviction, and knowledge of bodies and their properties, is widely different from this spiritual feeling. By the sense of feeling we gain a knowledge or perception of

bodies and their qualities ; of hard, soft, wet, dry, cold, hot, and other tangible properties ; yet this gives us no mental feeling of those qualities, so as to demonstrate their truth. But that which is mentioned by the apostle implies this feeling, this mental, internal sense ; and in this consists the great difference between theoretical and experimental religion.

2. The apostle, in another place, explains this spiritual sense in one word : “ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. For the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.” Now the fact to be witnessed is beyond the knowledge of man ; no human power or cunning can acquire it ; if obtained at all, it must come from above. In this human wit and ingenuity can do nothing. The Spirit himself comes to tell us that we are reconciled to God—that our sins are blotted out—that we are adopted into the family of heaven. The apostle tells us that this is witnessed by the Spirit of God. God alone can tell whom he has accepted—whose sins he has blotted out—whom he has put among his children ; this he makes known by his Spirit, in our spirit ; so that we have, not by induction or inference, a thorough conviction and mental feeling that we are his children.

3. There is as great a difference between this and knowledge gained by logical argument, as there is between hypothesis and experiment. Hypothesis states that a thing may be so : experiment alone proves the hypothesis to be true or false. By the first, we think the thing to be possible or likely ; by the latter, we know, experience, or prove by practical trial, that the matter is true or is false, as the case may be.

VIII. Now this knowledge and spiritual feeling are given us, to the end that we *may approve things that are*



*excellent*—εις το δοκιμαζειν τα διαφεροντα—that we may try—practically examine, *the things that differ* ; that is, that differ from those things mentioned above, viz., the knowledge and spiritual sense or feeling. When a man is rooted and grounded in the true knowledge of God and sacred things, he knows whatsoever is presented to himself, whether it be truth or error, in reference to the experimental knowledge of salvation, by faith in Christ.

1. They know whatsoever is contrary to that work.

2. Whatsoever is contrary to that spirit. And,

3. By this all impressions on the imagination are tried ; and by their nature and tendency they know, (1) Whatsoever comes from God. (2) Whatsoever comes from mere NATURE ; and, (3) Whatsoever comes from SATAN.

(1) What comes from *God* is not only pure and holy, but leads directly to him, in faith, love, and obedience.

(2) Whatever comes from mere *nature* leads to animal gratification, never raising the man above himself, nor above animal and earthly things.

(3) What comes from *Satan* leads from subordination to God, and from benevolence and beneficence to man ; to envy, hatred, and malice, and to all uncharitableness.

Thus they see the things that differ, and avoid them as strange, untried, and unsafe. They see the things that are excellent, and approve them, and attach themselves to them ; striving to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God ; every day labouring to excel their former selves. “They put to proof the things that are more profitable,” as the words may be translated ; and having proved them, profit by them themselves, and thus become profitable to others.

IX. But besides this power of knowing and discerning, so as to prevent mental aberration from the truth,

and defection of the heart from experimental godliness. this knowledge and spiritual feeling are given to regulate both heart and life ; therefore the apostle adds, “That ye may be sincere, and without offence, till the day of Christ.” There are two points to be considered here. 1st. The state of the heart before God : *That ye may be sincere.* 2nd. The state of the life before men : *That ye may be without offence.*

1st. That ye may be *sincere*, ειλκρινεις. The word ειλκρινης, *sincere*, or ειλκρινεια, *sincerity*, are compound words, and come from ειλη, the *splendour of the sun*, and κρινω, *I judge*: “a fine word,” says old Mr. Leigh. “It is a metaphor taken from the usual practice of chapmen, in the view and choice of their wares, that bring them forth into the light, and hold up the cloth against the sun, to see if they can espy any default in it. Or else from such things as are purged and clarified by the light and heat of the sun, from the gross matter that is in them. As the sun discovers motes and atoms, so let your hearts be genuine, that the inwardest light may not discover motes which appear in others.” When stuffs are held up between the eye and the sun, not only flaws are easily seen, but the threads and general contexture of the cloth, whether even or uneven, whether carelessly or well woven, may be at once discerned. True believers will never rest, till the thoughts of their hearts are purified by the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit, so that they may perfectly love and worthily magnify his name.

Our word *sincere*, and *sincerity*, is also a metaphor taken from clarified honey, *mel incerum* ; that is, *mel sine cerá*—honey without wax ; that from which the wax has been entirely separated, so that nothing of the comb, nothing impure or gross, can be detected in it. For such a state of grace and purity, the apostle prays

in behalf of the Philippians; and had the attainment of such a state of grace in this life been impossible, the Holy Spirit would never have inspired the heart of the apostle to pray for it.

2nd. *That ye may be without offence, απροσκοποι*, from *α*, negative, and *προσκοπη*, a *stumbling-block*; that ye neither stumble nor be stumbled; neither take offence nor give offence; that ye walk so, that your example, instead of deterring men from the truth, may excite them to seek it; and that your whole life may be a correct and instructive comment on the holy creed which you have professed to receive. A man may dishonour religion and hurt his own soul, either by taking or giving offence; either of them will lead him out of the way of understanding, and this will soon bring him into the congregation of the dead. Purity within will produce righteousness without. When the apostle prays that *they may be sincere and without offence*, he prays that their *heart may be always right before God*, and their *conduct always unblamable before MEN*. These two constitute the character of the perfect Christian; the character of him in whose heart Christ dwells by faith, and whose actions are governed by the law of love to God and man.

This purity is not to last for a day, or a particular time merely, but during the whole of life—*till the day of Christ*; i. e., the day in which Christ shall come to judge the world. Hence we see, from the most obvious construction of the word, that a deliverance from all sin is held out to believers in this life. No intimation that they shall receive this heavenly gift either in the hour of death or in the day of judgment. The deliverance of the soul from all the contagion and contamination of sin may be as complete in this life, as the justification of the conscience from all the guilt of sin. We have re-

demption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins; and that blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness.

X. But wherever this inward change, this heavenly work is wrought, it will be manifest in the life and conversation—in all the words, works, and tempers of the regenerated man. Hence, says the apostle, “being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

1. They now have righteousness—they are made partakers of the divine nature. They have a righteous principle in every power of their souls, and in every affection and passion of their hearts. It is not enough that they are *saved from sin*, but they must be *filled with righteousness*. To empty and to fill are distinct operations of the Spirit of God. He first casts out sin; this he can do in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; but the filling with righteousness is a progressive work, for the man is to increase more and more in KNOWLEDGE; and as his increase in love depends on his increase in knowledge, and knowledge must be, from its very nature, gradually received; hence his growth in grace is gradual. In a moment he may be emptied of sin, and wherever evil was, there will a seed of righteousness be deposited; but that seed will require time to vegetate and grow; and as these seeds grow, so the powers of the soul expand; and in this way the immortal spirit may grow in holiness and excellence to all eternity. Being emptied of all sin is a small matter, when compared with being filled with God, or with all the fruits of righteousness.

By righteousness, we may understand, in a general sense, the whole work of the Spirit of God in the soul; and by the fruits of righteousness, all holy tempers, holy words, and right actions; and with these the apostle prays that *they may be filled*, *πεπληρωμενοι*, *filled up*, *filled*

*full*, no place being left for Satan or sin. Christ dwelling in their heart by faith ; being all in all, and all in every part.

2. The fruits of righteousness imply the seeds sown, and these watered by the dew of heaven from above, and influenced to their spiritual vegetation by the continual rays of the *Sun of righteousness*. In vain does the sun shine on the field where no seed has been sown ; and in vain is the seed sown, if the sun do not shine upon it, and the early and latter rains do not descend in their season. And it must be wholly a right seed to grow at all, and the ground must be well cultivated, and kept clean from weeds, that the seed, having a proper soil, may grow ; and the ground being kept clean, that the seed may not be choked, and so become unfruitful.

3. Nothing can produce the fruits of righteousness but the *seed of the kingdom*, and this can grow nowhere but in good ground ; and the good ground, our Lord tells us, is an *honest and good heart* ; and this honest and good heart becomes such, by being sufficiently *ploughed and broken up* by that repentance that is according to God, which produces the broken and contrite heart, the sighings of which God will not despise. In a word, *they are to be filled with the fruits of righteousness* :—1. Their hearts are to be filled with righteous purposes, and holy and merciful resolutions ; to produce the effects of which, the heart, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, feels continual tendencies ; and 2. In consequence, their lives are filled up with the works themselves : and hence, the word *πεπληρωμενοι*, *filled up, completely filled*,—or, as we would express it in homely phrase, *brimful, running over*.

XI. Lest any should imagine that this state of internal purity and external righteousness could be obtained by any efforts of man, or acquired by repeated acts,

which in the end might produce habits, and these a system of righteousness; the apostle takes care to remark, that all these blessings, moral changes, gracious dispositions, holy tempers, righteous actions, &c., are by **JESUS CHRIST**. Without him nothing is strong, or wise, or holy. No man could have either grace or space to repent, were it not for him. His sacrificial death alone is the cause why the sword of justice has not cut off every sinner. It is through his intercession that any transgressor or backslider is spared; by and through his merits the long-suffering of God is exercised towards men, and they are thereby led to repentance. It is by the power of his word and Spirit that repentance and deep contrition for sin are produced in the heart. It is through his passion and death alone that the penitent is reconciled to God, and receives the remission of his sins. It is the Spirit of Jesus Christ that witnesses with ours, that we are children of God. It is his blood that cleanseth from all unrighteousness. And it is by his dwelling in our hearts by faith that we are rooted and grounded in love, and are filled with all the fulness of God. He is the *Beginner* of our salvation, the *Continuer* and the *Finisher* of our faith. It is by him that we devise what is holy, and by him that we perform what is good. We are accepted through him, because purchased by him; and finally glorified together with him. Thus our whole salvation is through and by him; and if we overcome by his blood, it is that we may sit down on his throne, as he has overcome and sat down with the Father upon the Father's throne. Thus, of him, and through him, and to him are all things; and to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

XII. Finally, we see here the ultimate **END** proposed—*the glory and praise of God*. 1. God made man for his own glory; not to increase that glory, for it is infi-

nite and eternal, and cannot be increased ; but to manifest that glory. And God's glory is manifested when that which is agreeable to his nature is accomplished, so as to appear to angels and men. The greater the work of redemption on the earth, the greater display there is of the *glorious power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth* of God. Even the salvation of one sinner is an exhibition of God's glory ; it shows the availableness of the incarnation and death of Christ. It shows, thus far, the accomplishment of the end for which Christ died. For these triumphs of his love and mercy, God is honoured and praised. He is honoured when the work of his grace thus appears to men in the fruits of righteousness ; and God is praised by all the faithful, when his work thus appears. Every genuine follower of God has the glory of his heavenly Father in view in all that he does, says, or intends. He is not his own, and therefore he sees the reasonableness of glorifying God with his body and his spirit which are his. Such study to glorify their God ; they do glorify him by showing forth in their conversion and godly life, the glorious working of the glorious power of the Lord. 2. Thus, the great end for which man was created, preserved, and redeemed, is accomplished. God's glory is secured ; JESUS sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied ; the ANGELS rejoice in the accession of redeemed souls, coming from the church militant to the church triumphant ; and God, to all eternity, receives the praise that is due to the glory of his grace.

And now, reader, art thou willing to have this apostolic prayer fulfilled to thee ? Art thou weary of that carnal mind which is enmity to God ? Canst thou be happy whilst thou art unholy ? Dost thou know anything of God's love to thee ? Dost thou not know that he has given his Son to die for thee ? Dost thou love

him in return for his love? Hast thou even a little love to him? And canst thou love him a little, without desiring to love him more? Dost thou not feel that thy happiness grows in proportion to thy love and subjection to him? Dost thou not wish to be happy? And dost thou not know that holiness and happiness are as inseparable as sin and misery? Canst thou have too much happiness or too much holiness? Canst thou be made holy and happy too soon? Art thou not weary of a sinful heart? Are not thy bad tempers, anger, peevishness, fretfulness, covetousness, and the various unholy passions that too often agitate thy soul, a source of misery and woe to thee? And canst thou be unwilling to have them destroyed? Arise, then, and shake thyself from the dust, and call upon thy God! His ear is not heavy, that it cannot hear; his hand is not shortened, that it cannot save. Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation. It was necessary that Jesus Christ should die for thee, that thou mightest be saved; but he gave up his life for thee 1800 years ago! And himself invites thee *to come, for all things are now ready*. Such is the nature of God, that he cannot be more willing to save thee in any future time, than he is now. He wills that thou shouldst love him now, with all thy heart; but he knows that thou canst not thus love him till the enmity of the carnal mind is removed; and this he is willing this moment to destroy. The power of the Lord is therefore present to heal. Turn from every sin, give up every idol, cut off every right hand, pluck out every right eye. Be willing to part with thy enemies, that thou mayst receive thy Chief Friend. Thy day is far spent, the night is at hand, the graves are ready for thee, and here thou hast no abiding city. A month, a week, a day, an hour, yea, even a moment, may send thee into eternity. And if thou die in thy sins, where



God is, thou shalt never come. Do not expect redemption in death. It can do nothing for thee—even under the best consideration ; it is thy last enemy. Remember then that nothing but the blood of Jesus can cleanse thee from all unrighteousness. Lay hold, therefore, on the hope that is set before thee, re-echo the apostle's prayer, and apply it to thyself. The gate may appear strait, but strive, and thou shalt pass through ! *Come unto me*, says Jesus ; hear his voice, believe at all risks, and struggle into God ! Amen and Amen.

## SERMON VII.

### SAINT PAUL'S GLORYING ; -

OR, THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD UNTO  
SALVATION.

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ROMANS, i. 16, 17.

16. " For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

17. " For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ; as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

THERE is no case on record that affords a more decisive proof of the truth of Christianity, than that of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, afterwards called Paul, and constituted by Christ the apostle of the Gentiles. It is a maxim among men, *never to risk the loss of a present advantage, unless there be a good prospect and moral certainty of gaining another vastly superior in value.* Paul had lineage, civil rights, learning, influence, credit, authority, and power. Such was the state of Christianity in his time, that he who embraced it lost the benefit of all these, and forfeited his character in civil and religious society. This man was also zealously attached to his religious opinions, the religion of his country, and the traditions of his fathers. To change all these for the cross of Christ, for poverty, want, obloquy, pain, persecution, and death in its worst forms, could never be a matter of rational choice. That he did count them all as dross and

dung that he might gain Christ, is an indisputable fact. But how was this most extraordinary revolution of sentiment brought about, without one worldly consideration to prompt or sustain it? Here is a mystery which nothing but his own confession, and a subsequently long life of pains, labours, unparalleled writings, and finally a martyr's death, can properly account for and illustrate. He was convinced of the truth and excellence of the Christian religion, by *feeling it to be the power of God to his salvation*; and on this account he was, not only not ashamed of it, but gloried in it, and cheerfully sealed its truth with his blood.

In considering the general subject of the text, I shall inquire.

I. What is the Gospel of Christ?

II. Why was the apostle not ashamed of it?—It brought him salvation.

III. What was the agency by which the saving tendency of the gospel is applied?—The power of God.

IV. For whom were these benefits designed?—Jews and Gentiles.

V. How are they secured and rendered ultimately beneficial?—By faith.

VI. By Exhortation.

1. What is the gospel of Christ?

1. The history of the incarnation of our blessed Lord, including—1. His immaculate conception. 2. His extraordinary birth. 3. His miracles and preaching. 4. His sufferings and death. 5. His resurrection and triumphant ascension to heaven.

2. The end for which all this was undertaken. 1. To make an atonement for the sin of the world. 2. To blot out the sins of all that repent and believe on him. 3. To make men partakers of the divine nature. And 4. Finally take them to glory.

3. The doctrine of Christ crucified : or the good news (*ευαγγελιον*) that God wills all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth :—that truth which states that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.

With other acceptations it is not necessary to meddle.

II. Of this gospel, the apostle says he is not ashamed. What were the reasons? This assertion will receive light from Isai. xxviii. 16, and xlix. 23, quoted by the apostle, chap. x. 11, of this epistle, “For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed, nor confounded.” This is spoken in particular reference to the JEWS, that they might be reprovèd—to the GENTILES, that they might be encouraged.

The Jews, by not believing on Jesus Christ, and not receiving him as the promised Messiah, but trusting in others, have been disappointed of their hope, ashamed and confounded from that time to the present day. Their expectation is cut off :—and while rejecting Christ, and expecting another Messiah, they have continued under the displeasure of God, and are ashamed of their confidence.

On the other hand, those who have believed on Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, had, in and through him, all the blessings of which the prophets spoke : for the promises of God in the Old Testament, are yea and amen through him. Paul, as a Jew, believed on Jesus Christ ; and in believing, had life through his name : Christ dwelt in his heart by faith, and he was made unspeakably happy by the atonement which he had received, and the diffusion of the Spirit of holiness through his soul ; therefore, he could cheerfully say, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. And why? Because he felt it to be the *power of God to his salvation*.

Without this demonstration of its truth and excel-

lence, is there not something in the gospel itself calculated to make its professors *ashamed*? 1. The immaculate conception of our Lord. We know how this has been blasphemously represented by the Jews of old; and indeed by them and by many other infidels, to the present day. 2. The poverty and destitute state of Christ and his disciples. He had not where to lay his head; and he had no secular means of supporting, much less of enriching, his disciples. 3. In the manner of his trial—he was arraigned and condemned as a felon, as one that strove to destroy the public peace and tranquillity, by exciting the common people to insurrection and rebellion. 4. In the manner of his death—he was crucified as the vilest and most criminal slave; and as if his guilt were evident to all, had not one to plead for him; and as a sanction to the judgment of his enemies, his own disciples abandoned him, as if convinced of his guilt, or ashamed any longer to confess so traduced a master. But the resurrection of Christ dissipated all doubts concerning these points; and the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost on the souls of believers, filling them with light, and power, and love, was the demonstration that all was of God, and that they had not credited a foolish history, or a cunningly devised fable.

But this subject may and should be taken up on a more extensive ground. As it regards Paul, all is right and clear; we see that he had no cause to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He had all the consolations of which he speaks, he was an inspired apostle, and always full of the Holy Ghost and power. But the circumstances of Christians in these latter days are in several respects different from those of the apostle; and in reference to these the subject should be examined. On general grounds, what is it of which a man has cause to be ashamed? Answer,—

- (1) Anything that is unwise or injudicious in its plan.
- (2) Absurd or extravagant in its execution or progress.
- (3) Inefficient or destructive in its issue or end.
- (4) Anything that is false in its principle, or calculated to make men believe a lie.

This may be applied, Firstly, To all works of intellect. Secondly, To all works of civil polity. Thirdly, to all religious institutions.

With but few exceptions, the whole herd of novelists may be included under the *first*. (1) Their plans are sickly abortions of paralysed intellect. (2) The execution is fantastic and preposterous. And (3) Their issue is dangerous, often destructive, and generally ruinous. Several instances might be produced, and they might almost be taken up at random. Writers of this class,

“Snivelling and drivelling nonsense without end,”

have corrupted the youth and depraved the manners, not only of this, but of almost all the countries of Europe. They are the begetters of vain imaginations, of extravagant projects, and of calamitous issues. Of them, their country may well be ashamed; and they themselves blush at their own works, and the disastrous effects produced by them in society.

There are, however, some honourable exceptions. There are a few writers of this class, whose sole aim was to correct the vicious manners of the age, give a proper bias to the understanding, and a healthy direction to the feelings of the heart, and who, because it was popular, chose the form of a novel to convey their salutary instructions to the public. At the head of these, for pious and benevolent feeling, stands Henry Brook; for good intention and indefatigable ponderous labour, Samuel Richardson; and for correct conception, masterly deline-

ation, judicious colouring, and majestic execution, Walter Scott. The first leads you directly to God, the Fountain of light, life, perfection, and goodness. The second conducts you through many indirect roads and fairy by-paths, to virtue and propriety of conduct in the various relations of life. And the latter professes to carry you through nature and facts to the sources whence history should originate ; and raises up, not only the recollections of past events, but labours to place you, by inimitable description, in the midst of generations that have long since ceased to exist, whom in your presence he causes to transact all the avocations of their respective situations in life, and to exhibit all the peculiarities of the manners and customs of their times, with the whole train of thinking and feeling which gave them birth. What a pity that his after-discovery of himself has shown the public that instead of history we have had fiction ; instead of truth we have had *the thing that is not* ; and that there is scarcely a genuine character or a tissue of facts in the whole of these elegant works ! We have sowed much and reaped little ; we have been lulled into a pleasant sleep by the enchanter's wand ; himself has awoke us ; and lo ! the baseless fabric of the vision is dissolved, and not a wreck is left behind ! The author alone of the splendid illusion could detect its unrealities, and dissolve the fabric. We are glad, however, that we are at last undeceived ; for a falsehood, even gracefully told, is not the less dangerous ; for evil communications will, in all cases, not fail to corrupt good manners.

Such writers as these shall have, from posterity at least, their just meed of praise ; and of the general tenor of their works their authors need never be ashamed.

*Secondly.* But this may be applied also to many works of civil polity among ancient and modern nations, both barbarous, and what are called refined. In many cases

how foolish the plan, how barbarous the execution of laws sufficiently ill-conceived, how partial the administration of justice, and how oppressive to all but the framers and higher ranks, the general operation of those institutions which should be the barriers against wrong, the protectors and comforters of the humble mechanic, and the laborious cultivator of the soil! See the oppressed state of the subjects of the Sublime Porte; and the degradation of the peasantry of the Autocrat of all the Russias! And how little better circumstanced are the inhabitants of Spain and Italy; and how capable of improvement is the condition of the people under the Bourbons of France! Of most of these nations may it not be said, "They have statutes that are not good, and judgments by which they cannot live." I say nothing of sanguinary laws and brutal punishments, of which, where-soever found, the *framers* may be *ashamed*, and in which the *people* cannot *glory*.

*Thirdly.* But this applies still more forcibly to all human codes of religion, from the oral laws of the Jews down to the deistical and demi-atheistical systems of the present day. All, all have been conceived in folly or the lust of power—are carried on by puerile, ridiculous, and extravagant rites and ceremonies, and are daily issuing in perplexity and disappointment.

1. This is the nature, tendency, and operation of the spurious and generally contemptible Mishna of the Jews, with their Talmuds and Gemara, works that never yet made one man wise unto salvation, nor saved one sinner from his sins.

2. And also of the Mosliman religion, built on the jargon of the Koran—a system of conceits and solemn fooleries; a stagnant lake of asphaltic water, which would have long since been irrecoverably putrid, had not the deadly mass been preserved from total corruption by



some portions of living water stolen from Siloah's brook that flows from the oracle of God.

The like may be said of all the other systems of religion that have been invented by man. By none of them has the human heart ever been mended, the soul sanctified, or the conduct brought up to a pure standard of moral rectitude. Pure morality has been produced in no nation of the world where the revelation of God has not prevailed. What we find of good under any other system of religion consists more in the absence of certain evils, which are restrained by penal laws, than in the presence of good produced by holy principles.

Let us now examine the gospel of Christ, and see whether from its *plan*, its *operation*, and the *effects* produced by it, any of its professors have cause to be ashamed of their faith.

(1) Its **PLAN**.—It professes to come from God, the Fountain of wisdom, truth, holiness, and goodness ; and if this be its origin, it must be wise, true, holy, and beneficent ; and all its operations vindicate its claim to a heavenly origin. It is every way suited to the fallen, miserable state of man. It shows—makes a fuller discovery of the divine nature, than was ever made before, of its holiness, justice, truth, and goodness. It also gives a more correct view of man—of his nature, the soul and its immortality, the end of his being and the way of happiness. The resurrection of the human body, and the state of future rewards and punishments, are asserted, proved, and illustrated by it. Its promises and precepts are full of wisdom, reasonableness, and encouragement. It is adapted to every want, meets every wish, and satisfies every desire of the human soul.

Let us examine this more particularly.

That man is a fallen, sinful being, cannot be denied ; that he has that carnal mind which is enmity against

God, requires no proof. He is despicable and mean, yet proud and arrogant. He is sinful and wicked, yet presumptive of merit, and expectant of endless felicity. His moral weakness is such that he cannot resist sin; and yet he acts and boasts as if he had all power, and could bruise down Satan under his own feet. In a word, he is ignorant and proud, sinful and wicked, an enemy to himself, an enemy to his species, and an enemy to God. The gospel provides a remedy for all these evils. 1. It was a maxim amongst ancient philosophers and physicians, *contraria contrariis curantur*, “contraries are cured by their contraries.” Hence, to abase, confound, and destroy the pride of man, Jesus, who was in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; he humbled himself (yet farther), and *became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, Phil. ii. 6—8. And this humiliation of Jesus Christ is wondrously calculated to confound the pride and vain-glory of man; and this emptying of himself has been the means of purchasing that grace which bends and breaks the heart, gives true repentance, and prepares the soul for the mercy that pardons.

2. In like manner, his love is opposed to our enmity; and by it, our hatred to God and goodness is overcome. Love counteracts the whole carnal mind, draws out the heart in affectionate attachment to God, and is the incentive to all obedience, as being the fulfilling of the law. Such a person is not obliged to derive the principle of his obedience from anything outward; the moral law is before his eyes; but the love of God, shed abroad in his heart, is the principle by which he obeys it. He performs nothing merely as a duty, he has the law of God written in his heart, and this ever disposes him to do what is right in the sight of his Judge. If it were not

even infallibly true, that a life of sin must terminate in endless misery, yet he would abhor the way of the wicked. He has tried the path of disobedience, and found it the road to ruin ; he now knows the way of righteousness, and finds it the path of peace and happiness. *Satan*, the enslaver of the world, he found to be a hard taskmaster, during the long period in which he laboured under chains, in the house of his bondage. God, the Saviour of the world, he finds to be a beneficent Father, and his service perfect freedom. He delights in obedience ; it is the element in which his soul lives, prospers, and is happy.

3. The grace afforded by the gospel plan of salvation, destroys also the enmity that subsists between man and his fellows. As God is loving to every man, and hates nothing that he has made, so all those who are made partakers of the divine nature love man for his sake, and by the influence of that same love, which a merciful God bears even to the froward and the wicked. Strifes, quarrels, and contentions, wars and fightings, with all systems of licensed or unlicensed aggression, slaughter, rapine, and wrong, would cease in the world were the Spirit of the gospel to be even generally received. Com-motions in civil society would be as rare as comets in the solar system (as they could only exist among those who would not have God to rule over them), and like those rare visitants, pass through that kingdom of heaven which Christ had established upon earth, without disturbing that general order and harmony which are essential to his government among men. And were this gospel to be universally received (and why should it not?) all human enmities would be abolished for ever.

This is not theory. We know what would be the case in the mass, from what we see among individuals. In every case where a sinner is converted to God, he is

filled with that WISDOM *from above, which is pure*, PEACEABLE, GENTLE, EASY TO BE ENTREATED, *full of MERCY and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy*. Under such influence, men bear each others' burdens, cease from all strife and envying, are courteous, pitiful, and kind. They have in them the mind that was in Christ, and they walk as he walked. Behold then the wisdom of the gospel plan! It does not act by laying on restraints, but by cradicating evils; it not only takes away those evil dispositions which lead to the works of the devil and the flesh, but it infuses those principles which lead to peace, purity, and happiness.

(2) And as it is wise in its *plan*, so it is benign in its *operation*; its doctrine drops as the rain, its speech distils as the dew, as small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass (Deut. xxxii. 2). The Spirit of God shines into the heart to convince it of sin, righteousness, and judgment; in order that it may feel the need it has of redemption; that same Spirit takes of the things that are Christ's, and shows them unto it; the sinner then sees the boundless love of God that has provided such a sacrifice for sin. He is astonished at the divine goodness. When he sees what has been done for him he hates his former life, and loathes himself, repenting as in sackcloth and ashes. He is commanded to believe on him who died for his offences, and rose again for his justification. He lays hold on the hope set before him; he believes in the availableness of the wondrous atonement, and "gives up every plea beside, 'I am condemned, but Christ has died.'" The spirit of adoption is then given to him, by which, with a thorough conviction of his own sonship, he is enabled to cry, Abba, Father! He is now justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus; and is filled with all peace,

love, and joy, in believing ; and abounds in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Nothing can be more gentle, nothing more persuasive, nothing more effectual than the operation of this grace upon his heart and mind. Whatever part the great and mighty wind, the earthquake, and the fire might have had in his conviction, it was the still small voice (1 Kings xix. 11, &c.) that announced the presence of that most merciful God and Father who is now come to put away his sins, and receive him among his children. And now, being received into the heavenly family, he continues to believe—love—and obey. And as his faith worketh by love, he runs the race that is set before him with alacrity, cheerfulness, and delight. As he finds the service of God to be a reasonable service, so he performs it, not with constraint, but willingly ; doing the will of God from his heart ; rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

(3) As the *plan* was wise, and the *operation* benign, so the *issue* is glorious. The genuine Christian is holy—and happy, because holy ; he not only lives an innocent life, but he lives a useful life—he labours for the welfare of society, and the peace of God keeps and rules his heart. He lives to grow wiser and better, and he misses not his aim. In affliction he is patient and submissive ; in adversity his confidence in God is unshaken ; in death he has no fears, because Christ dwells in his heart by faith ; he overcomes his last enemy, and finally triumphs, Satan himself being beat down under his feet ; and, having overcome, he sits down with Christ on his throne, as he, having overcome, is sat down with the Father upon the Father's throne. Thus then, his salvation on earth issues in an eternal weight of glory. Hence, therefore, it is demonstrated, that no believer

need be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, as it is wise in its PLAN, benign in its OPERATION, and glorious in its END.

And (4) It need scarcely be added, that it is *true* in its *principle*, and has been the means of diffusing truth wherever it has been proclaimed; ascertaining the nature and worth of natural and spiritual things; correcting all errors in judgment, and viciousness in practice; causing men to know the only true God, and “Jesus Christ whom he has sent, whom to know is life eternal.” It opens the science of salvation by manifesting him, “who is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE; and thus fulfilling the purposes of God,—the intentions of nature,—and the counsels of reason, in reference to the present and eternal state of men.

All these things are included in the reason which the apostle assigns for his not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ: “Because,” says he, “it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.”

III. That the gospel brings salvation to men has already been ascertained, and the manner in which the operation is carried on, has also been pointed out; but the especial agency by which the work is begun, carried on, and completed, has been mentioned only in a general way. The apostle terms it the *power of God*, *δυναμις του Θεου*, a phrase which ordinarily signifies *such a power as God exerts when he inverts or suspends the operations of nature, to produce effects which in the ordinary course of things could not take place*. Such, indeed, is the salvation of the soul; so deep is the stain, so radicated the habits of sinning, so strong the propensity to do what is evil, that nothing less than the power by which the soul was created, can conquer these habits, eradicate these vices, and cause such a leopard to change his spots, and such an Ethiop his hue. The whole change which

the soul undergoes in its conversion, is the effect of a divine energy within. This the Gospel promises, when it promises to send forth the Holy Spirit. This mighty Spirit is given to enlighten, convince, strengthen, quicken, and save ; and the change that is effected in the sinner's soul, in his habits, and in his life, is such as no natural cause can produce ; such as no art of man can effect ; and such as no religious institutions, connected with the most serious and pointed moral advices, can ever bring about. It is wholly God's work ; and he performs it neither by might nor power, but by his own Spirit.

Several systems of religion have some good ordinances and moral precepts—they speak against sin, and recommend a moral life ; but under them not one sinner is converted. And why ? Because they minister not the power of God. Nor does even the strong and forcible preaching of the divine precepts of Christianity itself produce this. Where JESUS is not preached as the POWER of God, as well as the WISDOM of God, no sinner is converted from the error of his life. The profligate continues his course ; drunkards, swearers, liars, sabbath-breakers, the unjust, the unclean, and the unholy, continue under the influence and power of sin, though they may frequent the ministry of those who, not knowing the work of God upon their own hearts, think God works not at all ; and endeavour to produce the wonderful change which the gospel requires, and the state of the soul demands, by moral suasion, and the administration of the divine ordinances ! Vain labour ! without this power of God, no good can be effected. Jesus, as putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and as sending forth the enlightening and powerful influence of the Holy Ghost, must be clearly, faithfully, and incessantly preached. Where this is done, sinners will be converted unto God, and believers built up on their most holy faith. This was the *gospel*

which St. Paul preached, because he knew it to be the "power of God to salvation." He had felt it to be such ; and he witnessed it as the only means of saving either a lost world, or a lost soul.

Now, as all men had sinned, and Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, so the Gospel salvation is offered indiscriminately to all. And as nothing can produce this salvation but the power of God, so no one can merit it ; none can purchase it by works of righteousness which he has done or can do ; and therefore, it is a gratuitous offer made to mankind, and actually conferred on them that believe—on them who credit the record that God has given of his Son, and receive Jesus Christ crucified as a sufficient sacrifice and oblation for their sins. Hence the apostle states, that "the Gospel is the power of God to salvation unto every one that believes."

IV. And lest that most sinful selfishness, which causes multitudes to restrain the grace and goodness of God to themselves, and imagine that all the rest of mankind were passed by, and that the God who hateth nothing that he has made, but is loving to every man, had made no provision for them who did not worship in their way, or receive their creed, should prevail in any mind, the apostle adds, "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." That is, by the most obvious construction, from the well known application of those terms, "to the whole human race ;" for, at that time, under the denomination of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, was the whole human race included. To the *Jew*, the first offer of salvation by Christ was to be made, and the next to the *Gentile* world. All that did not harden their hearts against God's fear, nor reject the counsel of God against themselves, were made partakers of this grace, and became the "elect of God, holy and beloved." Those who resisted the Holy Ghost were



blinded and cast off; but none was rejected till he had rejected the Lord who bought him.

And that this gospel salvation was intended both for Jews and Gentiles, the apostle argues thus : " For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith ; " i. e., God's method of saving sinners by Christ Jesus (as the phrase *righteousness of God* is often used in this epistle ; among others, see chap. iii. 20—26), is fully manifested in the gospel, is *revealed from faith to faith*. 1st, It is shown to be by faith, and not by the works of the law ; for *Abraham*, the father and founder of the Jewish people, was justified by faith, before even the law was given ; and from believing, in reference to the spiritual object held forth in the various ordinances of the law, and now revealed under the gospel, he and all his believing descendants have been justified ; have received the pardon of sin, and become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 2ndly, Thus the faith of the Old Covenant led on to the faith of the New Covenant, which shows that salvation has been by faith from the call of Abraham to the present time. And from the beginning, all that were just or righteous in the earth became such by faith ; and by this principle alone they were enabled to persevere, as it is written, adds the apostle, " The just shall live by faith." 3dly, And because the gospel of Christ provides a way of salvation at once so honourable to God, so illustrative of his justice and mercy, and so suitable to the state and condition of a fallen, ruined world, therefore the apostle could say, and every man who has duly studied and felt the subject can also say, " I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

V. How are these benefits to be ultimately secured ?

The apostle answers, "The just shall live by faith." The man that is justified by faith must live by faith. The way to obtain salvation, and the way to retain it, are the same. The penitent sinner receives by faith the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, for the remission of his sins. The believer receives grace by faith through Christ Jesus, to give him stability in the grace he has received. We may note here three things. 1. The *character* of the person—the *just*. 2. How he *maintains* that character—he *lives*. 3. What are the *means* by which this life is continued? *Faith*. The just—shall live—by faith.

1. The *just* here, is the same as the justified person—he who has sought and found redemption in Christ Jesus; and he is called just, not because he has been acquitted, that is impossible, because he was found guilty—but because he has been absolved from the punishment due to his sins, by receiving a pardon; and a pardon sets the culprit on the same footing, in reference to the law, as the just or righteous man himself. Where the sovereign exerts his royal prerogative, in the way of pardon, whatever the law might have previously exacted, it ceases now to have any demands in reference to the past; and the righteous and the pardoned occupy the same ground as to civil rights, privileges, &c. Where the king issues his pardon, the law ceases to condemn.

2. The just or justified person maintains this character—by *living*; i. e., living to God's glory. 1. He must have all his actions regulated by the Word and Spirit of Christ. In the Word he sees how he should act so as to please God. By the indwelling Spirit, he feels a power to act in this way. *That* shows him his duty; *this* enables him to fulfil it. 2. Before his justification he lived to no useful purpose—though he existed, yet he was considered dead; dead in trespasses in sins—dead in law; because his life was forfeited by transgres-

sion. His soul was dead to all religious affections, feelings, and desires ; but now he *lives*, yet not he, but Christ liveth in him ; and when Christ, who is his life shall appear, then shall he also appear with him in glory. Christ is, in the believing soul, a well springing up to life eternal. While the streams of this life arise in him, he *lives*—lives to God's glory, and his Redeemer's praise ; for he shows forth the virtues of him who has called him from darkness into his marvellous light. He lives also for the benefit of man ; his light so shines, that others, seeing his good works, may glorify his Father which is in heaven.

3. The *means* by which this life is maintained is FAITH. He continues in the conscientious belief of every article of the Christian faith ; he believes in reference to practice. He searches the Scripture, as well to know his duty, as to find out his privileges ; he seeks out God's commandments till he finds none. What he reads, he credits ; and what he credits, he applies to the use for which it was given. But he has *faith in Christ*—he still views him as his sacrificial offering—as having purchased all the blessings he needs,—and faith is the hand which is ever stretched out to receive of his fulness. His prayers for support—for victory over temptation—for power to take up and bear his cross—and for grace to do and suffer the whole will of God, are all offered up through faith in Christ ; and for Christ's sake alone are they answered. Christ dwells in his heart by faith ; and the life that he lives in the flesh he lives by faith in the Son of God. Thus Christ lives in him, and he lives by and to him. He is maintained in his justified state, goes on to perfection, and at last enters into the paradise of God by faith in Christ Jesus. In vain does any one dream about final perseverance, who does not thus walk by faith, and live to the glory of God.

VI. And now, reader, what dost thou say? Dost thou understand the Gospel? Is it the power of God to thy salvation? Art thou saved? Is the power of thy sin broken? The guilt of it removed from thy conscience? The pollution of it washed away from thy heart? Hast thou felt that mighty power which roots up all the seeds of sin? Art thou then *ashamed* of this Gospel?—ashamed to speak of it?—ashamed to acknowledge it?—ashamed to patronize it?—ashamed to own or associate with true believers in it, because they are poor or persecuted? Art thou ashamed to own it among the ungodly? Canst thou hear pure and undefiled religion spoken against, and its followers reviled by the formalist and the profane, and yet hold thy peace, lest thou shouldst come in for a share of the reproach? In a word, art thou ashamed of Christ crucified? Of God manifested in the flesh? Of the Maker, preserver, and friend of mankind? Of HIM who will shortly be thy Judge? Then, hear what the Lord God speaketh unto thee: “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels;” Mark viii. 38. “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven;” Matt. x. 32, 33. These are words of terror to the half-hearted Christian—to all that wish to walk in the sunshine of public prosperity,—to those who love that religion which the world approves,—for that religion was never yet of God. It is justly said, that “as the laws of Christ give no quarter to vice, so vicious men will give no quarter to religion.” On what principle has the Christian church been honoured with martyrs? On that laid down by

the apostle : *they were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ;* “they counted not their lives dear to them ; but overcame through the blood of the Lamb, and their testimony. Therefore are they before the throne.” On the same principle, “Moses refused the honour of being constituted the son of Pharaoh’s daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ;” Heb. xi. 24—26. But who is of his mind ? Who is it that is not continually bartering Christ, and the soul’s best interests, for the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world ? But are there not many thousands that have not bowed their knees to these Baals ? who love Christ,—his Gospel,—his messengers,—his people,—and even his Cross ? There are. And why is this ? Because they know his Gospel to be the power of God unto their salvation. To such, therefore, I would say, “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free.” Run the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus ? Remember that “the just shall live by faith.” You obey no longer than you love ; you love no longer than you believe ; you believe no longer than you are looking unto Jesus. Look at him in his sacrificial character, discerning the end for which he was offered up. Look at him in his mediatorial office, and consider the prevalence of his intercession. Look at him in the meekness and gentleness of his carriage, and endeavour to imitate him. Look at him in his benevolence, charity, and mercy, and strive to bear his likeness. Look at him in the universal excellence of his conduct, and follow him. Look at him as the fountain of your life and the source of all your blessings, and continue to derive fresh supplies from his fulness ; for without him you can do nothing. Thus shall you live by faith ; be preserved in his salva-

tion ; be able “to bear all things—believe all things—hope all things—endure all things ;” for you shall have the *charity that never faileth*. And, when he doth appear, you shall be like him, for you shall see him as he is, and have an abundant entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus ! Then shall he confess you before his Father and the holy angels, and you shall have an eternal triumph, because you have known and acknowledged him before men, *and have not been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*.

## SERMON VIII.

### THE DISEASE AND CURE OF NAAMAN.

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2 KINGS v. 12.

“Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?”

I do not recollect a more remarkable chapter in the historical books of the Bible than this out of which I have taken the text. The facts mentioned here occur nowhere else in the sacred writings, nor are they referred to by the ancient Jewish historians. The history of Naaman, as here related, is not even mentioned by Josephus, though it most certainly must have been in the Hebrew text in his time, from which it has never been absent: and besides, has always been extant in the Chaldee, Syriac, and Septuagint, all of which must have been known to him. The history, therefore, is very singular; and the two main facts in it—the leprosy of Naaman, and its miraculous cure by Elisha, and the transfer of that leprosy to Gehazi, the servant of the prophet—are both as instructive as they are extraordinary, and teach us lessons of sovereign importance. There are some difficulties (not contradictions nor improbabilities) in both accounts, which require study and investigation; but these difficulties belong to some circumstances in the accounts, and not to the facts them-

selves; they are of minor importance, and need not at present come into consideration. I propose, therefore,

FIRST—To take a general view of the history, paraphrasing its most impressive parts.

SECONDLY—To consider the nature of leprosy in general, as a disease, and as an emblematical representation of SIN; and what is to be done to effect its cure.

THIRDLY—To make some remarks on the simplicity of the means which God has prescribed for the cure of sin, or salvation of men; and how these means have been treated in different ages of the world.

*First.* I shall take a general view of this history, by paraphrasing its most impressive parts.

1. *Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, &c., ver. 1.* Of this eminent Syrian we know nothing more than what is related here, as his name is nowhere mentioned in the sacred writings but in this place, and by our Lord in Luke iv. 27; who, in his discourse to the people of Nazareth, mentioning the case of Naaman, evidently refers to this place: “Many lepers were in Israel, in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” Some of the rabbins say that he is the person mentioned in 1 Kings xxii. 34, *who drew his bow at a venture* (לְתַמּוֹ *letummo*), more properly, *with true aim and all his strength*, and smote Ahab, king of Israel, so that he died; by which circumstance the Israelites were discomfited, and the victory, including in it a great deliverance, came to Syria. But this tradition is too uncertain to be entitled to much consideration.

2. Though we cannot cast much light on the person of Naaman, yet his character and high offices in the Syrian court are particularly mentioned.



1. He was *captain of the host of the king of Syria* (שר צבא *sar tseba*), prince or chief of the army. This most probably means generalissimo, or commander-in-chief of all the Syrian forces ; the different chiefs, as well as the forces under them, being all under his authority and direction ; an office of the highest importance, consequence, and responsibility.

2. He was a *great man* (יש גדול *ish gadol*), worthy of the trust and confidence reposed in him ; had extensive connexions and great influence, especially with the king his master, who had trusted the weal of the empire entirely to his management.

3. And he was *honourable* (נשא פנים *nesua panim*), highly respectable. He was elevated on account of his merit, and he showed his face with honour in all places and in all offices, and behaved himself so well as to have the suffrages and good opinion of the kingdom, as well as of the prince.

4. *He was also a mighty man in valour* (גבור חיל *gibbor chayil*), words which seem at once to express the size and strength of his body, and the bold, intrepid, and inflexible energy of his mind. Few, probably, could compare with him in bodily strength, and he had the genuine spirit of a hero—an enemy never saw his back ; and his military career was never tarnished by ferocious cruelty or barbarous plunder, farther than the allowed usages of war authorized him to act. In reference to such a character, in such circumstances, this seems to be the unforced meaning of the four characteristics mentioned above. Humanly speaking, what could such a man have or desire more ! He was possessed of the three great excellencies which are the objects of pursuit to all the ambitious of the earth—*honour, power, and profit*. The friendship of the prince, the confidence of the country, and the high emoluments of office ; to

which may be added, success in his military engagements, and the honour of having saved his country when in imminent danger from a powerful rival state; *for by him had Jehovah given deliverance unto Syria.* Yet in none, nor in all of these things, could he be happy; for it is added—

5. He was a **LEPER**. This is brought in with a strange abruptness, and in a single word in the original—*מצורע* *metsorá*, leprous. Alas! just about to step on the last round of the climax of happiness, the cup of blessing at his lips, and he about to drink of the fountain of life, when the cup was dashed from his mouth! *A leper!* What a heavy tax upon his grandeur; for he was afflicted with a disorder the most loathsome and the most humiliating that could possibly disgrace and afflict a human being!

The wise and just God often, in the course of his providence, permits great defects to be associated with great eminence, that he may hide pride from man, and cause him to think soberly of himself and of his acquirements. Let him that most assuredly standeth take heed lest he fall! and let him who is in honour bear himself meekly, lest God defile his horn in the dust; for God grants his gifts, not that the creature, but that himself may be magnified.

Evils are sent sometimes in the way of judgment, because the man has abused his blessings; at other times he sends or permits them to come, either to prevent disgrace, or for the farther manifestation of his own power and goodness. This latter was the case in the instance before us; and by what a surprising chain of providences was this brought about! Let us attend to them, and consider them in detail:—

1. “The Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive a little maid; and she waited on

Naaman's wife," ver. 2. There had been war between Israel and Syria in the days of Ahab, king of the former, and Ben-hadad, king of the latter; and as their territories were contiguous to each other, a predatory war appears to have been carried on upon the borders; and in making inroads, when successful, goods, cattle, and persons were carried off as lawful prey. To divide and distract the counsels and energies of the invaded, the marauding foe divided himself into companies, and, at the same time, entered the borders in different places. The irruption was sudden; the panic occasioned by it great; and before they could put themselves in a posture of defence, the enemy had laden himself with booty, and departed with the same celerity with which he had made his aggression.

This is the very mode in which this sort of warfare is carried on in various parts of the East to the present day. The term *companies*, גודודים *gedudim*, is, I believe, correctly explained by Rab. Sal. Jarchi:—"When," says he, "one or two hundred men go out by themselves, to make prey of whatever they can get, that is called גודוד *gedud*, a troop." It was in such marauding companies that the Syrians had invaded the Israelitish borders when the little maid in question was taken, and afterwards probably sold for a slave.

2. On the case of this little maid, we may remark, 1. That she had been piously brought up; she had known the God of Israel. 2. She acknowledged and respected his prophet. 3. She had a thorough belief in God's omnipotence. 4. She knew the intercourse and power that his prophet had with him. 5. Her pious education was not in vain, for she carried her fear of God into the land of her captivity; and, 6. She acknowledged the only true God in an idolatrous house, and in a nation of heathens.

3. But how mysterious was that Providence that permitted the parents to be deprived of their child ; and of such a child ! the child of their prayers and their hopes ; but now, the child of their tears, anxieties, and hopeless sorrows ! The loss of any child, even the most worthless, in such circumstances, must distress beyond description, even the most unfeeling of parents : torn from their bosoms by the ruthless hands of unprincipled barbarian soldiers, and carried into exile, to slavery, to slaughter, or even to a worse fate ; for idolatry and prostitution are even worse than any of the preceding. Behold the goodness and severity of Divine Providence : affectionate parents are deprived of their promising daughter by a set of lawless freebooters, without the smallest prospect that, if spared alive, she could have any lot in life but that of misery, infamy, and woe !

4. But the mystery of the Divine Providence begins to be cleared up ; for it is added, *She waited on Naaman's wife*. The words are emphatic, וְהָיָה לְפָנֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ נַעֲמָן *va-tehi lipney esheth Naaman*, “and she was in the presence (before the face, or under the eye) of the wife of Naaman. She was what we could call lady's maid, or companion, to the wife of this general. Her decent orderly behaviour, the consequence of her sober, pious education, entitled her to this place of distinction, in which her servitude was at least easy, and her person safe. If God permitted the parents to be deprived of their child by the hands of ruffians, he did not permit her to be without a guardian ! If even the father and the mother had forsaken her, or she had been reft from them, the Lord had taken her up ; nor could she have had a more efficient protector than the Syrian general, nor have been in safer circumstances than under the eye of his wife. ’

5. The conduct of this little Israelitish maid, as far as it concerns the history before us, is next to be considered.

“She said to her mistress, Would God, my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy,” ver. 3. Here we may first admire the kindness of God, who sent a prophet to such an idolatrous city as Samaria, and among a people who had apostatized in the main, from the true faith: for although they, in a certain way, *feared Jehovah, yet they served other gods*,—had neither a true temple, a true service, nor a true sacrifice. Well, they stood the more in need of a divine teacher; and, because their blindness was great and their case deplorable, God sent them one of the most eminent of his prophets, who fearlessly proclaimed the counsel of the Most High, and was endowed with such extraordinary powers as to be able to accredit and confirm his teaching by the most striking miracles.

