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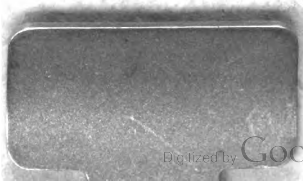
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REV. JOSEPH BENSON, A.M.

*Formerly of Oxford University.*

# SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS OCCASIONS,

AND

MOST OF THEM ON THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS

OF

**GENUINE CHRISTIANITY.**

  
BY JOSEPH BENSON, A. M.  


I am not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST, for it is the power of God unto  
salvation to every one that believeth....Rom. i. 16.  
I have believed, and therefore have I spoken....2 Cor. iv. 13.

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1814.



*District of New-York, ss.*

**BE IT REMEMBERED**, that on the fourteenth day of September, in the thirty-ninth year of the independence of the United States of America *Daniel Hill*, and *Thomas Ware*, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words and figures following, to wit :

“ Sermons on Various Occasions, and most of them on the principal Subjects of Genuine Christianity By Joseph Benson, A. M. ”

“ I am not ashamed of the gospel of CHRIST, for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth... *Rom. i. 16.* ”

“ I have believed, and therefore have I spoken... *2 Cor. iv. 13.* ”

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled “ an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned.” And also to an Act, entitled, “ an Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

**THERON RUDD,**

Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

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## PREFACE.

**T**HE following discourses, delivered on different occasions, and written after their delivery, with such alterations and enlargements as were requisite; and published at the request of many who heard them, have all been for some years before the public. Some of them, as those on the Second Coming of Christ and the Future Misery of the Wicked, and on Sanctification, have gone through sundry editions, and many thousands of them have been circulated in different parts of this kingdom, especially among the members of the Methodist societies and congregations. And if I may give credit to the information I have received, the divine blessing has attended the reading of them to many individuals, and most of those into whose hands they have fallen, have signified their approbation of them. They are therefore here collected into one volume, at the request of our last Conference, with a view to their preservation when their author is no more. Thus, not only my friends, and those that have been profited by my ministry, may have a memorial of me when I am removed out of their sight; but, what may be of much more moment, when *dead* I may thus *speak* to those of them that shall survive me; and perhaps also to many others that never knew my face in the flesh, but into whose hands this book may fall.

Most of those truths of experimental and practical Christianity, (the only Christianity that will afford any one comfort at a dying hour,) to which I have believed myself to be called of God to bear testimony, and which, in conjunction with my brethren, I have been labouring, for upwards of thirty years, to propagate in most parts of Great Britain, are here explained and enforced according to the best ability God hath given me. The end I have had in view, in writing and publishing these sermons, is the same that I have pursued through the whole course of my ministry, and that is, *simply* and *only* to glorify God in the reformation and salvation of my fellow-creatures. I have therefore not studied elegance of style, or the oratorical ornaments of speech, because, if I could have attained to this excellency, and have spared the time which this kind of composition would have cost me, I had no reason to

suppose that it would either have recommended these sermons to such, as it was probable, would peruse them, or have given the truths contained in them a greater influence on their minds. But I have endeavoured to write, exactly as I always wish to preach, in a *plain, clear, and intelligible* manner; and with such a proper arrangement of the matter, and such a connexion of the parts of each discourse, as seemed best calculated to assist the conceptions and memories of my readers. I have studied also to write with some degree of force and energy, especially in the applicatory part of each sermon. How far I have succeeded, must be left to the public to judge. I am, however, not without hope, that as I am conscious I have written, as I trust I generally speak, from the heart, so that some part at least of these plain and unadorned discourses will reach the hearts of those readers, that receive the truth as it is in Jesus, with attentive and unprejudiced minds, and in a spirit of prayer.

This last observation is of vast importance. For if, as St. Paul declares, "The natural man discerneth not the things of God, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;"—if, "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God," it is not to be supposed that these truths of spiritual and experimental religion, which are here declared, will be either discerned or relished, by those who do not sincerely and fervently pray for "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation," any more than by those who do not endeavour to devest their minds of prejudice, and to consider seriously what was advanced. This therefore, I cannot but most earnestly recommend to all my readers.