This little maid seems to have been well acquainted with the character and ministry of the prophet; and knowing the divine power with which God hath clothed him, she was satisfied that he both could and would cure her master, were he to present himself before him.

“Would God that my master”—אחלי *achali*, *I wish*; or, as the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic have it, *Happy would it be* for my master, if he were with the prophet, &c. Here the mystery of the Divine Providence becomes farther developed:—

“And one went in and told his lord—Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel,” ver. 4. By the captivity of this little maid, one Syrian family at least, and that one of the most considerable in the Syrian empire, is brought to the knowledge of the true God: and most probably the king and his court were led, in consequence, to acknowledge the supremacy of the God of Israel. So well had this pious child conducted herself, that her sober words made a serious impression on them that heard them; and so fully were they credited,

that an embassy from the king of Syria to the king of Israel was founded upon them !

A religious profession, supported by a consistent walk, produces both reverence and respect, even in the wicked. And, even while they ridicule religion, they will put confidence in its professors, credit their works, and employ their services in preference to all others. How forcible are right words ! What a pity that all the professors of religion were not at all times faithful to their trust, and consistent in their conduct ! How soon would infidelity and vice lose their glorying, and the faith and hope of the gospel everywhere triumph ! But, alas ! how few are clear in this matter ! O God, mend both thy church and thy ministers !

6. This information had affected and interested Naaman, and it appears he went and laid the whole before the king ; for a journey by his chief captain could not be undertaken to Samaria, without the king's license ; and as the two nations were not in a good understanding with each other, a negociation was necessary, in order that a journey of this kind might be taken with safety to the person of Naaman, and without suspicion or damage to the Israelitish king.

It appears that the testimony of the little maid weighed equally with the king of Syria as with Naaman ; and as in all countries, where a form of religion is established and supported by the state, the clergy or priests are under the authority of the prince, the Syrian king thought that it was best to address the king of Israel on the subject, and desire him to cure his servant of the leprosy. That the message might appear properly respectable, he sent a suitable letter ; and Naaman took a present of considerable value for the prophet. This was an invariable custom, for prophets and great men of all descriptions were approached with this ceremony ; and the present

was, in its value, always proportioned to the eminence of the person to whom the approach was made, and to the circumstances of the person claiming the interview. Naaman took with him *ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment*, ver. 5. These ten talents of silver, valued at £353 11s. 10½*d.* per talent, amounted to the sum of £3,535 18s. 9*d.* The six thousand pieces of gold, if shekels be meant, as is most probable, at £1 16s. 5*d.* the shekel, amount to £10,925, and the whole to £14,460 18s. 9*d.* sterling ; besides the value of the ten caftans or superb suits of clothing, which must have been very considerable. This was a princely present : but neither Naaman nor his royal master knew that healing was the gift of God, and that the gift of God could not be purchased by money.

7. This embassy produced great agitation in the Israelitish court, the reason of which will shortly be explained.

When the king of Israel had read the letter, (which was as follows: “ Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant unto thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy,”) he rent his clothes, and said, “ Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?—see how he seeketh a quarrel against me?” ver. 7. The king of Israel spoke thus, under the conviction that *God alone* could cure the leprosy. This was a truth generally acknowledged by all ; and must have been acknowledged in Syria, as it was in both Egypt and Israel ; for this disease was equally prevalent in all those countries, and in all equally incurable. And it was this that led the king of Israel to infer that Ben-hadad sought a quarrel with him, in desiring him to do a work which God alone could do ; and when he should find that the work was not done, would declare war against him, because he did not do it. He either did not know the

power of the Lord's prophet, or he knew that he had too small an interest with the Supreme God to expect him to work a miracle to save one who was a worshipper of the golden calves set up by Jeroboam, at Dan and Bethel. Idolatry is not only contemptible in itself, but it renders its partizans ridiculous. In the time of distress, they dare not trust in their idols; they are satisfied that they have no power; for, who, under the influence of a reflecting mind, can put their trust in the stock of a tree? To expect supernatural help in a time of distress, a man must know that there is a God, and that he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. He that will be saved, must pray; and he that prays, must have faith in a God all-sufficient.

Of the consternation at the Israelitish court, the Lord's prophet was soon informed; God still cared for Israel, and there he had his watchman Elisha. He sent a message to the king sufficiently respectful, but unceremonious: "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes?" Why shouldst thou be in such circumstances as to be terrified at the message of the Syrian king? Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Hast thou totally forsaken him, and now darest not to trust him in the time of thy distress? "Send Naaman to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel," ver. 8. Here is a cutting reproof; but in it there is consolation. I have been long in the land,—why hast thou not known me? I have been a watchman to Israel,—why hast thou not acknowledged me? If thou wilt not know me as the *prophet of God*, this heathen man, this worshipper of Rimmon, shall be led to acknowledge that I am such. "Let him come to me."

8. On receiving this command, Naaman would naturally consider of himself how he was to proceed in the order of his journey; for the little maid did not say, "Would God that my master were with the KING



of ISRAEL, at Samaria; for HE would recover him of his leprosy!" It was the *prophet* she mentioned, not the *king*: but the king was solicited, that he might command the prophet; and now that he is sent by the king to the prophet, he would naturally consider that all was going on in its right course. He, therefore, hesitates not, but immediately sets off for the prophet's residence. "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha," ver. 9. Though he assumed considerable state, yet probably not more than belonged to his office and dignity: but, alas! he was a leper. His whole body was covered with a most loathsome disease, unfit for human society, and in the last state, as to his body, of human wretchedness: so the meanest unpolluted beggar was both higher and happier than he. How vain are earthly distinctions when God lays his hand upon our flesh! Naaman was at the pinnacle of human grandeur, but he was a leper. Pride was not made for the sons of men; in our prosperity we should rejoice even before God with trembling. The exaltation of every state in life is counterbalanced by its depressions. Even Haman, the highest next to the king in the mighty Persian empire, feels wretched, because there is one porter at the king's gate, who is not obliged to do him homage! What a multitude of substantial evils are produced by the inquietudes of vanity—all in themselves ideal and imaginary!

9. The prophet must be faithful to his God; and he must act so that he himself may appear as little as possible in the miracle about to be wrought, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of man; and that God alone may have all the glory. "Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go, and wash in Jordan seven times; and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean," ver. 10. Here Elisha

spake as a prophet, the order was from heaven ; neither the will nor the device of the prophet was consulted ; he acted under immediate inspiration, and was not even permitted to appear in the business. Man may mistake, God cannot. Whatever HE says is good ; whatever he commands is right ; and he so doth his marvellous works, that men may fear before him. It is the height of presumption for the creature to set up his wisdom against that of the all-wise Creator. God intended that Naaman should be cleansed ; but that cleansing shall be effected by washing *seven times in the river JORDAN*. Though seven was a number that intimated perfection among the Jews, and is often used in this sense ; and here it might be supposed that the command meant, Wash sufficiently, wash till thou find that thou art clean ; yet nothing of this kind is intended, the works are to be taken literally ; for God, in the law, had commanded that the leper should be sprinkled seven times, in order to his healing ; see Lev. xiv. 7. The command of the prophet, therefore, was in strict accordance with the law ; and if there were reason for the one, there was equal reason for the other ; but the LAW was holy ; and, therefore, the commandment was holy, just, and good.

10. "But Naaman was wroth, and went away," ver. 11. And why was he wroth ? Because the prophet treated him without ceremony, and prescribed a simple and expenseless mode of cure ! How strange that some people will not accept help unless it come to them in their own way, and that way generally the worst calculated to convey it ! God's mode of cure is infallible ; he that neglects so great a salvation, must live and die under all the power and virulence of his disease. Naaman expected to be treated with great ceremony, and instead of humbling himself before the Lord's prophet, he expected the prophet of the Lord to humble himself before him.

11. *Behold, I thought.* Hear him express his *thoughts*, for every word is emphatic. 1. *I thought* HE *will surely come out to me*—I never thought he would make his servant the medium of communication between ME and himself. 2. *I thought he would come out to me and stand*—Present himself before me, and stand as a servant before his master, to hear the orders of his God. 3. *I thought* he would stand *and call on the name of the Lord his God*—So that his God and himself might appear to do me service and honour. 4. *I thought* that he would STRIKE *his hand over the place*; for I can never suppose that any healing virtue can be conveyed without contact. Had he acted thus, I should have considered myself treated according to the dignity of my master, and might have expected, from such a rational procedure, the cure for which I have come from the land of Syria. Why wash in HIS *Jordan*? “Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel! May I not wash in them and be clean?” If my cure is to be effected by cold water bathing, surely I have means at home, superior to any that this country can afford. I am insulted; and shall instantly lay the business before my prince. “So he turned and went away in a rage,” ver. 12.

12. Having thus expressed his thoughts, he began to act upon them, and was proceeding on his return, till a prudent servant ventured to reason with him thus:—“My father, if the prophet had bid thee do *some* great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith, WASH AND BE CLEAN?” ver. 13. “The prescription is easy and unexpensive; thou hast come a great way, and it is worthy of trial, and it is time enough to give way to resentment and displeasure, when, after trial, the prescription shall be found inefficient.” Won by such forcible reasoning, he directed his

way to Jordan, *dipped himself seven times, according to the saying of the man of God ; and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and HE WAS CLEAN!* Thus, when he began to suspect his own wisdom, repress his choler, pay respect to the command of the prophet, and hearken to the advice of his prudent servants, he used the prescribed means with a success that astonished himself, and filled him with gratitude both to God and his prophet. How much pain and misery should we avoid if we had true simplicity of heart, took God at his word, and never leaned to our own understanding, when we found that opposed to the positive commands of God! Had Naaman continued to prefer his own prejudices to the directions of the prophet, he would have returned to Syria as loathsome a leper as he came away ; and perhaps wreaked his vengeance on others, when only himself was in fault.

*Secondly.* It may be necessary now to consider more particularly the nature of leprosy in general, as a disease ; and as an emblematical representation of SIN ; and what is to be done to effect its cure.

Naaman, the chief character in this history, was a leper ; and with him, as such, we are principally concerned. We have already seen that the leprosy was a dangerous and inveterate disease, and the worst of all those that can possibly afflict the human body : and because it is such, it has by general consent been considered a fit emblem of SIN, in whatever concerns its nature, its operation, and its cure.

(1) *Its nature.* It was a disorder, howsoever produced, that infected the whole body, had its seat in a highly vitiated state of the blood and other juices, and manifested itself on the whole surface by eruptions, and scrofulous scaly excrescences, till the whole skin became thick, and wrinkled like that of an elephant, whence

one species of this disorder had its name—elephantiasis. In this disorder the hair falls off; the eyes, nose, ears, and mouth, become exceedingly ulcerated, discharging a most foetid and offensive ichor; the joints swell, and in the flexures the skin and external muscles crack across, so that the toes and fingers ultimately fall off. Taste entirely forsakes the patient, so that he is totally incapable of distinguishing, in this way, any kind of food; yet at times, a most voracious appetite, and satiriasis, the most libidinous and disgusting: in short, the patient is an object of extreme horror. ARETEUS, a Greek physician of Cappadocia, who was well acquainted with this disease, gives us a fearful description of it in the thirteenth chapter of his second book, *Περι αιτιων και σημειων και χρονικων παθων*, “Concerning the causes and signs of acute and chronic diseases,” from which I shall at present take only one sentence. Speaking of the falling off of the extremities, he says:—*και των μελεων προ-αποθνησκει του ανθρωπου αχρι εκπτωσιως, ρις, δακτυλοι, ποδες, αιδοια, και ολαι χειρες*, “The nose, the fingers, the feet, the genitals, and the hands and arms of the man die, previously to the death of the body.” Dr. Mead, who had seen a case of leprosy, describes it thus:—“I have seen a remarkable case of this in a countryman, whose body was so miserably seized with it, that his skin was shining as if covered with snow; and as the furfureaceous scales were daily rubbed off, the flesh appeared quick or raw underneath.”

Mr. Maundrell, in the letters at the end of his Travels in the Holy Land, referring to the account of Naaman’s leprosy, speaks thus: “When I was in the Holy Land, I saw several that laboured under Gehazi’s distemper; particularly at Sichen, now Naplousi, there were no less than ten that came begging to us at one time. Their manner is to come with small baskets in their hands, to

receive the alms of the charitable ; their touch being still held infectious, or at least unclean. The distemper, as I saw it on them, was quite different from what I have seen it in England ; for it not only defiles the whole surface of the body with a foul scurf, but also deforms the joints of the body, particularly those of the wrists and ancles, making them swell with a gouty, scrofulous substance, very loathsome to look on. I thought their legs seemed like those of old battered horses, such as are often seen in drays in England. The whole distemper, indeed, as it there appeared, was so noisome, that it might well pass for the utmost corruption of the human body on this side the grave. And certainly the inspired penmen could not have found out a fitter emblem whereby to express the uncleanness and odiousness of vice."

Of this most horrible disorder I have myself seen one case. Such a deplorable object I never before beheld ; the body, arms, legs, &c., were terrific ; every sort of contact and association with this person was avoided by old and young, and life itself was an insupportable burden ; so that the patient was incessantly and most earnestly entreating God to put an end to it ! I believe death in any form would have been preferred by this unfortunate person to this life of suffering and calamity.

Areteus, already quoted, observes that the elephantiasis, that species of leprosy which he so fearfully describes, has its name from the circumstance of the skin, knees, and joints, by swellings, wrinkles, and deeply-indented lines, resembling those of the elephant. It was called also the leonis, the lion disorder ; and Herculeiosis, the Herculean disorder, because of its insuperable strength and virulence. And here a thought suggests itself : as Hercules is represented as having his whole body brought into a state of insupportable in-

flammation by reason of a poisoned shirt, so that in rage and despair he threw himself into the flames of a burning pyre on Mount Œta, and this put an end to his miserable life ; was it not most probably the leprosy by which this ancient savage was afflicted ? and, on this account, did he not rather choose to throw himself into the flames, than to endure the anguish and misery occasioned by this affliction ? This is very likely to be the truth of a case which fable has so much disguised ; for Hercules was no fabulous person, though many fables have been made concerning him.

(2) Its *operation*. In the Hebrew this disease is termed *צרע* *tsarath*, from *צר* *tsara*, to smite ; but the root, in Arabic, signifies to cast down, or prostrate ; and in Æthiopic, to cause to cease, because, says Stockius, it prostrates the strength of man, and obliges him to cease from all work and labour.

As this disorder spread over the body in thin white scales, it had its name, *λεπρα*, *leprosy*, from *λεπρις*, a scale, because the body presented the appearance of thin white scales, constantly falling off, and having their places supplied by others which were continually forming.

Among the Jews, there were three principal signs by which the leprosy was known : 1. A bright spot. 2. A rising or enamelling of the surface. 3. A scab. These signs are particularly specified in Lev. xiii. 1, &c. ; and the ordinance concerning them, and everything relative to the leprosy, may be found in large detail in that and the following chapter. From both chapters I shall extract all the characteristics and circumstances descriptive of this disorder ; and show that they are highly illustrative of sin and sinfulness in the heart and life of man :—

1. The leprosy began with a spot, a simple hidden

infection being the cause; for the spot itself was only the first ostensible evidence of the vicious principle within.

This is descriptive of SIN; there is a contagion in human nature, an evil principle that is opposed to the truth and holiness of God. This is the grand hidden cause of all transgression. It is a contagion from which no soul of man is free; it is propagated with the human species—no human being was ever born without it: it is the infection of our nature; is commonly called original sin; SIN, because it is without conformity to the nature, will, and law of God; and is constantly in opposition to all three. The doctrine of original sin has been denied by many, while its opposers, as well as those who allow it, give the most unequivocal proofs that they are subjects of its working. I have seen its opposers and supporters impugn and defend it with an asperity of temper and coarseness of diction, that gave sufficient evidence of a fallen nature; both, Jonah-like, thinking they did well to be angry! A late writer on the subject has excelled in this way, and by his bad tempers spoiled his works. I might be justified in naming him, but I need not; he has published two books on the Scriptures, translating and commenting; they well witness against his evil tempers; and, for the present, I spare him. Evil tempers are leprous spots, which sufficiently indicate the deeply radicated contagion in the hearts of those in whose lives they are evident.

2. This spot was very conspicuous; and as effects necessarily suppose the causes whence they originate, the bright shining spot appearing in the flesh, with the circumstances mentioned in the above chapters, gave presumptive evidence of the presence of the leprous contagion.

This also is applicable to that malady of the soul, of



which the leprosy has been considered a fit emblem. It is a seed that has its development, growth, gradual increase, and perfection. Though latent, it is never inactive ; it also "grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength." The human heart is its proper soil ; and no seed of it, in any spirit, has ever perished since the original apostasy of man. God alone can root it out.

3. The leprous contagion was of a diffusive nature, and soon spread over the whole system, pervading and contaminating every part.

Nothing can be more descriptive of sin than this ; as it spreads in the mind, so it diffuses itself through the whole life. Every natural feeling, every temper and passion, every purpose and action, partaking of its influence. It is an infernal leaven, that spreads itself through the whole lump, till all is leavened ; and the whole conduct becomes a tissue of transgression. For every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man is only evil continually, Gen. vi. 5. Thus it was in the antediluvians, and thus it has been invariably in the postdiluvians, down to the present time.

4. The leprosy communicated its infectious nature, not only to the whole of the patient's body, but also to his clothes and habitation.

As a sinner is infected, so is he infectious ; by his precept and example, he spreads the infernal contagion wherever he goes. He joins with the multitude to do evil, strengthening and being strengthened in the ways of sin and death ; forwarding, by his influence, the growth and development of the evil principle in the young and inexperienced ; and becomes an especial snare and curse to his own household. What a wide-wasting woe and evil is even one sinner ! he spreads desolation and death wherever he comes. Satan drives, and he

runs ; or, spontaneously with the tempter, he is led captive by him at his will. By the instrumentality of one wicked man, Satan can do ten thousand times more evil than he can in his own person. He deceiveth the world, waters the infernal seed, and powerfully works in the hearts of the children of disobedience. What a dishonour to be a servant, and much more to be a slave of the devil ! O why do not sinners lay this to heart !

5. The leprosy rendered its miserable subject unfit for any office in civil or religious life. Areteus remarks a dulness and hebitude that distinguished persons labouring under this calamity, that prevented all activity ; and the miserable state of their hands, arms, and legs rendered it impossible for them to perform any duty of life, or any service for others.

This also has its parallel in the sinner's case :—what duty of religion can he fulfil, what work of righteousness can he perform ? Many are willing to perform the duties of life, but they are unable : the sinner is not only unable to do any good thing, but he is totally indisposed to it. To read the sacred writings he has no taste ; to pray for his own salvation he has no disposition ; to strive to enter in at the strait gate he has no energy. Even his negative character is, he is ungodly, and without strength. No wonder he falls into sin ; and no wonder he falls before every well-circumstanced sin. Wherever there are opportunity and place, he has the disposition to offend. He is never indisposed where iniquity calls, and the sin of his constitution invites ; but he invariably feels a universal backwardness to every good word and work.

6. The leper was loathsome, and unfit for society ; he was also dangerous to society, because of the contagious nature of his disorder.

That a sinner must be, as such, abominable in the

sight of God, and of all good men ; that he is unfit for the society of the righteous ; and that he cannot, as a sinner, be admitted into the church and kingdom of God,—need no proof. Though God be a God of mercy and compassion—though he have loved the world so as to give his Son Jesus Christ to die for the sin of the world ; yet the sinner against his own soul, who neglects this great salvation, and will not come to Christ that he may have life ; and who prefers sin, sinners, and their ways, to God, his followers, his angels, and his heaven, must be abominable in his sight. With the wicked he is angry every day, whose carnal mind is enmity against God, and who are continually in heart and conduct saying, “Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” Would it be consistent with the holiness and perfections of God to look on such with allowance, much less with complacency and delight ?

7. The leper was obliged to be separated from society, both civil and religious ; to dwell by himself without the camp or the city, and hold commerce with none.

It is only owing to the universality of the evil, that sinners are not expelled from society as the most pestiferous of all contagions, and the most dangerous of all monsters ; and be obliged to hide themselves in dens and caves of the earth, and shun all commerce with their fellow-creatures. Ten lepers might associate together, and form a lazar-house, an infected community ; but no untainted person could associate with them. They being partakers of the same infection, could carry on conjointly the begging business of their wretched life ; and civil society is now generally maintained, because composed of a leprous community.

8. The leper was obliged to wear some mark, that might designate his state ; put his hand upon his mouth, and proclaim his own uncleanness ; and, sensible of his

plague, continue thus humbled and abased before God and man.

The spiritual leper, who wishes to be healed, must humble himself before God and man; sensible of his own sore, and the plague of his heart, confess his transgressions, look to God for a cure, from whom alone it can be received; and bring that Sacrifice, by which only the guilt can be taken away, and the soul purified from all unrighteousness. The Chaldee paraphrast says, the words which the leper was obliged to utter, in order to prevent others from coming near him, that they might not catch the infection, were, "Be not ye made unclean! Be not ye made unclean!" If every sinner were obliged to proclaim his own state thus, what a solemn and awful appearance would the whole of society exhibit!

(3) Its *cure*. 1. We have already seen that the leprosy was a disorder generally acknowledged to be incurable by any human art or means, and therefore no attempt was made to remove it; for what is directed to be done under the Levitical law was not in order to cure the leper, but to declare him cured, and fit for society, when God has wrought such a change. See Lev. xiv.

In like manner the contagion of sin, its guilt, and its power, can only be removed by the hand of God; all means, without his special influence, can be of no avail.

2. The law of Moses required that the body must be sprinkled and washed, and a sacrifice offered for the sin of the soul, before the leper could be declared to be clean.

To cleanse the spiritual leper, the Lamb of God must be slain, and the sprinkling of his blood be applied; for God has ordained, "Everything must be purified by blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission."

3. When the leper was cleansed, he was obliged to show himself to the priest, whose province it was to pronounce him clean, and declare him fit for intercourse with civil and religious society.

When a sinner is converted from the error of his ways, it is the business, as it is the prerogative, of the ministers of Christ, after having duly acquainted themselves with every circumstance, to declare the person converted from sin to holiness, to unite him with the people of God, and admit him to all the ordinances which belong to the faithful.

4. When the leper was cleansed, he was obliged by the law to offer a gift unto the Lord for his healing, as a proof of his gratitude, and an evidence of his obedience.

When a sinner is restored to the Divine favour, he should offer continually the sacrifice of a grateful heart ; and in willing obedience show forth the virtues of Him who hath called him from darkness and wretchedness, to marvellous light, life, and happiness ; and who has associated him to the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

Reader, such was the leprosy, its destructive nature and consequences, and the means of removing it : such is the spiritual evil represented by it, such its consequences, and such the means by which it can be taken away. The disease of sin, inflicted by the devil, can only be cured by the power of God.

1. Art thou a leper ? Do the spots of this spiritual infection begin to appear upon thee ?

2. Art thou young, and only entering into the ways of the world and sin ? Stop ! Bad habits are more easily conquered to-day than they will be to-morrow.

3. Art thou stricken in years and rooted in transgression ? How kind is thy Maker in having preserved thee

alive so long! Turn from thy transgressions—humble thy soul before him—confess thine iniquity—be sorry for thy sin—and implore forgiveness. Seek—and thou, even thou, shalt find. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!

4. Hast thou been cleansed, and hast not returned to give glory to God? Hast not continued in the truth, serving thy Maker and Saviour with a loving, obedient heart? How cutting is that word, “Were there not *ten* cleansed, but where are the *nine*?” Thou art probably one of them. Be confounded at thy ingratitude, and distressed for thy backsliding, and apply a second time for the healing efficacy of the great atonement. Turn, thou backslider, for he is married unto thee, and will heal thy backsliding, and love thee freely. Amen, be it so, Lord Jesus!

Thus we have seen the nature and operation of Naaman’s disorder, and how aptly the leprosy adumbrates SIN, the spiritual disease of the soul; and we have seen and recommended the general mode of healing. There was something, however, in Naaman’s case that requires a more particular consideration, as it involves circumstances of general and frequent occurrence.

*Thirdly.* And now I come specially to advert to the simplicity of the means which the prophet prescribed for his healing: “Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean;”—and under them, the simplicity of the means which God prescribes for the salvation of sinners.

The simplicity of the prescription excited the animosity of the carnal mind in Naaman. I will not go to his Jordan—“Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?” I answer, merely considered as waters, they might be as good; merely considered as larger rivers than Jordan,

they might be better. But considered as rivers to which God did not command him to go, they were of no worth. The ordinance of God has its efficacy, not from anything in itself calculated to produce a salutary effect, but from the consideration that God chooses to make it the instrument or means by which he will dispense his goodness and healing power. He has ever chosen the weak to confound the mighty, and the things that are not (of no repute) to bring to nought the things that are (in high estimation among men); and this he does that he may bring down the haughtiness of man, and that no flesh may glory in his presence.

1. There ever has been a class of persons (and they are still frequently to be met with) who think they can mend the work of the Almighty, and improve his plan of human salvation. To avoid offence, I could wish to find a technical term by which I might designate them;—to call them Naamanites would, perhaps, be doing them too much honour; for Naaman, on being reasoned with, submitted to the ordinance of God, and found God's way efficacious; but this, to any of them, has rarely occurred; and to the whole of this class, is highly problematical. I shall coin a term, and call them “Abana and Pharpar men.” They have been of old, and have left their successors behind them.

2. Look at the history of the world, which is properly the history of the soul, mind, and heart of man; and what is the great tale that is told in this history, from the foundation of the world down to the present time? The tale is, “Man is a wretched being through all his generations.” He has been sensible of his wretchedness, and all his struggles have been to find happiness. In every object of sense, and in every possible state, he has sought it. In what is the chief good of man to be found? The “Abana and Pharpar men” of the day

were at hand, and pointed out the thing, and the means to attain it. The pursuit commenced—the means were ardently used, but without success! The object, the thing in the attainment of which happiness was promised, was attained, but the end was not answered. Other objects were proposed, suitable means of attainment specified, and a vigorous pursuit strongly recommended. These were tried in their turn, and with equal success.

3. The “Abana and Pharpar men” then began to disagree among themselves; some cried one thing, some another; and the greater part knew not what they recommended, nor with what certainty they formed rules: they then divided themselves into sects and parties, and each had its rules, its discipline, and its followers. Among these, the main object was lost sight of by their contentions. The Abana and Pharpar of each class were infinitely better in their view, and in their mode of argumentation, than those of the others; and in their wordy strife, truth was obscured, and the mind bewildered.

4. It was equally in vain that a new class of “Abana and Pharpar men” rose up, whose object was, “to examine all that had been said concerning this supreme good by all the different classes, and select from the whole what bade fair to be the truth of the case; and, by giving infallible directions to men, direct them safely and effectually to the attainment of what would make them happy.” This last effort of the “Abana and Pharpar men” of the times, previously to the Christian dispensation, was equally fruitless.

5. The world by wisdom knew not God. All those men sought for a happiness which should be the fruit of their own earning; and the Supreme God, as the Fountain and Giver of all goodness, was left entirely out of



the question. The spirituality of the soul was rarely considered, and not generally known or understood ; therefore no spiritual happiness was sought, because its necessity was not known.

6. God is a spirit, the human soul is a spirit ; and the happiness suitable to the nature and state of man must be spiritual. The soul has infinite desires and wishes ; and what can satisfy these wishes must be infinite. God alone is that good ; and in Him alone is this happiness to be found. The "Abana and Pharpar men" of all ages have shut their eyes against this light, and refused to submit to the righteousness of God, but have gone about to establish their own righteousness.

7. At length God in his mercy revealed his Son, who was spoken of by all the prophets since the world began, and men were commanded to hear him. He spoke of God, of holiness, of heaven, of repentance, of faith, of regeneration, of judgment, of future rewards and punishments, of the final misery of the ungodly, and of the righteous shining like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The scribes and pharisees, the "Abana and Pharpar men" of his day, spoke against him, and blasphemed. They opposed the traditions of the fathers to the words of life which he taught ; and they, in fact, maintained that those turbid rivers of THEIR Damascus were better than all the waters of Shiloh, and the laver of regeneration. They went farther ; they persecuted him unto death, and he made a sacrificial offering of his life for the sin of the world.

8. His followers, the apostles, the genuine Elishas of their times, proclaimed their crucified Lord and Master ; commanding all men everywhere to repent, and to believe in Christ, as having been delivered up to death for their offences, and having risen again for their justification ; with the most positive assurances that they who

lid so should receive remission of sins, be made partakers of the Holy Spirit, have their souls cleansed from all unrighteousness, and in consequence be happy, because saved from sin, the source and cause of misery. Multitudes received their testimony, and all that did so were made partakers of the supreme good. These blessed men went everywhere, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and forming into holy communities, called churches, all who believed in Christ crucified.

9. To preserve them in the state of salvation into which they had been brought, they instituted, by the command of their Lord, baptism with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as an initiatory ordinance into the church; and bread and wine, as a memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ. There were not long wanting "Abana and Pharpar men," who either derided or neglected these ordinances, or changed their form; and not only denied their efficacy, but also denied the Lord that bought them, and attributed to a decent, orderly life (the "Abana and Pharpar" of their own invention) all that apostolic men attributed to the sacrificial death and powerful Spirit of the Lord Jesus. They cannot think that God required any such sacrifice, and that he can (for they have no doubt of it) forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin, through his own benevolence, without any atonement; and they loudly proclaim that their Damascene "Abana and Pharpar" are better than the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed for us; and the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was broken for us; and all the other doctrines that form the orthodox Christian's creed!

10. To all those innovators or opposers of the truth of God, we simply say, "God has commanded us to believe and do as we believe and practise; and where the

word of such a King is, there is power. By these truths, hundreds of thousands are reclaimed from the error of their ways, and made holy, happy, and useful ; an honour to God, and a blessing to men." We have, further, too much reason to state that not one profligate soul, not one sinner is converted to God, and changed from sin to holiness, by all the Damascene waters which have been so lavishly effused by the "Abana and Pharpar men ;" while the doctrine of Christ crucified is, to them that believe, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

11. A powerful attack has been lately made by some "Abana and Pharpar men," on the means of salvation, and particularly on prayer. "God," say they, "knows what we want ; and if, of his own benevolence, he be not disposed to supply our wants, no prayers nor entreaties can move him to do it ; and if he be disposed to do it, our wants shall be supplied without our asking. Therefore prayer for these things is foolish in the principle, ridiculous in its application, and useless in its performance." To all such we answer, Masters, if God had bidden us to do some great thing, should we not have done it ? How much rather when he saith, "ASK, and ye shall receive ; SEEK, and ye shall find ; KNOCK, and it shall be opened to you." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved." We have the positive command of God for prayer, for supplication, and for importunity. ASK, says Jesus ;—there is PRAYER. SEEK, says the Saviour of the world ;—there is SUPPLICATION. KNOCK, says the Sovereign of angels and men ;—there is IMPORTUNITY. Shall we, then, put the foolish, and indeed contemptible, directions and sayings of these "Abana and Pharpar men," in place of the salutary commands of the Supreme God ? That be far from us.

12. We therefore in simplicity, like Naaman in his

better mind, take God at his word, acknowledge his right to prescribe the means by which we shall receive that salvation which is his free gift; we go to the Jordan of his prescription, dip seven times, according to his order; and we return healed of our leprosy, giving glory to God in the highest, and living to promote peace and good will among men. Hallelujah! Jesus is exalted, and the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen.

## SERMON IX.

### LIFE, THE GIFT OF THE GOSPEL ; THE LAW, THE MINISTRATION OF DEATH.

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GALATIANS iii. 21, 22.

21. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22. "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

THE people of Galatia, to whom the apostle wrote, had been, at an early period of the gospel dispensation, converted to Christianity ; and had given ample proofs of their conversion, by their attachment to St. Paul, who had been the instrument of that conversion, and by their obedience to the precepts of the gospel. But it appears that certain teachers had got among them, who unhappily succeeded in persuading them that an observance of the Mosaic law was indispensably necessary to their justification and final salvation. The apostle, being informed of this unhappy change, wrote this epistle to them, to call them back to the simplicity of the gospel : and he does this, partly by expostulating with them, and putting them in remembrance of their conversion to God, and the blessedness they then experienced ; and partly by showing them the utter insufficiency of the Mosaic, or of any other law, to give life and salvation to men ; for, thus he argues in the text, *If there had been a law given which could have given life*—insured and made over life tem-

poral, spiritual, and eternal, to those who should observe its precepts; *then righteousness*—pardon of sin and salvation, *should have been by that law*, and the gospel scheme been utterly useless: *but the Scripture*—all the declarations of God in the law and by the prophets, *hath concluded*, συνεκλίσεν, *hath shut and locked up*, as in a prison, both Jews and Gentiles, because all have sinned; where they all continue as criminals, condemned to death, till the time of execution should come; or till a merciful display of the lawgiver's goodness should take place, which is here called the promise by faith of Jesus Christ, namely, the promise made to Adam, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*; and that contained in the covenant made with Abraham, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; the fulfilment of which promise, containing pardon and salvation, is given to them that believe in Christ, as having made an atonement for sin by his passion and death, thus opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers; no kind of obedience to any law being capable of producing such effects.

To see the force of the apostle's argument and reasoning, we must examine and explain the true import of some of the principal words in the text. These are, *law, life, righteousness, promise, and faith*; and in doing this, the reasoning dependant on each will be introduced.

1. LAW, νομος, from νημω, includes the idea of appropriation and assignment; giving to each his own, and guarding that own, or property, against the claims or aggressions of others. *Suum cuique*, "his own to every one," is its invariable motto. And as it ascertains property, so it secures and defends that property; the ascertainment of rights, and the defence of those rights, being

essential to the true notion of a just or rationally-constituted law.

The word law, תורה *torah*, as used among the Hebrews, implied in its ideal meaning, instruction or teaching, from ירה *yarah*, to teach ; for that law taught the knowledge of the true God, and the worship that was due to him, and instructed the people in all the duties of life : and among the Romans, law, *lex*, meant nearly the same, as the word comes from *lego*, I read ; law being a system of instruction committed to writing, and promulgated for the information of the people at large, that they might know their rights, and discern their duties.

Law carries generally with it the idea of binding or restraint, it being designed to prevent evil, and thus oblige men to live according to its prescriptions, and within the limits it has defined. This supposes it to be derived from *ligo*, to bind.

All law has professedly for its objects the prevention of evil, and the good of the governed ; and hence the subject finds that it is at once both his duty and interest to be obedient. While the law professes to ascertain the rights of the subject, and protect him in those rights, it clothes the ruler with authority and power to enforce and execute all its injunctions. Without authority and power in the ruler, all law would be idle and nugatory ; however excellently conceived and righteously constructed, it would be of no avail, because there was no effective and acknowledged energy for its execution.

2. By LIFE, in the text, we are not only to understand, on the general principles already laid down, 1. Security of life and property—protection against outrage, rapine, spoil, and murder, which we have already seen to be the province of law, executed by a just ruler ; but as the apostle is speaking of spiritual things, he

must mean spiritual life—the salvation and safety of the soul, preservation from death, with the right to live.

2. Spiritual life, union with God, the Fountain of Life ; so that the man lives through him, to him, and for him.

3. Eternal life, not only being, but well-being, infinitely protracted.

3. RIGHTEOUSNESS, *δικαιοσυνη*, not only what is right and just in itself, and what contains the principles of all justice and morality, which is its literal and proper meaning ; and justification, i. e., the pardon of sin, reconciliation to God, the removal of condemnation and liability to punishment for transgressions already committed ; but also the recovery of the forfeited right to life—life spiritual and eternal. This is a frequent meaning of the term in St. Paul's writings ; and by this word he expresses God's plan of saving sinners by Jesus Christ. See Rom. iii. 21, 22, 25, 26.

4. PROMISE ; God's engagement with fallen man, that he would provide an atonement ; and especially his covenant with Abraham, that in his seed, from which the man Christ Jesus sprang, all nations of the earth should be blessed. This promise or engagement was made four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law, and was formed independently of the peculiarities of the Jewish dispensation. It was made for the Gentile world when as yet there was no distinction of Jews, no law, no settlement in the afterwards promised land. Jesus Christ incarnated, preaching righteousness, proving his mission by miracle, suffering, dying, rising again from the dead, ascending into heaven, and becoming a mediator between God and man, having purchased eternal redemption for them—is what is meant by this *promise*.

5. FAITH ; implicit credence in what God has promised, and what he has spoken concerning Christ ; trusting to his passion and death as a sacrificial offering,



and sufficient atonement for sin. And because every blessing under the gospel is to be received by faith, hence the gospel itself is termed faith; so the apostle in the context: ver. 23, *But before faith came*—before the gospel dispensation was published, *we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith*—the gospel, *which should afterwards be revealed*; the law being only a schoolmaster (*παιδαγωγός*, a leader of children to school), *to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified*—have our sins forgiven, *by faith*—by believing in Christ as having died and made atonement for our sins. And he adds, ver. 25, *But after that faith is come*—the *gospel way of salvation* was published, *we are no longer under a schoolmaster*—under the law, as expecting justification through it, or salvation by it; as it was only intended to point out Christ by its ritual, and by its strict morality show the absolute necessity of such a sacrificial offering as that which was made to divine justice by his passion and death.

The terms in the text being thus explained, we shall be able, on a review of the whole passage, to see and properly apprehend the force of the apostle's reasoning.

Four things are here asserted by the apostle:—

I. That men are under condemnation because of sin, have forfeited their life, and are exposed to death.

II. That no law has been given that can redeem them from this perilous situation, and give them life.

III. That the great promise of human redemption, fulfilled in the incarnation and death of Christ, is the only means of saving a lost world.

And IV That the benefits of this redemption are to be received by faith.

I. That men are under condemnation, &c. When God made man, he formed him as capable of doing his will, as of understanding it; and having made him in his own

image, the divine law was written on his heart: for the law of God is a transcript of his own righteousness, holiness, and truth. When man had fallen from his fidelity to his Maker, and thus become disunited from him who was his life, light, and holiness, he was no longer capable of perfectly loving his Creator, and worthily magnifying his name. God had given him a law, the spirit of which was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul," &c. This was plain, simple, holy, just, and good. 1. It was plain—so that it could not be mistaken. 2. Simple—so that it could not perplex nor confound by distinctions and subtleties. 3. Holy—totally free either from sin or imperfection. 4. Just—as requiring no obedience but what the creature owed to its Creator. And 5. Good—as it led to the continual perfection of the creature, and secured its increasing felicity.

To love God is to be happy; to obey God is to continue in his love. Man, ceasing to be obedient, did not continue in this love, and consequently lost his happiness.

But this was not the only evil that his transgression entailed upon him; he fell into condemnation, because he had broken this law. When a law is broken, not only all the privileges it confers on the obedient are lost, for the transgressor has no longer any claim on it for protection and support; but he is condemned as a transgressor, to suffer the penalty due to his sin. And in a case of this kind, where disobedience implies treason, the crime is capital; and the penalty is an everlasting separation from the presence of God, and the glory of his power.

According to the spirit of St. Paul's language, such transgressors are considered as being arraigned, tried,

found guilty, and condemned by the law, taken away from the place of judgment, committed to prison, and shut up in it, to await the time of execution. This is the import of the word *συνεκλισειν*, *shut or locked up together* in their prison-house, waiting in dreadful expectation the arrival of the order for their execution.

II. No law has been given that can redeem them, &c. In this awful time of suspense, any appeal to the law is vain; for by that is the knowledge of sin, and by that they are condemned. Law is justice; and justice knows nothing of mercy. By them has it been broken, and it knows no forgiveness. No law can be made with any provision for the passing by or pardon of sin. Such a provision would be a provision for transgression, and an excitement to it. The obligations of justice would be at once weakened, if the law held out any hope for the pardon of transgression. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is the language of the law; and "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them," is among the penal sanctions by which God has fortified his law, and rendered it respectable. No abatement of this penalty, no remission of the offence: in vain is life requested; life has already been forfeited; and no law has ever been given, that can give back forfeited life. God's law is righteous, and can look with approbation only on what is righteous. It is holy; and requires holiness in the motive, the purpose, and the act. The transgressor is unholy; the law therefore looks upon him with abhorrence. The law is true, and must fulfil all its declarations:—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die," has already passed the lips of the Lord; and the law cannot give life.

It may be asked indeed, "Why is the law so inexorable and severe?" I answer, there is no severity in it;

it is justice flowing from righteousness, holiness, and truth ; to be exorable would be to resign its claims, and at once to change its nature.

Yet this law is not vindictive ; it does nothing in the nature of revenge. In its requisitions it is calm and steady ; so is it in its inflictions of punishment, they also flow from its righteousness, holiness, and truth. As it gives due warning by promulgating its determinations, there is no excuse for ignorance ; it has ascertained the proper line of conduct, and fixed the penalties of transgression. The duties are all reasonable, the penalties are suitable to the nature of the transgressions.

But with a greater show of reason it may be asked, "Is it not out of the power of any man to fulfil the requisitions of this law, as it requires an unvarying perfect obedience, and extends its demands to the very thoughts and purposes of the heart ? Is it not, therefore, cruel to place a man in such circumstances, in which he must invariably transgress ? As no man, unless entirely pure and holy, could keep such a law ; should not therefore the powers of the subject be brought up to the spirituality and perfection of the law, or the law be brought down by moderated claims to the abilities and state of fallen sinful man ?"

1. To this I answer : the law is precisely what it should be, as it is an emanation from the righteousness, holiness, and truth of God. It is also perfectly reasonable ; it enjoins nothing that is not right. To love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to serve him through that principle of love, are so perfectly consistent with reason and good sense, that every man must see at once that less could not, should not, be required. It less than this reasonable service were our duty, our interest would be lessened in the same proportion, and our happiness be necessarily incomplete.

2. This law, as it proceeded from the immaculate nature of God, was always the same. It was the law given to our first parents. It was suited to the nature of man, who was created in the image of God ; there was nothing in it too hard for him ; he was as the commandment—holy, just, and good : and it would be shockingly absurd to suppose, that when man, through his own fault, sinned against his God, and fell from his perfection, that God must then bring down his law to a level with his sinful imperfection, that he might not by transgressing incur farther penalty ! The thought, seriously indulged, is blasphemy. A law thus framed could be no expression of the divine mind, could not have his sanction, and could be no rule of moral action.

3. “ But might not the law have made provision for such delinquencies, if not by moderating its claims, yet by granting pardon ? ” That is, Could not justice reverse its own sentence righteously pronounced ? Could it not condemn and acquit at the same time ? For justice must condemn an evil action. We have seen already that no law could make provision for pardon—that this would defeat its own purposes, and dissolve the bond of moral obligation. No law, therefore, could give life, in the case where death had been incurred, and the sentence of death pronounced. Hence it is an eternal invariable truth, that no law has been given among men, or even by God to men, that can give LIFE ; and, consequently, righteousness, or pardon of sin, cannot be by the law—a law—or any law ; and for all that the law even of God can do, the guilt and consequent punishment of sin must remain for ever. If God be disposed to save man, some other method of salvation must be found ; or the fallen children of men must sink lower and lower into the gulf of their own impurities and misery, and at last into the bottomless pit of endless perdition.

But if the law be so totally inefficient for all the purposes of reconciliation to God, and eternal salvation; may we not then, in the language of the context, ver. 19, ask, "Wherefore, then, serveth the law?" Of what real use can it be in the economy of salvation? I answer, It serves the most important purposes: 1. Its purity and strictness show us its origin,—it came from God. All religious institutions, merely human, though pretendedly from heaven, show their origin, by extravagant demands in some cases, and sinful concessions in others. In the law of God nothing of this appears, and therefore we see it to be a transcript of the divine nature. 2. It shows us the perfection of the original state of man; for as the law was suited to his state, and the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good, so was his nature; it is, therefore, a comment on those words, "God made man in his own image, and in his own likeness." 3. It serves to show the nature of sin; the real obliquity of a crooked line can only be ascertained by laying a straight line to it: thus the fall of man, and the depth of that fall, are ascertained by the law. 4. It serves to convict man of sin, righteousness, and judgment; it shows him the deplorable state into which he is fallen, and the great danger to which he is exposed. 5. It serves as a schoolmaster, or leader of children to school, *παιδαγωγος*, to convince us of the absolute necessity and value of the Gospel, without which no soul can entertain even a hope of salvation. 6. It serves to show us the perfection and excellence of that state into which we are to be brought by the grace of the Gospel; for that pure and holy moral law must be written upon the hearts of believers; and its precepts, both in letter and spirit, become the rule of their lives.

The law, therefore, though it cannot give life, serves

the most important purposes in the economy of the Gospel ; and unless it be preached strongly and fully, the necessity of a Redeemer will scarcely appear. *Thus, then, serveth the law.*

III. These considerations lead us to the great *promise* of human redemption, fulfilled in the incarnation, teaching, passion, and death of Jesus Christ, as the only means of saving a lost world.

Man, being utterly undone by his transgression, disabled in his soul through moral evil, and condemned to death because of his sins ; and no law or dispensation of any kind or form having been given, that could give him life, and save him from death eternal ; God, in the plenitude of his mercy, devised means that this his banished should not be eternally expelled from him. JESUS, the Almighty's Fellow, must come down from heaven, and be incarnated by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of a virgin—live among men—point out, by his teaching, the way of holiness that leads to heaven—suffer in his body, and at last pour out his blood, in order to make an atonement for the sin of the world ; and thus, as the representative of the human race, being a partaker of human flesh and blood, he bore in his own body, in the garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross, the punishment which belonged to all who had sinned, and were partakers of that nature. God, manifested in the flesh, made the atonement by giving up his life, expressly purposing that this death should be sacrificial, and should be the price of redemption for the great sinful family, captives to sin, and imprisoned, under condemnation to an endless banishment from God, the Fountain of true and endless felicity. And in reference to this purpose, Christ must suffer and rise again from the dead, in order that repentance and remission of sin might be proclaimed in his name among all nations ; all mankind

being thus called upon to believe on him, as having been delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification.

Though the hand of violence appeared as evidently in the apprehending of Christ, and his subsequent maltreatment, as the hand of injustice did in his condemnation and death; yet, we must take heed that we attribute not to Jewish malice and violence, that which was brought about in the order of God's grace and infinite mercy. Jesus must shed his blood, and pour out his life for the sin of the world; and this must be a voluntary sacrifice: had there been any reluctance on the part of the sufferer, the sacrifice had been marred; had his death been the mere effect of Jewish malice, and inflicted by their violence, it would not have been sacrificial. The salvation of a lost world, by Jesus Christ, is ever attributed to the love of God: from this source all must flow spontaneously, and without compulsion or restraint. Could HE be dragged to death, and die by malicious violence, who, if he had willed, might have had *more than twelve legions of angels* to defend and deliver him? Could he be compelled to appear before Pilate by that most disorderly and unruly mob, to whom, when he only announced his name, so great was the authority and influence, that *they went backward, and fell to the ground*, John xviii. 6? No! That Person who ever appeared to have all nature under his control by the miracles he wrought, could not have his life reluctantly taken away by a Jewish mob. He was himself solicitous to guard us against an error of this kind, as it would tend directly to vitiate, if not destroy, the merit of his offering; therefore, he says, "I lay down my life for the sheep." "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again; NO MAN TAKETH it from me, but I lay it down



OF MYSELF. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up;" John x. 15, 17, 18. No words can be more dignified—none more decisive of the fact. He *gave* his life for the life of the world; and his death was as voluntary as it was sacrificial and atoning.

Man in his *natural state* is presented to us, 1. As *guilty*. 2. As *unholy*.

1. As *guilty*, he needs that *righteousness* or *pardon* which cannot come by the law.

2. As *unholy*, he needs that *purification* and *holiness*, without which none can see God. This twofold work requires a twofold agency. 1. To *blot out sin*, Christ must *shed his life's blood*; without shedding of blood there was no remission even typified under the law; and the blood was the life of the beast: indicating that Christ himself could not make atonement in any other way than by dying. 2. To purify the soul, to refine and sublime all the passions and appetites, the operation of the Holy Spirit is promised. Spirit only can act successfully on spirit; and this Spirit is called the Holy Spirit, not only because it is holy in itself, but because it is the Author of holiness to them who receive it. Hence, it is represented under the notion of fire, because it enlightens, warms, refines, and purifies. It is the property of fire either to consume and destroy, or assimilate everything to itself with which it is brought into contact. It pervades all things, transfuses itself through every part, destroys or decomposes whatever cannot stand its action, and communicates its own essential properties to whatever abides its test. Thus the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of burning, destroys the pollution of the heart, and makes pure and divine all its powers and faculties.

As the first work was called the work of justification or pardon, so the second is called the work of sanctifica-

tion or holiness: the one is invariably attributed to the blood of Christ; and the other, generally to the Holy Ghost. Without the first of these, the second cannot take place; without the second, the work is imperfect. Without the pardon of sin, there can be no redemption from eternal punishment; without the sanctification of the soul, there is no meetness for nor entrance into eternal glory.

Again, as by diabolical influence the soul is rendered guilty and impure, and thus divested of the image of God, in which it was created; it is essential to the honour of Jesus Christ and the scheme of redemption, that the soul be brought back to the state in which it was created; that sin and Satan may not only have no triumph, but that they may be destroyed and eternally confounded. Anything less than this could not have entered into the divine purpose; for as man in the beginning had no more holiness and perfection than was suitable to and necessary for the nature of his being, and the end for which he was formed, so, if he be redeemed at all, and saved, he must be brought back into the same state of holiness in which he originally stood; without which God's design in his creation cannot be fulfilled. Further, as the law of God was written upon his heart, but became obliterated by sin, it is essentially necessary that it be again written on the soul: and as the law, in his fallen state, could not be brought down in its purity, spirituality, and demands to the sinful and imperfect state into which he had fallen, so it was necessary, in redemption, to bring the soul up to the law; and this is done by this purifying energy: and thus the redeemed of the Lord are enabled to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength; "the very thoughts of their hearts being cleansed by the inspira-

tion of the Holy Ghost, so that they are enabled perfectly to love him, and worthily to magnify his name."

IV. As the great *promise*, fulfilled in the manifestation of Christ, is the only means of saving a lost world; so the only means of reaping the benefit of his incarnation and sacrificial death, is *faith*; for this *promise*, in all its benefits, is *given*, says the apostle, *to them that believe*.

From the nature of the thing and from the state of the soul it is evident, that salvation cannot be obtained by the works of the law; for we have already seen that no law can be given that can give life, and therefore "by the works of the law can no man living be justified." If, therefore, man is to be saved, his salvation must be gratuitous: it is only mercy that can blot out his sin; it is only mercy that can sanctify his soul. And as man is an intelligent being, rational and free, there must be some act on his part by which this mercy is received. That the salvation may be of grace, it is by faith; that man may not even have the pretence of merit, he is required only to believe in order to receive it; that is, to credit what God has spoken on this subject; and to be so convinced of the infinite merit of the great sacrificial offering, as to trust the total redemption of his soul to that merit; to consider it as a sufficient sacrifice and atonement for his sins; and in this confidence, to bring it to God as the grand and sufficient price by which that redemption has been effected. Thus God's grace provides the sacrifice; Jesus Christ, in his infinite love to man, offers it; the Holy Spirit stands ready to apply and seal it; and man, by faith, receives it; the act of faith being simply his own—though the power by which he believes, comes from God. He can, therefore, from the mere act, have no more merit in his own salvation,

than the necessitous mendicant has in procuring the alms of the charitable man, by stretching out his hand, in order to receive them.

God requires, yea commands, men to believe, and threatens them with perdition if they do not ; for he no more believes for men, than he repents, loves, or obeys for them ; the power he communicates, but the use of that power is their own. The Jews, who on the preaching of Christ crucified did not believe, were reprobated, and continue to this day monuments of God's displeasure. The Gentiles, who hardened not their hearts, but used the power they had to believe, according to the evidence that was set before them, received the salvation of God, and were elected in the room of the unbelieving and disobedient Jews. And to this day, the Gospel is the savour of death unto death, or of life unto life, according as it is rejected or received by men. This is the grand reason why, under the preaching of the gospel, some are saved and some not ; for some gladly lay hold on the hope that is set before them, while others cavil, give way to prejudice, harden their hearts, disbelieve, and will not come to Christ that they may have life. This, then, is the condemnation of ungodly men, that light is come into the world, and they choose darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil ; and so the word preached does not profit them, because it is not mixed with faith in them that hear it. There is but one remedy, and this they refuse to apply.

After having shown that the grace of the gospel brings a complete salvation to the soul, justifying it from all unrighteousness, sanctifying it from all unholiness, it will at once be perceived how it communicates and maintains that life which the law could not give. The believing soul, being now restored to the divine favour and image, regains, 1st. A right to live through the

whole of his probation ; before he was only suffered to exist, and was considered a condemned criminal. Now, having his sin blotted out, he is no longer liable to death on account of transgression, but he has that life which the law took away, because forfeited by sin. He is now free among the dead, and through the second Adam eats of the tree of life, from which the first Adam was excluded because of his apostasy.

2. He lives a spiritual life, for *the law of the Spirit of life has made him free from the law of sin and death*. Christ is his life ; and he lives, because Christ dwells in his heart by faith ; and the life that he lives is by faith in the Son of God. His soul has constantly that union with God, in which the essence of spiritual life consists ; and this is a life which, if once forfeited, no law can give back ; for the law confers no grace, and gives no privileges ; it only preserves to the obedient what they already possess.

3. By this change of his circumstances and nature he has a right to eternal life ; for, being a son, he is an heir, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Neither could this life be given by the law. In case of perfect obedience, it only awarded that eternal life which the person must have merited by his exact and unfailling fulfilment of all its precepts.

While, therefore, in every sense, the man died by the law, because of his sins, in every sense the believer lives by the gospel, because of that sacrificial merit which has blotted out his offences, and bestows that Spirit by which the heart is purified and made a partaker of the divine nature.

Being brought into this state of salvation, *he loves God with all his HEART* ; every affection, appetite, and desire being purified, refined, and fixed on and centred in God. *He loves him with all his SOUL* ; the whole animal

life being occupied with and devoted to his service ; for as he lives by God, he lives to and for him. (Such were the martyrs ; they counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might properly confess and glorify him who had brought them out of darkness to his marvellous light.) He *loves him with all his MIND*—his understanding, judgment, and will ; with his spirit—the whole of the intellectual principle ; all his rational powers being influenced by the spirit of love, and employed in rendering a reasonable service to his God. And *he loves him with all his STRENGTH* ; all his animal, rational, and intellectual energies being combined in his acts of devotion and acts of obedience. As he thus loves God, he also loves his neighbour as himself. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law :” he lives to God’s glory, by receiving good from him to do good to men. By the finger of God the moral law is written on his heart, and by incessant acts of loving obedience it is transcribed in his life.

But who is sufficient for these things ? He in whose heart Jesus lives and rules, and whose blood has cleansed him from all unrighteousness. He who wills in God’s will, lives in his life, is strong in his strength ; who walks by faith, and not by sight—who is crucified to the world, and the world to him—whose feet are fixed on the Rock of Ages—and who can do all things through Christ, who strengthens him. Reader, all things are possible to him that believeth.

#### EXHORTATION.

And now, reader, what sayest thou to these things ? Art thou alive under the gospel, or dead under the law ? A dead man knows not the state he is in : he has eyes, but he sees not ; ears, but he hears not ; a heart, but it

feels not. His senses are locked up, and he is neither terrified at the approach of danger, nor gladdened at the prospect of honour, wealth, or power.

The living man knows he is alive ; his eyes see, his ears hear, his heart feels. He can apprehend danger, and provide for his escape. He sees prosperity, and gladdens at its approach. As it fares with the naturally dead and living, so with him who is dead in trespasses and sins, and with him who is alive to God by faith in Christ. He who is under the death that the law has denounced against the workers of iniquity knows not his state, and is not sensible of his danger. He sees not that he is under the curse ; he considers not that the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men ; he knows not that the displeasure of God abideth on him ; he trembles not, though Tophet from beneath is moved to meet him at his coming ; he walks on frowardly in the hardness of his heart ; he fears no danger ; he is under no alarms ; and the glad tidings of salvation gladden not his heart. O how awful and dangerous is this state !

On the other hand, the man who is alive to God knows it, because he feels this divine life. His eyes by faith see the King in his beauty, and the land that is afar off. He knows that he is of God, by the Spirit which God hath given him ; he hears the voice of the Son of God, and lives ; he feels the powers of the world to come, and tastes the good word of God. O how glorious is this state ! He knows he is standing on the brink of eternity ; but, redeemed from the fear of death, he rejoices in hope of the glory of God.

Sinner, this is not thy case ; thou art still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. And canst thou, with this fearful looking for of fiery indignation, sport and play, laugh, jest, sing, and be merry ! O terrible

delusion, and fearful state! “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light.” Is not God even now quickening thee? Breathe, O divine Spirit, on these slain, that they may live, and let thy breath come unto them!

Dost thou not begin to feel the necessity of caring for thy soul? To-day, then, while it is called to-day, arise and shake thyself from the dust, and call upon thy God. Jesus hath died for thee, to redeem thee from the curse of the law, to blot out thine iniquities, to sanctify thy soul, and save thee unto eternal life! Now, turn unto him with all thy heart—humble thyself under the mighty hand of God—take refuge in the infinitely meritorious death of the crucified Jesus—and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life! Implore him to grant thee that spiritual regeneration, without which thou *canst not see the kingdom of God.*

But perhaps some one is ready to say, I have Abraham for my father; I have got that regeneration; I have been baptized by the proper authority, in the name of the holy and ever-blessed Trinity, and am therefore a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

Stop! If thou be a member of Christ, thou hast the same spirit in thee that is in the living Head. If a child of God, thou art holy; for holiness is the divine nature; and every child partakes of the nature of his father. If an heir of the kingdom of heaven, then thou must be a son; for *if a son, then an heir—an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ.* And if a son and heir, then, *because thou art a son, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into thy heart, crying, Abba, Father!* Gal. iv. 6, 7 Hast thou these evidences of thy regeneration? If thou have not, and art still trusting to what was only an *outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,*



viz., a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, thou art in a mortal deception, and thy teacher is the *blind that leadeth the blind*; and if God's mercy interpose not, thou and he shall soon fall into the ditch of remediless perdition? If even that doctrine were true (whereas it is both absurd and antichristian), thy baptism can avail thee nothing, if thou have fallen into sin, and wickedly departed from God, since it was administered unto thee;—if thou have not regularly through life “renounced the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh;” if thou have not “kept God's holy will and commandments,” and walked unblamably in the same, thou hast renounced thy baptism; thy circumcission is now uncircumcision; and, as a sinner, thou art a member of the mystical body of Satan, a child of wrath, and an heir of perdition. Strange, that those who have taught thee that water-baptism is all that is implied in spiritual regeneration—or that, when baptized with water, thou wert then spiritually regenerated—had not warned thee that, if ever thou didst renounce thy baptism, by taking the yoke of Satan on thee instead of the yoke of Christ, thou shouldst immediately apply to him that taught thee this absurd and dangerous doctrine, that he might administer a second baptism, and continue to repeat it as frequently as thou hast relapsed into sin! The latter teaching would not have been less absurd than the former. Trust in nothing of this kind; it is the blood of Jesus alone, that cleanseth from all sin. This alone will be to thee the laver of regeneration, and will bring with it the renewing power of the Holy Ghost; and thus, when born of water and the Holy Spirit, thou mayest enter into the kingdom of God. O let nothing divert thy attention from the absolute necessity of this most important change! Without the application of the

atoning blood, even the baptism instituted by Christ will profit thee nothing : it will be only as that law that cannot give life ; and verily righteousness cometh not by that law. Trust to nothing that has passed merely upon thee ; look for the remission of sins, and the renewing of thy soul in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of Him who created thee. Death is fast advancing upon thee, and the Judge is at the door.—But Jesus is nearer : hear his voice ! “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.” Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

# SERMON X.

## THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE.

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JAMES iii. 17.

“ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy.”

THE preaching of the gospel does not necessarily imply that we should in every sermon dwell on the fundamental articles of the Christian faith. Where a people are known to have a right creed and a thorough gospel ministry, these are necessarily supposed in every sermon.

1. Our coming together in a religious assembly necessarily supposes that we believe there is a God—“ for he that cometh unto God must believe that he is.” This, therefore, need not be a constant subject in proof.

2. Our making prayer and supplication before him necessarily supposes that we believe he hears prayer, and concerns himself with the interests of his creatures, and must imply our belief that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

3. Our *offering praise and thanksgiving* necessarily supposes that we believe in his moral government of the world; that he is the author and dispenser of every good; that all our good has been derived from him; that we deserve nothing at his hand, and having received much, should be thankful.

4. Our *confession of sin and deprecation of God's wrath* necessarily supposes that we acknowledge we are sinners, are exposed to his judgment, and in danger of endless punishment; and that he alone can save us from perdition.

5. Our *praying in the name, and imploring mercy for the sake of Jesus Christ*, necessarily supposes that we believe him to be the only Saviour of sinners; that we seek redemption in his blood, and have no confidence in any merit of ourselves or others.

6. Our *praying for grace* to enable us to stand, work, and be faithful, necessarily supposes that we are persuaded of our own utter insufficiency to do any good without divine assistance, and that we are constantly dependant upon God. Therefore these articles, for the reasons above alleged, need not be brought into continual proof.

This foundation is therefore always supposed to be laid—all our preaching is in reference to it, and is built on it; but there are principles which are derived from these doctrines (as necessary in their place as these doctrines themselves) which should never be forgotten, yet are seldom kept sufficiently in view: thus we are always laying the foundation, but advance not the superstructure—always learning, but seldom coming to the full knowledge of the truth. I shall therefore have recourse to some of those principles, fairly deducible from the text, in order to explain what effects the religion of Christ should produce in our souls, for our personal salvation: and in our lives, for the conviction and edification of others.

Religion, properly speaking, is a species of commerce carried on between God and the soul: it supposes his continual agency and operation, as well as the soul's

agency with him. The work of holiness is a divine work, and can only be produced and carried on by the Divine Spirit ; and it is from this that the soul has its light and life.

It is impossible for God, who is a spirit, to be inactive. Matter is necessarily inactive and motionless till moved ; and without this, must be always inert. Spirit is ever active ; and it requires as much of the activity and energy of God to maintain the works that he has made, as it required to produce them. “ My father worketh hitherto, and I work.” God is still working to preserve what he originally worked to produce. As he is the fountain of light and power—without him we can neither know nor do anything. To be well instructed in this point is of the greatest consequence ; for if we err here, we shall be right nowhere. We shall neither understand what is true, nor practise what is just. As none but he can diffuse the necessary knowledge, so none but himself can supply the requisite power. The true light must shine out by means of the gospel, and be reflected on our souls from the face of Jesus Christ.

Religion—that teaches these things—that points out God to man—that shows him his ignorance, darkness, sinfulness, guilt, and weakness—is termed here by St. James, WISDOM ; and to designate its nature, “ The wisdom that cometh from above.” There are various other names by which it has pleased God to point out to the eye and attention of man the same glorious principle : The law ; the law of liberty—The gospel ; and, to show its nature, the gospel of God, the gospel of our salvation—Life ; the word of life—The kingdom of God ; the kingdom of heaven—TRUTH—FAITH—The way of God, &c. These cannot be separately considered in this place, as each would require a distinct discourse for its

elucidation, and therefore we must confine ourselves to the term Wisdom, used by the apostle in the text, which I shall—

I. Analyse and explain ; and II. Show its fruits and effects.

I. WISDOM.—I have sometimes found it necessary, in explaining portions of Scripture, to quote and analyse the original words, whether Hebrew or Greek, from which they were taken ; and this has often given us an extension and force of meaning, which we could not have otherwise acquired. Though this might be done profitably in the present case, by a consideration of the grammatical meaning and general use of the word *Σοφία*, employed by St. James ; it will serve more for the purpose of general instruction, to analyse and explain the term Wisdom, one of the relicts of our ancient maternal language.

Wisdom is compounded of *πισ*, from *πιταν*, to know or understand, and *δομ*, or *δομε*, judgment, sanction, decree, and sometimes power, which itself comes from *δεμαν*, to judge, to deem, to have power to determine ; from *πιταν*, to know, comes our term *wit*, which originally signified the same as *wisdom*, expressing both *ingenuity* and *knowledge*. A shade of its meaning is preserved in our illative particle, to *wit*—to know ; or, in order to know or understand, hear farther ; read on. This meaning we sometimes express by the contraction, *viz. videsis*, you may see ; or *vide licet*, you are permitted to see farther. But *wit* now signifies *facetiousness*, *repartee*, or the giving a curious or pleasant turn to an expression or action, so as to excite mirth, &c. But the word was originally used to express the whole intellect or powers of the mind, with all the knowledge they had acquired by cultivation, learning, experience, &c.

The termination *δομ*, among our Anglo-Saxon ances-

tors, was added to nouns to show their state, condition, quality, or property : as free-dom, the *state of liberty* ; whore-dom, the *condition or state of prostitution* ; kingdom, the *state, place, dominion, or condition* of a king ; Christen-dom, the *condition or state of Christianity* under particular governments ; wis-dom, the *state or dominion of knowledge, or understanding, or the place or condition of the wise man.*

If we take the term in its common acceptation, it signifies the power of judging rightly—the knowledge of divine and human things, and a judicious conduct as the consequence.

The term *wisdom* is used also to signify *dexterity, cunning, skill, to over-reach, to get gain, to outwit*, as we sometimes express it, the ignorant and simple. Thus our Lord : “The children of this world are wiser (more subtle, crafty, dexterous) in their generation, than the children of light.” This is the *wisdom* of which St. James speaks in the context, ver. 15, which is *earthly, sensual, devilish* : it is from beneath ; it causes the man to seek his happiness in earthly things, through the medium of animal passions, and is totally under the direction and influence of the devil. It is the state of the diabolical regimen in the soul of a sinner : it teaches him to find out and invent the most prompt and effectual methods of serving his master, ruining himself, and hurting others.

But the wisdom which the apostle recommends is from above ; it comes immediately from God ; it is what God has taught man by his word, and what he impresses on the understanding and heart of man by his SPIRIT. As God is the only wise God ; so all wisdom must come from him. He has not created a stock of innate knowledge in man, but he has given him a capacity to know ; and in that capacity he works by his all-enlightening

Spirit; and gives, for subjects of knowledge and principles of conduct, his own revelation—the BIBLE—a book of the most consummate learning and wisdom that can be conceived.

It is highly worthy of remark, that the utmost ingenuity of man has not been able to add a single principle to the system of divine truth laid down in the Bible; nor to discover one attribute of God beyond those laid down in the Old and New Testaments. Nor have they found out anything new relative to the human soul, though they have written various essays both on the nature of God, and the nature of man; there is not one new discovery relative to God and spirits in their writings, nor a single article in morals, but what existed in the Bible, and what they borrowed from it.

This is a most important matter, and what should be carefully considered by all; that all the art, ingenuity, learning, and wisdom of man, howsoever employed and exerted through all the generations of his being, have not been able to add a previously unknown attribute to the Divine nature—a single article to the system of morals—nor to discover one property of the spirit or soul of man, besides those taught by that wisdom that is from above.

This wisdom—teaching a man the knowledge of himself and of his Maker; leading him to the Fountain of light, life, might, mercy, and purity, for instruction, life, power, pardon, and holiness, which it freely imparts when earnestly requested—makes him a new creature; so that all his former counsels, designs, and practices are passed away; and all things in his heart, his life, and conversation, are become new. Hence the wisdom that comes from above is another name for religion: it is the kingdom of heaven within, and the life of God in the soul.



II. This divine wisdom is an active principle, and shows its nature and origin by the effects it produces, or the fruits which it bears.

Of these the apostle lays down several ; and though not all, yet enough to show the nature and heavenly origin of the principle whence they are derived. Those that he does mention are essential, and can never be absent from the heart and life of the man, where the principle is in operation. I shall consider these in order.

1. The wisdom from above is—first, *pure*: *αγνη*, the original word, means such a purity as is implied in chastity of thought, word, and deed ; and is opposed to all inward and outward pollution.

It is worthy of remark, that the very first dawn of the light of God in the soul of man, discovers and renders horrible to the view all moral defilement, and gives the soul an insatiable thirst after holiness ; and this desire is often so intense, even in penitents, that they are led to seek sanctification before justification. For as this wisdom comes from God, it shows his nature. It shows that image in which the soul was created, and which it lost by the fall, and which it is to regain by Christ Jesus. This image of God, or purity of heart, contains in itself a summary of the whole work of God in the soul of man. Holiness is all that the soul needs to receive in order to its happiness ; and the attainment of it is what is required by the spirit and design of all the commandments of God—“ Be ye holy, for I am holy” (Lev. xi. 44 ; I Pet. i. 15, 16), is the uniform language of the law, and the authoritative command of the gospel.

But as holiness is produced in the soul by the Holy Spirit, and that Spirit is not an inmate of the heart till the soul is justified ; hence justification, or the pardon of sin, must precede sanctification ; the conscience must be purged or purified from guilt, from ALL guilt ; and from

all guilt at once: for in no part of the Scripture are we directed to seek remission of sins *seriatim*; one now, another then, and so on. Neither in any part are we directed to seek holiness *gradatim*. We are to come to God for an instantaneous and complete purification from all sin, as well as for an instantaneous pardon. Neither the *seriatim* pardon, nor the *gradatim* purification exists in the Bible. It is when the soul is purified from all sin, that it can properly grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: as the field may be expected to produce a good crop, and all the seed vegetate, when the thorns, thistles, briars, and noxious weeds of every kind, are grubbed out of it.

2. *Peaceable*, *εἰρηνικῆ*, signifies living in peace, having a good and comfortable understanding with God, with our own conscience, and with our neighbour. Enmity to God and holiness is destroyed—self-contradiction, self-reproach, and a guilty conscience, are at an end;—harmony and order are restored within, and prevail without. Did this heavenly religion prevail in the world, there would be no private quarrels, animosities, strifes, contentions, bloodshed, murder, nor wars in the world.

3. *Gentle*, *επιεικῆς*, implies *meek*, *modest*, of an *equal mind*, the opposite to anger, irritability of temper. Not offending others, and receiving no offences itself. A mind always in even balance.

4. *Easy to be entreated*. Expressed in one word, *εὐπειθῆς*, easily persuaded to do anything that is right, just, holy, and proper in itself, or what may be profitable to others. A mind always open to conviction; ready to receive light, and to act by it. The opposite to stubbornness, obstinacy, untractableness, morosity, and mulishness.

5. *Full of mercy*. The apostle felt that he could not go through all the attributes of such a character, and he

begins to sum them up. The man is full of mercy : he owes all to God's mercy ; the divine mercy has begotten in him its own similitude, and filled him with its own disposition. He is ever ready to pardon a transgression, and to show kindness and compassion to men. His heart is full of benevolence, and his life of beneficence. He lives to act towards others as God has acted towards him.

6. And being full of mercy, he is full of good fruits. Every grace of God in his soul is a heavenly seed, bearing fruit suited to and descriptive of its nature. His hand, heart, tongue, hands, and feet, are all full of purposes and acts of beneficence. The fruits are as various as they are numerous. Every fruit has its tree, every tree its peculiar seed, and every seed the same origin—GOD ; and all grow and thrive under the continual light and heat of the Sun of righteousness.

7. *Without partiality*, ἀδιακριτος, this word means, *without making a difference*—rendering to every man his due ; never swayed by self-interest, worldly honour, or the fear of man. Diffusing the fruits of his mercy through all mankind ; being as liberal and as compassionate to his enemy, as to his former benefactor, when he finds them in equal destitution or distress. The difference of religion, country, kindred, makes no difference with him.

8. *Without hypocrisy*, ἀνυποκριτος, *not acting under a borrowed character, acting no feigned part* ; being sincere in all that he professes, and in all that he does, without pretence or simulation—doing nothing to be seen or applauded of men. Having no cloak, never pretending to be what he is not, but ever acting in his own character ; in a word, a man without a mask, seeking nothing but God's glory, and using no other means to attain this end than those prescribed by God himself. This is the

man who has the wisdom that comes from above, who knows what is right, judges what is fit, and does what is good. He lives in the state, condition, and power of knowledge, as the king does in his kingdom. His state is wisdom. He knows the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; and in this knowledge he has the commencement and anticipation of LIFE ETERNAL.

We may now see the reasonableness of what has already been hinted, that we must have the life of Christ in our souls, for our personal salvation; and must show forth its fruits in our lives, for the conviction and edification of others. How can an irreligious man know anything of the nature of true religion, but as he may see it exemplified in the conduct of others? The conversion of sinners, under the preaching of the gospel, is a standing proof of the truth of Christianity, as it is of the efficacy of the doctrine it teaches. Here is a notorious drunkard, who has been suddenly reclaimed, and relapses not again; he has been known indeed to have lately been pensive and sorrowful, to have read the word of God, and been diligent in the means of grace; but he is suddenly become cheerful and happy; he is no longer overcome of evil; he has power over all his old sins, and is an example of godly living to all that are round about him.

If he be questioned on the change that has taken place, he is at no loss to give a reason of the hope that is in him, and the means by which he was made a partaker of that hope. Others, observing and hearing these things, are prompted, first by curiosity, to use the same means, or to hear the same doctrine zealously preached by some remarkable man; and the consequence is, they also are convinced of sin, led to God through Christ for salvation; and thus the kingdom of Christ becomes extended and

established in the earth. If we had no conversions, we should be without those evidences of the divinity of our religion which are within the reach of the common people, and by which alone they can be affected and convinced. It is as vain to boast of an excellent fruit-tree which a man has in his garden, and which never produces any fruit, as it is to profess our belief in Christianity, and profess ourselves the disciples of Christ, while we bring not forth the fruits of the Spirit. If religion do not make us honest, it does nothing for us in reference to this world; and if it do not save us from bad tempers, it has done nothing for us in reference to the world to come. A dishonest man is no Christian; an ill-tempered man is no disciple of Christ. Everything contrary to meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, is of that wisdom that is from beneath. It is earthly, animal, devilish; it is the work of the subtle serpent; it came from hell, and goeth into perdition. Let him that heareth understand.

## SERMON XI.

### GENUINE HAPPINESS THE PRIVILEGE OF THE CHRISTIAN IN THIS LIFE.

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PHILIPPIANS IV. 4.

*Χαιρετε εν Κυριω παντοτε' παλιν ερω, χαιρετε.*

“ Rejoice in the Lord alway ; and again I say, Rejoice.”

It is generally supposed that the church at Philippi, to which this epistle is directed, was founded about the year of our Lord 53, and that the epistle itself was sent to them about ten years after. From the time of their conversion to Christianity, they were a steady people, and although disturbed by false teachers, yet continued firm in the faith. They were more attached to the apostle than any of the other churches ; testified their affection by sending him supplies, even when he was labouring for the welfare of others ; and they seem to have been the only church that did so. See chap. iv. 15, 16.

That the apostle was pleased with them is sufficiently evident from the epistle, which is written in a very pleasing and easy style, everywhere bearing evidence of that happy state of mind in which he then was, and of his great affection for the people in that place.

Being truly happy himself, he endeavours to promote the happiness of others ; being satisfied that to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks, was the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning all believers.

The epistle consists of doctrines and exhortations ; and though all coming from the same Spirit, and tending to the same end, it is well to distinguish between them.

God, who has spoken to men at sundry times, has also spoken to them in a variety of manners, by all his inspired servants, both under the Old and under the New Testament.

The addresses of prophets, evangelists, and apostles, to men, relative to their salvation, are either in DOCTRINES, or in ADVICES and EXHORTATIONS founded on those doctrines.

We ought to distinguish between doctrines and exhortations, as we do between theory and practice, or between the principles of a science and the operations of those principles.

Doctrine simply signifies teaching of any kind. Whatever can be taught to man, and whatever man can learn.

A divine doctrine is what man learns concerning his own salvation, and is either, 1. Founded on the perfections of God ; or 2. Drawn from the declarations of God ; or 3. Inferred from the operations of God.

Nothing can properly be denominated a divine doctrine that has not its origin in one or other of these.

1st. It must be drawn from the infinite perfections of God, and agree with all those perfections ; or,

2ndly. It must be deduced from the revelation of God, and agree with all parts of that revelation ; or,

3rdly. It must be inferred from the operations of God in his works of creation and providence, in his government of the world and of the church ; and,

4thly. From whichever of these sources a doctrine professes to be derived, it must not only be fairly and indisputably deduced from that source, but it must agree with all the others ; e. g., 1. A doctrine professedly derived from the nature of God must not only agree with

all the perfections of that nature, but also with the revelation of God, and his conduct in governing the world and the church. 2. Again : a doctrine professedly drawn from divine revelation must not only agree with that revelation in all its parts, soberly understood, without figure, metaphor, or type, but must also agree with the operations of God, and the perfections of his nature. And lastly, a doctrine professedly derived from the conduct of God in governing the world, and managing the affairs of the church, must agree, without constraint or interference, positively and directly, with divine revelation, and the perfections of the divine nature. Doctrines not thus derived, and not thus agreeing with these essential principles, should not, in matters which concern the salvation of the soul, and the eternal interests of man, be received as doctrines of God. They are either, 1. Doctrines of men ; or, 2. Doctrines of devils ; or, 3. Precarious assumptions, on which no confidence should be placed, and to which no credit should be given.

The advices and exhortations of inspired men are always founded on such doctrines as above mentioned ; and, properly speaking, such advices are the uses that should be made of such doctrines. If God will, teach, and exemplify by his conduct, that such are his designs in reference to the sons of men ; then their duty is, 1st, To believe what he has thus discovered ; 2ndly, To venerate and love him for that discovery, because it has for its object their present and eternal happiness ; 3rdly, To use whatever means may lead to the accomplishment of this end ; and 4thly, To be obedient to his will in all things, as he himself has promised them a sufficiency of power to enable them thus to obey.

In this verse and the context, the apostle does not speak to the Philippians by doctrines, but by advice and exhortation founded on doctrines already delivered.



Knowing the infinite benevolence of the divine nature, and contemplating that astonishing manifestation of it in the incarnation of Christ ("who took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross," chap. ii. 6—8), he might have at once inferred, that the design of God was to make his intelligent creatures happy; but he had more than inference and deduction for his opinion; for now, writing under the immediate inspiration of God, he sees it plainly, and announces it strongly, from the direct impulse of the Divine Spirit, in the words of the text, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice."

As I conceive that the text speaks of human happiness, and by exhorting to its acquisition, shows the possibility of its attainment, I judge it necessary to inquire a little into the subject—define the term—show the general opinion that has been formed of it—and ascertain the sense in which I conceive it to be intended here.

I. When the apostle exhorts the Philippians to *rejoice*, I conceive that the term implies the same as, *Be happy*; and as he exhorts them to rejoice always, then he must mean, *Be constantly happy*; and to be constantly happy, is to have happiness, or to be in the state of happiness. Reasons for this will be given in other parts of the discourse.

Our term happiness, it is most likely, comes from *hap*, which is usually defined, *chance*, *fortune*, or that which occurs fortuitously, or without design. This term is equally applicable to good or ill, and other words are often joined to it in order to indicate the sense in which it is taken. *Mis-hap* is evil accident or fortune, and *good-hap* signifies a fortunate event, good luck, or favourable occurrence. But out of this term, the adjective

happy, and the noun happiness are made ; happy and happiness are taken exclusively in a good sense, and require no other terms to qualify their meaning. Happy applies to state, place, person, thing ; and happiness to the state of being happy.

II. We have many foolish, and some good definitions of the term or thing called happiness ; among the latter is the following : “ That state in which the desires are satisfied ;” or, according to Hooker, “ Happiness is that estate whereby we attain the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired ; and containeth in it, after an eminent sort, the contentation of all our desires—the highest degree of all our perfection.” Others define it, “ The durable possession of good, without any mixture of evil ; or the enjoyment of pure pleasure, unalloyed with pain ; or a state in which all the wishes are satisfied ;” in which senses, say they, happiness is known only by name upon the earth.

Mr. Locke observes, “ The various and contradictory choices that men make in the world argue that the same thing is not good to every man alike ; this variety of pursuits shows that every one does not place his happiness in the same thing.”

Others assert that “ the word happy, when applied to any state or condition of human life, will admit of no positive definition, but is merely a relative term ; that is, when we call a man happy, we only mean that he is happier than some others with whom we compare him, or than he himself was in some other situation.”

Mr. Archdeacon Paley says, “ In strictness, any condition may be denominated happy, in which the aggregate of pleasure exceeds that of pain ; and the degree of happiness depends on the quantity of this excess.”

In discussing this subject in his *Principles of Philo-*

*sophy*, he endeavours to show in what happiness does not, and what it does, consist.

“1. It consists not in the pleasures of sense, in whatever profusion or variety they may be enjoyed.

“2. It does not consist in any exemption from pain, labour, care, suspense, molestation, &c.

“3. It does not consist in greatness, rank, or elevated station.

“But, 1. It does consist in the exercise of the social affections.

“2. In the exercise of our mental and corporeal faculties in the pursuit of some engaging end.

“3. In settling the habits in such a manner, that every change may be a change for the better.

“4. It consists in health, freedom from bodily distempers, and tranquillity, firmness, and alacrity of mind, or good spirits.”

In all these definitions, and they are the best I have been able to select, there is not one word of happiness in reference to the soul of man,—not one word of happiness in or from God! Nay, the soul appears to be entirely out of the question; and, as to regaining the image or enjoying the approbation of God, these make no part of the inquiry! The animal man, and the animal mind, are the alone subjects of consideration: and the great question is, What happiness may man, merely considered in reference to this world and to his animal nature, possess in this life?

III. It is not in this light I take up the subject: my inquiry relates to a man as possessing an immortal spirit, standing in a relation to God as his Creator, Governor, and Judge, and as a candidate for eternal glory.

If the present state be only the threshold of being,—if it be a state of probation,—if man, in the estimate of

reason and religion, should be guided by wisdom, and true wisdom is that which directs to the best end by the use of the most proper means ; then, that must be the best end of man that has in view his true blessedness in this life, and his eternal glorification in the world to come. “What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and with what shall we be clothed?”—in a word, how shall we acquire animal gratification ? are inquiries with which the Gentiles may be endlessly exercised ; but he who has the revelation of God should have higher objects of pursuit, and such as become an immortal spirit.

This is the subject on which St. Paul addresses the Christians at Philippi, and, through them, all, in every place, who profess the Christian name. He speaks to them of spiritual happiness, exhorts to its acquisition, and shows in what it consists.

I shall, therefore, give a definition of what I conceive true happiness to be ; copying in the main, the words of a preceding definition :—“It is that state of mind in which the desires are all satisfied, by the full possession of that which, for its own sake, is to be desired above all things, as containing in itself everything that is suited to the nature, capacity, and wishes of an immortal spirit ; with the rational conviction that this state may be permanent :” and this, without circumlocution, I state to be, the approbation of God in the conscience, and the image of God in the heart. Where these are, there must be happiness ; where these are permanent, there must be permanent happiness. The actual existence of these things, or the possibility of their attainment, I consider to be directly implied in the exhortation of the apostle, “Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice.” He who can rejoice, is so far happy : but no man can rejoice, even in the slightest degree, but from a consciousness of happiness at the time ; and happiness implies

perfect satisfaction or contentment of mind, from a gratification of its wishes and desires. And this necessarily implies these two things :—1. Actual possession of that which gratifies or contents ; and, 2. Comfortable persuasion that the possession shall be continued. For, 1. If a man possess not that which his soul has earnestly desired, and without which he could not be comfortable, he cannot have rejoicing in himself ; and, 2. If he have not a well-grounded hope, and full persuasion that this possession, and his consequent happiness, may be continued,—that none can deprive him of it, and that it cannot be lost but through his own fault,—he cannot rejoice. Hence, therefore, it is evident, that the thing that constitutes happiness must be so far in possession, as to leave no craving desire ungratified ; and must be so sure in prospect, in reference to its future continuance, as to leave no anxious apprehension of unavoidable privation.

IV When therefore the apostle exhorts the believers at Philippi to rejoice, he means Be happy—happy in the present gratification and contentment of your ardent heavenly wishes, and in prospect of its future continuance. When he says, *Rejoice always*, he means, Be always happy—ye need never be wretched, ye need never be miserable : and when he adds, *Again I say, Rejoice!* he shows the possibility of the case, the attainableness of such a state, and that God, by positive injunction, makes that their bounden duty, which is their sovereign felicity.

Here is the possibility of human happiness asserted by divine authority, and consequently the attainableness of it proved. But these great questions will naturally arise : In what does this happiness consist ? And, by what means is it to be acquired ?

Even the divine assertion, that we may be happy, and that we should be happy, and always happy, does not

answer these questions ; but the qualification in the text meets the first, Rejoice IN THE LORD: from which we learn that it is the Lord, the God who made it, who constitutes the happiness of the human soul ; for he alone can content its desires.

Every human being desires happiness ; every intelligent spirit hates misery. God has made the soul capable of happiness, and having endowed it with a capacity for happiness, designing that it should be happy, he says in the text, *Rejoice always!*—be uninterruptedly happy in your God.

But it may be objected, How can God will the happiness of man, when he has brought him into such a state of existence that he is encompassed with unavoidable evils? I grant that the world is full of evil and misery ; and if I could believe that these were the result of divine counsels, and divine operations, I must also say, vain is the command to be happy, when by such evils the cup of blessedness is dashed from the lips of mortals, as frequently as they attempt to taste it: but I deny that God is the author of what is strictly styled evil.

Evil is that which necessarily entails misery, and is opposed to good and happiness. Evil stands in opposition to the Divine Nature,—to its infinite perfections and eternal beatitude.

V Evil is properly distinguished into two kinds, NATURAL AND MORAL.

1. NATURAL evil implies some derangement in the operations of nature, by which they are totally hindered or opposed, or thwarted, so that regular effects are not produced ; violence and disorder taking the place of uniformity and design: and thus effects, contrary to the original ordination of a wise and intelligent mind, are produced. It is, in a word, whatever destroys, or in any way disturbs, the perfection of natural beings ; or pro-

duces mischief, prejudice, or damage. This supposes two things, 1. The evil cause which produces this disturbance, prejudice, and damage ; and 2. The evil effects produced by this cause. Earthquakes are most probably produced by electricity : the inordinate quantity and disorderly action of the electric matter is the cause ; the convulsions of the earth, the consequence. So an obstruction of the nervous fluid may be the cause of paralysis ; and a peccant humour, the cause of blindness. The obstruction, therefore, is the cause of the paralysis ; blindness, the effect of the peccant humour.

God is not the author of death, neither hath "he pleasure in the destruction of the living." Hence, in the class of natural evils, we must rank everything that impairs the human constitution, produced by the present operations of nature, inducing morbid activity, or morbid debility in the nervous or muscular system ; and consequent sickness, infirmity, diseases, and deaths. Among these also may be classed violent alterations and commotions in the earth ; such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and all such causes us produce vegetable sterility. Also, all violent alterations in the structure and state of the atmosphere. Pestilences, plagues, endemic and epidemic diseases ; lightnings, tempests, tornadoes, pestiferous alterations in the atmosphere, from a deficiency or superabundance of any of its component principles ; too much rain in one case, producing injury to seeds and plants ; or sweeping away men, cattle, property, and the vegetable surface, by floods or inundations : on the other hand, too little rain, so that the earth is exhausted of its radical moisture ; and plants and seeds are entirely parched up. Sudden deaths, maiming, and heavy losses, ultimately terminating in the beggary and destruction of the sufferers, may also enter into the catalogue of natural evils.

2. MORAL evil is usually defined, "The disagreement between the actions of a moral agent, and the rule of those actions." It consists properly of two parts: 1. The evil principle in moral agents, which induces them to depart from truth, purity, and goodness; and 2. The disagreement between the actions of a moral agent, and the rule of those actions. The first implies an evil nature in moral agents; the second, transgression, or the breach of the moral law, or rule of morality.

MORAL evil is that which is opposed to the wisdom, holiness, goodness, and perfections of God; to the peace, comfort, and happiness of intelligent beings. That which, in a word, blinds the understanding of man, perverts his judgment, and depraves his affections and passions; leading him to seek his happiness in this life, in mere brutal or sensual gratifications; and causing him to transgress those laws which God has given him for the regulation of his life. Moral evil shows itself particularly in the obstinate opposition of man to the will of his Maker; the transgressions by which he is disgraced and cursed; and the evil tempers, disorderly affections and passions, which constitute his own inward hell, and turn him into a malignant spirit among his fellow-creatures. Hence come discord, contentions, seditions, debates, popular ruptures, anarchy, confusion, battle, bloodshed, and war, in all its wide-wasting varieties, and desolating consequences. Now, there is no evidence that God, the author and rule of regularity and order, could bring such disorder and desolation into the works of his own hands. Nor can he influence the soul with such unholy passions as lead it to oppose his will, insult his majesty, and produce its own ruin.

VI. These considerations will lead to another question, "Are all evils unavoidable and necessary?" I answer, All moral evil is avoidable, and unnecessary:



because man may cease from sinning against his Maker ; and all those natural evils which are the immediate consequence of transgression are also avoidable. The principal part of our sufferings, most of our diseases, and the general calamities that fall upon nations and individuals by wars, &c., are all avoidable, because they are all the fruits of voluntary and obstinate sin and transgression. An eminent physician has asserted that the three great sources of disease are, indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions : all these are avoidable, and if so, all their consequences ; and for each and the whole of them, genuine religion is a cure. **INDOLENCE** is disgraceful ; **INTEMPERANCE**, brutal ; and disorderly **PASSIONS**, unreasonable : common sense may correct the two former ; and the grace of God is sufficient to subdue and destroy the latter. These three sources of evil dried up, there is then an end to the major part of the diseases which constitute the chief calamities of life. From this view of the subject, we greatly diminish the number of unavoidable evils ; and see that natural evil is, in general, the consequence of moral evil ; and moral evil, the effect of our own wilful obstinacy against God, yielding to the solicitations of the wicked one. Through them, we may be solicited to sin against the Almighty, but they cannot force us to do it. A man must consent to sin, before he can sin. God has so constituted the human will, that it cannot be forced. Satan may present false images to the imagination, darken the mind, and confound the memory ; but he cannot force the will. He may flatter, soothe, and promise pleasure, in order to gain over the will ; but before he can ruin us, he must have our consent. Were the case otherwise, we could not possibly be saved. God has given a power to the human will, so insuperably great, that all the armies of heaven, the hosts of hell, and the united energy of the whole human

race, cannot move, force, or subdue it. In all circumstances, in all solicitations to sin, we are safe, if we consent not. We have entrenchments which our most powerful adversaries cannot force, and which God will not. He can so enlighten our minds, influence and sway our affections, and convince our reason, that it is our highest interest to close in with the overtures of mercy, that we shall cheerfully lay hold on the hope set before us; but in this case there is no force, no power, argument, or persuasion applied that is irresistible. Will is the principle of freedom or choice: to force, would be to destroy it.

The question about Free Will has long agitated divines and philosophers: with their contentions I have nothing to do; but the subject of their controversies, as far as the term which they use is concerned, is absurd. *Will* necessarily implies mental freedom, or a power in the soul to choose or refuse:—the addition of the word *free* to it is absurd and ridiculous, because freedom is essential to the being of *WILL*: bound will, or will over-ruled by necessity, is equally absurd; because binding and necessitating imply in themselves, when connected with will, or the power to choose and refuse, essentially opposite ideas: *WILL* bound or necessitated, is *WILL* annihilated. When free volition, in reference to choice and refusal, ends; then the thing itself ceases to exist, and another principle takes its place. The forcing of the will implies such an essential contradiction and impossibility, that it is one of those things which cannot be done by Omnipotence itself, because it implies absurdity and contradiction. God may annihilate the will, but he cannot force it; for this would be to undo, by an absolute contradiction, the work of his own hands.

God gave man this faculty that he might be a free rewardable or punishable moral agent; and by his own

eternal power and energy, he supports this faculty, rendering it superior to all force or constraint, that he may continue man a rational creature, preserve his accountability, and render him capable of salvation. On this supposition, and on this alone, is the whole revelation of God addressed to man, in all its promises, threatenings, exhortations, entreaties, expostulations, and warnings. It is on this ground alone, that the Holy Blessed God is every way consistent with himself, and the discoveries of his will to mankind, when he addresses them in such solemn language as this :—“ See, I have set before thee this day LIFE and GOOD, and DEATH and EVIL ; in that I command thee to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live ; but if thine heart turn away, that thou WILT NOT hear—I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you LIFE and DEATH, BLESSING and CURSING ; therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live ;” Deut. xxx. 15—19.

“ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and YE WOULD NOT !” Matt. xxiii. 37. “ YE WILL NOT come to me, that ye might have life ;” John v. 40. But it is needless to multiply scriptures, for this is the spirit of divine revelation from the beginning to the end.

That Satan can never lead a soul into sin till he gain its own consent, has been well stated by that deep and nervous writer, the Rev. John Smith, Fellow of Queen’s College, Cambridge, in his discourse on “ A Christian’s Conflicts :” “ The certainty of success to all those who resist the devil ; *resist the devil, and he will flee from you* ; he cannot stand when opposed in the strength of

God ; he will fall down as swift as lightning ; he cannot bear the glory of God shining in the souls of men. Here, it is no more, but, stand and conquer, resist and vanquish. For, first of all, *the devil and sin, in themselves considered, are but weak and impotent.* They cannot prevail over the soul which yields not to them ; the evil spirit then only prevails over us when we ourselves consent to his suggestions ; all his strength lies in our treachery and falseness to our own souls. Though those wicked spirits be perpetually so near us, *yet they cannot bow or bend our wills ;* there is a place of defence in the souls of men, into which they cannot enter ; they may stand at a distance, allure and entice them ; but they cannot prevail over them, except they wilfully and shamefully deliver over their strength into the enemy's hand. It is, indeed, nothing else but hell itself in the souls of men, that gives the devil such free entertainment there. Men are, therefore, so much captivated by him, because they voluntarily take his yoke upon them. Could we, or would we, resist sin and Satan, they could not hurt us. Everything is weak and impotent, according to the distance it stands from God, who is the only Fountain of life and power. Let us not impute the fruits of our own sluggishness to the power of the evil spirit without ; or to God's neglecting of us. Open thy windows, thou sluggard, and let in the beams of divine light that are there waiting upon thee ; then shalt thou find the shadows of the night dispelled and scattered ; and the warm beams of light and love enfolding thee ; which, the higher they arise on the horizon of thy soul, the more fully they will display their native strength and beauty upon thee, transforming thee more and more from darkness to light ; from the similitude of Satan, into a participation of the divine image. What the Jews have observed of *error*, is true of all sin, שקר אין לו רגלים

*sheker ein lo ragelim*, “Falsity hath no feet :” no basis of its own to subsist and rest on. Let us withdraw our will and affections from it, and it will soon fall into nothing.”—SMITH’S Select Discourses, 4to., Lond. 1660, p. 474.

Notwithstanding all this, there are, it must be granted, many *unavoidable* natural evils ; but most of them originate in avoidable moral evil. Many men will sin, and so be a curse to themselves, and a plague to others ; and there will be desolating storms, tempests, dearth, famines, and in process of time, those infirmities that tend to dissolve the connexion betwixt soul and body, and finally terminate in death. But none of these is a reason against the possibility of mental happiness here below, because none of these can have any moral evil effect upon the soul : on the contrary, if properly managed, they may become instruments of our eternal blessedness ; for all things work together for good to them who love God.

In considering this subject, we should make as broad a distinction between happiness and gratification, as we do between body and spirit. As the former implies “that state in which all the faculties and desires of the mind are filled and satisfied with that good which is suited to their nature ;” therefore it belongs to spirit. As the latter implies a sufficiency of food, raiment, drink, rest, ease, sleep, &c., and such things as are suited to the nature of animal desires ; therefore it belongs to body.

Happiness, therefore, does not belong to the body ; what this requires, is gratification and ease. As it is a natural being, it is affected by natural things. For the body, God has given the earth and its productions. Animal desires are gratified by these material things ; food, when hungry ; drink, when thirsty ; rest, when

weary ; ease, when in pain ; sleep, when exhausted by the day's labour ; with suitable clothing to preserve from the inclemency of the weather ; are all that the body requires to satisfy its wants, and thus produce gratification and contentment.

To the soul, therefore, happiness belongs ; of this, it alone is capable, and as it is a spiritual being, the happiness of which it is capable must be spiritual, and must be produced by the possession, not of an earthly, but of a spiritual good. A man may have as many houses as he can inhabit, as many clothes as he can wear, as many beds as he can lie on, and as much food as he can eat, and with all possess sound health and strength ; and yet his soul be in misery, while his body has not one wish ungratified, nor a single want unsupplied. Like may cleave to and assimilate with like. The productions of the earth are suited to animal wants ; but what relation have food, raiment, gold, silver, and earthly possessions, to an immortal spirit ? The abundance of them does not satisfy it ; the want of them does not distress it. These are not made for soul or spirit ; they have nothing in their nature suited to the nature of a spiritual substance. God constituted the body so as to receive gratification and support from natural things ; and endowed these natural things with such properties, as render them suitable to those bodies ; but he made the soul of a different nature, and designed it a happiness which no sublunary things can communicate, affect, or remove.