I must also advise them rather to read these discourses in the order in which they are here placed, than in any other. For although they were neither written, nor first published in this order, yet I believe they will be read with most advantage according to it; as each preceding sermon will thus, in general, prepare the mind to understand and relish the following, and each following sermon will illustrate and confirm the preceding.

J. BENSON.

New-Chapel, City-Road, London,  
Jan. 26th 1802.

# Christ's Commission to his Ministers :

## A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE HELD IN

LEEDS, JULY, 1793.

*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. Mark xvi. 15, 16.*

1. **I**N reading the sacred narrative of the evangelists, concerning the life and doctrine of the LORD JESUS, and in comparing their sundry accounts together, it is diligently to be observed, that, in writing their histories, they regarded not the amusement, but only the instruction and edification of their readers. They paid no respect to the gratification of the curiosity of mankind, by a relation of uninteresting and trivial circumstances, but consulted merely the illumination and renovation of their minds, by laying before them important truths. Hence, without detaining us to hear on what occasion, at what time, or in what place, our Lord performed his miracles or delivered his discourses, they frequently carry us forward to observe rather, what is of infinitely greater importance to us, the fact done, or the doctrine taught.

The consequence, however, of this is, that, if we do not make this proper allowance for their passing over unimportant matters, and reflect that some of them omitted what others of them relate, we shall be led into the erroneous idea of their designedly connecting events, which, in reality, were not immediately connected,

and even of their contradicting one another, which would impeach their credit as historians, and shake the very foundation of our faith.

2. I am led to make this remark, by considering the passage before us in connexion with the context. These words of Christ, as they stand here, seemingly connected with the preceding verses, may appear at first sight to have been spoken to his disciples on the day on which he rose from the dead. Whereas, upon comparing the contents of this chapter, with the accounts which the other evangelists have given, of the events which took place between the resurrection of Christ and his ascension, it seems evident that they were uttered on the day of his ascension, and probably at the very time, when he was lifting up his hands and blessing them,\* and was just about to be parted from them and carried up into heaven. At that solemn and ever-memorable moment, it seems, among other instructions and advices, recorded by St. Luke, in the above-mentioned chapter, and Acts i. Jesus gave them this most important, most benevolent, and yet most awful charge, and said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." For, as we are assured, verse 19, "after the Lord had spoken unto them," viz. the preceding words, a part of which is my text, "he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

In discoursing from these words, containing, as we see, the last, solemn charge of the Son of God to his disciples, I propose to consider,

I. What is implied in preaching the gospel?

II. To whom the office of preaching it belongs? In other words, To whom this charge is given?

III. Where they are to preach it, and to whom? And,

IV. Lastly. What is required of those who hear it, with the consequences of their complying, or not complying, with the condition required of them.

I. And first, I am to inquire, What is implied in preaching the gospel? Under this head it will be necessary to consider, first, what the gospel is, that we may understand, secondly, what it is to preach it.

\* Luke xxiv. 50.

1. Now with regard to the nature of the gospel, I may observe, first, in general, that the very word, used here and in other places by the evangelists and apostles, in the original, and translated *gospel*, gives us some information concerning it. It means, as is well known, not *God's-spcl*, or *God's-tidings*, which is all that is signified by the Saxon term *gospel*, but *good-news*, or *glad-tidings*. Such the gospel of Christ is in the very essence of it. It is good news, or glad tidings to the fallen race of Adam, to the sinful, guilty, weak, and wretched children of men, even tidings of a Saviour, and salvation through him. Therefore, when the angel announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds, he expressed himself thus, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy," *ευαγγελίζομαι υμιν χαρὰν μεγάλην*, literally, *I evangelize unto you great joy*, or, *I preach the gospel*, containing matter of great joy; "for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is CHRIST the LORD."\* So that tidings of a Saviour, at least of such a SAVIOUR as Christ the Lord, are good tidings, and the very essence of the gospel. Hence it is, that when the evangelical prophet, Isaiah, was foretelling gospel days, and describing the message which the ministers of the gospel would, in those days, deliver to mankind, he expressed himself in the following words: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" This, therefore, is the true nature of the gospel. It is good tidings, or good tidings of good: and a message of peace and salvation. And accordingly, as we learn from the sacred writers, they that preached the gospel, "preached peace by Jesus Christ,"† and bore witness, that it is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that he came into the world to save sinners."‡