He gave it unbounded capacities and infinite desires. I mean by this, that its capacities are not limited by created things ; and its wishes extend beyond all finite good and excellence. As, therefore, the capacities of the soul extend far beyond all created material good and excellence, GOD alone must be its portion ; he alone can satisfy its infinite desires ; he alone can make it

happy. Therefore the text says, *Rejoice* (be happy) IN *the LORD*. It is, therefore, in God alone, that happiness is to be found.

VII. But how is this effected? And what does it imply? These were questions of great and solemn importance among the ancient sages of the heathen world. And after long search and much discussion, they came to the general agreement, that "happiness, or the *supreme good*, consisted in having the animal nature subjected to the rational." In order to this, they took incredible pains, invented copious rules, and prescribed asecetic discipline of the most painful and difficult nature. But alas, all was in vain; the *animal* rose above the *rational*; and the *brute* ran away with the *man*. Their fine maxims, prescriptions, and discipline were burnt threads, when opposed to the resistance of their gigantic fallen nature. Of one material point, they were generally unapprehensive, viz., that reason itself was perverted; that the thing by which they hoped to effect the cure, was itself diseased by habits of sin. *Reason* needed as much a controlling, regulating, healing power, as the animal passions themselves. Hence, they made no progress; all their doctrines, maxims, rules, and discipline were inefficient.

As divine revelation shows us the depth and inveteracy of our disease, so it shows us our only cure. As God alone is the Source of happiness, so he alone can prepare the soul for it; he alone can save us from our sins; he alone can purify the soul, can bring a clean out of an unclean thing, can subject the animal to the rational, and the rational to the spirit of his holiness. The HOLY SPIRIT of God influences the spirit of man; enlightens its understanding, rectifies its judgment, removes obliquity from the will, and purifies and refines the affections and desires. Thus, *our best reason is taught*

*reason, and our will taught rectitude.* The soul is purified unto himself, and thus becomes a fit habitation for God through the Spirit.

But how is this to be acquired? The same revelation tells us: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that they who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The Lord Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost." "He was delivered (unto death) for our offences; and he rose again for our justification;" and, "We have an entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus;" for "his blood cleanseth from all sin."

To show that the exhortation, *Rejoice IN the LORD always*, is founded on a doctrine which springs from the divine nature, we need only to have recourse to 1 John v. 11, 12, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." This being the *doctrine* or *principle*, the *advice* is founded on it. God has given us eternal life; but this life is in his Son. If so, no man can have the life, unless he have the Son. Hence, then, says the apostle, *Rejoice IN the Lord*. Be happy in having Christ in you the hope of glory. Your souls were made for God; and God alone can fill and make them happy.

But is this the will of God? Is there sufficient evidence that it is his desire to make us happy in this life? That he desires to do this, there can be no doubt: 1. The very constitution of your souls proves this. He has made you capable of enjoying himself; and if he have not designed to become himself the portion of the immortal spirit, he must have designed its misery and not its happiness; for he has provided no other portion for it. Nothing that his hands have formed can satisfy the wishes of a human spirit, or fulfil its desires. 2. That



he must have designed it for happiness, and intended to fill it with himself, the infinite goodness of his own nature proves. He could not have made it capable of endless and immeasurable happiness, placed this happiness fully in its view, and rendered the enjoyment eternally impossible by refusing to communicate himself! His goodness for ever disproves this. 3. Though the soul be fallen from its primitive righteousness and perfection, and is altogether become unclean, yet it has not lost its powers and capacities ; and to redeem it from the power, the guilt, and the infection of sin, he has given his own Son Jesus Christ to die for it, that it might be reconciled to himself, have all its sins blotted out, and be adopted into the family of heaven. He has also sent forth his own Spirit into the souls of believers, to purify them from all unrighteousness, and bring them up to that standard of perfection, from which they had fallen. 4. His whole revelation proves this, his institution of so many means of salvation, his continual influence on the heart, and the invariably favouring current of providential operation. 5. The text itself gives no slight indications of this willingness to make his creatures happy. The Holy Spirit, by the apostle, says, *Rejoice*—be happy. *Rejoice always!*—be always happy. *Rejoice in the Lord!*—look for spiritual happiness ; such as is suited to your nature, and such as God can give. *Rejoice in the Lord!*—not merely because you know there is a God ; not merely because you know that his *word has free course and is glorified* ; not merely because you know that the church of God is in a prosperous state, that religion gains ground, that infidelity loses countenance, and that your friends, neighbours, and relatives are among the genuine converts to the Lord Jesus : though these are all subjects of real joy and thankfulness to a Christian mind, yet this is not all that the text means ;

it speaks particularly to you, to every individual—Have thou God for thy continual portion. Know him as thy Saviour and thy sanctifier. Dwell thou in God, and God in thee. Be one with God, and God with thee. Have the prayer of your Lord fulfilled in you : “I pray,” said he, “that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me : that they may be one, even as we are one ; I IN THEM, and THOU IN ME, that they may be made perfect in one ;” John xvii. 21—23.

The slightest reflection on this subject will be sufficient to show, that this constant happiness, arising from the constant abiding of God in the soul, cannot be the portion of any heart which is *not cleansed from all sin*. The heart in which Christ constantly dwells, he completely fills ; and holiness becometh his house for ever. He binds the strong armed man, spoils his goods, and casts him out ; and then, having sanctified the house, makes it his permanent dwelling. If it be his will that the happiness lost by sin should be restored to believers in Christ, then it is his will that they should be made holy. Misery was never known till sin entered into the world ; and happiness can never be known by any man till sin be expelled from his soul. No holiness, no happiness ; and no plenary and permanent happiness without plenary and permanent holiness. I repeat it, that to give true and permanent happiness to believers, is the design of that God, whose name is Mercy, and whose nature is Love. The duplication of the exhortation in the text, speaks this strongly : *Rejoice in the Lord always* ; and, as if peculiarly pleased with the advice inspired by his own Spirit, God seems to say to his servant : “ Paul, this is so agreeable to the benevolence, mercy, and goodness of my nature ; so consistent

with all my counsels and designs ; so necessary for the creatures on whom I have set my heart, and for whom I have given my Son, that I will have them explicitly and fully informed of it; therefore, repeat the exhortation." And the apostle immediately adds, *And again I say, REJOICE!*

*When* may we expect to attain this happiness? is a question of great importance, and requires a pointed answer. But there is no difficulty in it. From every view of the subject it appears that the blessing of a clean heart, and the happiness consequent on it, may be obtained in this life, because here, not in the future world, are we to be saved. Whenever, therefore, such blessings are offered, they may be received; but all the graces and blessings of the gospel are offered at all times; and when they are offered they may be received. Every sinner is exhorted to turn from the evil of his way, to repent of sin, and to supplicate the throne of grace for pardon. In the same moment in which he is commanded to turn, in that moment he may and should turn. He does not receive the exhortation to repentance to-day, that he may become a penitent at some future time. Every penitent is exhorted to believe on the Lord Jesus, that he may receive remission of sins; he does not, he cannot understand that the blessing thus promised is not to be received to-day, but at some future time. In like manner, to every believer the new heart and the right spirit are offered in the present moment, that they may, in that moment, be received. For as the work of cleansing and renewing the heart is the work of God, his almighty power can perform it in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And as it is this moment our duty to love God with all our heart, and we cannot do this till he cleanse our hearts, consequently he is ready to do it this moment, because he wills that we should in this moment thus love

him. Therefore we may justly say, *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation. He, who in the beginning caused light in a moment to shine out of darkness, can in a moment shine into our hearts, and give us to see the light of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. This moment therefore we may be emptied of sin, filled with holiness, and become truly happy.

Before I conclude, I shall anticipate another question, the answer to which has already been partially, though perhaps not sufficiently given. "May not *mental happiness* be so affected by *natural evil*, as to impair it, suspend it, or even destroy it?" I answer, *No*. I have already shown, that the happiness for which I contend consists not merely in the purification of the heart from all sin, the cause of misery, but in the continual indwelling of God, in communion with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Ghost. Happiness, therefore, arising from such a source, is not affected by the changes and chances to which mortal and sublunary things are exposed. It depends on the continual presence and approbation of God; and most certainly, no natural evil occurrence could induce the holy and blessed God to suspend his influence in the soul of his loving obedient follower; or cause him to hide his face, or withdraw the evidence of his approbation from him whose motto is, Believe, love, obey. But it may be asked farther, "Can a man's mind be truly happy, while his body is pressed with want, sickness, and pain?" Undoubtedly, for the reason already given, viz., that natural evils, of what kind soever they may be, have no tendency to produce moral evil. They are themselves, in a certain sense, the consequences of moral evil, but they never did and never can produce it. Such a cause is wholly inadequate to such an effect. Moral evil did not produce natural evil as its immediate effect; but man's disobedience brought God's

curse upon the earth, and thus natural evil was the immediate consequence of that curse. Hear the Scripture: "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, *cursed is the ground for thy sake*; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," Gen. iii. 17, 19. Happiness in God does not prevent the sensation of pain, grief, and distress, no more than it prevents us from feeling hunger, thirst, cold, fatigue, &c. But these need not affect nor interrupt our happiness. I have known cases where persons were in what might be literally called excruciating pain and agony for weeks together, and yet indescribably happy in God, and even returning him thanks for every exacerbation of pain, and paroxysm of distress!

But these are not strange things to the genuine followers of God. I may appeal to every man who has found redemption in the blood of the cross, that when the Spirit of God bore witness with his spirit that he was a child of God, he felt unutterable happiness! "Being justified by faith, he had peace with God, through our Lord Jesus,—rejoiced in hope of the glory of God; and could even glory in tribulation." Such persons can adopt the language of the poet, feeling that these very strong expressions owe little either to enthusiastic colouring or poetic license:—

"I rode on the sky, freely justified I,  
Nor envied Elijah his seat;  
My heart mounted higher, in a chariot of fire,  
And the moon it was under my feet."

They felt the presence and approbation of their God; and should they who possess this blessing be brought to

the fiery furnace, or the valley of the shadow of death, they could neither be appalled by the flames, nor be moved by the terror; all is heaven, where God reigns. The holy man has remounted to his source; he is re-united to his God, the Source and Cause of all blessedness. The grave has no terrors for him, and death no sting. Of him it may be truly said,—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas :  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

VIRG. Geor. ii., ver. 490.

He fears God, and has no other kind of fear. He can trace out the causes of things; he sees that good must come from God, and in him he seeks it; he knows that all evil springs from sin, and therefore he avoids it. To him destiny and fate are names more empty than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. He tramples dismay and dread under his feet; nor can the yells of the tormented spirits of Acheron shake the firmness of his soul.

He has received that perfect love which casteth out all fear that hath torment, 1 John iv. 18. In him the end of the commandment is accomplished, for he has love out of a pure heart and good conscience, and faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5. The great promise so solemnly and impressively announced by the prophet, is fulfilled in him: "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 I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. All this is summarily expressed in that prayer, which you have often offered up to God in the most solemn act of your religious service:—

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, CLEANSE the THOUGHTS of our HEARTS by the INSPIRATION of thy HOLY SPIRIT, *that we may PERFECTLY LOVE THEE*, and WORTHILY MAGNIFY *thy holy name*, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”—*Collect before the Communion Service.*

As sin is the fountain of all misery, and inward sin is the sole cause of inward unhappiness ; and as nothing less than the mighty energy of the Spirit of God, applying the salvation purchased by the blood of the covenant, can purify the fallen, depraved, and unclean spirit of man ; and as he who feels inward sin, evil tempers, and unholy propensities, which often lead into transgressions of the law of God, must necessarily feel guilt and wretchedness ; so he who has got even the thoughts of his heart cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and is enabled in consequence to love God perfectly, i. e., with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to magnify his holy name worthily, must necessarily be happy. He cannot be wretched, for the cause of wretchedness is destroyed, and he loves God with all his heart ; he cannot feel guilt and condemnation, for he is enabled worthily to magnify God's holy name. Thus we see that in him the power, the guilt, and the nature of sin are destroyed. To him “the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared ; teaching him that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus ii. 11—14.

It is not, therefore, in another state, that we are to be

restored to this purity and happiness, but in this present world; in the place where we can perfectly love God; and as love is the principle and incentive to all obedience, where we can worthily magnify God's holy name. And is it not proper, that where sin has been contracted, where the atonement for it has been offered, that there it should be destroyed? Hence salvation from sin is to be received in this life; and glorification of the body and soul, as the consequence in the life to come. In the whole Bible there is not one intimation that sin shall be destroyed, either in the article of death, or in the other world. *Here* we are to *rejoice in the Lord always*. *Here* we are to wash our robes, and make them white through the blood of the Lamb. *Here* we are to be saved out of the hands of all our enemies; and *here* we are to enjoy that happiness which shall qualify us for glorification in the eternal world.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: glory be to thee, O Lord, Most High! Amen.



## SERMON XII.

### LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

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PHILIPPIANS iii. 20, 21.

20. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

21. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

BEFORE I enter on the consideration of the text, there are several circumstances of *time*, *place*, and *occasion* which require to be noted.

And first of the *time*. Several deaths have recently happened among some of the principal families who attend the worship of God in this place; the deaths particularly of some young persons have been very edifying, though deeply solemn and impressive.

Secondly, of *place*. We behold many people in mourning, and the chapel itself hung with black, on account, not only of their private and domestic distresses, but chiefly on account of the lately arived intelligence of the sudden death of the Rev. Dr. Coke, a man of indefatigable missionary zeal and might, who, being on his passage to the island of Ceylon, with several missionaries, to proclaim the gospel of Christ to the heathen, died within a few days' sail of the place of his destination.

Thirdly, added to all this, the doctrine of the text, which is taken out of the epistle for the day, twenty-third Sunday after Trinity; and which, being in close

association with all the above circumstances, induces me to enter on a consideration of the deeply important subjects of LIFE, DEATH, and IMMORTALITY—Subjects which all allow to be the most interesting that can fall under the consideration of the human mind—subjects which should be considered, not only in a moral and religious, but also in a physical point of view; not only that we may know what God says of them in the revelation with which he has favoured us, but also that we may obtain a philosophical acquaintance with the nature and constitution of the subjects, the body and soul of man, to which they refer.

In this latter point of view, they are seldom considered in public discourses—not so much because the ministers of the gospel are incapable of thus viewing them, but because they are discouraged by their congregations from all discussions of this kind; a certain class of unthinking people terming them carnal reasoning, and consequently proscribing them as being contrary to what they call evangelical preaching.

It would be easy to prove that discussions of the kind which I now propose, are authorized by the whole tenor of divine revelation, and sanctioned particularly by the word and example of our blessed Lord, who is ever teaching us, though we are slow of heart to learn, to ascend to things spiritual and eternal, by means of those that are natural and transitory.

Though the text speaks professedly only on the glorious state of the human body after the general resurrection, yet, as that necessarily implies both death and previous life, I shall take these subjects in the order of nature, and try how far a philosophical consideration of what is laid down in Scripture relative to them, may tend to remove our darkness, and strengthen our faith.

In order to this it may be necessary first to define the terms themselves, that we may use them in a strict and determinate physiological sense.

I. LIFE has been defined, "The union of the body and the soul;" and this definition necessarily follows from that given below, of *death*. But it is as plainly absurd in the one case, as it is in the other; and supposes that in all cases of life, a soul or immortal principle is formed to be connected with a body, in order to produce the vital functions. I shall, therefore, leave this, and adopt that given by the most accurate physiologists, "Life is the assemblage of those functions by which death is resisted." But in the human being, an immortal spirit is always present, during the whole extension of what is called *life*.

II. DEATH is generally defined, "The separation of the soul and body." This definition, though it conveys scarcely any knowledge to the mind, as it gives no distinct idea of the thing itself, may nevertheless answer the general purposes of morality and religion. But in the present inquiry, we must consider the subject in a nearer and more correct point of view, that we may know the subject itself, without attempting to explain it by negative propositions. That in death the immortal spirit is separated from the body, with me, admits of no doubt; and this spirit admits neither of death nor decay.

I therefore take up the definition which the most accurate physiologists adopt, and say, "Death is the total and irrecoverable cessation of all the functions of a living animal."

This definition is highly proper, as it distinguishes this final cessation of the animal functions, 1st, From accidental suspension, as in those cases of swooning, suffocation, and drowning, from which persons have been resuscitated; and therefore, very properly termed by

medical men, *cases of suspended animation*. And 2dly, From that state of organized bodies where putrefaction has taken place, and the solution of the parts has been the consequence.

III. By IMMORTALITY, I mean, as it regards man, not only the restoration of the human body to life, in circumstances in which death shall be for ever impossible, but also the re-union of the immortal spirit with it in the eternal presence of God.

After these definitions, it may be just necessary to state, that all animals have their ORIGIN by *generation*, their GROWTH by *nutrition*, and their TERMINATION by *death*.

### *Of Life.*

1. *Life* has never been detected in its *first principles* or commencement. For a time, the animal continues in connexion with the parent, or in the nidus in which its rudiments are formed. By and by it becomes detached from the womb or nidus, and lives in a state of independence. But, wherever it is discovered, it is found in a state of complete activity, associating to itself those principles necessary to the construction of the aggregate of that body in and by which it is to operate.

An animal, therefore, can be traced to its parent—that to its parent, and so on through the whole series of beings of that species; but the commencement of life in any is undiscoverable.

It is true that organization is supposed by many to be the principle of life.

But that the principle of life does not consist in organization of any kind, appears from this, 1. That the organization may be perfect, and the principle of life extinct.

2. That death often takes place where the organization exhibits no proofs of morbid alteration.

3. Organization may be perfect before life commences : instanced in the scriptural account of the creation of man : “ God made man out of the dust of the ground.” Here was a perfectly organized body, in its full maturity and growth—no principle of life had ever yet acted upon it, and therefore this organization did not proceed from the operation of a vital principle inherent in that body ; for it is added that, after this body was thus formed, “ God breathed into the nostrils of the man the breath of life, and he became a living soul ;” Gen. ii. 7.

Let us examine this account. It has been already observed that life is never discovered in its commencement. We find it a perfect and efficient principle as soon as we can detect its being. We have seen that it exists in connexion with the parent, or nidus, in which it first became manifest, and afterwards existed without either ; we have traced it from parent to parent—and here we trace it to God. *God breathed into the nostrils of the perfectly organized Adam*—his lungs were inflated—his heart began its pulsations—and the mass of blood, torpid in the arteries and veins, now began to circulate—and the newly-made creature found himself capable of motion and thought in the same moment.

The original is emphatic : “ God breathed into his nostrils, נשמת חיים *nishmat chayim*, the *soul* or *principle* of LIVES, in consequence of which double principle, he became נפש חיה *nephesh chayah*, a *living soul* ; or a compound creature, being both a soul and an animal ; to inform and actuate each of which, viz., his animal and intellectual nature, he had the breath or inspiration of lives ; so that he became a perfect animal and a rational being ; for it is said, Job xxxii. 8, “ There is a spirit

in man," וְנִשְׁמַת שְׂרֵי חַיִּים *venishmet shaddai tebinem*, "and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding."

To prove that he was endued with animal life, and intellectual powers, "God brought to him every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, to see what he would call them." And he gave names to all—"and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof;" Gen. ii. 19, 20. Here he had the full proof of his own intellectual powers. He discerned the qualities and habits of the different creatures brought before him; and gave them names expressive of those qualities and habits. This is proved from the signification of the names of the different animals mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures—the language in which Adam named those creatures. He was חַיִּיה *chayyah*, an *animal* like them; but he had נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*, or נִשְׁמַת שְׂרֵי *nishmat shaddai*, an *intellectual principle*, by which he could discern their natures and habits; and he gave so full a proof of his intelligence here, that God ratified his nomination, and did not change one of the names which he had imposed!

Here we find *soul* or the *intellectual principle*, distinct from *life* or the *animal principle*—both distinct from *organization*, and both immediately proceeding from God himself. God, therefore, is the Author of both *soul* and *life*, and *organized body*; and is it not on this ground that life has never been detected in its commencement, or in a state of imperfection? From the first moment we discover it, it is perfectly performing all its functions.

The doctrine of *materialism* is evidently absurd: there could be no such principles as *life*, *thought*, and *intelligence*, if the Almighty Spirit did not move, actuate, and work everything according to the counsel of his own

will or pleasure ; and thus become the principle of life and reason to all animate and intelligent beings.

The doctrine of *materialism*, though it do not owe its birth, yet has had its embellishment, from our greatest poet, Milton ; who, in his fifth book of *Paradise Lost*, exhibits the angel Raphael teaching and explaining the doctrine at large to Adam and Eve. It will not be improper to produce the passage here, that Milton's admirers, who have asserted that the imputation of such an opinion to this divine poet is a positive slander, may learn to speak more cautiously. I shall first give the sum of what he says, and then produce his words.

The poet asserts, 1. That God made one first matter. 2. That he endued this first matter with various forms. 3. That out of it he produced all life. 4. That this life is capable of continual refinement, till body itself is transmuted into spirit. 5. That the food received into the human stomach, being digested, produces blood—blood, vital spirits—vital spirits, animal spirits—animal spirits, intellectual. 6. That from these spring *life, sense, fancy, and understanding*. 7. That from our aliment the soul receives discursive and intuitive reason, which is its essence. 8. And that, in short, all spirits and intellectual beings, are formed out of matter—and that from a *prima materia*, men, angels, and archangels derived their being. The words follow from which I have drawn the above particulars.

To whom the winged hierarch replied :

O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom  
 All things proceed, and up to Him return,  
 If not depraved from *good* ; created all  
 Such to perfection, *one first matter all*,  
 Endued with various *forms*, various degrees  
 Of *substance*, and in things that live, of *life* ;

But more refined, more spirituous, and pure,  
 As nearer to him placed, or nearer *tending*,  
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,  
*Till body up to spirit work*, in bounds  
 Proportioned to each kind.

To illustrate this doctrine, he produces the following simile from the vegetable creation, to prove that the soul receives its being and reason from the food which is digested in the stomach, as fruits and flowers have their savours and odours from the root that bears them.

So from the root  
 Springs *lighter* the *green stalk*, from thence the leaves  
 More *airy*, last the bright consummate *flower*  
 Spirits odorous breathes ; *flowers* and their *fruit*,  
 Man's nourishment, by gradual *scale* *sublimed*,  
 To *vital spirits* aspire, to *animal*,  
 To *intellectual* ; give both *life* and *sense*,  
*Fancy* and *understanding* ; whence the soul  
*Reason* receives, and *Reason* is her *being*,  
*Discursive*, or *intuitive*.

PARADISE LOST, Book v., l. 468—488.

Here is a doctrine pretended to be taught by an angel from heaven, at once disgraceful both to God and man, and demonstrably both unphilosophical and false.

Milton apparently borrowed this doctrine from Rabelais ; see book iii., chap. 4, where not only the doctrine, but the mode of reasoning, and the very ideas expressed in the above lines, are found in "Panurge's Explanation of the Microcosm ;" where, having shown that from the food the blood is derived, and by different means variously elaborated, he adds :—"At last it is made so fine and subtile within the *rete mirabile*, that thereafter those animal spirits are framed and composed of it, by means whereof the *imagination*, *discourse*, *judgment*, *resolution*,



*deliberation, ratiocination, and memory* have their rise ;” see Sir. T. Urquart’s Translation, 18mo., vol. iii., p. 42. Take also the original : “Enfin tant est affiné dcdans le retz merueilleux que pur après en sont faicts les esperits animaulx, moyennant lesquelz elle imagine, discourt, resoult, delibere, raciocrine, et rememore.”

From this we may at once see whence Milton got both his doctrine and his ideas.

For excellent views and correct reasoning on the *Immateriality* of the *Soul*, see Drew’s Essay on the subject.

### *Of Death.*

II. Having considered life in its origin and operations, let us next view that change which passes upon animated beings, in what is termed DEATH ; which we have defined to be, *the total and irrecoverable cessation of all the functions of a living animal.*

It has been observed, that all animals have their *origin* in *generation*,—their *growth* in *nutrition*,—and their *termination* in *death*. *Life* and *nutrition* are widely different. *Nutrition* is that power which an animal has of assimilating certain substances to itself, by which its volume is increased to certain dimensions. Every species of animal is prescribed *within certain dimensions*, which that species in general never surpasses. The accretion of bulk to form these dimensions, proceeds from *nutrition*,—nutrition is carried on by a threefold operation, or rather by three different kinds of absorption. 1. By substances taken into the stomach—there digested, and afterwards taken into the general circulation, and by a certain indescribable process of nature, or operation of the *living* principle, absorbed and assimilated to the body into which they are introduced. 2. By matter absorbed from substances floating in the circumambient air, which

is a proof that the living principle exerts an influence beyond that body in which it is resident; and, 3. By the air itself, or certain essential parts of it taken into the lungs, and there absorbed, decomposed, thrown into the circulation, and, by these means, compacted with the system.

In a general sense, independently of mere aliment received into the stomach, and the matter absorbed by the external surface, air, humidity, and heat are the grand means which the principle of life uses to support the organized system; and while that assemblage of functions which are said to constitute life continues in animal organized bodies, death is prevented. When these cease, death can be no longer resisted, and life then becomes extinct.

In order to have a more correct notion of death, let us view the changes which pass on a human body when deprived of life.

Suppose, as is not unfrequently the case, a person taken off in the bloom of beauty and vigour of mature life. A moment before, everything that was lovely and interesting was combined in the shape, mien, motion, eyes, lips, and accents of this master-piece of God's lower works. Death takes place: the muscles become flaccid; the inexpressibly delicate lines and contours, which form what is emphatically called the line of beauty, almost totally disappear; the angular processes of the bones become apparent; the eyes, glassy and inexpressive, being utterly destitute of speculation; the lips livid, and the extremities cold and rigid; all voluntary and involuntary motion being entirely at an end. Here we behold the termination of life, and the commencement of death. I say commencement; for the changes which have already taken place may be considered only as the medium between life, and the desolations pro-

duced by death. A succession of changes soon follows those already mentioned, which are awful, degrading, and even horrible. Exposed to the air, this body, deprived of its vital principle, becomes blue—then green, next black; decomposition takes rapid place; a part of this once lovely system is thrown off in the most noisome effluvia; others are resolved into the most putrid and offensive sanies, which also soon becomes dissipated; and a small portion of earth and salts are the apparent remains of a structure that required the skill of God to plan, and his omnipotence to execute.

What were the proximate causes of these fearful changes? They are generally acknowledged to be air, humidity, and heat: the very means which the vital principle used for the support of this wonderful machine, now, in the absence of that principle, become the destroyers of the fabric which they were the instruments of raising, and to the support of which they so essentially contributed.

In like manner, vegetables are nourished by air, humidity, and heat, while in connexion with the earth: pluck up the plant, and the same agents decompose and destroy it.

### *Of Immortality.*

III. It may now be inquired, seeing man is liable to such degradation and corruption, Was he made so in the intention of his Creator, or has something intervened which has afforded infinite wisdom sufficient reason to destroy this most accomplished work of its own hand?

That man was created perfect, the perfections of his Maker most profoundly argue. That he is now in a state of wonderfully comparative perfection, both as to the structure of his body, and the structure and powers

of his mind, all are convinced who have examined the subject as they ought; and that God never made such a curious and complicated machine to pull to pieces, and consign to final destruction, after having exerted his providence in the support of it for a few years, we may safely assert. On this head, what says God in divine revelation? "The body is dead, because of sin!" When the commandment was given, death was threatened as the penalty of transgression: *In the day thou eatest thereof* (of the tree of knowledge) *thou shalt surely die*, מוֹת תָּמוּת *mot tamut*, "dying thou shalt die." Thou shalt become mortal, and by a variety of decays, &c., thou shalt at last fall under the empire of death. But immediate spiritual death was the first consequence of the transgression.

That the immortality of the human creature was designed by the Creator, we have at least an indirect evidence in the tree of life, which was planted in the garden of paradise—by eating of which, it appears, mortality would have been precluded, and immortality secured. And when man had sinned against God, and brought darkness into his understanding, and irregularity and disorder into his passions; lest he should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever in that dark and disordered state, and the penalty be prevented which justice had decreed, therefore "God drove him out of the garden, and placed at the entrance cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way," to prevent his re-entering, and having access to that *tree of life*, the use of which, even in that condition, would apparently have secured his immortality.

Here, then, we find him abandoned to the influence of all those causes which would naturally bring about the execution of the divine sentence; and utterly precluded from the use of those means by which that execution might be prevented.

In this state, a gracious promise is given in behalf of the soul, whose moral condition was greatly changed and totally deteriorated ; but whose immortality does not appear to have been at all impaired.

A state also of probation is fixed for the human being ; at first of considerable duration, but afterwards gradually shortened, and at last bounded by certain fixed limits, beyond which, in a general way, it should not be permitted to pass : and this state was assigned for the purpose of the soul's re-acquiring the knowledge of God, and regaining that moral image of its Maker, righteousness and true holiness, in which it was created. Means also were amply furnished, in this state, for the accomplishment of this important purpose, the principal of which was the commerce God himself held with man, by immediate communications from himself, and by the ministry of angelic beings.

These we may safely presume were common to all the original inhabitants of the earth during the whole of the patriarchal dispensation. We have the history only of a few families, and of a few individuals in those families, and we find that the communications and ministry above referred to, were common to them all, and extended to those who were not immediately in covenant with God : and it would be absurd to suppose that they were withheld from the others who stood equally in need of them, or similar helps for their salvation.

After the patriarchal age, in which the above means were commonly employed, God began by Moses to give a written revelation of his will, relative to the salvation of the soul. This revelation was continued for nearly 2,000 years, receiving occasional additions by various men called prophets, who wrote by immediate inspiration from God, till the whole canon of Scripture was completed, which God, in that dispensation of grace and jus-

tice, thought necessary for the instruction and salvation of man. During this dispensation, angelic ministry, not being now so necessary, though not entirely laid aside, was very rare.

In all these dispensations, the immortality of the SOUL is continually supposed, but we hear scarcely anything of the forfeited immortality of the BODY being restored ; God leaves this under an impenetrable veil and cloud, through which it seldom appears, except in certain indistinct and indefinite gleams of light, which are so transient as not only to elude examination, but also so evanescent as to prevent the mind from forming any distinct apprehension of them.

The translation of Enoch in the patriarchal age, and of Elijah under the Mosaic, are the only evidences we have that the thing was possible ; and though not professedly exhibited to beget faith in this important subject, or excite hope, yet in all likelihood, designed for this gracious purpose.

Till the New Testament dispensation, this doctrine was not fully known. Indeed it was not a doctrine, or system of teaching, as that word should be understood ; for it was only by Christ and his apostles that it was professedly and formally introduced. Of it the whole of the New Testament is full ; and it is everywhere made a most essential article of the Christian creed ; life and immortality being *brought to light by the gospel*, and the doctrine illustrated and confirmed by the resurrection and ascension of the human body of Christ Jesus.

This circumstance is strongly confirmed by the reality of the death of Christ. There is not only no reason to apprehend that his case was a case of suspended animation ; but there was every possible evidence that there was a total cessation of all the animal functions ; and that these functions must have continued in an irrecover-

able state of cessation, had not a miraculous power interposed.

He expired on the cross ; and to prevent all after-suspicion of merely suspended animation, God so permitting, a “soldier pierced his side with a spear, and forthwith came there out blood and water”—a proof that the spear had traversed the diaphragm and pericardium, and wounded the heart itself.

It is on the ground of the reality of the immortality of the body of Christ, that the text asserts the immortality of ours. *He will change our vile body*, μετασχηματισει το σωμα της ταπινωσης ημων, he will alter the appearance and condition of this body of our humiliation (this body that is dead, adjudged to death, because of sin), that it may be like unto his glorious body, εις το γενεσθαι αυτο συμμορφον το σωματι της δοξης αυτου, that it may bear a similar form to his glorified humanity, and be so changed as to be capable, through its immortality, not only of enduring eternally, but of the infinite spiritual enjoyments at the right hand of God.

As many cases of drowning and suffocation have occurred, in which the persons, by the use of proper means, have been restored to life ; and which, in consequence, are termed cases of suspended animation ; and without which means, death, in the proper sense of the word, would have ensued, and the vital functions have irrecoverably ceased ; so the human body, dead, and under the power of corruption, and the uttermost dissolution of its component parts, must continue finally and eternally under that corruption, if the sovereign power of God be not exerted, as in its original formation, to build it up as at the beginning, to restore the vital principle, and to reconnect with both the immortal soul, so that man shall become that נפש חיה *nephesh chaiyah*, or animated rational being, which he was in the beginning.

Against the possibility of this work, there can be no objection, because the power by which it is to be produced is omnipotent, the very same which was employed in its original formation ; and therefore the apostle states that this great event is to be brought about “according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself,” *κατα την ενεργειαν του δυνασθαι αυτου και υποταξαι εντω τα παντα*, according to that energy, or all-pervading, all-controlling, powerful activity, by which he is able to subject all things to himself, and cause them to answer the purposes of his will, in reference to all those original determinations concerning man. As he has purposed its final immortality, therefore, the human body, between death and the resurrection, may be considered in a state of suspended immortality, and analogous to what takes place in suspended animation in cases of drowning.

From what the apostle says here, we have some intimations, and not obscure ones, of the original state of the body of Adam. Many conjectures have been formed relative to his original state, and perfection of body and mind. That his body possessed the same form and essential qualities which the human body possesses now, there can be little doubt. It was formed out of the earth, and there is no intimation that its essential and distinctive fashion was ever changed. It was in all probability, what it will be after the resurrection ; for it is plain, from the whole economy of the gospel, that God designs, according to his grace and justice, to restore what was lost ; and it is as likely that the body of Christ as it appeared in the transfiguration, as well as those of Moses and Elijah, were not only the same as the glorified body shall be after the resurrection, but similar to that which Adam had in his original creation.

As the apostle, therefore, seems to refer to the trans-



figuration of Christ ; and as I suppose the body of this second Adam did, at that time, exhibit the appearance of the body of the first Adam while in his state of perfection and innocence, I shall spend a few moments in the consideration of this subject, before I conclude.

It is said, Matt. xvii. 2, Mark ix. 3, Luke ix. 29, that Christ *was transfigured*—that *the fashion of his countenance was altered* ; that is, that it did *shine as the sun*—that *his raiment became shining, white as the snow* ; and *as light, and glistering*, and so *white that no fuller on earth could so white them*. These are the circumstances mentioned by the three evangelists who give this relation ; and from the whole of them we learn that, though there was a most significant and visible alteration in the appearance, there was none in the form or lineaments of the body. The glorious image of God filling the soul, the matter forming the body being refined was rendered pervious to the light and glory which dwelt within, which beamed forth from every part, and was particularly observable in the countenance, on which there was no covering ; and the rays of this glory transmitted through the body, pervaded also the raiment, so that whatever its colour might have been, it was totally lost in the effulgence of that splendour, as we know all colours are, in strong and dazzling light.

Here, then, according to my view of the subject, was an exhibition in the person of the *second Adam*, of the appearance of the *first Adam* in his state of innocence ; and of that appearance which shall be exhibited by all glorified human beings in the realms of bliss.

As a farther proof that the immortality of the human body is predetermined by the Almighty, even the interment of the body in the grave is represented by divine inspiration as the seed of a future and more glorious body ; for, says the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 42, &c. : “ It is

sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. Thus this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality; and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’”

From this account we find that the grand characteristics of this future body, are, *incorruption—glory—power—spirituality*—and also IMMORTALITY; for death, together with the possibility of future corruption and dissolution, shall be destroyed, and swallowed up in victory. Then shall it appear that *these bodies of our humiliation, are fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the all-conquering and all-pervading energy by which he has power to subdue ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF.*

#### CONCLUSION.

If these things be so, and we have a hope of this *immortality* in a state of eternal blessedness—how should we live? how should we act? The apostle tells us how the primitive Christians lived and acted, who had this hope: *Our conversation, says he, is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

That is, we are a spiritual people; this earth is considered by none of us as his rest—we seek not our happiness below—we consider ourselves in a state of probation—we have an appointed time upon earth, and all the days of that appointed time we wait till our great, glorious, and final change come. For, says the apostle, *ἡμῶν το πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει*, our *citizenship*, with all the rights, immunities, and privileges which belong to it, are heavenly and in heaven—and the course of our

life resembles the place to which we belong : we are spiritual in our views—spiritual in our motives—holy in our hearts—righteous in our lives—enduring, as seeing him who is invisible : we are labouring to promote the welfare of our fellow-creatures—living to receive good, and to do good—building up ourselves on our most holy faith—praying in the Holy Ghost, and keeping ourselves in the love of God, we are looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. As his glorious body is the model and pattern according to which our bodies are to be raised ; so his pure and benevolent heart, his holy and useful life, are the models according to which our hearts and conversation are to be regulated. As we hope to live with him in eternity, we look to have him to live in us here ; for we know that the conscience, that is not justified by his blood, and the heart that is not purified by his Spirit, can never be associated with him in his ineffable glory.

P. S. This is but a sketch of a discourse on the subject in the title : it might be greatly enlarged ; but as many points in it are discussed in various parts of the different discourses, in these volumes, I do not see it necessary to enlarge on them in this place.

## SERMON XIII.

### THE FAMILY OF GOD, AND ITS PRIVILEGES.

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EPHESIANS iii. 14—21.

14. Τουτου χαριν καμπω τα γονατα μου προς τον πατερα του Κυριου ἡμων Ιησου Χριστου,
15. Εξ οὐ πασα πατρια εν ουρανοις, και επι γης ονομαζεται
16. Ἴνα δωη ἡμιν κατα τον πλουτον της δοξης αυτου, δυναμει κραταιωθηναι δια του Πνευματος αυτου, εις τον εσω ανθρωπον·
17. Κατοικησαι τον Χριστον δια της πιστεως εν ταις καρδιαις ἡμων·
18. Εν αγαπη ερριζωμενοι και τεθεμελιωμενοι· ἵνα εξισχυσητε καταλαβεσθαι συν πασι τοις ἁγιοις, τι το πλατος, και μηκος, και βαθος, και ὕψος·
19. Γνωναι τε την ὑπερβαλλουσαν της γνωσεως αγαπην του Χριστου· ἵνα πληρωθητε εις παν το πληρωμα του Θεου·
20. Τῷ δε δυναμενῷ ὑπερ παντα ποιησαι ὑπερ εκ περισσου ὡν αιτουμεθα η νοουμεν, κατα την δυναμιν την ενεργουμενην εν ἡμιν,
21. Αυτῷ ἡ δοξα εν τῇ εκκλησιᾳ, εν Χριστῷ Ιησῷ, εις πασας τας γενεας του αιωνος των αιωνων. Αμην.

14. "For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man :

17. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18. "May be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ;

19. "And to know the love of God that passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

20. "Now, unto him who is able to do more exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

THIS prayer of the apostle, for the church at Ephesus, is the most grand and sublime in the oracles of God. The riches of the grace of the gospel, and the extent to which that grace carries the salvation of the soul of man in this life, are most emphatically expressed in the various petitions of which it is composed. The prayer itself is an immediate inspiration from heaven ; and its different words, though chosen out of the richness of the incomparable language in which the apostle wrote, are evidently inadequate to express the mighty working of the Divine Spirit in his mind, while making intercession for this church, partly by groanings which cannot be uttered ; and partly by words, which however well chosen, fall infinitely short of explaining the feelings of that eternal mercy which has provided salvation for a lost world : and such a salvation or deliverance from sin as the necessities of the soul require, and as becomes the majesty and benevolence of God to give.

To such a composition, no paraphrase can do justice : and few commentators seem to have entered into its spirit ; deterred, perhaps, by the apparent difficulty of the subject, and the unparalleled sublimity of the language. After carefully weighing every expression, in order to ascertain the literal meaning, and the spiritual ideas to which this meaning refers, much must be necessarily re-

ferred back to that Spirit by whom these words were originally given, and who alone can fully explain the deep things of God.

For the sake of observing order, where the subjects have an evident distinction, it may be necessary to consider:—

I. The *manner* in which the apostle approaches the Divine Majesty.

II. The *persons* who are the objects of his prayer.

III. The *prayer* itself, in its several petitions. And,

IV. *The doxology* with which it is concluded.

I. The *manner* in which the apostle approaches the Divine Majesty. This refers partly to the state of his mind, and partly to the posture of his body.

1. *The state of his mind.* The apostle was now in prison at Rome, and did not yet know how his trials might issue. By external circumstances, the mind is ever less or more affected; and the loss of liberty must be always grievous, let the sufferings induced by it be ever so unrighteously inflicted. It must have appeared to St. Paul a very strange dispensation, that he who had got a commission from God to preach the gospel to the heathen, should, by his captivity, be rendered incapable of performing the work which his Master had given him to do! But though his body is bound, his spirit is free. If he could not labour in the word and doctrine for the conversion of the heathen, he could write for the edification of the churches; if he could not preach in public, he could pray to his Father who saw in secret. Even in prison, he seemed to feel himself a free man; his spirit was unsubdued, and unbroken; and although he saw and felt his bonds, yet he will not confess himself to be under the power of man; he is not the prisoner of the Jews, nor the bondman of the Romans; but Paul, the prisoner of the Lord. He looks through secondary causes

to the First Cause—he knew that his enemies could not prevail against his liberty or his life, but by the permission of God ; and as he permitted him to be thus tried, he was persuaded that his present circumstances were those in which he could bring most glory to his Sovereign and Master. His faith, his hope, his love were in full exercise ; and each brought forth its respective fruit in abundance. He had the strongest confidence in his God ; a vigorous and invincible love to his Redeemer, and the flock purchased by his blood ; and a hope that seemed to realize what it anticipated, that all should issue to the glory of God and the good of men. He had access to the throne of glory ; and he appeared to live, not in a Roman prison, but in the heavenly Jerusalem ; not on the confines even of blessedness, but within the precincts of heaven itself ! That this statement is not too strong, hear his own solemn and energetic words, ver. 12, where, speaking of Christ Jesus the Lord, as mediator between God and man, he says : *Εν ᾧ εχομεν την παρήσιαν, και την προσαγωγήν εν πεποιθησει, δια της πιστεως αυτου* *Through whom we have this liberty of speech and this introduction, being led as by the hand to be introduced to the Divine Presence, with the fullest confidence of success, by the faith of him.* Nothing can exceed the mental persuasion and full confidence expressed by the apostle in these words. He saw God upon his throne, as his Father and his Lord ; he is introduced to the Divine Presence by the only Mediator ; he lifts up his face with joy, for his Father smiles upon him ; he has liberty of speech, for his inmost soul hears, *What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted :* in consequence, his mind has the fullest persuasion of success through faith in that Jesus, who, having given up his life a sacrifice for sin, is now the all-prevalent Mediator between God and man. On him, as the Saviour and In-

tercessor, he finds all his confidence ; and through him he sends forth all his desires into the bosom of that Father of the spirits of all flesh, who is a stream of incessant benevolence to all his intelligent offspring. This was the apostle's state of mind ; and after considering it, we need not wonder at the astonishing prayer that succeeds.

2. His spirit being thus prepared and excited, how does it act upon his body, in bringing it forward to the Divine Majesty ? We already see him introduced, his soul full of confidence and reverence ; and being ushered into the presence of his King, he falls on his knees before him—"I bow," says he, "my knees unto the Father."

The posture of the body in our approaches to God, is not a matter of trifling importance. We should ever consider the immense distance that is between the Creator and the creature in point of dignity. His nature is infinitely perfect ; ours, indescribably imperfect. The consideration of this may well inspire awe, accompanied with the highest respect. But he is not only infinitely exalted in his own nature, but he is our King, and we are his subjects ; he has given us his laws, and we are bound to obey them : we have broken these laws, and traitorously rebelled against his authority ; we have admitted another sovereign, his enemy and ours ! We have bowed down to his authority ; and instead of living invariably to God's honour and glory, we have given our hearts, our bodies, our souls to the service of the arch-rebel, the chief of disorder and misrule, the dispenser of wretchedness and misery ! We have sinned against God and our own souls ; how then *shall we come before the Lord, and bow ourselves before the High God ?* We should approach him as criminals do their judge ; and especially when we see the perdition to which we are exposed, with only one



ray of hope penetrating the dense and insupportable gloom in which we are involved. With what reverence and humility, with what self-abasement and godly fear, and with what anxiety and mental energy should we as criminals cry out, "Save, Lord, or we perish! Heal our souls, for we have sinned against thee!" Blind and thoughtless, if not hardened, must that man be, who rushes into the presence of God, as the horse does into the battle; and how little different is he who uses an undue familiarity with his Maker, while urging his plea of "God be merciful to me a sinner!" The most holy and devout, when approaching the divine presence, should never forget that they have sinned; and that though now they have boldness to enter into the holiest, it is by the blood of Jesus!

But there is a wide difference between the apostle and most common Christians. He was already reconciled to God, through the blood of his Son; he was filled with the heavenly unction; he was deeply taught in the school of Christ. He had his instructions perfected in the *third heavens*; and in consequence, he *taught wisdom among them that were perfect*. He had long and close communion with God; and if any man might come with boldness to the throne of grace, it was *à fortiori*, the privilege of the *Apostle of the Gentiles*. But with all his boldness of access, and confidence by the faith of Jesus Christ (ver. 12), we find him here on his knees before his heavenly Father. The humblest posture we can use is certainly the most suitable for saint or sinner. **KNEELING** is that which is allowed to express the greatest degree of humility, reverence, and respect. This is the posture of the apostle; and this is that which every Christian should use in such a solemn act as prayer. I know what a pious prelate has said, "In prayer I will always either stand, as a servant, to receive my Master's commands; or kneel, as

a subject, before my Prince." This may appear fine, and to express a proper distinction; I must say, I cannot esteem it. It is neither the doctrine of his church, nor of his Bible. It is a portion of Genevan practice, which Bishop Hall probably imbibed with several exceptionable parts of a Genevan creed. God's commands we receive in his word. When we come into his presence, it is not to receive his commands, but to ask mercy for the pardon of our sin, in breaking these commands, and to petition for grace to help us in time of need; grace to enable us to act according to the commands which we have already received from his word. God says, *Every knee shall bow to me*, Isai. xlv. 23; Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 10. SOLOMON *kneeled on his knees*, when addressing his Maker in behalf of the church and people of Israel, 1 Kings viii. 54, 2 Chron. vi. 13. EZRA *fell on his knees, and spread his hands* before God, when making intercession for the people, Ezra ix. 5.

DANIEL *kneeled on his knees three times a day, and prayed*, Dan. vi. 10. PETER *fell down at Jesus's knees*, Luke v. 8; and *kneeled* to make prayer when he raised Tabitha to life, Acts ix. 40.

STEPHEN *kneeled* down when he was stoned, praying the Lord Jesus TO RECEIVE HIS SPIRIT, Acts vii. 60.

PAUL, after his preaching at Ephesus, *kneeled down and prayed with them all*, Acts xx. 36. And at Tyre, he *kneeled down on the shore and prayed*, Acts xxi. 5. And this doubtless was his common practice. And, to complete all evidence on this point, when Jesus, the Almighty Saviour, was in his last agony, "he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me! And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and the sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," Luke xxii. 41—44. After all these examples, which we may consider as so

many precepts, should we not join with the **PSALMIST**, and in all acts of social and public worship, say, "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!" Ps. **xcv.** 6.

I grant that a man may exercise the true spirit of prayer in any posture; sitting, standing, or lying, when neither place nor opportunity can afford convenience for kneeling; but I contend that, according to the Scriptures, in all our private and public addresses to God, we should kneel, as the most suitable, the most humble, and the most becoming posture for persons who have nothing to bring—possess no merit—and who have everything to receive from God's mere **MERCY**. I ask, what can any man think of himself, who, in his addresses to God, can either sit on his seat, or stand in the presence of his Maker and his Judge? Would he sit while addressing any person of a little more than ordinary respectability? If he did, he would be reckoned extremely rude. Would he sit in the presence of the king of his own land? This he would not be permitted to do. Is **GOD** then to be treated with less respect than a fellow-mortal? Surely not. Paul thought otherwise, and *bows his knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

Having seen the manner in which the apostle approached his heavenly Father, implied in the state of his mind, and manifested in the posture of his body; we come now,—

**II.** To consider the *persons* who were the objects of his prayer. They were the children of God—the family of the Great Father. They were *the saints at Ephesus—the faithful in Christ Jesus*, chap. i. 1. Those who *had redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins*, ver. 7. Those whom, though once *dead in trespasses and sins*, God had *quicken*ed, or made *alive*, chap. ii. 1. So that they became *fellow-citizens with the saints*, and *of the household*,

or domestics of God, *ib.* ver. 19. And they were *built up together for a habitation of God through the Spirit*, *ib.* 22.

All these expressions show that these were genuine Christian believers—persons who had laid hold on the hope set before them in the gospel—who had been justified freely through the redemption that was in Jesus—had the constant witness of God's Spirit in their souls, that they were quickened by the Spirit of their Head, and had passed from death unto life, and lived in God's church, as faithful domestics live in the house of their master.

The religious character and spiritual state of the persons to whom the apostolic epistles are directed, should be carefully considered, as this often throws much light on the phraseology of the epistle itself; and without this many passages may be misapplied and misinterpreted. As it was to a church of God, bearing a very high spiritual character, that St. Paul sent this epistle, the petitions in the following prayer, and the terms in these petitions, were in every sense applicable to those who were in a state of grace so advanced, and who earnestly desired to follow on to know the Lord.

The apostle views them as a part of the family of God, which he intimates consists of two vast divisions; one resident in heaven, which we call the church triumphant; and the other, sojourning upon earth, which we term the church militant.

Now, God has but ONE spiritual family, these two parts constituting the great whole.

As the whole of the Israelitish church or people, though they consisted of twelve distinct tribes, constituted but one family, because those twelve tribes were the sons of the same father; so, all believers in Christ Jesus, being children of God, and heirs of the heavenly Canaan, are

considered as one family. They are all, as the apostle says, "children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 25. And "because they are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. And they are denominated the brethren of Christ himself; for "He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 11. Hence, as there is but ONE Father, there is but ONE family; whether the members of it be found under several names scattered over the earth, or, having been faithful unto death, and having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, have been received into heaven,

"Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in."

The apostle does not say, "of whom the *families* in heaven and earth are named," as if each formed a distinct household; but he says *family*, because they are all one, and of one. And he states, that all this family is named—derives its origin and being from God, as truly as the twelve sons of Jacob, or the children of any other family, derive their name from him who is the father of the family. So the descendants of Jacob, surnamed Israel, were called Israelites; and believers in Christ, becoming children of God through faith in him, are called Christians. This may be carried much higher; for as God made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and made but one human pair, through whom this blood should circulate—from which that generative influence should proceed by which the successive generations of men should be propagated over the whole terraqueous globe; so there is, properly speaking, but one human family, of which Adam and Eve were the proge-

niters, and God, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, the Head and Source. But the apostle evidently refers here more particularly to believers in Christ, who are children of God by adoption through grace—are made partakers of the divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world. These form the household or family of God, among whom he resides, and in whom he lives. To none others can the words of the prayer be applied, nor are any others capable of receiving these blessings, till saved as those were ; this bread is for the children—this “strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil,” Heb. v. 14 : such then are the objects of the apostle’s prayer.

III. We must now consider the *prayer* itself, in its several petitions.

1. His first petition is, that they may have a great increase of spiritual strength : “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man,” ver. 16.

Man, by his fall, is reduced to a miserable state of spiritual imbecility. And of the fall the apostle produces this as one of the sad consequences : “For while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly,” Rom. v. 6 ; for a sinner, as such, has neither strength to do the will of God, nor successfully to resist sin. Now, as our spiritual adversaries are numerous and potent, we need much power to resist and overcome them : and as the moral law is exceedingly extensive, pure, and holy (and, under this law, believers are created anew in Christ Jesus), so we need at all times the mighty energy of God’s Spirit, to enable us perfectly to love him, and worthily to magnify his name. Such strength must be received from God. He is the Fountain of might, and every energetic principle of action must be derived from

him. There are two ways in which the soul may receive an increase of mental energy. 1. By considerations drawn, by way of encouragement, from its present circumstances—remembrance of past mercies, from the known goodness and mercy of God—from the truth of his promises, and his fidelity in fulfilling them. These things lead it to put forth the strength that it already possesses—to be a worker together with God—to act on the principle already received. This is not so much a real accession of strength, as a farther and better use of that which God had before given : yet every grace is increased by its use.

2. The second way in which the soul may be said to be strengthened is, by receiving an increase of the principle of might, so that it may have more power to act, than it previously possessed. This is the thing here intended ; for the apostle prays that they may be strengthened with might, *δυναμει κραταιωθηναι*—not merely that strength or excitement which a person may feel, while under strong encouragements to act, but a fresh or additional accession of the principle of power ; so that he has might, not only to resist, but to overcome and triumph ; power, not only to wish and desire to give God his whole heart, and labour against the strong man armed, who, though he is not able to overcome the upright man, yet often brings down his strength in the day of battle,—but that might by which sin is dethroned, by which the adversary is not only chained, but cast out, and his goods spoiled. In a word, that might, by which he is enabled to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength, and his neighbour as himself. Thus, he has written on his heart the two great commandments of the law, on which hang all the law and the prophets.

Now as *might* always implies an agent in which it resides, and from which it is put forth, the apostle shows us here, that the *might* he prays for comes from the

Spirit of God, not merely a spiritual might communicated, but might proceeding from its Fountain and Source ; not by distant streams and emanations, but from the Holy Spirit itself dwelling in the soul : “That ye may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ;” and thus we find the might to proceed from the indwelling Spirit ; a might that works not merely in some particular mental faculty, but the inner man—the man within us, that is, the soul, in all its powers and faculties. Every man is a compound being—he has a body and a soul. The outward man is that alone which is seen, and considered by men ; the inner man is that which stands particularly in reference to God and eternity. The outward man is strengthened by earthly food, by air, exercise, &c. ; the inner man by spiritual and heavenly influence ; knowledge, love, peace, and holiness, are the food of the inward man ; or rather Jesus Christ, that Bread of life that came down from heaven ; he that eateth this Bread, shall live and be strengthened by it. The soul is as truly fed, sustained, and nourished by heavenly food, as the body is by the earthly aliment suited to its nature. And the Holy Spirit of God must ever live in it, to afford it that nourishment which is to produce the might by which it is to be strengthened.

The apostle prays that this might may be given according to the riches of God’s glory. The measure that man uses in speaking of and recommending the salvation of God, is like himself, narrow and scanty. In these things man seldom has that liberal heart that deviseth liberal things. It is the study of the major part of the Christian world, to find out with how little grace they may escape hell, and get to heaven ; the doctrine of entire holiness is their abhorrence—they fear nothing so much as to be persuaded that they may be saved from all sin in this life : but God’s thoughts are not as our thoughts ; we are



not straitened in him, but in our own bowels. The apostle, who stood in the full liberty of the children of God, well knowing that HE saves to the uttermost, prays that the Ephesians may receive that MIGHT, according to the riches of God's glory,—according to the measure of his eternal fulness; God's infinite mercy and goodness being the measure according to which we are to be saved. In giving alms it is a generally received maxim, that every man should give according to his ability, and the necessities of the supplicant. It would be a disgrace to a king or a nobleman to give no more than a mechanic or a peasant. God acts up to the dignity of his infinite perfections, he gives liberally—he gives according to the riches of his glory; i. e., all that the necessities of his creature require. The supply is as great as the want—open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. Let us not cease praying for the bounty till God withholds his hand.

We should remember that we have many enemies, cunning and strong; many trials, too great for our natural strength; many temptations, which no human power is able successfully to resist; many duties to perform, which cannot be accomplished by the strength of man; therefore we need divine strength; we must have might, and we must be strengthened everywhere, and be every way fortified by that might; i. e., we must be mightily and most effectually fortified by the energy of the Holy Spirit. This is according to the riches of his glory; and he is glorified in dealing out such riches. And let us remember, that what we receive is a free gift from God—it is his grant; and it is his grant through Christ Jesus. We come, therefore, not to receive a debt, but a gift; a gift to us, though purchased by the blood of the Covenant.

2. The SECOND petition is, That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith. In this, as well as in chap. ii. 21,

and in several other passages, the apostle compares the body or church of true believers to a temple, which, like that of Solomon, is built up for a habitation of God through the Spirit. Here, as Solomon did at the dedication of the temple at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. vi. 1, &c., Paul, having considered the Church at Ephesus completely formed, as to every external thing, with all the rudiments of every gift and grace, prays that God may come down and dwell in it. He may be considered as now dedicating the Christian church, that then was, and that ever should be, to God, and praying for those blessings which should ever rest on and distinguish it; and, having knelt down after the example of Solomon, he invokes him, to whom the first temple was dedicated, and who had made it a type of the Christian church, to come down, and fill it with his presence. And as there could be no indwelling of God but by Christ, and no indwelling of Christ but by faith, he prays that they may have such faith in Christ as shall keep them in the constant possession of his presence and love. God, in the beginning, made man to be his living temple; and while in a state of innocence and purity, he inhabited this temple; and when the temple became defiled, he left it. In the order of his eternal mercy, Christ, the repairer of the breach, comes to purify the temple, that it may again become a fit habitation for the God of glory. This is what the apostle points out to the believing Ephesians, when praying that Christ might dwell, κατοικησαι, might *intensely* and *constantly dwell* in their hearts by faith: for that man's heart which is not God's house, must be a hold of every foul and unclean spirit; for Satan and his angels will endeavour to fill, what God does not. We have already seen that Christ does not dwell in the heart but by faith; that faith which receives him as the Saviour of the world, and the Saviour

of the soul ; the faith that receives him as Jesus, who is to save his people from their sins ; for he came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to reconcile us to God by his incarnation and sacrificial death. On his constant indwelling all our happiness and holiness depend ; and on this indwelling the following blessings are to be founded.

3. THIRDLY, he prays that *they may be rooted and grounded in love*, εν αγαπη ερριζωμενοι και τεθεμελιωμενοι. Here is a double metaphor,—one taken from agriculture, the other from architecture. As trees of God's right-hand planting, they are to be rooted in love ; this is the soil in which alone the Christian soul can grow. Into the infinite love of God their souls were to strike their roots ; and from this love derive all that nourishment which is essential to their full growth ; till they have arrived to their fulness of vigour, and by the genuine light and heat of the Sun of righteousness, have their juices all properly concocted and dulcified, so that they may have the mind in them that was in Jesus ; and, as it is said below, till they are filled with the fulness of God. Sour godliness is not of Christ ; but all fruit must be acid till ripened by the sun. Their leaves, their blossom, their fruit must spring from this love. A healthy leaf is indicative of a healthy blossom ; a healthy blossom is the forerunner of a healthy fruit ; and a mature and wholesome fruit answers the expectation of the planter. It is the will of Christ that his followers should bear much fruit and that this fruit should remain ; for “ every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

As a building, their foundation is to be laid in this love. “ God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that they who believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Here is the ground

on which alone the soul and all its hopes and expectations can be safely founded. This foundation cannot be shaken; and it is from this alone that the doctrine of redemption flows to man, and from this alone has the soul its form and comeliness. In this love, as its proper soil, it grows; on this, as its only foundation, it rests. These two expressions are often used proverbially, to signify a complete acquisition of some science or point of knowledge; so as to know both the theory and practice, the principles and the proper mode of application. So, to be rooted and grounded in love, is to know it thoroughly, to possess it wholly; to know its nature, to feel its power, and to bring forth its fruits.

4. FOURTHLY, the apostle prays that they may have a vast increase of saving practical knowledge. “That ye may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,” ver. 18. The words *ἵνα ἐξισχυσητε καταλαβεσθαι*, which we translate, *that ye may be able to comprehend*, are so exceedingly nervous, and full of meaning, that it is almost impossible to translate them. The first word, *ἐξισχυσητε*, from *ἐξ*, intensive, and *ισχυω*, *to be strong*, signifies that they might be thoroughly able, having been strengthened with might by God’s power. The second word, *καταλαβεσθαι*, from *κατα*, intensive, and *λαμβάνω*, *to take, catch, or seize on*, may be translated, *that ye may fully catch, take in, and comprehend* this wonderful mystery of God. For it requires a considerable preparation of the mind, by such impressive teaching as the Spirit of God furnishes, to render the soul apt to take in and comprehend these deep things of God. These are subjects that the carnal mind cannot comprehend—they are spiritually known and discerned; and God alone can strengthen the human intellect to conceive and duly apprehend them. “What is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.” Here

the apostle still keeps up the metaphor, comparing the church of God to a building. And, as in order to rear a proper building constructed on scientific principles, a ground plan and specification must be previously made, according to which the building is to be formed, the apostle refers to this ; and such plan and specification must be thoroughly understood, before such a building can be erected. These believers were to be builded up a heavenly house, a habitation of God through the Spirit ; and this must have its latitude or breadth, its longitude or length, its altitude or height, and its profundity or depth. These things are easily understood when spoken of a material building ; but what can he mean when he speaks of the breadth, length, depth, and height of the LOVE of God ? Imagination can scarcely fancy any satisfactory mode of answering such a question. Let us, however, try what help a literal examination of these terms may afford. These four terms take in everything relative to the dimension and computation of all solids or bodies. Nothing more can be said of any substance. It has either length, without breadth or depth ; or it has length and breadth, without thickness ; or it has all these, length, breadth, and thickness. A mathematical point has neither length, breadth, nor thickness. A mathematical line has length, without breadth or thickness. And a simple surface may be said to have length and breadth, without thickness. Depth and height are properly the same as thickness ; but the former apply to the situation of a body, particularly a building, signifying how deep the foundation goes below the surface of the ground on which the building appears to stand, and how high it reaches vertically above that surface. If we hold, for example, a razor in a horizontal direction before our eyes, we can discern the edge as a *line*, to which we can assign neither breadth nor thickness. Hold the side of this

instrument in the same direction, and we can see a *surface* or breadth, to which we can assign length and breadth, but we can perceive no thickness or depth. Turn the back of the instrument to the eye in the same direction, and we can see the *thickness*, taken in opposition to the edge, where we could perceive length only. This rude example may be sufficient to give some satisfactory idea of these things to inexperienced minds. These terms, then, of breadth, length, depth, and height, express the whole affections or essential properties of matter. No body or solid can have more than the three dimensions of length, breadth, and thickness; for height and depth are only relative terms to express depth, as we have seen before.

Now, as these three terms express all the possible dimensions of matter; when applied metaphorically to any subject, accident, or thing, of a moral or spiritual nature, they must signify the whole of that thing, either in respect to its nature, its properties, or its influence—and these, as far as they are knowable, perceptible, or communicable. Hence, the breadth, length, depth, and height of the love of God, signify the whole love of God in its manifestations, operations, and effects. They mean the love that sent Jesus into the world—the love that caused him to taste death for every man—the love communicated to the soul of man, and that destroys the hatred or enmity of the carnal mind; in a word, the love which renders all that receive it unutterably happy in God, and obedient even unto death—the principle that produces all the moral good that is in the world, and that alone through which the Christian Church has been illustrated by martyrs. God is LOVE; and in this an infinity of breadth, length, depth, and height is included or rather, all breadth, length, depth, and height are lost in this immensity. It comprehends all that is above, all that is below; all that is present, all that is past, and all

that is to come. In reference to human beings, the love of God in its breadth is a girdle that encompasses the globe, or a mantle in which it is wrapped up. Its length reaches from the eternal purpose of the mission of Christ to the eternity of blessedness which is to be enjoyed by the pure in heart, in his ineffable glories. Its depth reaches to the lowest fallen of the sons of Adam, and to the deepest depravity of the human heart ; and its height, to the infinite dignities of the throne of Christ. "To him that overcometh will I give to sit down with me upon my throne ; as I have overcome, and sat down with the Father upon the Father's throne." Thus we see that the Father, the Son, and all true believers in him, are to be seated on the same throne ! This is the height of the love of God ; and the height to which that love raises the souls that believe in Jesus ! This love, in all these dimensions, is to be comprehended, laid hold on, and possessed by all those who are faithful unto death. They experience its influence, prove its efficacy, and enjoy its blessedness through that duration that can never terminate ! O thou infinite and ineffable Being ! what can the children of men render unto thee for all thy benefits ! In the presence of this subject we see a consistency in the apparently contradictory words of the poet :—

"Through all eternity to Thee, a joyful song we'll raise :  
But oh, eternity's too short, to utter all Thy praise."

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ! Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that, when he doth appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Well might both the prophet and apostle exclaim, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which

God hath prepared for them that love him ;” Isai. lxiv. 4 ; 1 Cor. ii. 9.

5. FIFTHLY. Having spoken of the salvation of God, and prayed that they might be able to comprehend its breadth, length, depth, and height, he prays here, ver. 19, “that they may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

God’s love is manifested in giving his Son Jesus Christ to die for a lost world ; CHRIST’S love is manifested in his humiliation, taking our nature upon him, suffering and dying in our stead, taking human nature in its first-fruits into heaven, and ever appearing in the presence of God for us. It is only by the love of Christ that we can know the love of God. The love of God to man induced him to give Christ for his redemption ; Christ’s love to man induced him to give his life’s blood a ransom for his salvation. The gift of Christ to man is the measure of God’s love ; the death of Christ for man is measure of Christ’s love. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son”—“Christ loved us, and gave himself for us.”

But it may be asked, How can *the love of Christ that passeth knowledge* be *known* ? Many have puzzled themselves with this question without real cause. There are two methods of solving it, at once both scriptural and rational. If we take the verb *γινωσκω*, *I know*, in the sense in which it is frequently used in the New Testament, to signify, *I acknowledge*, *I approve*, *I acknowledge with approbation* ; and the noun *γινωσις*, *knowledge*, to signify *comprehension*, then the principal difficulty will be removed. “That ye may acknowledge, approve, and publicly acknowledge that love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge.” We can acknowledge and approve of that which may surpass our comprehension. We cannot comprehend God ; yet we know that



he is ; approve of, love, adore, and serve him. In like manner, though we cannot comprehend the immensity of the love of Christ, yet we know that he has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood ; and we approve of and acknowledge him as our only Lord and Saviour. In this sense we may very justly be said to *know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*

But although this be a very satisfactory solution, yet it is most probable that the word  $\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , which we translate *knowledge*, signifies here *science* in general ; and particularly that science in which the rabbins boasted, and that in which the Greeks greatly exulted. The former professed to have the key of knowledge, the secret of all divine mysteries. The latter considered their philosophers, and their systems of philosophy, superior to everything that had ever been known among men ; and on this account reputed all other nations barbarians. They seem to have used the words  $\gamma\upsilon\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ , *knowledge*, and  $\sigma\omicron\phi\iota\alpha$ , *wisdom*, as we do the word *humanities*, for a complete system of academical education ; for a thorough knowledge of all that their philosophers taught relative to learning in general, but particularly in reference to the Supreme Good. When the apostle prays that the Ephesians *may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*, he may refer to all the boasted knowledge of the Jewish doctors, and to all the greatly-extolled science of the Greek philosophers. For to know, to understand, and experimentally feel the love of Christ, in point of satisfaction to the mind, and gratification to the soul, infinitely surpasses all other science ; and especially that among the Greeks, so famed, so loudly boasted, to which he seems here more particularly to refer. This love should be acknowledged, both in private and public, as that only which can make men happy, holy, and useful ; that alone which is the

sum and substance of all divine and useful knowledge ; and without which all knowledge, wisdom, and learning are of no vital and lasting importance to the human soul. The Jews may require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom ; but the love of Christ, which induced him to take our nature upon him, and suffer death in our stead, infinitely surpasses them all : and to know this experimentally as far exceeds, in true profit and blessedness, all human knowledge, whether in languages, sciences, or arts, as the attainments of an angel are superior to those of an ape.

The public acknowledgment of this love of Christ was required from every Christian convert ; and this was made by every adult in coming to baptism. And it was from this public acknowledgment that we have had confessors and martyrs in the Christian church. To be able to make such an acknowledgment was a full proof of the sincerity of the convert, and of the power of that grace which, through Christ crucified, he had received.

6. The apostle concludes his prayer with, “That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God,” ver. 19. *ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πᾶν τὸ πληρωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ.* Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be *filled with God* is a great thing ; to be *filled with the fulness of God* is still greater ; to be *filled with ALL the fulness of God* is greatest of all. This utterly bewilders the sense, and confounds the understanding, by leading us at once to consider the immensity of God, the infinitude of his attributes, and the absolute perfection of each ! But there must be a sense in which even this wonderful petition was understood by the apostle, and may be comprehended by us ; as we have already found one, in which the *love of Christ that passeth knowledge* may be comprehended by genuine believers.

Most people, in quoting these words, endeavour to correct or explain the apostle, by adding the word *communicable*. But this is as idle as it is useless and impertinent. Reason surely tells us, that St. Paul would not pray that they should be filled with what could not be communicated. The apostle certainly meant what he said, and would be understood in his own meaning ; and we may soon see what this meaning is.

By the *fulness of God* we are to understand all the gifts and graces which he has promised to bestow on man, in order to his full salvation here, and his being fully prepared for the enjoyment of glory hereafter. To be filled with all the fulness of God is to have the heart emptied of and cleansed from all sin and defilement, and filled with humility, meekness, gentleness, goodness, justice, holiness, mercy, and truth, and love to God and man. And that this implies a thorough emptying of the soul of everything that is not of God, and leads not to him, is evident from this, that what God fills, neither sin nor Satan can fill, nor in anywise occupy. For if a vessel be filled with one fluid or substance, not a drop or particle of any other kind can enter it, without displacing the same quantum of the original matter as that which is afterwards introduced. God cannot be said to fill the whole soul, while any place, part, passion, or faculty is filled, or less or more occupied, by sin or Satan ; and as **neither** sin nor Satan can be where God fills and occupies the whole, so the terms of the prayer state, that Satan shall neither have any dominion over that soul, nor being in it. A fulness of humility precludes all pride—of meekness, precludes anger—of gentleness, all ferocity—of goodness, all evil—of justice, all injustice—of holiness, all sin—of mercy, all unkindness and revenge—of truth, all falsity and dissimulation ; and where God is loved with all the heart, soul, mind,

and strength, there is no room for enmity or hatred to him, or anything connected with him : so, where a man loves his neighbour as himself, no ill shall be worked to that neighbour ; but, on the contrary, every kind affection will exist towards him, and every kind action, as far as power and circumstances can permit, will be done to him. Thus, being filled with God's fulness will produce constant, pious, and affectionate obedience to him, and unvarying benevolence towards one's neighbour, i. e., *any man, any and every human being*. Such a man is saved from all sin ; the law is fulfilled in him ; and he ever possesses and acts under the influence of that love to God and man, which is the fulfilling of the law.

It is impossible, with any scriptural or rational consistency, to understand these words in any lower sense ; but how much more they imply (and more they do imply), who can tell ?

As there is no end to the merits of Christ incarnated and crucified, no bounds to the mercy and love of God, no let nor hinderance to the almighty energy and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, no limits to the improbability of the human soul ; so there can be no bounds to the saving influence which God will dispense to the heart of every genuine believer. We may ask and receive, and our joy shall be full ! Well may we bless and praise God, "who has called us into such a state of salvation ;" a state in which we may be thus saved, and by the grace of that state continue in the same to the end of our lives.

As sin is the cause of the ruin of mankind, the gospel system, which exhibits its cure, is fitly called *good news* or *glad tidings* ; and it is good news, because it proclaims HIM who saves his people FROM their SINS : and it would indeed be dishonourable to that grace, and the infinite merit of him who procured it, to suppose, much more to

assert, that sin had made wounds which it would not heal. Of such a triumph, Satan shall ever be deprived.

IV. The *Doxology*.—*Now unto HIM*. The apostle, having finished his short but most wonderfully comprehensive and energetic prayer, brings in his *doxology*, or *form of praise* ; giving thanks to him from whom all blessings come, and to whom all praises are due.

There is a dignity here in the use of the *pronoun* instead of the *noun*—*HIM*. There is a similar mode of expression in the conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans, chap. xvi. 25, “ Now to *HIM* that is of power to stablish you ;” and in the conclusion of the Epistle of Jude, ver. 24, “ Now unto *HIM* that is able to keep you from falling,” &c. So here, “ Now unto *HIM* that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all we ask or think.” He does not say, Unto the Lord, unto God, unto the Creator, &c. ; but *ΑΥΤΩ*, to *HIM*—that Being of beings—that Cause of all causes—that eternal Fountain of all perfection and excellence—that Source of innate, eternal goodness ; or, as Cicero in one place expresses it, *illud inexprimabile*, that Ineffable Entity, which no name, no attribute can worthily define or express. That Being of whom the apostle had already said so much, to whom he had prayed for so much, and who was able to do all that he had asked for, and infinitely more ; unto this Being alone endless praises are due, and to him alone they shall be for ever ascribed. In every approach to the majesty of God, we should endeavour to conceive aright of his nature, and of our obligations to him. The apostle elsewhere tells us that he is a *consuming fire*, and commands us to worship him with *reverence and godly fear* ; and it is only through his incomprehensible goodness that we are permitted to approach his throne. See what has been said on ver. 14. We should also have a becoming sense of our obligator

to him : praise springs from gratitude ; gratitude, from a sense of obligation ; obligation, from a sense of benefits received ; and this sense of benefits received will be in proportion to the magnitude of the benefits, and the sense we have of our own unworthiness. But to return to the doxology itself.

Having considered the magnitude of the benefits which he asks of God in behalf of the believers at Ephesus, he is led to view him in his unlimited power, that he may appear to be justified in the extensive petitions he has made. Who can overthrow the power of sin but God ?

Who can pardon its guilt but God ?

Who can cleanse the human heart from all unrighteousness but God ?

Who can raise a body that is dead because of sin from death and corruption, but God ?

Who can endue it with immortality, unite it to its proper spirit, but God ?

And who can bring both to his own everlasting glory, there to dwell eternally, but God ?

And what Being can do all these things but Him who possesses almightiness, or unlimited power ?

The apostle meets all such inquiries as these with, *Unto HIM who is ABLE*. Can your God do all these things ? Yes, says the apostle, *these and more—more abundantly than all these—yea, above all that we can ask or think*. This at once settles every objection, silences all doubt, and prepares the soul to meet and claim the promises with strong and implicit faith.

When the two blind men came to Jesus, in order to be restored to sight, he saw the necessity of asking them, *Believe ye that I am ABLE to do this*, Matt. ix. 28. Even God puts not forth his strength to work such miracles of grace, till faith has received a full conviction of his

ability to do them. Let any man search his own heart, and he will find that, although in a general way, he believes that God is almighty, yet he entertains many doubts relative to his ability to do these works, especially to cleanse the soul from all sin in this life; most men believe it to be morally impossible. And hence, whatever may be the promises of God, it has become an article in most creeds, that "no man can be saved from all sin on this side death and the grave." In reference to this point, let us consider the subject of God's potency.

Every attribute of God is equal. Each is infinite, eternal, unoriginated, and without bound or limit. Such is the potency of God: it can do all things that do not imply absurdity or contradiction; it can do anything, in any way it pleases; and it can do anything when it pleases; and it will do anything that is necessary to be done, and should be done, when it ought to be done, and when the doing of it will most manifest his own glory; and his glory is chiefly manifested in promoting the happiness and saving the souls of men. These positions are self-evident, and have their reason in the perfections, and, especially in reference to us, in the goodness of the divine nature.

It is granted, that sin has a mighty power; and that Satan, who arms himself with the vile affections of man, and rules in the uncleanness of the heart, has a mighty power also. But what is power, howsoever great, howsoever malevolent, howsoever well circumstanced, to accomplish the purposes of its malevolence, when opposed by infinite potency? All power must originally emanate from God. Power, in the above sense, must be lodged in and be exercised by some intelligent being. Now all such beings, as well as others, must be dependant on him who is the Fountain whence they were derived.

Hence they can neither exist nor act but as he wills or permits; and hence it is evident he can at any time counteract, or suspend, or destroy all exertions of all finite beings. Therefore be the power of sin and Satan what it may, this can be no objection against the destruction of sin in the heart of man. He is ABLE to do THIS. And if it be to his glory as God; if it be to the glory of his grace as SAVIOUR; if it be to the perfection and happiness of his intelligent creature; if he have made it the duty of that creature to be or do at all times what he can neither be nor do while his heart is sinful—and none but God himself can remove and destroy that sinfulness;—hence we powerfully infer, that God will do this thing, if that intelligent creature apply to him as commanded by him who is able to save to the uttermost, i. e., in every *degree*, and in *all times*. Now, God has commanded men to be at all times holy as he is holy. At all times, to love him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength—to give him their hearts—to worship him in the beauty of holiness; and to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. And does he not know, that all these are utterly impossible to man while under the power, guilt, and pollution of sin? If, then, it be their duty to be and do all that is mentioned above (and who will deny this?), then it must be his will to break the power, pardon the guilt, and cleanse the heart from the infection of sin. And if it be his will, his power can execute the purpose of that will, and his goodness, from which springs this will, will induce him to exert his power that the thing may be done, and the creature be restored to the image of God, in which he was originally created, and from which he has fallen. For this very end, Jesus Christ came into the world: he was manifested that he might take away our sins—that he might destroy the works of the devil—that he might deliver us



out of the hands of our enemies, so that we might serve him in righteousness and true holiness, without fear, before him all the days of our life. In a word, that we might be emptied and cleansed from all sin, and be filled with all the fulness of God.

This will appear still more evident from the following words: He is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all*—*παντα ποιησαι ὑπερ ἐκπερισσου*—words similar to some which we have already met with in this prayer ; words that cannot be translated but by periphrasis. God is omnipotent, therefore he is able to do all things ; and superabundantly,—above the greatest abundance (and who can doubt this, who has any rational or scriptural views of his power and his love?)—*above all that we ask or think*. This refers to the knowledge we have of our wants, and the desire we feel to have them supplied. When on the conviction that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked (and what heart is otherwise till God cleanse it?) we think, deeply reflect on our state ; and by thinking and reflecting, see the provision that God has made for our salvation ; then we shall ask the blessings we need, in proportion to the evidence we have of the willingness and ability of God to supply these wants. Now what does all this imply ?

We can ask every good of which we have heard ; every good that God has promised in his word ; and we can think of and imagine goods and blessings beyond all that we have either seen, heard, or read of : yea, we can imagine good things and enjoyments to which it is impossible for us to give a name ; we can go beyond the limits of all human descriptions ; we can imagine more than even God himself has specified in his word ; and can feel no bounds to our imagination of good, but impossibility and eternity ! And after all, *God is able to do more exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or*

*think*—and his ability here is so necessarily connected with his willingness, that the one indisputably implies the other: for of what consequence would it be to tell the church of God that he had power to do so and so, if there were not implied an assurance that he will do what his power can do, and what the soul of man needs to have done?

To make this more impressive, and to excite the greater confidence, the apostle adds, *according to the power that worketh in us, κατα την δυναμιν, την ενεργουμενην εν ημιν*. As if he had said, “All that he can do, and all that he has promised to do, will be done according to what he has already done by that power, which strongly—with great energy, worketh in us.” This power acts with energy in our hearts, expelling evil, purifying and refining the affections and desires, and implanting heavenly dispositions—transfusing its own divine nature through our souls in proportion as we credit the promises, shake ourselves from the dust, take up our cross, abstain from every appearance of evil, and exercise the grace we have already received. Let no man expect more grace, who is not using that which has already been conferred upon him; and let none expect that God will purify his heart, while he is knowingly indulging any of its evil propensities. When first convinced of sin, we hated and fled from it, and sought God in every means of grace: nothing could satisfy our souls but a sense of God’s pardoning mercy through Christ: we sought, and we found. Now, according as God then worked in us, and we were workers together with him, so will he work, and we by faith must work with him in the purification of our souls. By faith and prayer we work to receive good; by his almighty energy, he works in us to destroy evil. We know how we were brought to the knowledge of God through Christ; we had forgiveness through his blood;

this was applied to our souls by his Spirit : it is the same blood that cleanses from all sin—and its efficacy is applied by the same Spirit. We were justified by faith, we are to be sanctified through the same ;—this was the way in which he saved of old ; whether Jews or Gentiles, he put no difference, purifying their hearts by faith, and giving them the Holy Ghost.

*Unto him be glory in the church.*—The apostle, having pointed out this Supreme Being as possessed of unlimited power and goodness, ever disposed to give more than we can desire or deserve, ascribes to him that honour which to him alone is due.

*To him be glory.*—The word  $\Delta\omicron\zeta\alpha$ , which the apostle uses here and in many other places of his epistles, is difficult to explain ; but we see at once, that it must imply such acknowledgments of the power, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, and goodness of the Divine Being, as are at once indicative and expressive of his infinite excellencies, our dependance upon him as the only source of perfection and goodness, and our gratitude to him for the benefits we have already received. The word  $\delta\omicron\zeta\alpha\zeta\omega$  signifies *to make luminous, illustrious, splendid, eminent, glorious, &c.* Hence a circle of rays round the head is called a glory, i. e., splendour, intense brightness, &c. Now we may be said to give glory to God, when we exhibit in the clearest light, and in the most impressive manner we can, the various excellencies of our God and Father ; and when we do this so that by our example others are led to esteem, adore, and put their trust in him ; we glorify him by showing forth the glory of his various attributes—telling forth how effectually he teaches, how powerfully he upholds, how mercifully he saves ; and how kindly he supplies all our wants, succours us in distress, stands by us in difficulties, defends us in dangers, guides us by his counsel, and promises

at last to receive us into his endless glory. By recollecting these things, we may be said to excite our own gratitude towards him; and thus encourage ourselves to trust more in him, to love him more reverently, and serve him more faithfully. This glory the apostle orders to be given in the church, that is, in the assemblies of true believers; of those who have felt the mighty workings of his Spirit—who know the grace of God in truth. They who have tasted the goodness of God can best estimate that goodness—they in whose hearts Christ dwells by faith, can best praise him for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace. In the church, God should be glorified; and it is not by what is generally termed singing his praise, and to his glory (which, by the way, is very seldom done by those who make a profession of doing it); but by speaking of his work on the souls of men; proclaiming his doings among the people, making mention that his name is exalted. God receives most glory in those churches or Christian assemblies, where the fulness, freeness, and universality of his salvation are held forth; where his grace that bringeth salvation to all men is exhibited; and where a complete redemption from all sin in this life (like that pointed out by the apostle in the preceding verse) is explained, illustrated, defended, and pressed home by powerful exhortation on the souls of the people. How little glory does God get from those who exhibit his sovereignty, to the utter discredit of his justice, mercy, and love—who inform the world “that he is more glorified by saving two than by saving ten thousand; that he beholds a very small few with everlasting love, and so infallibly provides for their salvation, while he beholds millions of millions with an eternal aversion and hatred, dooming them, while unborn, to everlasting perdition, without ever furnishing them with the slightest means of escape.”

Let such know that God is as sovereign in his mercy as in his justice; that hatred to man exists not in him; and that he is a sovereign everlasting Fountain of love and compassion to every human soul; that through this he gave his son Jesus to die for the sin of the world; who, in that dying, tasted death for every man; and let such learn (for it appears they know it not) that his blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness.

In these things God is glorified;—in the churches, where these truths are exhibited, God is honoured. In such displays of God and his works, all his attributes blaze forth in full splendour and harmony; while on the opposite system, one excellence is wounded by another; justice and mercy never meeting together—righteousness and peace never kissing each other. I refer here principally to that horrible caricature of the Sovereignty of God, by ELISHA COLES—a work which has made several Socinians and Deists, but never yet one genuine Christian. Such a work can draw no man to God, but may well affright many from him. See Mr. SELLON's answer to him.

But this glory is to be offered in the church by CHRIST JESUS. This may be easily understood; for it is by Christ Jesus that the glory of God has been revealed to the world. By him the worlds were made; by him man was redeemed; through him God meets with, visits, and saves man; in him was God the Father reconciling the world to himself; and in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. For him, and by him, and through him are all things; he is the only Mediator between God and man. Through him alone can we approach to God, and through him alone will God receive our prayers and praises. He that cometh unto the Father through him, shall in no wise be cast out.

This saving of man by Christ, and bringing glory to

God through him, is not to be a limited or transient work. The patriarchal system lasted only about two thousand years; the Mosaic system belonged principally to the Jews, and was to be in force only till the Messiah should come, and then to give place to the Christian dispensation;—this having lasted about two thousand years more, it was abrogated also; but the Christian system is to endure throughout all ages—*εις πασας τας γενεας*, *through all succeeding generations*; that is, while the race of human beings continues to exist on the face of the earth. The patriarchal dispensation was initial and imperfect; the Mosaic dispensation was typical and representative; the Christian dispensation was the complement or perfection of the whole: hence it is to last for ever. Being perfect, it needs no addition; being the completion of all that preceded, and the fulfilment of all that was promised—and all was promised that man needed for his present and eternal happiness—it is to be succeeded by no other. It fully exhibits him who was to come, and hence we are to look for none other. A fuller revelation cannot be made to man of what is necessary to his happiness and perfective of his being; for it is impossible for the human soul to receive or wish for more than is here promised. By the preaching of this gospel of the grace of God, the church, the congregation of true believers, is to be preserved on the earth; and in that church, Jesus Christ is to be proclaimed as the full, sufficient, and only Saviour; and through the preaching of this Christ, souls are to be converted from sin to holiness; and through this God, the universal Father and Lord, is to be incessantly glorified. But the effects of this salvation given to man are not to be confined to the limits of life. They are to last to eternity, and God to eternity be glorified for them; and therefore the apostle adds, *World without end*—*του αιωνος*

των αιωνων, "Of the age of ages," or, "the duration of durations"—that duration which is infinitely beyond all that can be measured or marked by the revolution of the heavenly bodies : in a word, ETERNITY—where there shall be no more time, no more change—where sorrow and sighing shall be no more ; and it is that eternal sabbath or rest that is reserved for the people of God.

The song of praise to God through Christ, begun on earth, and protracted through all the generations of men, till the end of time, shall be continued in heaven by those who, having here received the salvation of God, and continued faithful unto death, in the resurrection of the just are taken to that ineffable glory, where, being like him, they shall see him as he is ; and being raised to his right hand, have fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore ; in which state, eras, limits, and periods are absorbed in one eternal duration.

It is in vain to attempt to describe this state :—when we say that in it there is no SIN, we at once see that in it there can be no pain, no misery, no death. From it all evil is absent, and in it all good is present. There the introduction of evil is impossible, and there the loss of good is equally so. The time of probation is only on earth : the day of trial with the blessed is for ever ended, and now they are in that state in reference to which their probation existed. This duration we often express by *world without end*, i. e., the world or state that has no end. Sometimes by *for ever and ever*—that is, one ever or duration, that is endless, succeeding one that has ended. And sometimes by a yet more forcible expression, *for evermore* ; that is, for ever—through the whole lapse of time ; and more, the unlimited duration that shall succeed it. All these are phrases which labour to express what is at once both ineffable and inconceivable.

The apostle concludes the whole with *Amen*, the common seal to all such instruments as this. אמן *amen* signifies, he was faithful and true; and the use of it here refers at once to God, to whom the prayer is offered, and from whom all those blessings came; and also to the truth and stability of the promises relative to the salvation mentioned here, and the glory that should follow. *Amen*—so be it—so let it be! and so it shall be; for all the counsels of God are faithfulness and truth; and not one jot or tittle of his promise has failed from the foundation of the world to the present day; nor can fail, till mortality be swallowed up of life, and the *more* have succeeded the *ever*, and God in his eternity be the centre in which all holy spirits shall infinitely rest.

Therefore, to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, dominion, power, and thanksgiving, now, henceforth, and for ever. Amen and Amen.

From God we came, and to God we shall return.

#### CONCLUSION.

With such a portion of the word of God before us, how can we be said to credit conscientiously the doctrines of Christianity, and live satisfied with such slender attainments in the divine life? Can any person who pleads for the necessary and degrading continuance of indwelling sin, believe what the apostle has written? Can we who profess to believe it, be excusable, and live under the influence of any temper or passion that is alien to the mind of Christ? Will it be said in answer, “This is only a prayer of the apostle, and contains his wish, from the overflowings of his heart, for the spiritual prosperity of the Ephesian Church.” I ask farther, was the apostle inspired or not, when he wrote this prayer? If he were not inspired, this prayer makes no part of divine revela-



tion ; if he were inspired, every petition is tantamount to a positive promise : for what God inspires the heart to pray for, that God purposes to bestow ; and if this prayer, thus given by inspiration, be given not merely for the comfort of the Church at Ephesus, but for the Christian Church in general ; then it is his will that all these blessings should be enjoyed by his followers in every age and nation : and the prayer is, that Christ would dwell in their hearts, that they should be filled with all the fulness of God ; and that he would do more abundantly for them than they could either ask or think. And as the prayer is not in reference to gifts to be given in the eternal world, does it not necessarily follow, that he prays for their deliverance from all sin, inward and outward, in this life ? Can any man expect to be saved from his inward sin, in the other world ? None, except such as hold the popish antisciptural doctrine of purgatory. But this deliverance is expected at death. Where is the promise that it shall then be given ? There is not one such in the whole Bible ! and to believe for a thing essential to our glorification, without any promise to support that faith in reference to the point on which it is exercised, is a desperation that argues as well the absence of true faith, as it does of right reason. Multitudes of such persons are continually deploring their want of faith, even where they have the clearest and most explicit promises : and yet strange to tell, risk their salvation at the hour of death, on a deliverance that is nowhere promised in the sacred oracles ! “ But who has got this blessing ? ” Every one who has come to God in the right way for it. “ Where is such an one ? ” Seek the blessing as you should do, and you will soon be able to answer the question. “ But it is too great a blessing to be expected.” Nothing is too great for a believer to expect, which God has promised, and Christ has purchased

with his blood. "If I had such a blessing, I should not be able to retain it." All things are possible to him that believeth. Besides, like all other gifts of God, it comes with a principle of preservation with it—and upon all thy glory there will be a defence. "Still, such an unfaithful person as I am cannot expect it." Perhaps the infidelity you deplore, came through the want of this blessing: and as to worthlessness, no soul under heaven *deserves* even the least of God's mercies. It is not for thy worthiness that he has given thee anything, but for the sake of his Son. You say, "When I felt myself a sinner, sinking into perdition, I did then flee to the atoning blood, and found pardon—but this sanctification is a far greater work." NO! speaking after the manner of men, justification is far greater than sanctification. When thou wert a sinner, ungodly, an enemy in thy mind by wicked works, a child of the devil, an heir of hell—God pardoned thee, on thy casting thy soul on the merit of the great sacrificial offering—thy sentence was reversed—thy state was changed—thou wert put among the children—and God's Spirit witnessed with thine that thou wert his child. What a change! and what a blessing! What then is this complete sanctification? It is the cleansing of the blood that has not been cleansed—it is washing the soul of a true believer from the remains of sin—it is the making one who is already a child of God, more holy, that he may be more happy, more useful in the world, and bring more glory to his heavenly Father. Great as this work is, how little, humanly speaking, is it, when compared with what God has already done for thee! But suppose it were ten thousand times greater, is anything too hard for God? Are not all things possible to him that believes? And does not the blood of Christ cleanse from all unrighteousness? Arise, then, and be baptized with a greater effusion of the Holy

Ghost, and wash away thy sin, calling on the name of the Lord.

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”—*Collect for the Communion Service.*

## SERMON XIV.

### THE DIFFERENT METHODS WHICH GOD HAS USED TO BRING MEN TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIMSELF.

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PSALM xix. 1—8.

1. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work.

2. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

3. "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

4. "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.

5. "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6. "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

7. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple:

8. "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

It may be deemed a fortunate coincidence when those portions of sacred writings, which are appointed by our Church for the Sabbaths, or other solemnities of the year, are found to contain pointed reference to charitable or benevolent institutions; which were not even contemplated when our reformers selected those portions, and assigned them their respective places in the calendar.

This is the *fourth* day of the *month* ; and the first Psalm appointed for the morning of this day, is the *ninth.*, out of which I have read the preceding verses : and on this day, the annual appeal on behalf of one of the greatest of the numerous benevolent institutions of this country (the Methodists' Missionary Society), is appointed to be made. A society that has for its object the illumination of the whole world, by sending the everlasting gospel to every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue—a subject predicted by the royal psalmist, in words too plain and appropriate to be misunderstood ; and which, in application to this or such-like institutions, was not thought of by our ancestors ; nor the appointment of this day, in reference to this Scripture, contemplated by the managers of the institution. May the coincidence be hallowed to the grand object of this society ! and may we take encouragement from the text to proceed in this excellent work, with a steady pace, and a liberal hand !

This psalm, which is one of the most beautiful and noble compositions in this extraordinary book, seems intended to show the means which God employs to teach the knowledge of himself to the whole human race, and his gracious designs towards them ; and also contains a prophetic declaration of the diffusion of his gospel over the habitable world, in these latter times ; so that the earth shall be as literally and efficiently filled with the glorious light and influence of the healing rays of the SUN of righteousness, as it is by the light and heat of the natural Sun.

To assert this from such a portion of Scripture, would appear hazardous and disputable, unless it could be supported by some other portion, evidently giving this direction and meaning ; and plainly showing that such was the design of the prophetic Spirit.

That such was the intention of the prophet, is proved

by a quotation from this psalm, by the apostle Paul who, considering what God was doing in his own day, to enlighten both Jews and Gentiles, quotes verse 4, "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world," Rom. x. 18; in which he evidently compares the preaching of the gospel of Christ to the SUN shining upon the whole earth; and the apostles to the planets reflecting the solar light and heat on the people who sat in darkness; conveying the spirit of life and health to those who sat in the region of the valley of the shadow of death; and thus, as the heavens declared the glory of God, Jesus was the light that enlightened the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel. As the *lines*—rays and influences of the heavenly bodies, went through the earth; and their *voice*—the testimony that their harmony, order, and usefulness bore to the being and benevolence of God, went to the end of the world; so, the preaching of the apostles and their successors went over the whole land of Judea, and to every department and colony of the Roman Empire. And, in the present day, nations, of whom neither the ancient Romans nor the apostles had ever heard, hear the glad tidings: for to them it may be truly said, *Arise and be illuminated, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* And from the prophet in the text, and the apostle in the quotation, we learn, that the design of God is to shed the light of his gospel as far as the sun shoots forth his beams, and the moon reflects his light, till every part of the habitable globe shall have heard of the salvation of God, by means of the Holy Scriptures and the missionaries, whose line is now going forth to *all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.*

In order to the accomplishment of this glorious end, I shall show that God has provided two books. I. The

Book of Nature ; and II. The Book of Revelation ; that mankind may be brought to the true knowledge of himself, and finally to eternal glory.

I. THE BOOK OF NATURE.—1. The psalmist commences this sublime ode with this self-evident truth, “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy work.” As the original text is very expressive, I make no apology for inserting it ; *השמים מספרים כבוד אל ומעשה ידיו מגיד הרקיע ha-shamayim mesapherim cabod El ; u-ma’áseh yadaiv magid ha-rakiá*, “The heavens number out the glory of the strong God, and the firmament shows forth his handy-work.” *Glory* generally means an excessive brightness or splendour ; continued coruscations of light—not flashes like lightning, which dazzle and confound the sight, and immediately disappear. This brightness is permanent ; not only luminous in itself, but giving light to others : feeding upon no fuel, but being an essential splendour, is sustained by itself, yet appears to grow more and more luminous, because of the communication of itself to the subjects on which it shines, all of which partake of its splendours.

To this property of brightness, or in other words, of the divine glory, St. Paul alludes, 2 Cor. iii. 18 ; “For we all with unveiled face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit.” This glory diffuses glory ; and the glory diffused impregnates and irradiates those on whom its rays are directed, so that they become luminous, though their light is but borrowed and reflected.

Thus the SUN and STARS receive their splendour from GOD, and the planets, and their secondaries, become luminous by the glory reflected on them by their primaries. Even a first view of the starry heavens, strikes every careful observer with astonishment at the power

by which they are made, and by which they are sustained: when a sufficiency of science is brought to the examination of the wisdom and skill displayed in the contrivance of such a great variety of bodies of different magnitudes, affections, and motions, increasing astonishment is produced, and we are forced to exclaim, These are the works of the strong God.

*The firmament*—the whole visible expanse, not only containing the celestial bodies already mentioned, but also the air, light, clouds, rains, dews, &c.; and when the composition of these principles is examined, and their great utility to the earth and its inhabitants properly understood, they afford matter of amazement to the wisest mind, and of adoration and gratitude even to a comparatively unfeeling heart. Above, we see the strong God; here, we see the Author of providence, the Fountain of mercy. Every view we take of these stupendous works adds something to our knowledge and amazement; for they continue to number out more and more of the glories of the Creator. They are the works of his power, and the works of his skill: his hands have made and fashioned them; he has given them their weight and measure, and has adapted them to their use.

“Day unto day uttereth speech,” יום ליום יביע אמר *yom leyom yobiâ omer*. Each succeeding day has something to add to the knowledge gained in the preceding one; and labours to make its communication. The verb נבע *nabâ* signifies to *boil, gurgle, or bubble up*, as water from a spring, and seems to be used here merely to express the difficulty there is to describe the works of God in suitable words, howsoever clear their ideas may be in the mind.

“Night unto night showeth knowledge,” ולילה ללילה יורה דעה *valayelah lelayelah yechavveh daâth*, — “and night clearly demonstrates knowledge, or science, unto



night." The word דעת *da'ath* not only signifies *knowledge* in general, but *science* or *systematic knowledge*; and חיה *chavvah* signifies, not only to *declare*, but "to demonstrate clearly and perspicuously, without any ambiguity. (See Taylor.) And it is highly worthy of remark, that while one day is only gurgling out a speech—some particular fact, unto another day; the night is represented as bringing forward a mass of science, "clearly demonstrated, without ambiguity or doubt." How natural are these two sentences of astronomical knowledge! How little is gained by day—it is only a saying, a speech, that one day can add to another; but by night, the heavenly bodies are all visible—their phases, motions, relative situations, southings, risings, and settings, are all clearly distinguishable. And thus, while day teaches a fact—night produces a mass of science. To nocturnal observations, we owe almost the whole of our astronomical science.