2. To be a little more particular. The gospel may be defined thus: "It is that revelation which God hath made of himself, and of his mind and will to mankind respecting their salvation." This was made first, obscurely, and in part, to the ancient patriarchs, and by them to the early ages of the world, before and after the flood. As to Adam, when God said, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" and to Abraham, when

\* Luke ii. 10, 11. † Acts xiii. 26. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 15.

he promised him, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed:" and lastly to Jacob, when he assured him, that "Shiloh should come, and that unto him should the gathering of the people be." But when the law was given to the posterity of Jacob, from mount Sinai, an institution took place, the design of which was to exhibit to mankind, in a variety of typical persons, and actions, and emblematical representations, the whole gospel, with its author, origin, and end, its precepts and promises, its privileges and blessings, its grace and glory, as it was in due time to be unfolded more fully and clearly by the eternal word of JEHOVAH, made flesh, and the Spirit of truth and holiness poured out, in all his plenitude of gifts and graces, upon the first disciples and ministers of the divine Immanuel. When this "fulness of time was come," and that same God, "who at sundry times, and in divers manners," had formerly spoken to his ancient people by the prophets, had in these last days sent forth his Son, the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, with credentials and powers, such as no other divine messenger ever was, or will be invested with, then the gospel, which in former ages had been exhibited in types and shadows, rather shaded than revealed, was manifested in all its glory, and appeared

" Full orb'd in its whole round of rays complete."

It arose upon the world with healing in its wings, and shone forth in all its beauty, splendour, and importance. "The day-spring from on high visited us, to give light to them that sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death, and to guide their feet into the way of peace." It is this last, clearest, and fullest revelation of the divine will, respecting our salvation, that is most properly and emphatically termed the gospel, and that is here chiefly meant; as also, in divers other passages of the New Testament, which you may examine at your leisure.

3. The gospel, considered in this view, has respect to all the offices sustained by its glorious Author. In reference to his prophetic office, it is a revelation of truths, including doctrines, precepts, promises, and threatenings, more clear and full than any preceding discovery. These truths, as they are of a spiritual and divine nature, and concern chiefly, if not wholly, spiritual and di-

vine things, so they are to us the most important that can be imagined. They, 1st, respect GOD the FATHER, whose nature and attributes, especially his moral attributes, as his holiness, justice, truth, mercy, and love, have been abundantly more plainly and fully revealed to mankind, by Christ and his apostles, than ever they were before. "No man hath seen God," says St. John, "at any time; the only-begotten SON, who is in the bosom of the FATHER, he hath declared him." "The SON of GOD is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true. And we are in him that is true." "They shall know me," says God, speaking of gospel days, "from the least to the greatest." They regard, 2dly, the SON of GOD, whose person and offices, humiliation and exaltation, grace and glory, are exhibited and displayed, by himself and his evangelists and apostles, as they neither were, nor, in the nature of things could be, before his manifestation in the flesh. They concern, 3dly, the SPIRIT of GOD, not indeed so much with respect to his nature and essence, as his office in the church, and his operations in the souls of men, in order to their salvation. These are revealed much more at large, and with abundantly greater evidence, in the New Testament than in the Old, and we see with much more clearness than the Jews did formerly, how he enlightens, quickens, strengthens, sanctifies, and comforts his people, and by a variety of gifts and graces, prepares them for, and gives them a pledge and earnest of, eternal felicity and glory. The truths of the gospel, 4thly, respect ourselves. They reveal to us our fall in Adam, with the sinfulness and guilt, the depravity, weakness, and misery, entailed upon us thereby, in a much clearer and fuller manner than they were known to the Old Testament saints. In the mean time, our redemption by Christ, with the nature and properties, causes and effects of that salvation which is by faith in him, is also manifested and displayed in all its love and power, glory and extent, in this same gospel. Here we learn also, the will of God concerning us, viz. what he requires us to know, to believe, to experience, to be, to do, to suffer, and to enjoy. The immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, the conflagration of the world, the final judgment of men and angels, and the restitution of all things are among the important and astonishing discoveries, exhibited to our view in this ever-blessed gospel.