Verse 3. There is *no speech nor language*, where *their voice is not heard*. Leave out the expletives here, and our translation is a tolerably correct rendering: אין אמר ואין דברים בלי נשמע קולם *ein omer, veein debarim beli nishma kolam*, "No speech, and no words, their voice without hearing;" בכל הארץ יצא קום ובקצה טבל מלודם *becol ha'arets yatsa kavam ubekitseh tebel milleyhem*—"Into all the earth hath gone out their sound; and to the extremity of the habitable world, their eloquence." The sense is well given by Bishop Horne: "Although the heavens are thus appointed to teach, yet it is not by articulate sounds that they do it. They are not endowed like man with the faculty of speech, but they address themselves to the mind of the intelligent beholder in another way; and that, when understood, a no less forcible way; the way of picture or representation. The instruction which the heavens spread abroad, is as universal as their sub-

stance, which spreads itself in lines or rays; by this means, their words, or rather their significant actions or operations, מליהם *milleyhem*, are everywhere present; and thereby they preach to all nations, the power, the mercy, and the loving-kindness of the Lord."

The word קו *kav*, which we translate *line*, is rendered *sonus* by the Vulgate, and φθογγος, *sound*, by the Septuagint, and St. Paul uses the same term, Rom. x. 18. Perhaps the idea is taken here from a *stretched cord*, that emits a sound on being struck or twitched; and therefore both the ideas may be included in the same word; and hence קו *kavam* may be either *their line* or *cord*, or *their sound*. "In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun," שם אהל בהם *le shemesh, sam ohel bahem*. The Septuagint, and all the ancient versions, the Chaldee excepted, have translated the passage thus: εν τω ηλιω εθετο σκηνομα αυτου, "In the sun he hath placed his tabernacle:" though erroneous, this version has much force. As the sun is the most splendid and glorious of all the celestial bodies, it was supposed, and even by some of the best of men, that if the Supreme Being had any local habitation it must be in the SUN. There his presence was supposed to be manifested by excessive glory or brightness. There, he held his court—and from that residence, he sent forth his light and heat to all the parts and inhabitants of the earth. Nor could such persons put the residence for the resident, though others in ancient times had done so, but as often as they saw the sun going forth in his strength they would naturally lift up their hearts to him that thus dwelt in light unapproachable; and magnify him as well for the influences of his power and goodness in the natural world, as for those of his grace on the souls of men. Even in our own times, a sensible and learned man has supposed the sun to be the seat of the blessed. But our version strictly

follows the Hebrew ; and the thought conveyed by it is philosophically beautiful. We know by incontrovertible evidence, that the sun is in the centre of what is called the solar system—about him all the planets and their secondaries revolve ; and all have their motion, light, and heat from him. In ancient times, it was supposed that the earth was the centre, and that the whole heavens were whirled about it every twenty-four hours ! Had it been so, we might have expected to see אהל לארץ *ohel learets*, a tabernacle for the *earth*, instead of אהל לשמש *ohel leshemesh*, a tabernacle for the *sun* ; but the Hebrew shows that the sun has his *tabernacle* ; his *fixed central position among them*, that is, among the heavenly bodies ; and this is not said of any other body in the whole system. The author of the psalm might not have been aware of the philosophical precision with which he spoke ; but God, who inspired the words, knew his own meaning ; and this, as it must be, is beautiful and correct. What is said after, when comparing the sun to a *bridegroom coming out of his chamber*, refers to his apparent rising in the East, and proceeding along the heavens with increasing splendour and heat ; and is a metaphor taken from that part of a Jewish matrimonial ceremony, where a *canopy* or *veil* is raised on four poles, which four persons hold over the bridegroom's head, and from under which he comes with his *splendid and ornamental vestments*. To these ornamental garments the sun is compared, because of the glory and splendour of his rays ; and to a *giant* or *strong man running a race*, because of the power of his light and heat. Even Sir Isaac Newton speaks of the *rising* and *setting* of the *sun*, though these are only appearances ; for the sun never rises nor sets,—he has his *tabernacle*, his *fixed dwelling*, among the heavenly host ; like a general in his pavilion, surrounded by his officers and troops ; for the appearance of rising

and setting is occasioned by the diurnal revolution of the earth on its own axis, from west to east.

Verse 6. “His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” This is spoken either of the apparent motion of the sun from east to west,—for he appears to rise in the former, and set in the latter, which, as we have seen before, is occasioned by the diurnal revolution of the earth round its own axis, from west to east, which causes the sun to appear as if he were going the contrary way, i. e., from *east to west*;—or the first clause may refer to this, and the second most probably to the earth’s annual motion in its orbit or course between the tropics, on which the vicissitudes of all our seasons depend, and by which the necessary proportion of light and heat is dispensed to all the inhabitants of the earth, from the *tropic of Cancer* to the *tropic of Capricorn*. “His going forth is from the end of the heaven”—from the east to the west, forming the natural day; as *his circuit*—his annual revolution in its orbit round the sun, *is unto the ends of it*—from tropic to tropic, so that *there is nothing hidden from the heat thereof*; every part, from the *arctic* to the *antarctic* circle, having that proportion of light and heat which the nature of the soil and the necessity of the inhabitants require. Should it be said there is a less proportion of light and heat towards the *poles* than on other parts of the earth’s surface; if so, the reason is plain—*less is required*. Within the whole *antarctic* circle not a foot of land is known to exist; and as to the inhabitants within the *arctic circle*, and they are very few, it has never yet been known that their long days have not amply compensated for their short ones; nor has it been heard that the fruits which grow in those regions have not had light and heat sufficient to mature them. For, even in those regions,

as well as in others, it may be justly said, as in the text, "there is nothing that has been hidden from the heat thereof." God's power has lighted up the sun in the firmament of heaven; God's providence has dispensed his light and heat in their just proportions; and divided the influences of the celestial bodies to *all the nations under heaven*; and his mercy "makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good; and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

This is the BOOK of NATURE, which God has opened before the eyes of all men; filled with characters the most legible and intelligible, formed out of the alphabet of a universal language, which all the inhabitants of the earth can read; and thus, "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they who have not profited by this book are without excuse;" Rom. i. 20.

II. THE BOOK OF REVELATION.—The Psalmist, having shown what God has done in nature, in order to give to all men correct ideas of his eternal power and Godhead, now proceeds to state that he has added to the above a direct revelation of his will, containing a more perfect description of the DIVINE NATURE, particularly in reference to his justice and mercy; and of man in his fallen state; what he requires him to know, that he may become wise unto salvation; and what is necessary to be done for him, and in him, that he might be saved from his sins, and become an heir of eternal glory.

1. He has given him his LAW; characterized as being perfect; the use of which is, to become the instrument of converting and restoring the soul. In this we must consider the following points:

1st. It is a LAW: תורה *torah*, from ירה *yarah*, to *instruct, direct, put straight*, and to *guide*. 1. Man is igno-

rant, and must be instructed; general instructions will not be sufficient, therefore he must receive the most particular directions. 2. His paths are all crooked, and his mind is crooked, therefore he must be set straight. 3. He can never go on by himself, and therefore must be guided in the way.

2. This law is the book of divine revelation, contained in the Old and New Testaments, as created things are the book of nature: the things which God has made to make himself known by. This second book, or law of God, is a code of instruction, in which God makes himself known in the holiness and justice of his nature, his displacence at sin, and his love of righteousness; as also to manifest himself in the magnitude of his mercy, and readiness to save. In a word, it is God's system of instruction; by which men are taught the knowledge of their Creator and of themselves—directed how to walk so as to please God—redeemed from crooked paths—and guided in the way that leads to everlasting life. This is what those who know it best have in all ages and countries agreed to call the Bible, Βιβλος or Βιβλια,—the book, or the books. The Book, by way of eminence—the book made by God; the only book that is without blemish or error—the book that contains the TRUTH, the *whole* TRUTH, and *nothing but* the TRUTH. That without which we should have known little about God, less concerning ourselves, and nothing about heaven, the resurrection, or a future state. The book that contains the greatest mass of learning ever put together; the book from which all the sages of antiquity have directly or indirectly derived their knowledge; by means of which the nations who have studied it most, and known it best, have formed the wisest codes of laws, and have become the wisest and the most powerful nations of the earth. This LAW is described here by a variety of names. It

is not only GOD'S LAW, but it is GOD'S TESTIMONY—his STATUTES—his COMMANDMENT—his FEAR, or that which teaches reverence to him, and the proper manner of his worship—and his JUDGMENTS ; for all these are parts or characteristics of what is here called, The LAW OF JEHOVAH.

Some of the ancients, those called Primitive Fathers, thought that God had a threefold LAW ; or, that he had given three laws to mankind :

1. The law of NATURE ; which teaches the knowledge of God, as to his eternal power and deity, by the visible creation.

2. The WRITTEN law ; or code of laws given to Moses and the prophets ; which teaches more perfectly the knowledge of God : his nature—his will—and our duty.

3. The law of GRACE or mercy, given by Jesus Christ ; which teaches the necessity of an atonement, and shows in what that atonement consists ; the sanctification of the soul ; the resurrection of the body ; and clearly, the future condition of all human beings, in an eternal state of blessedness or misery, according to the use or abuse they have made of the mercy of their Redeemer ; and their fitness or unfitness for the eternal states revealed in this law.

The first of these laws was written in hieroglyphics in the earth and the visible heavens.

The second was written on tables of stone, on Mount Sinai.

The third is to be written on the heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

These three laws all emanate from the same source, and are given for the same end. They are three distinct ways by which God has chosen, in three distinct times, to make himself known to mankind. They have also been termed three dispensations : i. e., of mercy and

justice; each having its peculiar excellence, and its peculiar mode of teaching the same subject—i. e., the knowledge of the true God; in reference to the same end, viz., the edification and salvation of man.

Now God has, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoken in times past unto the fathers—the first inhabitants of the earth; and from them downward, to the time in which he sealed up vision and prophecy in the days of the Messiah. And it is worthy of remark, that each of these laws, or dispensations, in their successive order, discovered an increasing depth in the matter of instruction which they contained. They held out an increasing light, which shone more and more to the perfect day. They might be compared to the morning star—the rising sun—and the sun in his meridian height, strength, and glory.

1. The law of nature was calculated to instruct man in his primitive uncultivated state; it contained but few ideas, and taught a few original important truths, and those principally relating to the existence, power, wisdom, and providence of that Being, who was the Cause and Creator of all things; and, consequently, the adoration due to him as such. Thus it was calculated to prevent idolatry of all kinds.

2. The law which was written and delivered to Moses, and by him to the people called Israelites and Jews, while it contained the same truths as that above, gave greater evidence concerning each; and added a great variety of important instructions relative to the most essential attributes of God, especially his holiness, justice, and truth—his power in supporting, and his providence in preserving. It taught also what sin is, and the evil of it; the happiness and safety of the righteous; and showed, by a great variety of significant rites and ceremonies, that a dispensation of law and justice was in the fulness of time to be



introduced, that would fulfil the design and perfect the teaching of all that had gone before, and proclaim and exhibit God in the plenitude of his excellency, especially in the splendour of his justice, and the bright effulgence of his mercy.

3. The law of grace or mercy, given to man by Jesus the Christ, the promised Messiah, including all that the preceding laws or dispensations taught concerning the Being and attributes of God, pointing out more precisely the reference and intention of all rites and ceremonies contained in the preceding law ; and especially what was designed by its sacrificial system—showed the fulfilment of all the declarations of the prophets—opened a new communication between heaven and earth by the Holy Spirit—added exceeding great and precious promises of peace, happiness, and salvation to all them that believe—introduced in its fulness that most important doctrine of the one only and sufficient atoning sacrifice for sin, which himself was to make by his death upon the cross, and its grand consequence (not before discovered), justification by faith, without the deeds of the law, or pardon of sin through believing in Christ as having died for the offences of man, and risen again for his justification. For, as all had sinned, and had come short of God's glory, so none was capable of making an atonement for his own transgressions ; nor by any merit or moral obedience, could buy off his own soul from the curse pronounced upon it by that just and holy law which he had broken ; that therefore, if the mercy of God were intended finally to triumph over the requisitions of justice, it was necessary that the promised Messiah, the Almighty's Fellow, should assume the nature of man, suffer in his stead, and thus give the divine justice a sufficient reason why, consistently with all its just requisitions, mercy might flow in a perennial stream from the throne of God—glory to

all that were partakers of that nature which the Messiah had assumed, to the last human family that should be found upon the face of the earth, till the voice of the archangel should be heard, and the blast of the last trumpet should summon the living and the dead to appear before the bar of God, each to receive according to the deeds done in the body. As in this law of grace, Christ promises to restore true believers to the favour of God, by blotting out their sins; and to the full image of God, by purifying their souls from all unrighteousness; and as he promises the utmost perfection of which they are capable in this life, so that they shall have himself dwelling in their hearts by faith, be rooted and grounded in love, and be filled with all the fulness of God: as all these things are so, we cannot expect a fourth law or dispensation. All the laws preceding the manifestation of the Messiah were evidently imperfect; i. e., did not contain a full revelation of God's will in reference to man; so it was necessarily implied that they were only the forerunners which were to prepare the way for others, which should give more ample information concerning God and the salvation intended for man. Man needs no more; nor is the human soul capable of receiving more than God has promised to bestow in this life; so the gospel days are emphatically termed, *the last times*.

Now we see clearly that the law of nature was introductory to and prepared men for the law of Moses; the law of Moses was introductory to and prepared the way for the law of Christ, or the gospel dispensation; and the gospel dispensation is introductory to and prepares true believers for the state of eternal beatification and glory.

We have now before us the various means which God has used from the commencement of the world, to instruct man; and were we to begin the instruction of any nation, in its rudest and most heathen state, it is not pro-

bable that we could invent a more effectual and gradually illuminating mode of instruction, than that laid down in the above three laws or dispensations of God's power, wisdom, and grace towards man.

Were I, as a missionary, now to begin my ministerial labours among the stupid Hurons of North America, the Samoeids of the Northern Frozen Ocean, the Namacquas of Southern Africa, the Esquimaux of Labrador, or the Aborigenes of New Holland, I would proceed with them in the very manner in which God has given his laws and dispensations to the human race.

1. By day I would call their attention to the sun in the firmament of heaven ; by night to the moon, the planets, and the stars. I would endeavour to tell them what they are, where they are, what their use is, and what we may learn from them. In substance, I would thus address them : " You feel that the sun gives you light and warmth by day, and when your days are longest, and the sun brightest and warmest, then the grass, and the yams, and the various things on which you feed, grow most plentifully. Whence did these things come ? Did they make themselves ? Can anything make itself ? Can a thing begin to work before it has any being ? You see this vessel. I turn it upside down. Is there anything in it ? No, there is nothing. Could then this nothing, this emptiness build that hut—make that rock—produce this great tree ? You see, you know that it could not. It has neither eyes, nor feet, nor hands, nor instruments of any kind—nor is it anything that you can touch, or see, or even think of, for it has no being ; it does not exist—it is nothing ; consequently it has made nothing, and can make nothing. Then, do you think that the sun, the moon, the stars, &c., have made themselves ? They can no more make themselves than the nothing in this vessel can make your hut, yon rock, or that large tree !

Who made the hut? Why yourself, for it could not make itself. Then, who made the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, and all things? For the reason already shown you, they could not make themselves. They would naturally answer, We do not know who or what made them, nor anything else; do *you* know? Yes. It was that Being that we worship—that we pray to—and to whom we sing those hymns, with the sound of which you seem so pleased. We call him God. This word in our language signifies the Good Being. This Being is so strong, that he could take up the whole earth, with all its seas, and rivers, and islands. He could dash them all to pieces, and in the same moment make them as they were before, or make them in any other shape, or put them in any other place. He is also very wise; he knows every thing; and can teach you to know anything that might do you good. You think that we know much more than you. It is so; and it is so, because we know this God, and we pray to him, and he teaches us; he makes our hearts wise and our heads wise. We see also that he is very good; he made the sun to give us light and heat, and to make our crops grow in the ground; and he made the moon and the stars to give light by night; and the earth to provide us with food. So from the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the earth, and other wonderful things which we see, none of which could make themselves, we have first learnt, that a strong Being, a wise Being, and a good Being, could alone make all these things; and as we see that he made them for our use, and for our advantage, we then know that he must love us; and we feel from that, that we should love him. Now, if we love him, we know that we should not do anything that would offend him. We should not do anything that is bad, for that would offend the good Being; we should **not** do anything that is foolish, for that would grieve this

wise Being. We should not use our strength to hurt one another, to oppress each other, to strike, to kill, or destroy our friends, our neighbours, or any one else, for thus the strong Being never employs his strength; and what strength we have, he gave it to us, for he made us; it would grieve him if we should do wrong to one another. But where is this strong, wise, and good Being? We never saw him. We answer, He is everywhere—he sees everything, because he is everywhere—he fills all things and places. But he has not a body like us—he is a spirit; now a spirit is that which knows, thinks, and works, without using any bodily form. Then, if he have no body, and we cannot see him, how can we know that there is such a Being? I answer, Look at that grass; what makes it wave?—look at that tree; what makes its leaves and branches shake?—look at the clouds; what makes them move along the sky? We tell you, it is the wind that does these things. Well then, can you see the wind? Have you ever seen it? Have you ever heard that any of your forefathers have seen it? No. Then you see that something may exist and work which you cannot see. Have you not seen that this wind sometimes blows down your houses, tears up great trees from their roots, raises up the waves of the sea, that they appear to touch the clouds? Yet you have never seen it; but you see from its effects that it can do wonderful things—terrible things? Now, our God made that very wind. He cannot be seen, because he is a spirit;—it cannot be seen, because it is thin air. But though you cannot see the wind, you may feel it; it blows upon your bodies, it blows your garments about, it has sometimes, no doubt, blown you off your feet, and its cool breeze has often refreshed you when hot and weary. Thus you know by feeling it that it exists. So you might feel our God, though you, cannot see him. Have you ever felt any good desire? Have you felt

grieved with yourselves when you did some wicked thing? Yes, we have. Well; it was God that gave you that feeling; and were you to pray to him, suppose thus: O thou strong Being, I am weak in my heart, and cannot do the things that are right, be thou pleased to give me strength! O thou wise Being, I am very ignorant and very foolish, wilt thou be pleased to give me wisdom that I may know what is right! O thou good Being, I have a bad heart, and do many bad things; oh, take away my bad heart, and give me a good heart. Now I say, this God, who is here, for he is everywhere, and hears what I teach you, will hear your prayer, and give you to feel that he strengthens you; he will teach you, and you will feel that you grow wise; he will take away your bad heart, and give you to feel that he has given you a good one. And as you feel his inward working so powerfully, you shall be as sure that he exists, and that he loves and works in you, as if you could see him with your eyes, and feel him with your hands; and you will be soon able, when I have given you more instruction from a book that we Christians have, which was given to us by this God, to call him your Father, as your son shall call you his father."

Thus far I could, as a missionary, go with the rudest savages, teaching them from the law or book of nature that there is a Being who has made all things; and that he is strong, and wise, and good; that he may be felt, though not seen; that men should pray to him for power, and wisdom, and goodness, and that he will hear them, and grant their requests. But this plan of teaching the rude and uncultivated may be almost endlessly varied, everything around us offering new arguments and new modes of illustration.

2. Having prepared the minds of my heathen auditory by such plain arguments and illustrations as were neces-

sary to give them some notion of a First Cause—to point out to them the almighty, omniscient, and infinitely good Being, and the necessity of knowing, loving, and serving him ; the SECOND LAW, or mode of discovery which God has made of himself to mankind, should be introduced ; and in such circumstances as those mentioned above, I would introduce this subject after the following manner :

“ I have already shown you, that the Being which we call God was before all things, and that the heaven and the earth were made by him ; that no thing, no being, could make itself ; and that this Being has made all things by his wisdom and power ; and that he made them for the use and good of mankind ; which is a proof that he loves man, and is always disposed to make him wise, and good, and happy ; and therefore we should love him, and do nothing that might displease him. But in order to know him fully, for our happiness, he has given us a BOOK, that teaches how he has made all things, how he governs them, what he would have us to know ; and also gives us an account of what he hates, and what we should not do ; and of what he loves, and what we should perform. This book teaches us that all men came from one father and mother, whom this God formed out of the ground, and made them with very good hearts, without any evil thought or bad passion ; it tells us also, how man lost his good heart, by doing what this God told him not to do ; and that misery, woe and death, came in consequence into the world. Now, the accounts that we have in this BOOK we know to be true ; for they tell us what we know and feel to be true ; for the descriptions that are given answer exactly to the things themselves, and these things we could not have found out had we not been taught them by this book ; and no people in the world, that have not this book, know these things ; for instance, you do not know them, because you have not this book ; and all

the men in the world were in the same state of ignorance, as you are now, before God gave this Book. And God, this good Being, pitying the state of man, through the great love that he bears to him, spoke all the words contained in this book, in the hearts of men which he had made good, that they might receive and remember these good things; and he caused them to write them down in a book, that they might copy them into other books, and thus hand them down from father to son, as long as that sun shall shine by day, and the moon and stars give light by night. Now I will read to you the account that God gives us in this book; how he made the heavens above, and the earth below; how he made the sun, the moon, the stars, the trees, the grass, the fish, the fowls, the beasts; and how he made men and women. Now listen attentively, and you will hear a most beautiful account; and if anything you hear me read does not appear sufficiently plain to you, when I stop, ask me, and I will explain it fully." Here then I would read a part of the first chapter of Genesis, and at successive opportunities the whole; with the account of the temptation and fall of man. I would give also the history of the people to whom God originally gave those Scriptures—of the Israelites, in their origin—in their slavery in Egypt—their exodus—miraculous support in their travels, and their settlement in the Promised Land. When all this was done, I would proceed in some such way as this: "Now, as God loves man (for I would take care to have the love of God to man, as the foundation and cause of all his acts towards the whole human race), and he saw that he was become so very ignorant and wicked, that he had no proper knowledge of good and evil left; God tells him in this book what he should do, and what he should not do; and that all might easily learn and remember these things, he divides them into ten commandments, or divine orders,



telling each what he should perform, and what he should leave undone." Here the decalogue should come in— every precept be explained at large, showing at the same time the reasonableness, necessity, and usefulness of each part, and of the whole. Having completed this part of my plan of instruction, I would proceed to the account of sacrifices, and endeavour to explain their nature, their reference to sin, in order to show what each sin deserved, viz., death, and show that the same God who prescribed them, had told the people that they were insufficient of themselves to take away the guilt of sin; and that they were intended to point out a glorious Being, infinitely pure, spiritual, and good; who was to come from heaven to earth, and become a man, like to one of ourselves, though in that pure and spiritual nature, which dwelt in that man, he had infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and was himself to become a true sacrifice, by dying for the sins of mankind; and that God had revealed this great design many hundreds of years before it took place, to holy men who were commanded to write what God had declared on this subject, in the same book; and then the various promises concerning the advent of Christ should be read and explained; and care should be taken to show that these prophecies were delivered several hundreds of years before any such events as were foretold in them had taken place. I would also show strongly the necessity of such a sacrifice as that promised, 1. To *blot out the sins* that were past. 2. To *procure grace* or divine help, by which we might live a holy life. 3. To *purify the heart and mind* from all *badness* or *sinfulness*; and thus to prepare the soul for and finally bring it into an everlasting state of happiness with the good God, in the kingdom of heaven.

3. Having added line upon line, and precept upon precept, on these subjects, then I would introduce

The THIRD *Law*, or *Revelation of God's will* to mankind, *the Gospel dispensation* ; show that, exactly at the time which the prophets referred to, Jesus Christ came into the world, and appeared as *man* among men—but the wisdom of his words, and his wonderful miracles (which should be carefully detailed), proved that, in that *man* dwelt an infinite power and goodness ; that according to the prophecies, long before delivered, he permitted himself to be *nailed to a cross*, on which he *expired* ; and that, in three days, he raised up that slain body from the dead—lived and conversed with his friends for many days—and then, in the sight of several, went up into heaven, having given commandment to his disciples (persons whom he had before instructed) to go into all the world, and preach the good news of what he had done and suffered, to every man ; and that all who should hear these things, and believe on him, as thus having lived, suffered, died, risen again, and gone up into heaven, to pray and plead from them, should receive the *forgiveness of all their sins*, and that purification of heart promised by the prophets, so that when they should die, their souls should go straight to heaven, a state of indescribable happiness ; and that at no great distance of time, even their bodies should be raised from their graves, and never feel sickness, nor pain, and never die more. And it is in consequence of his command, that we are come so many thousands of miles over great oceans to preach to and teach you, that you may be made happy.

I have said that the plan of preaching to the heathen which I here propose, is sanctioned by the manner in which God exhibits those works by which he makes his eternal power and Godhead known to the world.

1. Prophets and apostles have followed the same plan. When writing to the heathens in Babylon, Jeremiah not only uses their own language, but also this same manner

of teaching : “ The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens,” Jer. x. 11. [See the first Discourse in this volume.]

2. See the great apostle Paul : when he addresses the Jews, he quotes the Law and the Prophets ; and his appeals to their Scriptures are incessant ; and out of the law and the prophets, the divine authority of which they allowed, he shows their wickedness in rejecting the gospel, which Moses and the prophets foretold.

3. But view him writing to heathens, or preaching to a heathen audience, and what do you hear ? The finest appeals to the Book of Nature, to prove the being, providence, justice, wisdom, and goodness of him who made the heavens and the earth. Hear him at Lystra, where all were heathens and idolaters, and took him and his companion for gods, and were about to offer them sacrifices, Acts xiv. 15—17 : “ Sirs, why do ye these things ? We also are men of like passions (feelings and constitutions) with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.” “ He hath not left himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” No appeal to Scripture here ; and why ? because they neither acknowledged it, nor knew anything of it.

4. Hear him preaching at the Areopagus, to the Athenian magistrates : he does not begin to announce Christ, and redemption through his blood ; if he had done so, he must have lost his labour—they did not believe in the Supreme God ; for they did not know him : to know the true God, is the first principle of true religion. Taking advantage of the inscription on one of their altars, *To the unknown God*, he commences with, “ Him whom

ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you. God, that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device," &c., Acts xvii. 22—29. To such a people, Moses and the prophets would have had no authority; but a Greek poet of their own, Aratus, had; and therefore he quotes him, and argues on the quotation: "We are his offspring."—If so, "Then the Godhead is not like unto gold, silver, stone," &c.

5. And so nicely does this chief apostle discriminate, that when he addresses Felix, half a heathen and half a Jew, he does not dwell on either system, but refers to both. The resurrection of the dead was generally credited among the Jews, all believing it, except the Sadducees. This he mentions in his defence before Felix: and then, as was the practice of the Ethic philosophers, he "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," Acts xxiv. 21—25; referring to both systems, as far as they were likely to bear on the understanding and conscience of this demi-heathen. They who do not follow such a plan in preaching to the heathen, but rush in upon them with the mysteries of

Christianity, before they are convinced that there is a God who has created all things, though they thus *cast their bread upon the waters*, are not likely to find it, even after many days.

I need add no more relative to what might be said in the endlessly extended teaching of this third law: no direction can be needed on this point; and I introduce this method of instruction, to show that, in preaching to the heathen, we should begin with the simplest truths, and rise by degrees to the most sublime, one degree of knowledge preparing the way for another; and thus we should copy the method which God has used in the communication of his will to mankind, as has been before observed (p. 326): the patriarchal dispensation making way for the Mosaic; the Mosaic preparing for the Christian dispensation; and the Christian dispensation making way and preparing for the heaven of heavens in all its glories.

6. It is absurd to commence the instruction of heathens by the preaching of the sublime doctrines and mysteries of Christianity. We never set our children to read MILTON'S *Paradise Lost* before they have learnt the ALPHABET, and how to write and compound the LETTERS into SYLLABLES, the syllables into WORDS, the words into SENTENCES, and the sentences into regular DISCOURSE.

But it is time to return to my Christian congregation from a long digression, which has led me away to a heathen auditory in the ends of the earth.

1. The grand characteristics of that revelation of God, called here *The Law of Jehovah* (or as the margin translates, *The Doctrine of the Lord*), we have already seen; and what the word here used signifies (see p. 320); it is God's system of instruction, and of it the Psalmist says, *it is perfect* תמימה יהוה תורתו *torath Yehovah temimah*, "The law or doctrine of Jehovah is perfection." The revelation that God has given of himself to

man is a perfect system of instruction. It reveals no more than we ought to know; it keeps nothing back that would be profitable. It gives us a proper view of the nature and authority of the Lawgiver. It shows the right he has to govern us. This right he derives from being our Creator, our Preserver, and our incessant Benefactor. He has made us, and therefore we are his: "We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." All well-constituted and wisely-enacted laws are for the benefit of the subject. This is emphatically the case with the law of God. HE needs not our allegiance—he wants not our tribute. He is infinitely perfect, and needs nothing that we can bring. There was the utmost necessity for this law. He that is without law is without reason and rule. He has no line to walk by—nothing to teach, restrain, or correct him. He is led astray by his passions; and lives to his own ruin and destruction. God in his mercy has given him a law to bind, to instruct, and to lead him. In this law he has shown man at once his duty and his interest; and by it he has shown him his own weakness and sinfulness, and the necessity of receiving mercy from his Creator, because he has broken it, and cannot repair the breaches he has made; and the need he has of continual help from his God, that he may be able to walk in conformity to that moral law, not only in all his outward deportment, but also in all the workings of his understanding, judgment, will, and affections. All these things are included in the letter and meaning of the perfect law of the Lord. By it is the knowledge of sin; and by it is shown the absolute necessity of a Saviour. It shows also the nature and demerit of crimes, and declares and appoints the punishment.

It is PERFECTION—it is perfect in all its parts; and when we take the word in the whole extent of its meaning, it includes the instructions of the new law; it gives

testimony to him, “by whom is preached unto us the forgiveness of sin ; and by whom we are to be freely justified from all things from which we could not be justified (pardoned and saved) by the law of Moses.”

2. It is therefore said of this law, not only that it is perfect, but it CONVERTS the soul: משיבת נפש *meshibath nephesh*—*converting* (or as the margin, *restoring*) *the soul*. The soul of man has been *perverted*—turned from God to SIN and DEATH. It is to be *converted*—turned FROM sin and death, TO GOD and life eternal. It has fallen into sin, misery, and ruin ; and is to be restored to holiness, happiness, and endless salvation. The *law* (or as the margin has it, the *doctrine*) of the Lord, received as coming from himself, and under the influences of his own Spirit, *turns* the soul *back* (shows the method of reconciliation) *to God* ; and how it is to be restored from its ruined state, built up as at the beginning, and *made a habitation of God through the Spirit*. Thus the soul is converted to him, and restored by him. And the doctrine of the Lord is the grand means that he uses and will bless to the conversion and restoration of the souls of both Jews and Gentiles, of practical heathens and nominal Christians.

3. It is immediately added, ver. 7, “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple :” עדות יהוה נאמנה מוכימת פתי *éduth Yehovah neeminah, mechocimat peti*. The word עדות *éduth*, which we translate *testimony*, from עד *ád*, on, beyond, forward, signifies a *reference* to something *beyond itself*—to *time forward* ; and may here be referred to *typical things* ;—to such as gave testimony to things to come, as things of which the present were representatives. These may include all the types by which the great Saviour of the world was prefigured, his glorious dignity, his incarnation, preaching, miracles, passion, death, resurrection, the preaching of the apostles and

their successors, and the glory that should follow in the establishment of the Christian Church; and the diffusion of the knowledge of God over all the nations of the world by the dissemination of the word of truth, and by the teaching of the many, now called *missionaries*, who run to and fro, and by whom knowledge is increased. There is not one of these points that is not mentioned in the BIBLE, either in the direct words of prophecy, or by the testimonies, the types, and representatives of future glorious things mentioned above.

4. It is said of these *testimonies*, that they are *sure* or *true*. Yes, we may say with David, *true from the beginning to the end*. Every type has been illustrated and fulfilled by the antitype. There is not one testimony in the Bible, relative to Christ, that has not been fulfilled in him. Very trifling circumstances apparently have been predicted, or typically represented; and these very circumstances have been fulfilled with the utmost exactitude. The truth of God's word is not seen more in anything than in the fulfilment of circumstances which from their nature would appear to be wholly fortuitous. Among these, the betraying of Christ by one of his disciples, the selling him for a certain sum of silver, his scourging, nailing to the cross, the piercing of his side with a spear, the not breaking his legs, which was a *coup de grace* to all that were crucified, the laying his body in the tomb of a rich man, &c., are circumstances of this kind, worthy of the most attentive regard. These were all sure, true, and fixed, and were fulfilled to the utmost precision. But we cannot wait now to point out distinctly those testimonies, show their references, and mark their fulfilment.

5. The operation of these testimonies, and their use, are next mentioned. "They make wise the simple." The term *simple*, which is borrowed from the Latin, *sim-*



*plex*, is a metaphor taken from a cord or thread formed of one strand, as spun from the wheel ; and is opposed to the word *complex*, which signifies many of such strands twisted together, in order to make a rope or cable. Applied to man, it signifies one who has no double views, no duplicity or sinister modes of acting ; one who is as he appears to be. One who aims at the best thing, and pursues it by the best, most legal, and simplest means. In a theological sense, it means one who has nothing in view but the glory of God in the salvation of his soul. This he is ever seeking, in all his reading, hearing, working, and thinking. This one thing he does, forgetting what is behind, he presses forward to the prize of his high calling. Such a person is ever learning wisdom, from every portion of the divine testimonies : when he looks into the Old Testament, he sees many things that speak of the Christ that was to come, and he is greatly edified. When he consults the New Testament, he reads much of the Christ that is come, and of the glory that has followed ; and each reading increases his knowledge and wisdom.

The word פתי *peti*, from פתח *patah*, signifies one easily drawn aside, or persuaded to anything, whether good or bad ; and sometimes it means what we call a *simpleton*, one easily drawn aside, which amounts to the definition already given : and it is very remarkable, what an influence the Word and Spirit of God have upon such persons. I have known many cases of this kind—persons who appeared to have little sense, and little understanding, till the light of the Word and Spirit shone into their minds—their intellect in consequence became highly improved, and they drank in knowledge as the thirsty land does the showers from the clouds ; and though before easily warped and turned aside, even from good, became as steady as steel, and never turned to the right hand or

to the left from following their God! In their case, I saw two Scriptures fulfilled, that in the text, viz., “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;” and “The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein;” Isai. xxxv. 8. These could say, “We know that the Son of God is come, and he hath given us an understanding, that we might know him that is true, and we are in him that is true; this is the true God and Eternal Life;” 1 John v. 20.

Some say, “Civilize the heathen, and then teach them Christianity.” Civilization never was the medium of conveying Christianity; but Christianity invariably brings civilization in its train. Teach them to know God first, and they directly feel, from this knowledge, that they should cease to do evil, and learn to do well. The bare idea of God impresses this upon their hearts, and then they feel the necessity of avoiding indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions; and hence civilization. I have preached to heathens, and to the uncircumcised and the unclean, and I never gained an inch of ground by previous lessons of domestic economy, &c. I have known this plan tried upon a large scale, i. e., civilizing in order to christianize, and it totally failed; but I never found an instance where christianizing did not produce civilization.

Without proceeding any further in our examination of the other attributes or characteristics of this LAW or Revelation of God, which we find in the following verses, for which there is not sufficient time, I shall make a general statement of what has already been said, and apply it to the purpose of the present solemnity.

1. We have seen the hand of the infinitely wise and powerful God, manifested in the formation of the heavens and the earth; and so covering them with the characters of his conserving power and providential goodness, as to

make intelligible to mankind, when attentive to those wonderful works, his independent Being, eternal Power, and underived Deity ; so that all they who continue atheists, are without apology, and without excuse.

2. We have seen also how the same kind and merciful Being has given us his written law, that, knowing the mind of God from himself, we might at once discover our duty and our interest ; what is right and what is wrong—what from the holiness and perfection of his nature he must hate, and what he must love ; also the worship which he requires from man, and the advantages which man is to receive from that worship. And we have seen at the same time the numerous rites, ceremonies, types, and ordinances by which he signified that he would *yet make greater discoveries of his good will towards men*, by providing a complete remedy for the spiritual diseases of the great human family, and connect heaven and earth more intimately than they had been from the creation.

3. In tracing the operations of God downward, we have seen all those gracious designs executed, all vision and prophecy fulfilled—all types, ceremonies, and references to good things to come, realized ; God and man connected by the incarnation of the great Messiah ; and through his preaching, passion, death, and glorious resurrection, ascension, and mission of the Holy Ghost, life and immortality brought to light, and the grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, ordered to be proclaimed to all the inhabitants of the earth.

4. We ourselves have lived, and do live, in those times in which this great God is carrying on his glorious work of the moral renovation of the world. Those professing the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, having freely received the unspeakable gift, have felt it their duty to endeavour, according to the directions of our blessed

Lord, to send the records of his salvation to every nation and people, and in every tongue; and thus go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: and their benevolence and Christian charity have been excited to go yet farther, and send multitudes of missionaries to every quarter of the globe, with the book of knowledge in their hand, and the love of Christ in their hearts, to testify to all, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all might believe on him; and that they who believed should not perish, but have everlasting life.

To this general statement I have to add, that the People whom I here represent—who have been among the first, and in most cases the very first, to send the glad tidings of salvation to thousands of the most destitute of the inhabitants of the earth—have at present one hundred and sixty-six stations in Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, which are occupied by two hundred and nineteen missionaries, who have left their country, their connexions, and friends; and, taking their lives in their hands, have gone among the Gentiles to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. We have seen also that God has, in a most remarkable manner, blessed their ministry; that they have now, independently of multitudes already saved and gone to heaven, not less than 45,786 true scriptural converts, in church fellowship; and not less than 27,606 of those the servile progeny of Ham, slave-negroes in the West India Islands. You know that by this work a vast deal of expense is incurred; by the transport of so many missionaries and their families across such immense tracts of ocean and forest wilds, maintaining them among the heathen—filling up their ranks when diminished by death—with other incidental expenses, too minute and numerous to

be detailed ; that all these expenses have been hitherto covered by the people who sit under our ministry ; who have always shown themselves willing, to the utmost of their power, yea, and beyond their power, to divide their bread of life with all those who, for lack of it, were ready to perish. The same necessity for these benevolent exertions still exists. Louder and more numerous calls are now heard. “Come over and help us !” is the cry of many nations and peoples ; and to hear these cries our ears will not be slow, nor our hands unready. Do then, my friends, as God has done for you, hear and act according to the influence which God’s grace has diffused through your hearts, and according to the good which his providence has intrusted to your hands. And while you help by your property, be not backward with your prayers ; for, eminently, in this work, if Paul himself were to plant, and Apollos to water, God alone could give the increase.

On all the earth thy Spirit shower,  
 The earth in righteousness renew  
 Thy kingdom come, and hell’s o’erpower,  
 And to thy sceptre all subdue !

Like mighty winds, or torrents fierce,  
 Let it opposers all o’errun ;  
 And every law of sin reverse,  
 That faith and love may make all one !

Grant this, O holy God and true !  
 The ancient seers thou didst inspire ;  
 To us perform the promise due ;  
 Descend, and crown us now with fire !

From all that dwell below the skies,  
 Let the Creator’s praise arise ;  
 Let the REDEEMER’S grace be sung  
 In ev’ry land, by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord!  
Eternal truth attends thy word;  
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,  
Till sun shall rise and set no more!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

AMEN, *γένοιτο!*

## SERMON XV.

### THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

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#### 1 PETER I. 3—5.

3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4. "To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5. "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

PERHAPS a stronger proof cannot be produced from universal nature, that man was created in a state of happiness, than the intense desire which every human being feels after it. A desire uniformly felt by every race of men, in every country, and through all the ages of the world.

The soul, without giving us any distinct ideas of its primitive happiness, or of that in which this happiness consisted, does not fail to afford us sufficient intimations that it has been in such a state; that it has lost its happiness, and that it always feels from the operation of that wonderful principle called hope, the possibility of being restored to that state; though of the means of that re-

storation it has no distinct knowledge: hence, from this ignorance of the thing, and of the means of acquisition (in any distinct way), it acts without rule, and runs at random, seeking in anything and in everything what it has lost; bearing about with it the continual expectation that its search must be ultimately crowned with success. Yet, in this feeling and the consequent search, we find still no distinct idea of the thing sought. There is a general sense of discomfort, occasioned by the loss of some good; a general persuasion that what is lost may be found; but where, when, or in what, there is no knowledge; nor would it ever have been otherwise, had not divine revelation made the discovery.

Now this desire after happiness, which is a universal human feeling, seems as if planted in the heart by God himself. No creature loves evil as such—it is an abhorrence to all flesh. Pain and suffering are universally deprecated and execrated; and the privation of good is considered a real evil. Man is miserable, and he cannot bear it. He is obliged often to augur evil, he sees everywhere the possibility of its occurrence, and he is generally alarmed, and often to distraction.

But what is this happiness, so universally desired and pursued? It implies, according to some, the gratification of all reasonable desires; and it is generally supposed that to have things suitable, necessary, convenient, and comfortable, would content this universal wish: in a word, the *mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy or sound mind in a healthy body; and in having everything within reach that can keep them so. This, as far as animal nature is concerned, may be sufficient.

Mr. Hooker gives a diffuse definition of happiness, which, I am afraid, is but little to the purpose:—"Happiness is that estate whereby we attain, so far as possibly may be attained, the full possession of that, which simply



for itself is to be desired ; and containeth in it, after an eminent sort, the contentation of our desires, the highest degree of all our perfection." There is not a clause in this definition that may not be disputed. Who desires anything simply for itself? or desires it because it is that which simply for itself is to be desired? This is mere waste of words—man desires happiness for himself, and he feels he cannot be happy till he has that which absolutely gratifies every desire ; in which case, all his wishes are satisfied, and nothing is left behind to excite desire, as every desire has fully met with its gratification.

As all souls are of the same nature, and all seek happiness, it may be fairly presumed that the same thing is intended to be the means of rendering all happy—this must therefore be a universal and a sovereign good. Men seem to suspect each other to be wrong, because of their different pursuits ; and from this Mr. Locke thinks that "The various and contrary choices that men make in the world, argue that the same thing is not good to every man alike : this variety of pursuits shows that every one does not place his happiness in the same thing." Now if, from the nature of the soul, it can be shown that what constitutes human happiness must be one thing, and this is a sovereign good ; it will from this appear, that the whole human race are wrong, and that all are running themselves out of breath for no prize. They are seeking, not that which can make an immortal spirit happy, but that which can gratify and content the animal nature. But I have discussed this subject in another place [Sermon XI.], and therefore shall only add, that the soul of man was evidently made for God ; that its wishes are immense, if not infinite ; and that nothing but God, the Sovereign Good, can gratify those wishes. I have only touched the subject here, for the purpose of introducing that hope of complete happiness, of which

the apostle speaks in the text, and which is a subject of the utmost consequence to man.

1. Every man hopes for happiness ; and it is this hope that bears him up through all the ills of life. He sees and he feels evil, but he hopes for good. Despair is the opposite to hope ; where this takes place, a total derangement of all the mental faculties ensues ; and generally, if not soon relieved, the wretched subject dies, or puts an end to life.

2. While we retain our old Saxon word, *hopa*, *hope*, from *hopian*, *to expect*, we espouse the word *despair*, from the French *desesperoir*. In the same language, *esperance*, and *espoir*, signify hope ; and *desesperance*, and *desespoir*, despair, the *loss of hope*, the opposite to hope, the state in which there is no expectation of good, happiness, or success. What then is the proper definition of hope ? The following is the most common, and probably the best : “The expectation of future good ;” an expectation too, that arises from desire. It must be good, else it could not be desired ; it must be future, or it would not be an object of expectation—good in possession precludes hope—“Hope that is seen (possessed) is not hope ; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for ? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it ;” Rom. viii. 24, 25. A thing that was once an object of hope may have been attained ; and if so, hope, in reference to that, is at an end. Hope is never exercised, but where there is a conviction, less or more deep, of the possibility of attaining its object. As hope implies desire, it must be a natural or moral good that is its object, for nothing can be desired that is known to be evil. That which is good can alone gratify the heart ; and to gratify is to please, satisfy, and content. When Milton puts in the mouth of Satan, the following speech, *Paradise Lost*, book iv., line 108 :—

“ So farewell *hope*, and with *hope* farewell *fear*,  
 Farewell *remorse* : all GOOD to me is lost ;  
 EVIL, be thou my *good*,”—

the poet does not mean that the nature or operation of evil can be changed ; but that the diabolic heart might be pleased, satisfied, for the time, and contented with it, as a means of gratifying revenge and malice ; as all good was then to him beyond the reach and sphere of hope. None but THE devil could have uttered such a speech, as none but that archangel ruined could bring the fellest malice and revenge into successful action, so as to derive gratification from the result. Could Satan have taken evil in the place of good, so as to have rested satisfied with it, in that moment the nature of evil must have been changed to him, and hell cease to be a place of torment. But it is a diabolic boast, and has neither truth nor reason in it.

3. In examining this grand subject farther, I would observe that hope may be considered in a threefold sense : 1. *Simple* HOPE. 2. *Dead* HOPE. 3. *Living* HOPE.

1. HOPE, simply considered in itself—according to its definition above, *the expectation of future good* ; this shows the existence of the thing, without activity in itself, or operation in reference to its object. It exists, but in a state of carelessness and unconcern. This sort is nearly common to all men ; is not only without profit to them, because not used, but is generally, in its flutterings in the breast, like the *ignis fatuus*, that instead of leading aright, leads astray, causing its possessor to rest in mere expectation, inoperative and indefinite, without any time to commence, or place to act in ; a principle which from its misuse rather deceives than helps the soul. In consequence of this, it has been called delusive hope, false hope, vain hope, &c. ; but hope in itself, which is a gift

from God, is neither deceptive, false, nor vain. It is the misuse or abuse of it that deceives, leads astray, fills with vanity, &c. If properly used and applied, it may become even the anchor of the soul; and is that power or principle on which the grace of God works, in order to bring forth, in the end, that faith by which even mountains are removed. A wicked man may have this simple hope, and so may a hypocrite, and neither receive benefit from it; yea, they may abuse it to their eternal damage; and thus every power of the soul, and every gift of God, may be abused; and in reference to this we may apply the homely but expressive lines of old Francis Quarles:

“Thus God’s best gifts, usurped by wicked ones,  
To poison turn by their con-ta-gi-ons.”

2. *Dead HOPE.* I do not mean by this, hope that is extinct; for then it would cease to be hope, or anything else. Nor do I mean hope that is entirely inactive, and which may on this account be considered as *morally dead*; but I mean that hope which has for its object, *good things to come, after life is ended*; a hope that expects fruition of the objects of its attention, when the present state of things closes for ever on its possessor. Nor do I mean the hope that has for its object the glories of the invisible world; but the hope that misplaces its objects—that refers things which belong to the present state of being, to a future state; as it does the things which should be received here, in order to prepare for glory hereafter. This is a species of religious hope; it has to do with religious matters, such as pardon of sin, sanctification of the soul, and the acquisition of those graces that *constitute the mind that was in Christ*; in a word, that holiness without which none shall ever see the Lord. It expects none of these in this life; and thinks that no consciousness of having received pardon can take

place before death, if even then ; nor can any person, according to this hope, be *saved from his sins till his body and soul are separated*. Hence all its operations are in reference to death, and the separate state immediately succeeding. This hope, or the perversion of simple hope, paralyzes the Christian spirit, and in effect grieves the Spirit of God. No man ever receives good from it ; it serves indeed to amuse the mind, and in the proper sense of the word divert the soul ; it turns away from seeking present blessings, because its owner has made up his mind that none of these blessings can be received before death, and therefore he neither seeks nor expects them. It has the form, but it is the bane of every good. In many this species of hope, or the abuse of hope, is associated with much uncertainty, and sometimes with a degree of despair, even in reference to the things which it professes to have for its object, till at last the man doubts the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body ; and in fine, the joys of heaven become problematical ! This is *dead hope*—the hope that is looking for no spiritual good before death ; and generally appears to be inactive and unconcerned even about them. It is the inhabitant of a dead soul—of a lifeless, careless, Christless professor of Christianity ; one who, though he have a name to live, yet is dead ; and who will find, when he comes to that bourne where his hope is expected to act and be realized, that it is like the giving up of the ghost ; he gives up his ghost and his hope together. It is also the hope of the wicked—they expect to find God's mercy when they come to die ; but the hope of the wicked, in death, perisheth. Of such persons none can entertain hope but themselves.

3. *Living HOPE*. The hope that lives and flourishes by hoping ! This is simple hope, in its greatest activity and operation ; hope, with all the range of possible good

in its eye, its expectation, and its desire. Its objects are necessarily future ; but all is future that is in the least degree removed from the present ; hence the future, properly speaking, verges on the time that now is. The blessings that are necessary now it sees at hand—desires the possession—believes the possibility of immediate attainment—claims the grace from God through Christ—and thus realizes its object. Having received this blessing, it is strengthened to go out after more ; sees, desires, and claims the next in course ; receives this, and thus realizes another good that a short time before was future, and continues to be future still to all others who do not act in this way.

This hope is ever living by receiving. Pardon and holiness, the forgiveness of all sin, and purification from all unrighteousness, must be attained here. This it sees ; of this it is convinced ; and these blessings are the first objects of its attention. It claims them by a living energy, through faith ; for hope cannot exist nor act without faith ; and by faith is its work made perfect. Thus it is ever receiving. All future blessings, belonging to the human state of probation, which extends from the cradle to the grave, in the whole series of their approximations, becoming present, are realized in their order ; and the innate power of the last-received serves to support that which was received before, and thus on all the increasing glory there is a defence.

This hope takes up all God's blessings in their places and proper series. There are some of its objects, as stated above, which necessarily belong to this life ; others, that as necessarily belong to the world to come. It will not refer the blessings to be obtained here to the state after death ; nor will it attempt to anticipate those blessings which belong to eternity, in the present state. It is a

discriminating grace, for it is ever supported by knowledge and faith. It walks uprightly, and therefore surely.

“ Grace is in all its steps, heaven in its eye ;  
In every gesture, dignity and love.”

St. Peter calls this a LIVING HOPE. God, says he, hath begotten us again, *εις ελπιδα ζωσαν*, to a *living hope* ; and here he probably refers to his own case, and that of the apostles, at the time that the Jews had put Jesus Christ to death ; they had actually lost their hope, it had died, was become extinct. As it was before founded on the life of Christ, who they expected was about to restore the kingdom to Israel, when they found that the Jews had power to crucify him, that he actually died and was buried, and that he lay under the power of death—for as yet they had not seen him, nor heard of his resurrection—therefore they seem to have lost all hope in him as the King of Israel ; but when assured of his resurrection, then their *hope sprang up afresh*. The apostle represents God as having *αναγεννησας*, *begotten them again*, as giving them a second birth by this resurrection of Christ. They began to live a new life, having a lively faith in him who, though delivered to death for their offences, was raised again for their justification.

From all this we learn, that hope of pardon, holiness, and heaven, depends wholly on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The atonement was made by his passion and death ; the grand sin-offering had been made ; but the resurrection was the evidence that this was the true sin-offering, and that this sin-offering had been accepted by the Lord.

1 If Christ had not died for man, no soul could have been saved. There was no remission of sins without the

shedding of blood ; and no atonement, such as man needed, in the shedding of blood, unless that blood had been of infinite value.

2. As Christ was put to death as a malefactor, had he not risen again from the dead, it would have been a presumptive proof that he had suffered justly. But as he did rise according to his own prediction, this was a full proof of his innocence and God's acceptance of his offering. That crucified body, that pierced heart, could never more have been restored to life, but by a miracle of the Lord ; and had he been a malefactor, God's power would never have been employed in raising a body that had suffered the sentence of the law ; as this would have been an accrediting of iniquity. The resurrection, therefore, eternally precludes all suspicion on this head.

3. The resurrection of Christ was not only a proof of his immaculate innocence, and of God's acceptance of the sacrificial offering that he had made, but also of our resurrection. It was the human nature of Christ that died ; it was the human nature that rose again from the dead. It was absolutely necessary that there should be incontestable proof of the reality of Christ's death, in order to establish the fact of his resurrection. If it had only been a suspended animation, his revivification could have been no miracle. But the Jews saw him nailed to the cross—the Roman soldiers saw this also. When he and the malefactors that were crucified with him, had hung the due time, they were examined, to see whether they were dead, that if not, the *coup de grace* might be administered—the *breaking of their limbs*, to put them out of pain. The two malefactors were not quite dead, therefore they brake their bones ; but they found *Jesus dead already*, therefore they brake not his bones ; but to make sure work, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and from the wound issued *blood and water* ; a



full evidence that the spear had traversed the pericardium, and wounded the heart. And this was no doubt what was designed by the act; to fulfil the purpose of the sentence, and to insure the certainty of his death.

After this act, that body never could be restored to life but by the miraculous power of God; and that miraculous power never could be applied to accredit iniquity or imposture.

That all imposture might be prevented in his rising again, they took care to seal the tomb with the governor's seal, which it was death to counterfeit or break; and a guard of Roman soldiers were set to keep watch, till the third day should be elapsed after which Christ had said he would rise again. Notwithstanding all this care and caution, the resurrection took place—was sufficiently evident—was attested by the guards themselves,—but who were persuaded by the Jewish rulers to tell a most clumsy falsehood, which confuted itself, that they fell asleep (which was death if they did), and that while they slept, “His disciples came and stole away the body.” If they were asleep, they could not know whether he rose himself, or was raised by others; and if by others, how could they know that they were his disciples, as they acknowledged that at the time they were asleep? The soldiers got money, and they reported what they were desired to tell, and the governor was persuaded to wink at the thing. See the account, Matt. xxvii. 62—66; xxviii. 11—15.

But this falsity and malevolence were defeated by the *manifestation of Christ himself*, who, after he was risen, *showed himself openly to his disciples*, ate and drank with them for about fifty days; was seen and known by many, and at one time by more than 500 persons! See the different Gospels, and 1 Cor. xv. 3—8.

Such was the evidence of these facts to the disciples, who were so influenced by them (though naturally hesi-

tating and doubtful), that they could never doubt more ; but with the greatest power bore testimony to the resurrection of our Lord ; and the evidence was so great, accumulative, and conclusive, that many even of the Jewish priests became obedient to the faith ; and multitudes, both of Jews and Gentiles, were converted to Christianity. Thus then Peter and his brethren were “ begotten again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

4. The ascension of Christ to heaven, and his sitting down on the right hand of God, is a proof that he has regained the forfeited inheritance of mankind ; and this inheritance, all his genuine followers have a right to expect. Hence the apostle says, “ We are begotten to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”

It is an *inheritance*. The children of God only can possess it ; those who are begotten again—that have had a new birth, being *born of the Spirit*. By our first birth we are born children of the old corrupt Adam—children of wrath, i. e., condemned persons, dead in law—and who cannot inherit ; for, having sinned and been traitors against God, we have forfeited the inheritance. But as Christ has died and risen again from the dead, by a second birth—the being born from above—we become children of God by faith in him ; “ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” But we must become children in order to be heirs. For to none but these can eternal life be given ; for, even in heaven, the lot is dealt out according to law ; if children, then heirs—if not children, then not heirs.

This inheritance is,—

1. *Incorruptible*, *Αφθαρτον*. It has no principle of dissolution or decay in it ; and therefore must be totally different from this earth. The title is good ; it is legally conveyed ; there is no flaw in it ; it cannot be vitiated.

Originally it was a gift from God's eternal bounty ; and though it was lost by sin, yet the forfeited gift was recovered by purchase, and a most valuable consideration was paid down for it. It is signed, sealed, and witnessed, and is ready to be delivered ; for the time of *seisin*, or taking possession, is just at hand.

2. *It is undefiled, Αμικρον.* It has not only no principles or seeds of dissolution in itself, but it cannot be defiled—nothing impure can enter it ; therefore its corruption or deterioration is impossible.

3. *It fadeth not away, Αμαρανρον.* *It cannot wither.* Neither the soil, the air, nor the water can ever change. The soil cannot be exhausted ; the air cannot be contaminated ; and the water cannot be corrupted. It is always in bloom. It is a metaphor taken from those flowers that never lose their hue nor their fragrance. From the Greek word *αμαραντος*, we have our flowers called *amaranths*, because they preserve both hue and apparent freshness for a long time. This inheritance is as unfailing as its heirs are ; their day of probation is past ; their lot is fixed ; they can sin no more ; paradise cannot be lost a second time ; therefore the inheritance is for ever. This inheritance can never more go out of the family ; it is their own—unchangeably so. Not tenants-at-will, under the caprice of a landlord—nor the inheritance a place that can be assailed or taken from them either by force or fraud. It is no such tenure, nor so exposed. Their right in it is indefeasibly established. Satan attempted once to dispossess them eternally of the terrestrial inheritance, and all that was dependant upon it ; and though he partly succeeded, yet *God devised means that his banished should not be expelled from him.* Jesus repurchased and reconveyed it unalienably. So the attempt of the great adversary has been completely defeated. Glory be to God for his unspeakable gift !

On the subject of this inheritance of the people of God, I met with a very curious piece in an ancient Latin MS. on vellum, that contains Discourses for all the Sabbaths of the Year; how early composed I cannot tell, but the collection was made by John Felton, vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Oxford, and written about the year 1450. I shall translate this curious piece as a specimen of the theology of our forefathers. He observes:

“It was a custom in this country (England), that if a tyrant or oppressor had driven the true heir from his inheritance, and appropriated it to himself, and the oppressed man could not get any legal redress (for on the side of the adversary there was power), his last remedy was to challenge the tyrant to single combat; and if he overcame him, he was reinstated in his inheritance, and the oppressor lost his life. But if the lawful heir were an old and infirm man, and could not undertake the combat; if he had a stout healthy son, who was a knight or a soldier, the law permitted him to fight the tyrant or oppressor, in his father’s stead, as the right of the inheritance would, on the father’s demise, fall to him. In like manner, the Scripture gives us to understand that Adam, the first man, was right and true heir of Paradise; but was driven from it by the craft and subtlety of the devil. And although he might have claimed the combat, in vindication of his right to the inheritance, yet, being old and feeble, he was incapable of doing it. But his son, a strong active warrior, claimed the battle in place of his father, fought with and overcame the tyrant and oppressor, and gained a glorious victory for his father and brethren. And having done so, he conveyed the inheritance to his father and brethren by the following CHARTER:—

“KNOW all men present and to come, and all in

heaven and in earth, that I, JESUS CHRIST, Son of God the Father, and the Virgin Mary, God and Man, on account of my inheritance unjustly and traitorously taken away from my family, and long detained in the hand of the adversary, have descended into the stadium, fought with and overcome him, and gained a glorious victory; by which I have recovered and taken proper seisin of my inheritance, at the passover; and with my heirs have received it according to the appointment of my Father, to have and to hold, freely, fully, and peaceably, in length and in breadth, for ever and ever, on the simple condition of paying annually and daily to God the tribute of a clean heart and pure mind. In testimony of which, I have written this present charter with my blood, and order it to be read publicly by the whole world; and have affixed to it the seal of my divinity, with the testimony of the Father and the Holy Spirit, for these Three give witness in heaven.

“Written, read, confirmed, and delivered to men on Mount Calvary, on the sixth day of the passover, in the five thousand two hundred and thirty-third year from the creation of the world. To remain open and public  
**FOR EVER!**”

The ordeal by battle or single combat, in doubtful cases, where it was supposed that God alone could decide, was allowed in England till between the 11th and 12th centuries, as well as the ordeal by fire, hot iron, scalding water, &c.; but that to which the author here alludes was in high repute. The reader will at once see, that the inheritance was the same as that of which St. Peter speaks here. The *tyrant*, the devil; the *old infirm man*, Adam after his fall; the *warlike Son*, the Lord Jesus; the *combat*, his passion and death; the *Magna Charta*, or great charter of human salvation, the

New Testament; the *tribute*, or acknowledgment for possession, a new heart and a holy life. For without holiness no man can see God; and without practical holiness, no man can please him. By allegories of this kind were our forefathers instructed in the simple truths of the gospel. It is worthy of remark, that the charter was delivered to *all men*, was published to *all men*, and was ordered to be *everywhere read*. The Scriptures had not at that time been authoritatively withheld from the people.

Having referred to the ancient way in which lost inheritances were recoverable, I come now to consider the remaining characteristics of this inheritance.

4. *Reserved in heaven for you.* Such a place as that described above is not to be expected upon earth. It is that which was typified by the earthly Canaan; and in reference to which, the patriarchs endured all kinds of trials and difficulties in this life, as seeing him who is invisible. Therefore the inheritance must be *after this life*; for to this, as its ultimate point, does hope tend. There it is to be *kept*, *τηρημενην*, *guarded* and *watched*, for them to whom it belongs; and there is no fear of its being lost or alienated.

5. But for *whom* is it kept? Ans. For *them who are kept by the power of God*; *τους εν δυναμει Θεου φρουρουμενους*, for them *who are defended as in a fortress, by the power of God*. There is a remarkable correspondence between the two verbs used in this sentence: the first verb, *τηρω*, signifies *to keep watch, guard*, and *τηρησις* is a *place of custody, or prison*; and the other verb, *φρουρω*, from *φρουρος*, a *sentinel*, signifies *to keep as under a military guard*. The true disciples of Christ are under the continual watchful care of God, and the inheritance is guarded for them. In some countries military posts are continually kept up on the confines, in

order to prevent irruptions from a neighbouring people ; and in many places heirs, while in their minority, are kept in fortified places, under military guards, lest they should sustain any injury, or be carried away.

The *heirs* in the text are *kept by the power of God* ; *εν δυναμει Θεου*, *by the mighty miraculous power of God* ; for nothing less is necessary to keep and preserve in this state of continual trial, a soul from the contagion that is in the world. God's providence is the safe place, and God's power is the guard in that safe place. As it requires the same power to preserve that it required to create, so nothing less than the sovereign power of God will suffice to keep that soul in a state of purity which that power has purified. Thus the power and grace which save us are still necessary to keep us in the saved state.

But *how* is this power *exerted*? Ans. By *faith*. He that shall ultimately get the inheritance is he who shall be found faithful unto death. *Faith* interests the power of God in behalf of his follower ; and the power of God preserves the inheritance for the man, and the man for the inheritance. No persevering without this power, and no power without faith. The oracle of God is, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." This is *salvation*—redemption from sin in and during life, and glory after death.

6. This *salvation*, *σωτηρια*, this final state of safety, *is ready to be revealed* ; *εις σωτηριαν ετοιμην αποκαλυφθηναι*, it is *prepared to be revealed*. The oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready for the marriage. There is but a short step between any man and death ; and there is but a hair's-breadth between the true believer and glory. But it will not be fully revealed till *the last time*. The inheritance is prepared, but its glories will not be revealed till we have *done with life*—till we **have**

*passed through our probation*, having held fast faith and a good conscience.

Some by this clause understand the deliverance of the Christians at the sackage of Jerusalem by the Romans; the end of the Jewish polity being called the *last time*; others refer it to the *day of judgment*, and the glorification of the body and soul in heaven. But it may with equal probability be applied to the *gospel dispensation*, for it is the *last*, and shall not be *succeeded* by any other; and it is during this *dispensation* that all the miracles of God's grace shall be wrought. Here, under the continual influence of the grace of God, the soul is to be saved. In the other world, the issue of this salvation is to be found. Indeed, the time in which we live may be called the last time; in this we have our last day; and how near may this last day be! *The END of all things is at hand*. The end of the *enjoyments* of the *wicked*—the end of the *trials* of the *godly*. To all of us the Judge is at the door, and the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers. Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

Though there has been a general application of the substance of this discourse during its progress, yet it would not be well to leave such momentous things without some inquiries relative to our knowledge of the subject, and our experience of its truths.

You have heard a fact stated, *viz.*, the whole of mankind are in pursuit of happiness, and but few find what was designed for all. And why? Because they seek it not where it may be found. Some miss it through ignorance; some through unsettledness of character.

Have you attained it? You who are so fully instructed in the nature of this blessing, and the source whence it springs? You know that it is to be obtained



in the possession of true religion ; in the life of God in the soul. Will you seek in earthly things, in worldly pleasures, profits, honours, &c., what you know can be found in God alone ? If you will, and die in this state. how awful must the account be which by and by you must render to God ! As you know not what a moment may bring forth, delay not to give your hearts fully to him, that he may purify them from an evil conscience, and fill them with his holiness.

I have spoken to you much about *hope*—the *simple*, the *dead*, and the *living* HOPE. What sort is yours ? Are you also putting off the good things of the gospel till the day after death ? If so, do you call this wisdom, or madness ?

Have you got the operative living hope—the hope that lives by hoping ? See, then, that you give it its full scope. Let it be the pioneer for your soul ; let it get forward, descry the route, and clear the way. Keep it alert ; and let faith act its part in conjunction with your hope.

You have also heard much about the inheritance of saints in light. Do you see your own inheritance there ? Are you, after the example of your Lord, for the joy that is before you, enduring the cross, and despising the pain ? Do you know that your treasure is in heaven, by feeling that your hearts are there ?

Do you anticipate its blessedness ? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God ? And if a child, then a heir.

But are you scripturally and experimentally assured of your sonship ? Can you bear to be in doubt on a subject of such awful importance ? Are you struggling after earthly possessions, rising early, sitting up late, and eating the bread of carefulness, that you may in-

crease your earthly property, or accumulate wealth, while your desires are languid, and your prayers lifeless, in reference to this permanent eternal good?

There is an inheritance, yea, a kingdom for you; will you let any one take your crown?

But you think you have a good hope through grace. Well, are you kept in the faith? Is yours as strong as it ever was? Does it live as much in heaven as it formerly did? It formerly removed mountains; is it now stumbled at mole-hills?

When you had most hope, faith, and love, you needed more, in order to qualify you fully for heaven. If you have less now, are you getting to glory?

But you can say, "My heart and my flesh long for the living God." Then you are near to the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace. Hear one word which may be applied to your case, "If you seek me, let those go away." Part with everything, so that you may gain a full meetness for the inheritance. God does not desire you to cast anything away that is useful or profitable. He will strip you only of rags, weights, and incumbrances.

You say you have many trials in the way. And what way is there that is exempt from them? Take courage! He hath said, "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee;" that is, he will bear both thee and thy load. Remember, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees  
 And looks to that alone;  
 Laughs at impossibilities,  
 And cries, "It shall be done!"

Keep still in view the great Sacrificial Offering. He has purchased all blessings by his own blood; and he

has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Continue looking unto Jesus! Hear him *preaching*—see him *suffering, dying, rising, reigning*; and you can never more be troubled with doubts concerning the goodness of God, and his readiness to save to the uttermost all that come unto him through the Son of his love.

O thou Fountain of mercy! Prepare us all for, and take us at last to thy eternal glory, through Christ Jesus!  
Amen.

## SERMON XVI.

### CHRISTIAN MODERATION.

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PHILIPPIANS iv. 4—7.

4. Rejoice in the Lord alway ; and again I say, Rejoice.
5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
6. Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
7. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

ONE thing is peculiarly remarkable in Christianity ; it gives blessings and talents to all, and finds employment for all these blessings and talents.

Every member of the church of Christ has something to do in and for that church. 1. We find from the context, that two women, Euodias and Syntyche, had laboured with the apostle—that they were valuable and useful members of the church—that there were some minor points on which these pious women differed ; and that their usefulness might not be hindered, the apostle exhorted them to *be of the same mind in the Lord* ; for without a union of sentiment and affection it is not likely that they could labour together with so much success.

2. He entreats a true yoke-fellow of his at Philippi, to give all possible assistance to these good women ;

who doubtless were employed in visiting, instructing, and relieving the sick ; and he urges this duty on his fellow apostle, on the ground that those women, *συνθηθασαν*, had *wrestled together* with him in the work of the gospel.

3. As he had appointed to all their work, so he showed them all that it was their privilege to be happy in that work ; and therefore says, *Rejoice alway, and again I say, Rejoice*. As if he had said, It is your privilege to be *constantly happy* ; but there is no happiness but *in the Lord*, and those who rejoice must rejoice in *him*. That this might be the case, he exhorts them, ver. 4, “ Let your moderation be known unto all men ;” and urges it from this consideration, “ The Lord is at hand.”

I. Before I enter into the particular examination of the first clause in this verse, which shall be the principal subject of my discourse, I must say a few things on the latter clause, viz., “ The Lord is at hand ;” as there is a difference of opinion among commentators on the meaning of this phrase.

1. Grotius, and several others, have supposed that not only the primitive Christians in general, but the apostles themselves, were under the continual conviction that the *day of judgment* was at hand ; that this is the point which the apostle has in view in the expression—“ The Lord is at hand ;” and that from the conviction which they had of the proximity of this awful event, they used the exhortation on all convenient occasions, as a spur to diligence, and a motive to perseverance. Grotius is certainly wrong in his supposition ; for the passages which he referred to this event, belong solely to our Lord’s coming to execute judgment upon the disobedient Jews, in the subversion of their state. To suppose that the apostles, under the inspiration of the Almighty, could have been under such a mistake, would go to the destruc-

tion of their credibility; for nearly 1800 years have elapsed since that time, and the final judgment has not yet taken place: therefore they must have been most capitally mistaken; and all the doctrines, cautions, exhortations, &c., which they delivered in reference to this imaginary event, must be all erroneous, and consequently should be expunged from the Sacred Writings. But when we apply the Scriptures in question to the desolations which were then coming on the Jewish people and state (and they can apply to nothing else), the event shows they were divinely inspired, because the predictions were punctually fulfilled, and the exhortations in reference to them appropriate and highly applicable.

2. The clause has been understood by others as having something cautionary or monitory in it, as if the apostle had said, See that you do all right, for the Lord is ever present, and his eye is upon you. He has appointed you your work—he offers you grace to enable you to perform it aright—he is the sole Judge of it—and he alone will punish or reward it.

3. As the Christian church has selected this portion to be read the Sabbath previously to *Christmas-day*, her design was to call to the remembrance of the faithful the blessings which the *Advent of Christ* has procured, and to lead them to expect a repetition of the same blessings. According to this view of the subject, “The Lord is at hand!” the mind should go forward in the expectation of peculiar blessings and mercies at this season of the year. This is a use of the present portion, which I hope none of my hearers will neglect.

I would not dismiss this part of my subject without making a few remarks in reference to our profiting.

1. Jesus came and destroyed the Jewish polity, according to his prediction. Let this teach us that every

prediction of God is absolutely true—that all that remain yet to be fulfilled shall be fulfilled in their season, as those have been, of whose accomplishment we have had the fullest evidence.

2. As it is no less true that God is always at hand, let us endeavour so to begin, continue, and end every work, that it may meet with his approbation ; which it cannot meet with unless it bring *him* glory, *us* good, and our *neighbour* profit. It is a most consolatory thought, that God is ever nigh us, protecting us with the shield of his power, directing us by the counsel of his Spirit, and providing for body and soul out of the endless stores of his providence and grace.

3. As the season is at hand in which we commemorate the incarnation of our Lord, let us expect especial blessings. It is for this purpose, as we have seen, that our Church selects this passage, and appoints it to be read the Sabbath before the Nativity, that the people of God might have their expectations enlarged, and in consequence, actually receive an increase of every grace of Christ's Spirit. The subject taken up in this threefold point of view cannot but administer both edification and improvement. The use of it in reference to the grand subject of the text, we shall afterwards consider.

I come now to my main point, and which I believe to be the main point the apostle had in view, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

I believe the term *moderation* is to be applied to the passions and operations of the human mind ; and that as the apostle exhorts that *moderation* should regulate and govern the whole, so he intimates that without this *moderation* there will be a sinful excess on one hand, or a sinful deficiency on the other.

The original word, *επιεικης*, from *επι*, upon, and *εικω*

I *yield*, though it may be applied to *meekness*, *gentleness*, and *patience*, yet, from the connexion in which it stands here, it is sufficiently evident that our translators have given it its proper meaning, by rendering it *moderation*. We may, therefore, suppose the apostle to say, As the *Lord is at hand*, and you have a great work to do, in which both your soul and body must be employed ; take heed that all your passions and appetites be properly regulated and directed, that there may be no sinful deficiency or exuberance in any ; that ye may do everything from a proper motive, in its proper time—in its due place—in its necessary proportion—and in reference to its proper end.

*Moderation*, from *modus*, a *measure*, whether to ascertain length or quantity, is a very proper term to express a ruling principle applied to the passions, feelings, operations, or excursions of the mind.

By *passion*, I mean something in the mind that is acted on by something without ; in consequence of which certain feelings are produced which form themselves into what are called *desires* and *aversions*.

*Desires* are excited by the seeing, feeling, or hearing of things which appear to be suitable, useful, and profitable.

*Aversions* are excited by seeing, feeling, or hearing of things which are apprehended to be unsuitable, unprofitable, and injurious.

Perhaps all the passions of the human mind may be, with propriety, reduced to the above simple classification.

*Desires* will include all the concupiscible passions ; *aversions*, all the irascible.

Under the first head we may class *desire*, simply considered ; *hope*, springing from desire ; and *love*, produced by the realization of hope.



Under the *second*, we may class *dislike, fear, anger, terror, hatred*, and the like.

All these passions, whether concupiscible or irascible, imply some degree of acquaintance with the things that are their objects.

In the first case, that things do exist which are desirable in themselves, and attainable by proper means.

In the second case, that there are things which are evil in themselves, and may possibly occur ; unless opposed by proper preventatives.

Good, real or supposed, is always the object of desire.

EVIL, real or imaginary, is always the object of aversion.

1. The nature of the soul must be changed before it can desire evil, knowing it to be such—and before it can hate good, when convinced of its goodness, and particularly when convinced that that good is attainable. *Desire* is opposed to *aversion* ; *love*, to *hatred* ; *hope*, to *despair*.

*Desire* is excited on the knowledge of the existence of an attainable good. The good once possessed or enjoyed produces *love*. Properly speaking, we cannot love a good that is not enjoyed. God himself is not loved till enjoyed : “ We love him because he first loved us.” Previously to enjoyment, all is *desire*—but desire more or less intense, according to our apprehension of the excellence, usefulness, and profitableness of the good we have in prospect.

*Desire* associates to itself *hope*—“ hope is the expectation of future good.” The soul may consume in desire, because there is no enjoyment ; fruitless longings drink up the spirit. *Hope deferred*, says the wise man, *makes the heart sick*—utterly disappointed, slays it. *But when the desire cometh*—when the thing desired is possessed, then, says the same authority, *it is a tree of life—its*

fruit, or, in other words, the enjoyment of the thing desired and hoped for, is the food of the soul; because it is found to be fitting, useful, profitable, &c.

*Despair* is not a passion. *Despair* is the utter and final disappointment of hope. It is a conviction that the thing desired and hoped for is absolutely and eternally unattainable. In this case *desire* does not exist; because *desire* always implies, not only the knowledge of the existence of a certain good, but also that there is a possibility of its attainment. *Wishes* may subsist with *despair*, and thus modify themselves; “O that such a thing were attainable! but it is not; it is for ever, eternally impossible!” This may show us the proper difference between *wish* and *desire*.

2. Where *desire*, *hope*, and *love* cannot exist, there *aversion*, *despair*, and *hatred* must live. Hatred produces *malice*; malice, *revenge*. But revenge, malice, and hatred are not properly passions. They are the irregular, unbridled, unmoderated workings of aversion; as foolish fondness, languishing hope, and pining wishes are not passions, but the exuberance, the unbridled and unmoderated workings, of *desire*.

As the soul is naturally led to desire good and hate evil, and as good may be lost and evil acquired, God has set before man life and death—a blessing and a curse. If the life and blessing are not attained, then death and cursing must take place; the GOSPEL, therefore, holds out to our desire and expectation every possible good—such good as is suited to the nature of the soul, and to the state and condition of a human being; a good that can never be useless must ever be profitable, and will endure eternally. On the other hand, it exhibits to our view a real and substantial evil—the possibility of the loss of all good for time and eternity, and the possession of all evil—everything that the soul can suffer from unavailing

wishes—endlessly blasted hopes—and deep sinking and illimitably overwhelming despair ; and this glorious and benevolent system shows all this final despair to be only the consequence of an obstinate rejection of proffered good. To excite *desire*, *hope*, and *love*, God unbosoms his endless mercy to us in Christ Jesus. Here is everything that the soul can desire, which is suitable to its nature, and perfective of that nature in time and eternity.

The work of his grace begins on the passions. By the teaching of his Spirit we are called from imaginary to real good. By the operations of his grace sin is forgiven, and the peace of God communicated. The work of the Spirit is to refine and rectify the passions of man ; not to create new ones, nor to destroy old ones, but to influence, purify, regulate, direct, and moderate the whole. We did not lose one passion by the FALL ; we do not gain one by regeneration. Every passion we have is essential to the being of the soul ; and if we had any other passions than those which we possess, we could not be creatures of the same class : we, therefore, could lose none, and can gain none if our identity and link in the chain, or degree in the scale of beings, is to be preserved.

Sin has defiled the whole ; grace is to purify and refine them. Sin has rendered all disorderly and irregular ; grace is to regulate the whole, and moderate their operations. The apostolic counsel, “Let your moderation be known unto all,” is another word for, “Be ye saved into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.” Get evil cast out ; get good brought in. Get from under the government of irregular passions and appetites ; and come under the direction and government of the correcting and harmonizing spirit of the God of light and order. In order to have the passions regulated, we

must endeavour to get an acquaintance with our own minds. How few know anything of what is within them! Hence, not knowing our passions, we have no rule by which to guide them; and they are under no discipline.

Do nothing without thought. Let this be a sacred rule from which you will never permit your soul to depart. To act on the immediate impulse of passion or feeling, is the property of a brute. When anything is proposed to be said or done, consider the possibility of doing or saying too little or too much. The rule of moderation must be here applied. Bring the subject immediately before your mind: let *attention* consider it, *judgment* weigh it, *will* or *resolution* determine concerning it, as to what is to be done, how much or how little, and when and how.

We are always in extremes, or prone to them; *moderation* seldom rules. What are all the vagaries, irregularities, and extravagances of man, but transgressions of this sacred rule—*moderation*?

Be determined to act when action is necessary; to perform what is necessary, and no more; and never to be satisfied with doing less than is required. *Moderation* will also dictate with respect to the place, the time, and the manner.

Every place is not equally proper for a particular action; therefore, select the place that is proper. All times are not equally good. An action, not done in proper time, may not only be useless, but injurious; which, if done in proper time, would have been highly profitable. *Qui cito dat, bis dat*. He who does a thing in time, does it twice.

The *manner* also should be particularly studied: a bad mode of doing an action of the highest importance may render it useless or disgusting, and spoil all its

fruit. An action inconsiderable in itself, may be rendered productive of great utility and pleasure by an appropriate and gracious manner. In all these things *let your moderation be known unto all men.*

Apply this rule also to your *attachments*, and to your *opinions*. Be not hasty in forming friendships or intimacies ; appearances are seldom sure guides : they may be good land-marks ; but examine the road and every bearing ; connect these appearances with spirit, temper, action, manner, and judge from the whole ; and then the judgment is likely to be according to the rule of moderation.

*Opinion* and *judgment* are often confounded ; but they are very different. *Opinion* is generally formed on appearance, *judgment* on investigation. *Opinions* are often crude, irrelevant, and inconsistent ; *judgment* is systematic, regular, and consistent. The former is the fruit of passion or feeling, the latter of reason.

In religious and political opinions, men are greatly divided. Every man thinks his own right ; for if he did not think so, he would not adopt it. Each, therefore, should give another credit for his sincerity and uprightness in what he professes to believe ; and not endeavour to obtrude his own opinion upon his neighbour, unless he can give him a sufficient reason that his is right, and that his neighbour's is wrong. This will lead to *discussion*, and discussion may produce *moderation*.

*Moderation*, in reference to a religious or political opinion, is widely different from what is termed indifference about religion, politics, &c. *Moderation* avoids excesses of all kinds, while laboriously studious to preserve the golden mean. *Indifference* is carelessness and unconcern whether the thing be true or false, right or wrong. To indifference, all systems of religion and politics are the same. The indifferent man is a latitudinarian in religion :

he has no fixed creed, nor does he think it of importance to form one. In politics, his indifference so far prevails, that he cares not what form of government he is under. Arbitrary power and rational liberty are to him the same, provided he suffer not under one of them in his person or in his property. To him the British Constitution, and that of Spain, are equally good. A person of an opposite mind is generally a *fury*, if not influenced by *moderation*. All who are not of his religious opinions are heretics, and should be committed to the flames; all who are not of his political creed are traitors, and should be expatriated or hanged. In such cases, how much need for the apostle's advice, "Let your moderation be known unto all."

The more common matters to which *moderation* should be applied, I have left unnoticed: he must have but a little religion and less sense, who does not see that he should be moderate in his food, sleep, clothing, domestic expenses, pursuits of whatever kind, and in everything that concerns him, either as an agent or a patient. To give this exhortation the fullest effect, let us remember the manner in which the apostle enforces it: "The Lord is at hand." He is your Judge—his eye is ever upon you—he hates evil—he loves good; all excesses in action and passion are opposed to the order and harmony of his Spirit, and his administration among men. He *is at hand* also to help you—to support you in trials—succour you against temptations, to direct your hearts into his love and fear; and, in a word, to give you grace according to your day.

II. Having considered this important branch of the apostle's exhortation, let us see how the other parts concord with this, and the views of it which have been already presented.

"Be careful for nothing," *μηδεν μεριμνᾶτε*, "Be not

*anxiously* concerned about anything." Carefulness, circumspection, and diligence are never prohibited by the gospel ; on the contrary, they are strongly recommended and enforced. He who is without care, in the proper sense of the word, is without prudence, common sense, and reason ; but anxiety, which argues doubtfulness, diffidence, distrust, and perturbation of mind, is always ruinous. The anxious man has no confidence in himself—all is hurry and confusion—apprehension and dismay : he has no confidence in his God, either in his providential management of the world, or in the displays of his grace and mercy : his mind is unhinged ; he is a prey to conflicting passions, each of which predominates by turns. In the present, he is miserable ; and every future prospect is gloomy and distressing. *Anxious carking care*, is the very opposite to *moderation*. By the former, the government and balance of the soul are lost ; by the latter, they are preserved. The anxious mind is a hurried mind : it is necessarily distracted ; and, in consequence, always indecisive. He is tossed about with illusive hopes, every one of which terminates in disappointment, because not founded in reason or probability ; and he is tortured with fears, which have no place but in his own imagination. He is without prayer—without confidence—and without God : and all his labour is marred, and his life poisoned, by the anxiety he feels for the issue of everything, and the gloomy apprehensions he has that the result will be evil. In a word, he is a burden to himself, and a plague to others.

To prevent such a state of mind, the apostle prescribes *moderation*, on the consideration mentioned before, *the Lord is at hand*. To show the use of this, he exhorts that "in all things our requests should be made known unto God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving."

It may be said, "How can any considerate man be free from anxiety, who is conscious that there is so much natural and moral evil in the world, and who cannot foresee what is in futurity; but has reason to conclude, from what has taken place, that every arriving moment will come laden with trouble, disappointment, affliction, and death?" It may be farther asserted, "That the changes and chances of this mortal life are subjects of the most serious and solemn apprehension: because they come unforeseen, they cannot be prevented; and not being known, no provision can be made against them."

To meet this objection properly, we must allow that there are what we call chances in the world, i. e., accidents and occurrences, which, howsoever under the direction of Divine Providence, appear to us unconnected, insulated, and fortuitous. And that these chances produce changes, which could not enter into the comprehension of prudence or foresight to descry, is also to be conceded. But what is all this to the point, as long as there verily is a God who ruleth in the earth, and who loves mankind? Chances or accidental occurrences in human affairs are under his eye and government. To the changes produced by them, HE can give what direction he pleases. The man who trusts in his God, need fear no evil; for should the chance produce a change which, in its natural operation, would be unfriendly to him; the power of God can turn it aside, or give it a contrary direction, so that it shall not come nigh to him to do him evil. God has way everywhere, and all things serve the purposes of his will; and it is his will and purpose to save to the uttermost all that come to him through the Son of his love.

Whatever a religious man's request may be, let him make it known unto God, whether it concern his present



or his future well-being. He wants a blessing now ; let the request be made known. He is afraid of coming evil ; let him pray for protection and safety. *Prayer*, which is the desire of the heart, is also the language of dependance ; and without dependance on God for continual direction and protection, anxiety is unavoidable. Prayer continued, is supplication. PRAYER, or the desire of the heart after God, may be one act ; SUPPLICATION is many. *Prayer* simply requests ; *supplication* begs, entreats, pleads, and continues in all these, till the answer is given.

Prayer and supplication should ever be accompanied with thanksgiving. Innumerable mercies have already been received : for these gratitude is reasonable ; and thanksgiving is the outward expression of gratitude. A man may expect to receive additional good from the hand of God, when he comes with a grateful heart for favours already bestowed.

It is not likely that God will trust that man with more mercies, who is not thankful for those he has received. By gratitude, we in some sort return the divine favours back to their source. Those only who are faithful to restore a loan, have reason to expect they will be again trusted.

We are commanded to *make our requests known to God* : this argues no imperfection in the divine knowledge. By making them known, we are to understand enumerating them, spreading them before him, not that *He* may see or know them, but that our eye may affect our heart. He who says, "As God knows all things, he knows my wants better than I can know them myself, and therefore I need not pray," only shows that he has no sense of his wants, and that on him divine benefits would be lost : for, not knowing the want of them, he could not know the worth of them ; therefore, that gra-

titude which springs from a sense of obligation could never be felt by him ; and as obedience is the proper expression of a sense of obligation, in the life of such a man it cannot be found. God, therefore, requires that *in all things*, with *prayer* and *supplication*, we *make our requests known unto him*. And when we know that his wisdom, power, and goodness are interested in our behalf, we shall be free from all anxious and corroding cares.

The necessary result of all this must be, that the *peace of God shall keep the heart*. As these directions are given to the church of God at Philippi, we may suppose that the members of it were made partakers of that peace which flows from a sense of justification or pardon, Rom. v. 1 ; but this peace will have many interruptions, if it should not be wholly destroyed, where *moderation* is wanting, and where anxious carking cares are indulged. Where *moderation in all things*, with proper dependance on the providence, and faith in the mercy and goodness of God, prevail ; there, PEACE rules, and keeps the heart as in a garrison or fortified place, for so much the term *φρουρησει* implies : the *heart*—the whole system of affections and passions which relate to man and his animal nature, in reference to this world ; for he that thus makes his requests known unto God, has a firm dependance on God's providence for supplies and support.

And this same peace will keep the *mind*, *νοημα*—the *understanding*, *judgment*, *will*, and *reason* ; all the higher faculties of the soul which relate to man in his reference to God, and the eternal world ; and this peace will keep the heart and mind from all extravagance—from all hurtful imaginations—from all foolish, precarious, and uncertain fancies, in a continual humble dependance on the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus, from the full conviction that he who has done all things well, will con-

tinue to send forth his mercy and his truth, and save to the uttermost all who thus trust in him.

The peace which God hath promised *passeth all understanding*—it is indescribably great, excellent, and necessary; beyond all price and all comprehension; and consequently, beyond all my powers of description. It is known best by its existence and government in the soul. It is better felt than expressed; and it is God alone that can make it known to the hearts of my readers.

In a very few lines, the late Dr. Byrom, of Manchester, has given a mass of excellent advice on the subject of this discourse; and with them I shall close it.

With patient mind, thy course of duty run;  
God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,  
But thou wouldst do thyself, couldst thou but see  
The end of all events, as well as He.

Now, to Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

# SERMON XVII.

## ON THE DECALOGUE, OR TEN COMMANDMENTS.

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EXODUS xx. 1—17.

1. "And God spake, all these words, saying,
2. "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
3. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
4. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth :
5. "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them ; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ;
6. "And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
7. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
8. "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.
9. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work :
10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God ; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates :
11. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day ; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

12. "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

13. "Thou shalt not kill.

14. "Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15. "Thou shalt not steal.

16. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's."

THE two first verses of this chapter contain the preface, which shows the authority by which these commandments are given, and the obligation of the people to obey:—

*And God spake all these words, ver. 1.*

It has been conjectured, and not without great plausibility, that the clause *את כל הדברים האלה eth col hadebarim haelleh*, "All these words," belongs to the latter part of the concluding verse of the preceding chapter, and should be read thus: "So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them ALL THESE WORDS; that is, he delivered to them that solemn charge, not to attempt to come up to that part of the mountain on which God manifested himself, in his glorious majesty, lest he should break through upon and consume them. When Moses, therefore, had gone down, and spoken all these words, and he and Aaron had reascended the mountain, then the Divine Being, as supreme Legislator, is majestically introduced thus: AND GOD SPAKE, SAYING. This gives a dignity to the commencement of this chapter, of which the above clause, if not referred to the speech of Moses to the people, deprives it. Our most ancient Version, the Anglo-Saxon, reads in the same way, *Ɔod spæc þus*, *God spake thus*; which is the whole of the verse in this Version (without the *and*), which

makes the whole of this introduction more peremptory and authoritative.

The giving of the law on Mount Sinai was the most solemn transaction which ever took place between God and man ; and therefore it is introduced in the most solemn manner. In the morning of that day in which this law was given (which many learned chronologists suppose to have been May 30, in the year of the world 2513, before the Incarnation 1491, that day being the Pentecost), the presence of Jehovah became manifest by thunders and lightnings, a dense cloud on the mountain, and a terrific blast of a trumpet ; so that the whole assembly was struck with terror and dismay. Shortly after, the whole mount appeared on fire ; columns of smoke arose from it, as the smoke of a furnace ; and an earthquake shook it from top to base ; the trumpet continued to sound, and the blasts grew longer, and louder and louder. Then JEHOVAH, the sovereign Law-giver, came down upon the mount, and called Moses to ascend to the top, where, previously to his delivering this law, he gave him directions concerning the sanctification of the people. See Exod. xix. 16, &c. From the awful manner in which the law was introduced, it is no wonder that, at first view, it was deemed the ministration of terror and death, 2 Cor. iii. 7 ; appearing rather to drive men from God, than to bring them nigh to him. And indeed from this solemn fact we may learn, that an approach to God would have been for ever impracticable, had not infinite mercy found out the gospel scheme of salvation. By this, and this alone, we draw nigh to God ; “for we have an entrance unto the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” Heb. x. 19. Even the apostle of the Gentiles was deeply struck with this terrific display of God’s majesty, though contemplating it

in the mild light of the glorious gospel. "For," says he, "ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire ; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest ; and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words ; which voice, they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more ; for so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake : but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ; and to an innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven ; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect ; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel," Heb. xii. 18—24.

The obligation of the people to hear and to obey, is founded on ver. 2 : "I am Jehovah thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." As יהוה *Jehovah*, he is the fountain and cause of all being : there was nothing *before* him, for he had no beginning ; there can be nothing after him, for he is eternal, and can have no end. And as he is the cause of all being, the Creator of heaven and earth, as he had already manifested himself to this people, so he is the preserver of all that he has made. Of all that is good and excellent, he is the cause ; without him nothing is good, nothing holy, nothing strong. He has, from his nature and being, absolute right over all that he has made ; and is, necessarily, the Lord and Governor of all things, animate and inanimate, spiritual and material. He alone has authority and power to save and to destroy ; to bring into being, or annihilate that which he has already created. He is the First, and he is the

Last ; he is the Beginning and the End ; the Uncreated, Self-sufficient, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent Creator of all things, and Father of the spirits of all flesh. *For his pleasure they are and were created.* As they were brought into being by his omnipotent *will*, so they continue to exist during his *pleasure*. Under such a Sovereign, man is not left to a state of indifference, whether he will obey or disobey, as if these were indifferent things. He *must* obey, and show his allegiance, if he regard his own welfare ; he *may* disobey, and show thereby his spirit of rebellion : and thus the potsherd of the earth enters the lists with the Almighty. In subjection and obedience all good is secured ; in disaffection and rebellion, all good is forfeited. Man *may* choose life or death, a blessing or a curse ; and according to his *choice* (for God *compels* nothing on this head) will be his state in time and eternity ; a state of misery or a state of happiness—and both ineffable. A just consideration of this subject is imperious on man ; and why ?—God made him. He is Jehovah, and governs all things ; and obedience to his will is the highest interest of man.

But in addition to his *right* over them as Creator and Sovereign, he says, *I am THY God* ; אלהיך *Eloheycā*. There is something in the term אלהים *Elohim* that is peculiarly interesting to man. It is allowed, by wise and learned men, to signify God in covenant with man : God having undertaken to raise man from his fall, and restore him from sin, degradation, and misery, to that state of glory, holiness, and excellence from which he had fallen. And, indeed, all this is implied in the bare idea of God ; the Good One ; the best of Beings ; He who is as benevolent as he is just—as beneficent as he is powerful. He who is the supreme and satisfying Good of all intelligent beings. Who, though he be infinitely just, delighteth



not in the death of a sinner ; and who, though infinitely perfect and happy, and therefore needing nothing that he hath made, delighteth in the salvation of man.

He to whom God says, *I am thy God*, in this peculiar sense, has reason for eternal exultation. And that he had shown himself to be God, the good Being, to Israel, he adds : “ Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” I need not here enter into the ancient history of the Israelites, and of their 430 years’ servitude in Egypt, where they were at all times ill used, and, towards the latter part of their sojourning there, most cruelly oppressed ; these things are well known. From that land, in which the true God was not acknowledged, where they had no means of grace, and no spiritual or intellectual advantage of any kind—out of this place of slavery, this house of bondmen, God, by a strong and mighty arm, redeemed them, and was now actually guiding them to a land where they were to eat bread without scarceness ; where God alone should be their king ; where they were to have the essence of civil liberty ; and, with all other good things, the means of grace, and the hope of glory. All these were obligations of the highest kind, and reasons why they should receive his laws immediately from himself, and take them for the regulators of their heart, and the rule of their conduct.

There are two points of view under which this law of God appears both singular and important.

1. It is the most ancient code or system of law ever given to man.

2. It was written in alphabetical characters, invented by God himself ; as it is most probable that, previously to this, no such characters had been known in the world.

1. It is the most ancient code or system of law ever

given to man. All the nations of the earth have been unanimous in the opinion that the first code of law must have come from heaven: and so necessary was a divine origin for those laws, to which all were to render obedience, that the great legislators of antiquity were obliged to pretend that from some god or goddess they received, by inspiration, the laws they proposed to the people, to whatever form of government they chose to apply them. The intercourse which Moses had with Jehovah, was soon known among all the nations of the East; and from them the Greeks and Romans received the information. Hence the pretensions of Numitor among the ancient Romans; Lycurgus and Solon among the Greeks; Zeratusth or Zoroaster, and Menu, among the Persians; and Mohammed among the Arabians. But no laws have been proved to be divine, and rightly attributed to God, but those given by Moses to the Jews; and by Jesus to the Gentiles. The oldest record in the world is the Pentateuch. It is the simplest, the purest, and the most comprehensive of all that has ever been delivered to men. Christ's sermon on the mount is the comment on the Mosaic code.

2. These laws were written in alphabetical characters, invented by God himself; as it is most probable that, before the giving of the two tables of stone written by the finger of Jehovah, there were no alphabetical characters of any kind known to man.

In the early ages of the world, letters would have been of little use. Men, living then to a great age, and nigh to each other, transmitted instructions down to posterity by word of mouth. This is what is called tradition; i. e., transmitting from hand to hand the facts necessary to be remembered: but when the age of man became shortened; when kingdoms and commerce were established, and the inhabitants of the earth were greatly

multiplied, and, consequently, scattered over the face of the earth, then the use of alphabetical writing became necessary. And seasonably, as Dr. A. Bayley observes, in supply of this want, we are told that God, at Mount Sinai, gave unto a chosen people, laws inscribed with his own hand. "No time seems so proper, from which to date the introduction of letters among the Hebrews, as this ; for after this period, we find continual mention of letters, reading, and writing, in the now proper sense of these words : "And it shall be, when he (the king) sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law, IN A BOOK ; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life," Deut. xvii. 18, 19. "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it to the priests the sons of Levi," Deut. xxxi. 9. The first time we meet with any mention of writing, is in Exod. xvii. 14, "And the Lord said to Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book." But it is evident, that either this passage is introduced here, instead of Deut. xxv. 17, by way of anticipation ; or that by the words כָּתוּב זָכוֹר וּזְכוֹר בַּסֵּפֶר *kethob zoth zikkaron ba-sephar*, "Write this for a memorial in a book," was intended only a monumental declaration of the defeat of Amalek by Joshua, by some action or symbolical representation : for it is immediately subjoined, "And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it יְהוָה נִסִּי *Yehovah nissi*, "the Lord is my banner." Moses, it is said, ἐκταδεύθη, *was educated*, in all the wisdom of the Egyptians—in all the learning of which they were possessed ; but it is manifest he had not learned of them any method of alphabetical writing, otherwise there had been no occasion for God's act and assistance, in writing the two tables of the law ; no need of a miraculous writing : had Moses known this art, the Lord might have said to him, as he often does afterwards, "Write thou these words," Exod.

xxxiv. 27. "Write on the stones the words of this law, Deut. xxvii. 3.—"Write ye this song for you," Deut. xxxi. 19. Possibly it might not be going too far to say that neither letters nor language were a natural discovery; and that it was impossible for man to have invented either: for, 1. Reason may show us how near to an impossibility it was that a just and proper number of convenient characters for the sounds in language should be naturally hit on by any man; for whom it was easy to imitate and improve, but not to invent. 2. From the evidence of the Mosaic history, it appears that the introduction of writing among the Hebrews was not from man, but God. 3. There are no vestiges of letters subsisting in other nations, before the delivery of the law on Mount Sinai; nor then among them till long after." See Dr. A. Bayley's Four Dissertations; Diss. 1. p. 33.