4. Again, in reference to his priestly office, the gospel implies a free and sincere offer of privileges, which Christ hath procured for us by his death, and received, in consequence of his ascension into heaven. What these privileges are, I need not now take up your time in endeavouring to show. You, my brethren, are well apprized that remission of sins, the favour and friendship of God, and adoption into his family, whereby we become his sons and daughters, are among the first and principal of them. These prepare the way for others, such as our heavenly Father's peculiar care and protection, an ample provision for the supply of all our wants, temporal and spiritual, with an assurance that all things, even affliction and death, shall work for our good. Add to this, that Christ has procured for us, and in his gospel offers to us, "fellowship with God," through the eternal Spirit; which, as it implies a title to, and, in some degree, at least, a meetness for, the happiness reserved for us in the heavenly mansions, so it is also an earnest of that happiness in our hearts. These blessed privileges of the gospel to be enjoyed here, are, you know, to be crowned with the everlasting vision and enjoyment of God hereafter, when his people shall be admitted to see his face and behold his glory, so as to be transformed fully into his likeness, and possessed eternally of his felicity.

5. Once more: if the gospel be considered in reference to the kingly office of Christ, it implies the promulgation of a variety of laws, enforced with sanctions, the most momentous and awful that can be imagined, even with promises of happiness, and threatenings of misery, infinite and eternal. All these laws are wise and holy, just and good. They enjoin repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to our possessing any, even the first of the fore-mentioned privileges, remission of sins, or justification before God. And upon those that are justified, and thereby furnished with the main-spring of obedience, love, they inculcate the uniform practice of piety and virtue in all their branches, directing us in every part of our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves, and "teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

6. That these laws of Christ make a part, and an important part of the gospel, is evident from this consideration, that Christ is as certainly a KING, as he is a Prophet, or a Priest, and requires our obedience, as much as our faith or confidence. As his prophetic office, in the execution of which he reveals great and important truths, would be of no advantage to us, if we did not believe him, nor his priestly office, whereby he atones for our sins and procures for us inestimable privileges, if we did not trust in him: so neither is his kingly office of any avail to us, if we do not obey and serve him. He is a Lawgiver and a Judge, as well as a Saviour; and while we apply to him, and depend on him for eternal salvation, we must remember he is "the author of it, only to those that obey him." We are therefore, "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ," who, when we stand at his judgment-seat, "will render to every man according to his deeds, and give eternal life only to those, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality." Whereas, to those that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, he will render "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." From all which it is manifest, as St. John testifies, that they only are "blessed that do his commandments," inasmuch as they alone have a right to the tree of life, and shall enter in through the gates into the city.\*

Hence it is, that in the parallel passages, by two of the other evangelists, our Lord is represented as giving the same or a like charge, in different words. In Luke it is, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations,"† and in Matt. "Go ye, and disciple all nations,—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."‡ The commands or laws of Christ, therefore, are a part of the gospel, or glad tidings published unto us. And that they may manifestly appear to be such, God hath promised under the new and better covenant, to "write them on the hearts" of his people.§

7. If this be the nature of the gospel, it will not be difficult to say, what is implied in preaching it. It is undoubtedly, first, to

\* Rev. xxii. 14. † Luke xxiv. 47. ‡ Math. xxviii. 20.

§ Jer. xxxi. 31. and Heb. viii. 6.

teach the truths which it reveals. This must be done *clearly*, in language intelligible to all, even to the most ignorant and illiterate; and, if possible, with such a judicious arrangement of matter, and distinctness of method, that while lower truths, and such as are more easily understood, make way for, and prepare the mind to receive those that are higher, and of more difficult apprehension, all may be easily and lastingly remembered. Again it must be done *fully*. Nothing that will be profitable to our hearers, must be kept back from them, but the whole counsel of God must be declared, at least, as far as concerns their salvation, present or eternal. And if we have not opportunity, during the short time of our residence with a people, to enter upon and discuss the controverted, and less important truths of christianity, we must at least take care to explain to them, and enforce upon them, its leading and essential doctrines. Further: these truths must be taught *affectionately*. We must instruct our people as a father instructs his children, whom he dearly loves, and whose welfare in time and in eternity, he has at heart. Love to them, and an earnest desire for their salvation, must be the spring of all our discourses. Our preaching in public, and our exhortations in private, must flow from this principle; and the affection of our hearts must manifest itself in all our words and actions. We must speak as those that "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, remembering, that we ourselves, also, are compassed about with infirmity," while at the same time, we rejoice in the increasing knowledge and holiness of those that "receive the truth in the love of it." Once more: We must inculcate these truths *diligently*; as St. Paul enjoins Timothy,\* charging him "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ," to observe this injunction. We must so preach the word as to be "instant in season and out of season:" must "convince, reprove, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." Yea, and in order hereto, as the apostle further observes, must watch in all things, that we may let "no fair occasion pass unheeded by," but may discern and embrace every favourable opportunity, whether in private or in public, of communicating knowledge. We must be ready to endure afflictions and hardships of every kind, in the prosecution of our work, not counting our

\* 2 Tim. iv. 11.

ease, our honour, our liberty, or our lives, dear unto ourselves, so we may but "do the work of evangelists, make full proof of our calling, finish our course with joy, and the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

8. To preach the gospel is, secondly, to exhibit the privileges which it offers. This must be done *freely*. They must be tendered to mankind, as the scripture speaks, "without money and without price." Our hearers must be given to understand, that remission of sins, acceptance with God, adoption into his family, regeneration, entire sanctification, and even eternal life, are all the gifts, the free, undeserved gifts of God, through Jesus Christ, and are offered to them without any regard to their merit, yea, notwithstanding their demerit. They must be made sensible, "that not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy, God will save them, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, "and therefore that, unworthy, guilty, and deserving of condemnation and wrath as they are, they are welcome, nay, are invited and urged to receive these blessings. Now as men are very averse to believe this doctrine, and yet, amidst the trials and troubles of this present life, have great need of the support and consolation it affords, these privileges must be offered them *frequently*. This should make one part, perhaps I may say, the principle part, of almost every sermon. And in private also, we ought to be frequently inviting them to the possession of these blessings, and demonstrating from Scripture and Reason, the readiness of the Lord Jesus to bestow them upon all that apply to him for them. *All*, I say, for these privileges must be offered to mankind *universally*, without any exception. The high and low, rich and poor, young and old, professors and profane, must be invited to partake of these unsearchable riches of Christ. "Let him that is athirst, come," must be our language, and "whosoever will, let him come, and take of the fountain of the water of life freely." For "whosoever cometh, he will in nowise cast out." They must be informed, notwithstanding, that these privileges will not be conferred upon, and, in the nature of things, cannot be received by the impenitent and unbelieving. We must therefore make this gracious offer *conditionally*, insisting on repentance and faith, as terms or conditions,

required of all who expect to be admitted to a participation of gospel blessings; which repentance and faith, however, we must assure them, are the gifts of God, and will be bestowed on all who sincerely and earnestly ask and seek for them.

9. Yet again on this head. To preach the gospel is, thirdly, to declare and enforce the precepts it enjoins. This should be done *boldly* and *faithfully*. In reproving sin, and showing people their duty, we must not fear the face of any man, but must regard only the presence of God, his all-seeing eye, the terrible day-of judgment, and the obligations of our office. The Lord, we must remember, hath appointed us to be watchmen over his people, we must therefore "hear the word at his mouth, and give them faithful warning from him." And we must do this under a conviction that our own souls are at stake! that if we "speak not unto them, to warn them to turn from their wicked ways, that they may save their souls alive, they shall die in their iniquity, but their blood shall be required at our hands;" whereas, if we do warn them faithfully, although they should not turn from their wickedness, but should die in their iniquity, we shall deliver our souls. Again: we must speak *plainly* and *intelligibly* on this important subject, that, if possible, they may have just and clear ideas of the spirituality, extent, and obligation of the law of Christ, the gospel law, the law of love and liberty, and of every part of their duty as enjoined thereby. We must use every means in our power to give them the necessary information respecting both sin and righteousness, truth and error, that as the apostle speaks, they may have their senses properly exercised to discern both good and evil. And in enforcing the precepts of christianity we must be *impartial*, having no respect of persons. We must be as ready to remind the rich and the great of their duty, and to reprove them for their faults, as the poor and the mean. Only, in order that our advice and reproofs may be well taken, and may answer their intended end, we must be so mindful of the superiority of their station in life, as to address them with proper respect, and carry ourselves with a becoming modesty and deference, in all our intercourse with them. I must observe also, that these laws of Christ must be inculcated *earnestly* and *awfully*. I mean hereby, that we should urge them upon our hearers, under a deep conviction of their very great importance, and that salvation is absolutely impossible, as to