That God actually wrote the ten Commandments on the two tables of stone, seems evident, beyond doubt, from the following texts:

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mountain, and be thou there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN, that thou mayest teach them;" Exod. xxiv. 12.

"And he gave unto Moses upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, WRITTEN WITH THE FINGER OF GOD;" Exod. xxxi. 18.

"And Moses went down from the mount, and the two tables of testimony were in his hand; the tables were written on both their sides. And the tables were the WORK OF GOD; and THE WRITING WAS THE WRITING OF GOD, graven upon the tables;" Exod. xxxii. 15, 16.

"These words (the ten Commandments) the Lord

spake in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice ; and he added no more ; and HE WROTE THEM upon two tables of stone ;” Deut. v. 22.

Nothing can be clearer than these texts ; and it seems quite impossible to give them any other meaning than that to which they are applied in the preceding observations ; and from them we learn that alphabetical characters were the invention of God ; and that the first piece of alphabetical writing was that of the *ten Commandments*, written by the finger of God on Mount Sinai, upon two tables of stone.

The laws delivered on Mount Sinai have been variously named : in Deut. iv. 13, they are called עשרת הדברים *ésereth hadebarim*—THE TEN WORDS.

In the preceding chapter, ver. 5, God calls them אמת בריתי *eth beriti*, “ my covenant ;” i. e., the agreement he entered into with the people of Israel, to take them for his peculiar people, if they took him for their God and portion. “ If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my *covenant*, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me.” And the word *covenant* here evidently refers to the *laws* given in this chapter, as is manifest from Deut. iv. 13 : “ And he declared unto you his *covenant* which he commanded you to perform, even *ten commandments*.”

These commandments have also been called the MORAL LAW, because they contain and lay down rules for the regulation of the *manners* and conduct of men.

Sometimes they have been termed התורה *hatorah*, THE LAW, by way of eminence, as containing the grand system of spiritual *instruction, direction, guidance, &c.*, as the radical meaning of *torah* signifies.

Often it is called the DECALOGUE, Δεκαλογος, which is a literal translation into Greek of the עשרת הדברים *ésereth hadebarim*, or TEN WORDS of Moses.

Among divines these commandments are generally divided into what they term the *first* and *second* table.

The *first table* containing the first, second, third, and fourth commandments, and comprehending the whole system of THEOLOGY—the true notions we should form of the Supreme Being, the reverence we owe, and the religious service we should render, to him.

The *second table*, containing the remaining six commandments, and comprehending a complete system of ethics, or moral duties, which man owes to his fellows; and on the due performance of which the *order*, *peace*, and *happiness* of society depend. By this division, the FIRST table contains our *duty* to GOD; the SECOND, our *duty* to our NEIGHBOUR.

This division, which is natural enough, refers us to the grand *principle*—love to God and love to man; through which *both* tables are observed. 1. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength.” 2. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” “On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets;” Matt. xxii. 27—40.

#### THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

##### *Against Mental and Theoretic Idolatry.*

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” ver. 3.

פני לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני *lo yehiyeh leca elohim acharim al panai*,—“There shall not be to thee strange gods before, or in the place of me.” It is worthy of notice, that each *individual* is addressed here, and not the *people collectively*—though they are all necessarily included, that each might feel that he was bound for *himself* to hear and do all the words. Moses laboured to impress this personal interest on the people’s minds when he said, Deut. v. 3, “The Lord made this covenant with *us*, even *us*, who are all of *us* here alive this day.” To *us*,

called Christians, to every one of us, are these words directed also, and to our children and children's children. All are concerned here ; the supreme Lawgiver utters his commands, not relative to religious rites and ceremonies, but to spiritual and moral duties,—duties which we must fulfil both to God and man, if we wish to be happy in this world, and in the world to come. We must, therefore, lose sight of the *Ritual Law* of Moses ; in this we are not concerned ; we have to do with that unchangeable moral law which belongs to all mankind, in all countries, in all states and conditions of life, in all the ages of the world ; given by the Sovereign of heaven and earth to all the human beings that constitute his subjects and family on the habitable globe.

After having recalled to their remembrance his mercy in visiting them in Egypt, and his power manifested in bringing them out of a state of servitude as degrading as it was oppressive ; and this, by a series of acts plainly descriptive of his eternal power and godhead ; he now commands them to acknowledge no other being as God but himself. As the word אַחֲרִים *acharim* means *strange* or *strangers*, we may consider it here as implying, Thou shalt not acknowledge not only the strange gods of a strange people, but also any god or pretended power with which thou art unacquainted ; no one who has not given thee such proofs of his being, power, and goodness, as I have done, in delivering thee from the Egyptians ; dividing the Red Sea ; bringing water out of the rock ; bringing quails into the desert ; sending manna from heaven to feed thee ; giving the pillar of cloud and of fire to direct thee in the wilderness ; to be a light to thee by night, and to cover thee from the ardours of the sun when shining in the might of his strength. By these miracles God had rendered himself familiar to them ; they were intimately acquainted with him, and

the operation of his hands ; and therefore, with propriety, he says, “Thou shalt have no strange gods before me ;” פני על *ál panai*, or *penei*, in my presence, or in the place of those manifestations which I have made of myself.

This commandment prohibits every species of mental idolatry. We must not attempt to form conceptions of the Supreme Being as if confined to *form*, to any kind of *limits*, to any particular *space* or *place* ; as JEHOVAH, he is in every respect inconceivable ; no mind can grasp him ; he is an Infinite Spirit ; equally in every place, and in all points of duration ; he cannot be more present in one place than another, because he fills the heavens and the earth, though the manifestations of his presence may be more in particular places and especial times. His working shows that he is here and present ; though he would be no less present were there no apparent working. He is not like man, though, in condescension to our weakness, he represents himself often as possessing human members and human affections. When a thing is said to be done by the finger, the hand, or the arm of God,—this only points out *degrees* of power manifested in performing certain works of mercy, providence, deliverance, &c. And these *degrees* of power are always in proportion to the work that is to be effected. The *finger* may indicate a comparatively slight interference, where a miracle is wrought ; but not one that is stupendous. The *hand*, one where great power is necessary, accompanied by evident skill and design. And the *arm*, one in which the mighty power of God comes forward with sovereign, overwhelming, irresistible effect. When the *shoulder* is attributed to him, it points out his almighty sustaining power,—maintaining his government of the world, and of his church ; supporting whatever he has made ; so his *heart* represents his concern for his



own honour, for the welfare of his followers, and for the afflicted and distressed.

This divine Being we must sanctify in our hearts ; that is, we must separate all transitory, material, and particularly earthly things from the notion we form of him. We cannot conceive what he is, and how he is. It is enough for all the purposes of devotion and faith that we can acknowledge him as the Cause of all being ; infinitely perfect in himself ; needing nothing that he has made ; supporting all his creatures ; willing the perfection and happiness of all his intelligent offspring, for whom he is especially concerned ; for he made man in his own image, and in his own likeness.

But as this God is inconceivably great, holy, just, good, and merciful, how shall we come into the presence of his holiness and justice, seeing we have sinned and have rebelled against him ? It is true, the consideration of his goodness and mercy may encourage us ; but still what right have we to expect that he will give the preference to the claims of his goodness and mercy, rather than to those of his holiness and justice ? Here the doctrine of a Mediator must come in. Sacrifice was appointed to the Israelites as the medium of approach to this most awful and glorious Being. That sacrificial system was a type of the Incarnation, Passion, Death, and Atonement of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And as to us there is only one God, so there is only one Mediator between God and man ; we approach, therefore, this Infinite Spirit, through him who hath lain in his bosom, and hath declared him, and made him known to mankind.

This commandment also forbids all inordinate attachment to *earthly* and *sensible* things : i. e., things that are the objects of our senses, and for the possession of which our appetites and affections are intensely occupied.

As God is the Fountain of happiness, and no intelligent creature can be happy but through him ; whoever seeks happiness in the creature is necessarily an idolater ; as he puts the *creature* in the place of the Creator ; expecting *that* from the gratification of his passions in the use or abuse of earthly things, which is to be found in God alone.

Thus we find that the first commandment in the Decalogue is divinely calculated to prevent the misery of man, and to promote his happiness by taking him off from all false dependance ; and leading him to God himself, *the Fountain of all good.*

#### THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

##### *Against Making and Worshipping Images.*

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image ;”  
ver. 4.

As the word פֶּסֶל *pesel*, which we translate *graven image*, signifies in its root, to *hew, carve, engrave, &c.*, it may here signify any kind of image either of wood, stone, or metal, on which the axe, the chisel, or the graving tool, has been employed. This commandment includes, in its prohibitions, every species of idolatry practised in Egypt. For a particular description of the different objects of religious worship among the Egyptians, I must beg the reader to refer to my comment on the *ten plagues of Egypt*, and particularly to the concluding observations at the end of Exod. xii. Image-worship is a positive breach of the first command. It attempts to humanize God, and fills the miserable idolater with the opinion that God is like to himself, if not altogether so ; and image worshippers in general have no other idea of God than that of a gigantic man, of amazing dimensions, of vast strength, wisdom, and skill ; no other kind of being having any such strength or

wisdom. Hence, among the Roman Catholics, God is represented as a very grave, venerable old man, with a triple crown (which however their popes borrow), to signify his sovereignty over heaven, earth, and hell ; angels, men, and devils being subject to him. All these, as well as the triple crown, their symbol, have the popes of Rome, by their doctrines, traditions, and pretensions, arrogated to themselves. They have the keys of both worlds ; they open, and no man shutteth ; they shut, and no man openeth ! It is a matter of the highest astonishment that the blasphemous pretensions of these individuals should have been acknowledged and conceded to them for so long a time, by all the powers of Europe ! They have raised up and put down emperors and kings at pleasure. Have absolved, as in a moment, all their officers and subjects from the most solemn oaths of allegiance, and their obligations of obedience ; and for all this they have given them indulgences, purgatory, transubstantiation, image-worship, worship of the Virgin Mary as queen of heaven ; saints and angels as mediators and intercessors ; prayers for the dead ; and uncertain and contradictory traditions in place of the Bible ! All these must be received on their authority ; and he who disputes their authenticity is a heretic, i. e., one that the Church of Rome orders to be burnt alive ; and those who reject their authority incur the divine displeasure, and if not reconciled to them and their church, shall be banished from the presence of God, and the glory of his power, to all eternity ! What blasphemous pretensions ! What gross idolatry !

“Or any likeness that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth,” *ib.*

To have the full spirit and extent of this commandment, we must collate this place with Deut. iv. 15—19 :

“Take ye, therefore, good heed to yourselves; (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire;) lest ye corrupt *yourselves*, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of anything that creepeth upon the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven; and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, and shouldest be driven to worship them and serve them.” This is, in the first place, directed against the idolatry of Egypt. All who have even a slight acquaintance with the ancient history of Egypt, know that Osiris, and his wife Isis, were supreme divinities among that people. Their images were objects of adoration, and were multiplied throughout the land. Several of those images, of a very high and remote antiquity, with various mythological emblems, now lie before me, and which had been doubtless objects of adoration: some of them are thickly covered over with hieroglyphics; and could they be deciphered, would no doubt cast much light on the history of those persons, their deification, and the worship paid to them. Some of these images are cut out of marble, others out of sand-stone, and others out of schist. Among these, also, are the Anubis, or barking-dog; the Cercopithecus, or monkey; and the Ibis, or stork. Some of these are modelled of clay, and baked in the fire; others carved out of cedar, lately brought from the tombs of the kings in Upper Egypt; and others formed from brass. Not only the dog and the monkey were adored, but also the ox and the cow. The ox was sacred, because they supposed that Osiris took up his

residence in one of these animals. Hence they always had a living ox, which they supposed to be the habitation of the deity ; and they imagined that on the death of one he entered into the body of another, and so on successively. This famous ox-god they called Apis and Mnevis. Here every species of idolatry is forbidden. By the *male* and *female*, Osiris and Isis may be intended ; for to these they paid divine honours. By *any beast*, the dog, the monkey, the cat, and the ox are intended. By *the fowl that flieth in the air*, the ibis, or stork, the crane, and the hawk ; for these were all objects of Egyptian idolatry. By *that which creepeth on the ground*, the crocodile, serpents in general, and the scarabeus or beetle, may be intended, for all these were objects of Egyptian adoration. *The likeness of any fish*—all fish were sacred animals in Egypt. One called oxurunchus had a temple, and had divine honours paid to it. See Strabo, lib. xvii.

Another fish, called *phagrus*, was worshipped at Syene, according to Clemens Alexandrinus, in his *Cohortatio* ; and the lepidotus and eel were objects of their adoration, as we learn from Herodotus, lib. ii., cap. 72.

In short, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, lions, dogs, monkeys, and cats ; the Ibis, the crane, and the hawk ; the crocodile, serpents, flies, and the scarabeus or beetle ; the Nile and its fish ; the sun, moon, planets, and stars ; fire, air, light, darkness, and night ; onions, leeks, and other horticultural productions, were all objects of Egyptian idolatry, and all included in this very circumstantial prohibition, as it stands in Deuteronomy ; and very forcibly in the general terms of the text : “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image ; or any likeness of anything that is in the *heavens* above, or that is in the *earth* beneath, or that is in the *water* under the earth.” And the reason of this is very evident, when

the various objects of Egyptian idolatry are considered. But it is not directed solely against Egyptian idolatry, but against all idolatry, whether found among the savage tribes in North America—the worshippers of the visible heavens in China—the devotees of Brahma, Siva, and Mahadeo in Hindostan—the followers of Budhoo in Ceylon, and Java, and Ava—or the corrupt Christians in the Church of Rome:—against all these, and all like them, has God sent forth the *SECOND Commandment*.

There is something remarkable in the 23rd verse of this chapter, that should be noticed here: “Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.” In ver. 3 it is commanded, “Thou shalt have no other gods *before* me,” *אל פני* *al panai*; but here they are commanded, Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, or of gold, *איתי* *ithi*, *WITH me*, as emblems or representatives of God; in order, as might be pretended, to keep the displays of his magnificence in memory. He would not even have a costly altar; on the contrary, he ordered one of earth, or plain turf, to be erected, on which they should offer those sacrifices, by which they should commemorate their own guilt, and the necessity of an atonement, by which they might be reconciled to God.

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them,” ver. 5.

Two things, in addition to what is mentioned above, should be noted here. 1. They shall offer no mental adoration to images. 2. They shall perform to them no religious service.

1. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them; *לא תשתחוה להם* *lo tishtachaveh lahem*—Thou shalt not *prostrate thyself* to them in any act of adoration. Kneeling down, putting the head between the knees, and touching

the earth with the forehead, was the common form of religious adoration. Ye shall conceive no idea of their capability to hear, help, or save you ; they are nothing but the block, stone, or metal which you see ; from them you never received help, and to them you are under no obligation.

2. Thou shalt not serve them ; ולא תעבדם *velo taabdem*—Thou shalt not honour them with any religious rite, such as *sacrifice*, offering, &c. ; for this is one of the acceptations of the verb עבד *abad*, and in Exod. xii. 25 עבדה *abodah* signifies *religious service*, such as God required of the people ; and in this sense it is often used. Hence we find that prostration, kneeling, prayers, mental adoration, offering candles, frankincense, &c., or performing pilgrimages to saints, angels, images, &c., is flat idolatry, and point blank against the *letter* and *spirit* of this commandment.

To countenance its image worship, the Roman Catholic Church has, in some cases, left the whole of this second commandment out of the decalogue, and as a second command, she has omitted it in all her formularies, catechisms, missals, and church-books that I have seen ; and to keep up the number of the TEN commandments, she has divided the *tenth* into *two*, contrary to the whole spirit and sense of this law, that speaks only of the objects of *covetousness*.

This omission and division is totally contrary to the faith of God's elect, and to the acknowledgment of the truth which is according to godliness. The verse containing this second command is found in every MS. of the Hebrew Pentateuch that has ever yet been discovered. There is not even one word of the whole verse wanting in any of the hundreds of MSS. collated by Kennicott and De Rossi ; nor in my own, five of which are among the oldest extant. It is in all the ancient

Versions, Samaritan, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, Septuagint, Coptic, Vulgate, and also in the Persian. The Anglo-Saxon gives this command with its usual sententious brevity. Ne þinc þu þe agraþene Gobar, Ne work thou the graven (or image) Gods. Do not make such : and why ? Because Ic eom Drihten þin Eob, I am the Lord thy God.

And by all people and sects, with whom I have any acquaintance, the Roman Catholics excepted, it has ever been considered as the *second commandment*.

“For I the Lord thy God *am a jealous God,*” *ib.*

There is scarcely a word of more *ominous* interpretation than the word *jealousy*. It is a *suspicion* often generated from love, in weak minds, that it is not returned ; for love demands love, and nothing else can be its recompence. It is often ideal, being founded on appearances which, traced to their origin, are found to have no connexion with, nor bearing on, the subject of the suspicion. It is, however, in most cases, a real evil to that mind which is exercised with it. One of our poets has described it well :—

It is the green-eyed monster that doth mock  
The meat it feeds on :  
But O, what cursed minutes tells he o'er  
Who doats, yet doubts ; suspects, yet strongly loves !

But it signifies, also, an *anxious care* to preserve a person or thing in a *state of purity*—to prevent defection in a person, whose heedless and incautious conduct might lead into transgression, though at first neither pre-meditated nor planned. This is what may be called a *godly jealousy*—anxious care to preserve its object from corruption and ruin. Thus Jehovah was jealous over the Israelites ; and St. Paul jealous over the church of God at Corinth, that he might present it as a chaste virgin to Christ, 2 Cor. xi. 2..



When the Lord says, "I am a jealous God," he shows in the most expressive manner his love to the people. He felt for them as the most affectionate husband could feel for his spouse. The *covenant* between him and them was the strong bond which required their invariable attachment to him, and bound him to afford them his continual protection and support. He saw, from the lightness and variableness of their conduct, that they might be easily led astray into idolatry, which was the breach of that stronger than matrimonial bond by which he and they were bound to each other. He was *jealous* for their *fidelity*, because he willed their invariable happiness.

On this gracious principle, he tells them that *he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him*. This necessarily implies, IF the children hate him, as their fathers did, and continue to offend divine justice, by walking in the same way. For no man can be condemned by the justice of God for crimes of which he never was guilty. This point has been for ever settled by God, in his most solemn declarations by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xviii.

But as *idolatry* was the same in reference to the breach of the covenant between *God* and the *people*, as infidelity is in reference to the marriage contract between the *husband* and *wife*, idolatry may be principally intended here; and therefore the visiting the sins of this kind may refer to national judgments. By the withdrawing the Divine protection, the idolatrous Israelites were delivered up into the hands of their enemies, from whom the gods in whom they had trusted could not deliver them. This God did to the *third* and *fourth* generation, i. e., *successively*, as may be seen in every part of the Jewish history, and particularly in the Book

of Judges. Now God did this, not to punish *to destruction* or *extermination*, but to be the instrument of their amendment. And this became the grand and only efficient means in his hand of their deliverance from idolatry; for it is well known that, after the Babylonish captivity, the Israelites were so completely saved from idolatry, as never more to have disgraced themselves by it, as they had formerly done. These national judgments, thus continued from generation to generation, appear to be what is designed in the text, by “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.”

Those, therefore, who tread under foot God’s commandments, shall be trodden under foot by God’s judgments. But see what he says to *them who love him and keep his commandments*; as they have *love* to him, which is the principle of all obedience, so they *keep his commandments*; they observe their nature, consider their authority, see their great usefulness, and that it is their interest to obey them; and therefore get the Holy Spirit to write them in their hearts, that they may practise them in their lives.

To these, it is said, *he shows mercy*. Let it be observed, that even they who *love God* and *keep his commandments*, merit nothing from him; and therefore the salvation and blessedness which they enjoy come from the mere mercy of God.

“Shewing mercy unto thousands of them,” &c., ver. 6.

What a disproportion between the works of *justice* and *mercy*! JUSTICE works to the *third* or *fourth*; MERCY, to *thousands of generations*.

Our blessed Lord might have had reference to this place, when he comprised the fulfilment of the whole law in *love* to God and man. For as we have already seen that *love* is the grand principle of obedience, and

incentive to it, so there can be no obedience without it. It would be more easy, even in Egyptian bondage, to make brick without straw, than to do the will of God unless his love be shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. *Love*, says the apostle, *is the fulfilling of the law*, Rom. xiii. 10.

We see that this commandment prohibits every species of external idolatry, as the first does all idolatry that may be internal or mental. All false worship may be considered of this kind ; together with all image worship, as we have already seen ; as well as all superstitious rites and ceremonies. I have no doubt that the gross perversion of the simplicity of Christian worship, by the introduction of various instruments of music into churches and chapels, if not a species of idolatry, will at least rank with will-worship, and superstitious rites and ceremonies. Where the Spirit and unction of God do not prevail in Christian assemblies, priests and people being destitute of both, their place, by general consent, is to be supplied by imposing ceremonies, noise, and show.

#### THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

*Against False Swearing, Blasphemy, and Irreverent Use of the NAME of GOD.*

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,” ver. 7.

The strong reason for obedience to this commandment, is included in itself ; THE LORD THY GOD prescribes this. Oppose not his authority, for he is the LORD. Offend him not, for he is THY GOD. The *first*, *second*, *third*, *fourth*, and *fifth commandments* are proposed in the same way. “The LORD THY GOD says, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” “Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, &c., for I, THE LORD THY

God, am a jealous God." Thou shalt not take the name of THE LORD THY GOD in vain." "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy—for it is the Sabbath of THE LORD THY GOD." None of the other commandments is introduced in the same way. The *four* first commandments refer to God himself, and the *fifth* to our *parents*, who stand to us in the place of God, and next him should be held in the highest respect; and therefore they have this peculiar sanction. Because he is the Lord our God, therefore we should keep these laws. And because our *neighbours* owe to us, and we to them, help, support, and kind offices, therefore we should keep the remaining five, by which the *whole human family* are bound to each other. All God's commands have a solid reason why they should be obeyed. All who read as they should, will see this.

As the word *קַו* *shavé*, which we translate *in vain*, signifies not only *vanity*, a *vain thing*, but also *falsehood*, and a *lie*; the spirit of the commandment is, Do not invoke God to *witness* an *untruth*. He is the God of truth—the devil is the father of lies and liars. Do not call on him to pledge his truth to support a falsehood; nor shalt thou use the name of the Lord thy God in a falsehood or untruth. This would be the highest offence. And yet how often is it committed? The word *in vain* signifies for *no purpose*, to *no end*—*uselessly*—*triflingly*—*lightly*—without *respect*—*irreverently*.

Now this precept not only forbids all false oaths, but all common swearing, where the name of God is used, or where he is appealed to as a *witness of the truth*. It also necessarily forbids all light and *irreverent* mention of God, or any of his attributes; and we may safely add, that every prayer, ejaculation, and supplication, that is not accompanied with *deep reverence*, and the *genuine spirit of piety*, is here condemned also. So also is the

wicked mode of turning the name of *God*—of the *throne* of his glory, into *interjections*, and words to express *wonder, amazement, surprise, &c.* ; as, *O God! O Lord! O heavens! Good God! O my God! &c., &c.* When it is evident, from the character of the persons, their habits, the nature of the circumstances in which they then were, that their *souls* were as truly without the *fear of God*, as their *tongues* were without *respect* to the *company*, or *reverence* to their *Maker*.

But the command may be, and is, broken in thousands of instances, in the *prayers*, whether *read* or offered *extempore*, of inconsiderate, bold, and presumptuous worshippers. To hear the most solemn prayers, expressing the sighing of a contrite heart, the desires of such as be sorrowful, the fervent breathings of the righteous after fuller communion with God, where the person considered not what he said, and had no feelings corresponding with the solemn words he uttered—is to witness an awful breach of the *third commandment*, which God will the more signally punish, because the excellent prayers came from feigned lips. And alas! how few are there who do not break this command both in their public and private devotions. How low is piety in the church of God, when we are obliged to pray in order to escape damnation, “Lord cleanse us from our secret faults! and pardon the *sins* of our *holy things!*”

Even *heathens* thought that the names of their gods should be treated with reverence: Plato, *De Legib.*, lib. ix., says, “It is most undoubtedly right not lightly to profane the names of the gods, using them as we do common names, but we should watch with purity and holiness all matters belonging to them.”

But let us hear the solemn penalty, “the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Whatever the person himself may think or hope, however he

may plead in his own behalf, and say, “he intends no evil, hopes he is sincere, and thinks it his duty to say the *good words* which pious and learned men have put in the mouths of those who cannot make prayers for themselves, &c. ; yet if any man, in the above ways, or in any other way, take the name of the Lord his God in vain, God *will not hold him guiltless* ; he will account him *guilty*, and punish him for it. All common swearers, blasphemers, and those who in their prayers, or conversation, take the name of the Lord in vain, I would address in the nervous words of Mr. Herbert :—

Take not HIS *name* who made thy mouth, *in vain* ;  
 It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse :  
 Pride and lust plead pleasure, avarice, gain,  
 But the cheap swearer through his open sluice  
 Lets his soul run for nought, and nothing fearing.  
 Were I an infidel, I would hate *swearing*.

#### THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

*Against Profanation of the Sabbath, and Idleness on the other Days of the Week.*

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy,” *ver.* 8.

As this was the most ancient institution, God calls upon them to *remember* it. As if he had said, Do not forget that when I had finished the creation of the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, I instituted the sabbath ; and remember *why* I did so, and for *what* purposes.

The word שבת *shabath* signifies *he rested*, and hence, *shabath*, or sabbath, the *seventh day*, or the day of *rest*, or *rest* simply. In *six* days God created the heavens and the earth, and rested, that is, ceased to create on the *seventh* day, and has consecrated it as a day of rest for man. *Rest* to the body from labour and toil, and *rest* to the soul from all worldly cares and anxieties. He who

labours with his *mind* on the sabbath-day, is as culpable as he who labours with his *hands* in his ordinary calling. It is by the authority of God, that the sabbath is set apart for *rest* and religious purposes, as the *six days of the week* are appointed for labour. How *wise* is this provision ! How *gracious* this command ! It is essentially necessary not only to the body of man, but to all the animals employed in his service ; take this away, and the labour is too great ; both man and beast would fail under it. Without this consecrated day, religion itself would fail, and the human mind become sensualized, would soon forget its *origin* and *end*.

Even as a *political* regulation, it is one of the wisest and most beneficent in its effects of any ever instituted. Those who habitually disregard its *moral* obligation, are to a man not only *good for nothing*, but are *wretched* in themselves, a *curse* to society, and often end their lives *miserably*. The *idler* is next to the *sabbath-breaker*. As God has formed both the body and mind of man on principles of *activity*, so he designed him for proper employment ; and it is his *decree*, that the mind shall improve by *exercise*, and the body find increase of vigour and health in honest *labour*. He who *idles* away his time on the six days, is equally culpable, in the sight of God, as he who *works* on the seventh. The *idle person* is ordinarily clothed in *rags* ; and it has ever been remarked in all Christian countries, that sabbath-breakers generally come to an ignominious death.

The appointment of the sabbath is the *first* command ever given to man ; and that the sanctification of it was of great consequence in the sight of God, we may learn from the various repetitions of this law ; and we may observe that it has still for its object not only the benefit of the soul, but the health and comfort of the body also.

Because this commandment has not been particularly mentioned in the *New Testament*, as a moral precept binding on all; therefore some have presumptuously inferred, that there is *no sabbath* under the Christian dispensation. Were there none, Christianity itself would soon become extinct, and religion would soon have an end. But why is not the moral obligation of it insisted on by our Lord and the apostles? They have sufficiently insisted on it, they all kept it sacred, and so invariably did all the primitive Christians; though some observed the last day of the week, the Jewish sabbath, instead of the first day, in commemoration not only of God's resting from his work of creation, but also of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. But to insist on the necessity of observing it, was not requisite, because none doubted of its moral obligation; the question itself had never been disturbed: not so with circumcision and other Mosaic rites. The truth is, it is considered as a *type*. All *types* are of full force, till the thing signified by them take place; but the thing signified by the *sabbath* is that *rest* in glory, which *remains* for the people of God; and in this light it evidently appears to have been considered by the apostle, Heb. iv. As, therefore, the *antitype* remains, the moral obligation of the sabbath must continue, till time be swallowed up in eternity. The world was never without a *sabbath*, and never will be. And there is scarcely a people on the face of the earth, whether civilized or uncivilized, that has not agreed in the propriety of having a *sabbath*, or something analogous to it. But it has been objected that the sabbath could be only of partial obligation, and affect those only whose day and night were divisible into twenty-four hours; and would never be intended to apply to the inhabitants of either of the polar regions, where their days and nights alternately consisted of *several months* each. This objection is very



slight. The object of the Divine Being is evidently to cause men to apply the *seventh part of time* to rest ; and this may be as easily done at *Spitzbergen* as at any place under the equator. Nor is it of particular consequence where a nation or people may begin their sabbath observances, whether it fall in with our, or the Jewish, or even the Mohammedan sabbath, provided they continue regular in the observance, and hallow to religious uses this *seventh part of time*.

In his mercy, the Divine Being has limited our labour to *six* days out of *seven*. In order to destroy the institution of God, the *French National Assembly* divided time into *decads*, and ordered every *tenth* day to be kept as a day of relaxation, dissipation, and merriment. The offended God wrought no miracle to bring back his institution ; but in the course of his providence, he annihilated them and their devices, and restored the sabbath, in spite of legislative enactments to the contrary ; and the people, bad as they were, rejoiced to be put in possession of the sabbath which God had consecrated to rest and religious uses, from the foundation of the world.

But let us remember, as before noted, that while we rest on the *sabbath*, we do not *idle away* the other *six days*. The Lord commands, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work," ver. 9. Therefore it has been justly observed, that he who idles away time on the six days, is equally guilty before God, as he who does his ordinary work upon the sabbath.

No work should be done on the sabbath that can be done on the preceding day, or can be deferred to the ensuing week. Works of absolute *necessity* and *mercy* are alone excepted. He who works by his *servants* or *cattle*, is equally guilty as if he worked *himself* ; for God has commanded that both the *cattle*, and the *male* and

*female servants*, shall rest also. Yea, the *slave* himself is included, for so the original word עֶבֶד *abed* often signifies. But in what a state of moral depravity must those slaveholders be, who reduce their slaves to such a state of wretchedness, that they allow them only the sabbath-day to cultivate those grounds from which they are to derive their subsistence; having no food allowed them but what they are able to bring out of the earth on that day in which the Supreme Lord has commanded their masters to give them *rest*, and to require no *manner of labour from them*. Such enemies to God must expect no common judgment from the justice of the Most High, whatsoever countries they may inhabit.

Where men are unmerciful to their own species, no wonder that they have no feeling for the beasts that perish. Hiring out horses, &c., for pleasure or business, going on journeys, paying worldly visits, or taking jaunts on the Lord's day, are breaches of this law. Doth God care for oxen? Yes, and he mentions them with tenderness, *that thine ox and thine ass may rest*; how criminal to employ the labouring cattle on the *sabbath*, as well as on the other days of the week! In stage-coaches, and on canals, horses are in continual labour. In general there is no sabbath observed by the proprietors of those vehicles. Yet, so tender and scrupulous are some proprietors, that they would not on any account do any of these things themselves; but they can be shareholders in stage-coaches, wagons, canal boats, &c., &c., where the sabbath is constantly profaned, and from which they derive an annual profit! Good souls! ye would not do these things yourselves, you only hire other persons to do them, and you live by the profit! Take heed that you enter all these things punctually in your ledger, for the day is at hand in which you must render a strict account. More cattle are destroyed in

England than in any other part of the world in proportion, by continual labour. The noble horse, in general, has no *sabbath*. Does God look on this with an indifferent eye? Surely he does not. "England," said a foreigner, "is the paradise of women, the purgatory of servants, and the hell of horses."

On this head, I conclude with, Reader, remember that thou keep holy the sabbath-day—Thou needest the rest of it for thy body ; and the religious ordinances of it for thy *soul*. God has hallowed it for these purposes : Observe it as thou oughtest, and it will bring health to thy body, and peace to thy mind. So be it ! Amen.

#### THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

##### *Against Disrespect and Disobedience to Parents.*

"Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy days may be long upon the land," &c., ver. 12.

Hear, ye children :—God has given us only ten commandments, essentially necessary to our happiness in our religious, civil, and domestic life ; and one of the ten speaks of, and strongly recommends, obedience to parents. Nature and common sense teach us that there is a degree of affectionate respect which is owing to parents, and which no other persons can properly claim. For a considerable time, parents stand, in some sort, in the place of God to their children ; and therefore rebellion against their lawful commands, has been considered as rebellion against God. This precept, therefore, prohibits not only all injurious acts, irreverent and unkind speeches to parents ; but enjoins all necessary acts of kindness, filial respect, and obedience.

We can scarcely suppose that man honours his parents who, when they fall weak, blind, or sick, does not exert himself to the uttermost in their support. In such cases God as truly requires the children to provide for their

parents, as he required the parents to feed, nourish, instruct, support, and defend the children, when they were in the lowest state of helpless infancy. “Honour the Lord with thy substance,” says Solomon, Prov. iii. 9. On this the rabbins say, “Honour also thy father and mother:” the LORD is to be thus honoured, if thou have it: thy father and mother, whether thou have it or not; for, if thou have nothing, thou art bound to beg for them. Nor will the Lord have that given to religious uses which the parents need. Our Lord has exposed and deeply condemned this conduct. See Matt. xv. 5—9, Mark vii. 10—13.

All the reasonable commands of parents, children, while they are under their jurisdiction, should punctually obey. And even in cases where parents have no right to command (as in matters of religion, which refer only to God and the conscience, and in the choice of partners for life, in which the parties themselves are alone interested, because they are to dwell together for life), their counsel and advice should be respectfully sought, as their age and experience often enable them to speak oracularly on such a subject. But if the parents and children live in a state of peace and good understanding together, they will seldom disoblige each other in matters of this kind.

Children hate *death* and love *life*—they hope for many days, and the hope of happiness seems to smile continually on them. To this feeling God addresses himself: “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy DAYS may be LONG upon the LAND, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” This, as the apostle observes, Eph. vi. 2, is the first commandment to which God has annexed a promise, and therefore we may learn, in some measure, how important the duty is in his sight. In Deut. v. 16, it is added by the same Spirit, “That it may go well with

thee :” we may therefore conclude, that it will go ill with the disobedient : and there is little room to doubt, that the untimely deaths of many young persons were the judicial consequences of their disobedience to their parents. Most who come to an untimely end, are obliged to confess that this, with the breach of the sabbath, were the principal causes of their ruin. Reader, art thou guilty? Humble thyself therefore, before God, and repent.

1. As children are bound to succour their parents, so parents are bound to educate and instruct their children in all useful and necessary knowledge ; and not bring them up either in ignorance or idleness.

2. They should teach them the fear and knowledge of God : for how can parents expect affection or dutiful respect from those who have not the fear of God before their eyes? Those who are the best educated, are generally the most affectionate and obedient.

#### THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

#### *Against Murder and Cruelty.*

“Thou shalt not kill,” ver. 13.

God is the Fountain and Author of *life*—no creature can give life to another : an archangel cannot give life to an angel ; an angel cannot give life to man ; man cannot give life even to the meanest of the brute creation. As God alone gives life, so he alone has a right to take it away : and he who, without the authority of God, takes away life, is properly a *murderer*. This commandment, which is general, prohibits murder of every kind :—

1. All actions by which the life of our fellow-creatures may be suddenly taken away, or abridged.

2. All wars for extending empire, commerce, &c.

3. All sanguinary laws, by the operation of which the

lives of men may be taken away for offences of comparatively trifling demerit.

4. All bad dispositions, which lead men to wish evil to, or meditate mischief against, each other; for the Scripture says, “He that hateth his brother in his heart, is a murderer.”

5. All want of charity and humanity to the helpless and distressed; for he who has it in his power to save the life of another, by a timely application of succour, food, raiment, medicine, &c., and does not do it, and the life of the person either falls or is abridged on this account, he is in the sight of God a murderer. He who neglects to save life is, according to an incontrovertible maxim in law, the same as he who takes it away.

6. All who, by immoderate and superstitious fastings, macerations of the body, and wilful neglect of health, destroy or abridge life, are murderers; whatever a false religion and ignorant superstitious priests may say of them. God will not have murder for sacrifice.

7. All *duellists* are *murderers*—almost the worst of murderers; each meets the other with the design of killing him. He who shoots his antagonist dead is a murderer; he who is shot is a murderer also. The survivor should be hanged; the slain should be buried at a cross way, and the hanged murderer laid by his side.

8. All who put an end to their own lives by hemp, steel, pistol, poison, drowning, &c., are murderers—whatever coroners’ inquests may say of them; unless it be clearly proved that the deceased was radically insane.

9. All who are addicted to riot and excess, to drunkenness and gluttony, to extravagant pleasures, to inactivity and slothfulness—in short and in sum, all who are influenced by indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions, by which life is prostrated and abridged, are murderers; for our blessed Lord, who has given us a

new edition of this commandment, Matt. xix. 18, proposes it thus : "Thou shalt do no murder,"—no kind or species of murder ; and all the above are either direct or consequent murders ; and his beloved disciple has assured us, that "no murderer hath eternal life abiding him," 1 John iii. 15.

10. A man who is full of fierce and furious passions, who has no command of his own temper, may in a moment destroy the life even of his friend, his wife, or his child. All such fell and ferocious men are murderers ; they ever carry about with them the murderous propensity, and are not praying to God to subdue and destroy it.

#### THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

##### *Against Adultery, Fornication, and Uncleanness.*

"Thou shalt not commit adultery," ver. 14.

The word adultery, *adulterium*, has probably been derived or contracted from *ad alterius thorum*, "to another's bed;" for it is going to the bed of another man, that constitutes the act and the crime. Perhaps the derivation may be yet more simple, *ad alteram*, to another woman ; and she known to be the wife of another man. Adultery, as defined by our laws, is of two kinds : double, when between two married persons ; single, when one of the parties is single, the other married.

One principal part of the criminality of adultery consists in its injustice : 1. It robs a man of his right, by depriving him of the affection of his wife. 2. It does him a wrong, by fathering on him, and obliging him to maintain as his own, a spurious offspring, a child which is not his.

The act itself, and everything leading to the act, is prohibited by this commandment ; for our Lord says, even "he who looks on a woman to lust after her, has

already committed adultery with her in his heart." For to such there is only time and place wanting, if the other party be willing, to complete the crime. And not only adultery is forbidden here, but fornication also; as we may gather from our Lord's words, Matt. xv. 19, where, producing the commandments in order, he gives a word for each; but when he comes to the seventh, he gives two words to express its sense: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, *μοιχειαι, πορνειαι, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies;*" thus showing that fornication was included under adultery, in the seventh commandment.

Under this same prohibition, all impure books, songs, paintings, &c., which tend to inflame and debauch the mind, are included. And so is that crime not proper to be named, and more disgraceful, and in the sight of God and reason more abominable, than all the rest; and against which our laws are so severe, and the public odium more signally excited. I need not spend any time on the fact, that both adultery and fornication often mean idolatry in the worship of God. The reason of this, see in the beginning of this discourse.

#### THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

##### *Against Stealing and Dishonesty.*

"Thou shalt not steal," ver. 15.

Thou shalt not take what is not thy own, and apply it to thy own use. All rapine and theft are forbidden by this precept; as well national and commercial wrongs, as petty larceny, highway-robberies, house-breaking, private stealing, knavery, cheating, and defrauds of every kind. Also, the taking advantage of a buyer's or seller's ignorance, to give the one less, and make the other pay more, for a commodity than it is worth, is a breach of



this sacred law. All withholding of rights, and doing of wrongs, are against the spirit of it.

But the word is principally applicable to clandestine stealing, though it may undoubtedly include all political injustice and private wrongs ; and, consequently, all kidnapping, crimping, and slave-dealing are prohibited here, whether practised by individuals, the state, or its colonies. I greatly doubt whether the Impress Service stands clear here. Crimes are not lessened in their demerit by the number or political importance of those who commit them : a state that enacts bad laws is as criminal before God as the individual who breaks good ones.

It has been generally granted, that under the eighth commandment injuries done to character, the depriving a man of his reputation or good name, are included. Of a worse robbery than this, no knave can be guilty ; and a greater loss no honest man can sustain : hence the correct and nervous saying of one of our best poets, which never suffers by being frequently quoted :

*Good name* in man or woman, dear my lord,  
Is the immediate jewel of their souls :  
Who *steals* my *purse* steals *trash* ; 'tis something, nothing ;  
'Twas *mine*, 'tis *his*, and has been *slave* to thousands :  
But he that *filches* from me my *good name*,  
*Robs* me of that which not enriches him,  
And makes me *poor* indeed.

But among all thieves and knaves, he is the most execrable who endeavours to rob another of his character, that he may enhance his own ; lessening his neighbour, that he may aggrandize himself. This is that pest of society, who is full of kind assertions tagged with *buts*. “He is a good kind of man ; *but*—every bean has its black.” “Such a one is very *friendly* ; *but*—it is in his own way.” “My neighbour N. can be very liberal ; *but*

—you must catch him in the humour.” Persons like these speak well of their neighbours, merely that they may have the opportunity to neutralize all their commendations, and make them suspected whose character stood deservedly fair, before the traducer began to pilfer his property. He who repents not for these injuries, and does not make restitution, if possible, to his defrauded neighbour, will hear, when God comes to take away his soul, these words, more terrible than the knell of death : “Thou shalt not STEAL!” See under the ninth commandment ; and see Sermon XXI., on Ps. xv.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

*Against False Testimony, Perjury, Lying, and Deceit.*

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,” ver. 16.

Though the word רַעַי *raáh* signifies to *feed* or *nourish*, and is used to express a friend, even one who is peculiarly intimate ; yet it often means any person living nigh to another, one of the same village, an acquaintance. Here it signifies any person, any human being, a fellow-creature, whether he rank among our enemies or our friends, whether he be near or far off.

Not only *false oaths*, to deprive a man of his life or of his right, are here prohibited, but also all whispering, tale-bearing, calumny, and slander, where the object is to bring the neighbour to pain, loss, or punishment. In a word, whatever is deposed as a *truth*, which is *false* in fact, and tends to injure another in his body, goods, or influence, is against the spirit and letter of this law. Suppressing the truth when known, by which concealment a man may be defrauded of his property or his good name, or lie under injuries or disabilities which a *discovery* of the truth would have prevented, is also a crime under this law. The conduct of every *liar* and

*deceiver* comes under the ban of this commandment. The *liar* is always pretending to bear witness to the *truth*, and yet his testimony is *false*. A liar, who is *known* to be such, is detested of men ; a liar is always known to be such by the Searcher of hearts, and by him is held in sovereign abhorrence. He who bears a false testimony against even the *devil* himself, comes under the curse of this law, because his testimony is *false*. God is the punisher of falsehood, though his *enemy* be its object.

#### THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

##### *Against Covetousness.*

“Thou shalt not covet, לא תחמד, *lo tachemod*, ver. 17.” The word חמד *chamad* signifies an *earnest* and *strong desire* after a matter, on which all the affections are concentrated and fixed, whether the thing be good or bad. This is what we commonly term *covetousness*, which word is taken both in a good and bad sense. So, though the Scripture says that *covetousness is idolatry* ; yet it also says, *Covet earnestly the best things* ; thus we find that this disposition is sinful or holy, according to the object on which it is fixed. In this command, the *covetousness* which is placed on forbidden objects is that which is prohibited and condemned. To covet in this sense is intensely to long after, in order to enjoy the *property, person, or thing* coveted. He breaks this command who by any means endeavours to deprive a man of his house or farm by some underhand and clandestine bargain with the original landlord ; what is called, in some countries, “taking a man’s house and farm over his head.” He breaks it also who lusts after his neighbour’s wife, and endeavours to ingratiate himself into her affections, by striving to lessen her husband in her esteem ; and he also breaks it who endeavours to possess himself

of the servants, cattle, &c., of another, in any clandestine or unjustifiable manner. This is a most excellent moral precept, the observance of which will prevent all public crimes; for he who feels the force of the law which prohibits the inordinate desire of anything that is the property of another, can never make a breach in the peace of society by any act of wrong to any of even its feeblest members.

Before I conclude, I feel obliged once more to reprehend the bad faith of the church of Rome. We have already seen that this church has in effect struck out the second commandment, relative to image worship; that she might have nothing in the Bible which might directly testify against her idolatry; and this fearful liberty she has taken in opposition to the original Hebrew, all the ancient and modern Versions, her own accredited Versions—the Septuagint and the Vulgate; and against the judgment and usage of every other Christian church on the face of the earth, all of which consider it as a separate commandment. To colour this deceit, knowing that God had given TEN commandments, and that himself had expressly named this number, Deut. iv. 13, this church, after having disposed of the second, by joining it to the first, in order to keep up the number ten, divided the tenth commandment into two, against all Scripture, reason, and common sense: for the tenth commandment contains only one subject, and that absolutely indivisible; it is against covetousness, and against that only, as even a child may discern. This commandment, divided into two, makes the ninth and tenth of the church of Rome, thus:

Commandment IX.: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.”

Commandment X.: “Thou shalt not covet his house,

nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that belongs to him."

This division is without a difference ; for it is the same principle that covets the man-servant, the maid-servant, the ox, the ass, or any thing that is his, as that which *covets* the neighbour's wife, as she is most evidently included among the *any things that are his*. In vindication of this division it has been stated, that it is thus divided in the Hebrew text. It is true that in some of the Masoretic Bibles there is sometimes the space of a letter after the words אשה רעך *isheth réeca*, "Thy neighbour's wife:" but this is no authority to make two commandments out of one ; and were we to consider such a space as authority to divide a commandment, we might make three or four different commandments out of the fourth, for so many divisions it has in almost all Hebrew Bibles : besides, there are 239 MSS., and with them the Samaritan, which have been collated by Kennicott and De Rossi, that have no space after the above words ; and out of five ancient MSS. in my own collection, there are four which have no such space. The division is therefore arbitrary and unauthorized ; and the making two commandments out of one is absurd in reference to the sense, and sinful in reference to the design.

Having now gone over the Decalogue, and endeavoured to give the true meaning of each precept, it might be thought proper to give the sum of the whole in such a way as they might be easily remembered, and readily applied to all parts of our moral conduct. To do this would not be very difficult ; but to do it better than it has been done in the common Catechism of the Church, would be a task indeed. As every adult may not have the catechism at hand, and those who have learnt it when young may have unfortunately forgotten it, I shall transcribe it here :

“Q. What dost thou chiefly learn by these commandments ?

“A. I learn two things : my duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbour.

“Q. What is thy duty towards God ?

“A. To believe in him, to fear him, and to love him, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength ; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy name and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life.

“Q. What is thy duty towards thy neighbour ?

“A. To love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me ; to love, honour, and succour my father and mother ; to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him ; to submit myself to all my governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters ; to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters ; to hurt nobody by word or deed ; to be true and just in all my dealings ; to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart ; to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering ; to keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity ; not to covet or desire other men's goods ; but to learn and labour truly to get my own living, and to do my duty in that state of life into which it shall please God to call me.”

It is no ordinary recommendation of the passages which I have quoted, that when the famous Doctor Franklin undertook to draw up a catechism upon moral and economical principles for the Americans, he incorporated the above passages in his work, with very little alteration, as peculiarly excellent.

As obedience to these commandments is so essentially necessary, as they came to us from and with the highest

authority, and as the fallen spirit of man is not able to observe them in their letter and spirit without the especial help of God, I do not think that a sincere heart can ever find more suitable expressions to clothe its desires, when praying for such help from God, than are contained in the collect prefixed to these commandments, in the introduction to the Communion-service of our church, which I shall also subjoin :

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid ; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit ; that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

And as every man must know that he has broken these commandments, and stands in need of God's mercy to pardon what is past, and his grace to help him in the time to come, it is with great propriety that, when the minister ends each commandment, the people cry out : “Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law !” And when the last is read, that they should all join with heart and voice in the following petition, which I most cordially recommend to all my readers : “Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee !” We have broken them, and need mercy ; we must keep them, but shall not do it unless God incline our hearts to do it, and write them *all upon our hearts* by the finger of his power, as that finger wrote the originals on the tables of stone ! Amen, so be it, Lord Jesus !