“those that know not God,” so also to those that “obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”\* Persuaded of this, we must address them on this topic, a topic on which their everlasting ALL depends, with suitable earnestness and awe; and, if possible, must not leave them till they are brought to acquiesce in the whole will of God, and resolve, through his grace, to make haste, and not delay to keep all his commandments, and endeavour to be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness.

II. We come now to consider, as was proposed, secondly, *To whom* the office of preaching the Gospel belongs? or, *To whom* this charge of our LORD is given?

1. Although this command, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,” was primarily addressed to the apostles, as appears from the preceding verse, yet that it was not confined to them, is evident from divers considerations. 1st. Our Lord had before this sent out the *seventy*,† making, at the same time, this remarkable observation, “The harvest is great, and the labourers are few;” and exhorting them to “pray the LORD of the harvest to send forth labourers into his harvest.” Now these seventy he certainly never afterwards prohibited from preaching. 2dly, Some of the deacons, chosen merely to a temporal office, such as Stephen and Philip, preached frequently, and no doubt, were countenanced by the Lord in so doing.‡ 3dly, Many of the members of the church of Jerusalem scattered abroad through the regions of Judea and Samaria, by the great persecution raised against them after the death of Stephen, *went everywhere*, we are informed, *preaching the word*.§ And that the apostles were not the persons meant is certain, for we find them expressly excepted. Now they are so far from being censured by the Holy Ghost for this conduct, that this is manifestly recorded of them to their praise. Hence we find Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, and divers others, who were not apostles, preaching the gospel. And, 4thly, that the command was not intended to be confined to that period of time, but was given to all, in every age, that are *properly called and qualified*, appears from the parallel passage,|| where our Lord promises his presence to the ministers of his word, *to the end of the world*.

\* 2 Thess. i. 8. † Luke x. 1. ‡ Acts vi. 8. and viii. 5.

§ Acts viii. 4. || Matth. xxviii. 20.

2. But the great difficulty is, who are thus *called and qualified*? And yet this point, it appears to me, may be determined by attending simply to what has already been observed, with regard to the nature of the gospel, and what is implied in preaching it. But before I enter upon this subject, I must assure my hearers, it is not my intention, in what I shall advance, to reflect upon the clergy of the established church, or those of any other denomination of christians, but merely to show what *warrant* we have from *scripture* and *reason*, to take upon us the office of preaching the gospel, and to lay before this congregation the *rules*, according to which we proceed, in our *choice* and *appointment* of preachers.

3. And first, we have seen above, that to preach the gospel, is to teach the many great and important *truths* of it. Now since God is a God of *reason*, and it is certainly unreasonable to suppose that a man can teach what he does not know; therefore, in order that a person may be qualified for this office, we judge it necessary that he should be acquainted with the nature, variety, and importance of gospel truths. But this, we believe, no one can be, without supernatural illumination; the Old and the New Testament agreeing to assure us, that "The things of God knoweth no man, but by the Spirit of God." Hence, it appears to us absolutely necessary, that a man should be taught of God, taught by the Spirit as well as the Word of truth, in order to his being qualified for the office of a teacher of christianity. Further: Inasmuch as God is a God of truth, and requires truth in the inward parts; requires that those who preach in his name should do it sincerely; therefore, we consider it as being of equal necessity and importance that a person should firmly believe, or be fully persuaded, of the certainty of divine truths, that he may be qualified and called to teach them. "I have believed, and therefore have I spoken," said one. *He must believe, and therefore speak.* Again: God is a SPIRIT, and his word is spirit, and life; and power, and must be spoken in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" and from the heart, that it may reach the heart. In order, therefore, that a man may be qualified to preach the gospel, we believe he ought to have a deep and lively sense of the importance of divine truths upon his mind, and that his spirit and behaviour should be duly influenced thereby.

4. We have observed, secondly, that to preach the gospel, implies, the making a sincere and free offer of gospel privileges. But

before a person can be qualified to do this, it is requisite that he should know what these privileges are, and that he should believe them to be free for, and attainable by his hearers. And as this offer is to be made freely, affectionately, and urgently, it is necessary it should be made from experience. They who preach the gospel, and offer its privileges to mankind, should first themselves have received these privileges; at least, in part; and should have a well-grounded and lively hope of obtaining those that yet remain. Thus our Lord, "We speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen." And thus St. John, and the first ministers of the word, "What we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." They, therefore, who have not received these privileges; for instance, who have not obtained remission of sins, the favour of God, and a new and divine nature, are not qualified, and therefore not called to preach the gospel. In other words, those only are qualified to teach Christ, who have learned him; and, if we are to believe St. Paul, only those have learned him, who have put off the old man, and put on the new, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds.\* Hence it pleased God "to reveal his Son" in Paul, before he sent him to "preach among the Gentiles."†

5. We have seen, thirdly, that another particular implied in preaching the gospel, is to enforce the precepts of it, and that this must be done boldly, plainly, and impartially. Now, it is certain only those can do this who themselves obey those precepts. For they alone will be able to speak with confidence and courage. It follows from hence; that those who live in known sin of any kind, in disobedience to any of the commands of Christ, as they are not *qualified*, so neither are they *called* to preach the gospel. Accordingly, "unto the wicked, God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee."‡ And St. Paul, in the directions which he gives to Timothy and Titus, respecting the persons proper to be chosen to the pastoral office, requires; first of all, that they should be *blameless*, viz. at least as to their outward conduct, standing at

\* Eph. iv. 20, 24. † Gal. i. 16. ‡ Psalm l. 16, 17.



a distance from all known sin, whether of omission or commission. All these qualifications are essentially necessary, and without them, it is absurd to suppose, that any person is called of God to preach his gospel.

6. But there are other endowments also, which, although some of them be of an inferior nature, are yet not to be overlooked. For instance, it is to be observed, that the preachers of the gospel are to address rational creatures, possessed of minds to be informed, judgments to be convinced, consciences to be pierced, wills to be persuaded, fears to be alarmed, hopes to be excited, affections to be won; and hence we may infer, that it is necessary they should be qualified to speak in an intelligible, convincing, persuasive, and affecting manner, and that therefore, they ought to possess a degree, at least of elocution, and even of eloquence. Add to this, that as many persons will, if not stately, yet occasionally, hear them, who will be sensible of any impropriety of language, weakness of argument, or misinterpretation of scripture, it is, if not absolutely necessary, yet very desirable, that they should be persons of good sense, well acquainted with the scriptures, and with divinity, and able to speak their own language grammatically.

7. It is, however, of much more importance to observe, that as their success in their labours, depends entirely on the presence and blessing of the Lord Jesus, it is above all necessary that they should ensure these; "Without me," says the Lord Jesus to all his followers, and especially to the ministers of his gospel, sent forth to enlighten and convert the nations, "ye can do nothing." "We are not sufficient of ourselves, says St. Paul, "to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God; who hath made us able," or rather (*κτανοὺς*) *suitable, fit, or proper*, "ministers of the new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." This one circumstance, that the preachers of the gospel are to be ministers of the Spirit, that they are to communicate, not merely the literal, but also the spiritual and experimental knowledge of the gospel, demonstrates that they need, and can do nothing to purpose, without the Lord's presence and influence. This he hath accordingly promised to all that are called by him, declaring to them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

8. Those *called and sent* by him, I say; for it is not to be supposed that he will be *present with*, or that he will give success to, the labours of those he has not called nor sent. This leads me to observe, that it is not only necessary that a teacher of christianity should have the fore-mentioned qualifications, but that he should be properly called to the work. Thus the Lord Jesus called the *twelve*, and the *seventy*, and afterwards said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them." Hence the church of England requires the candidate for holy orders, to declare that he trusts he is moved by the Holy Ghost to "take upon him that office and ministry." Now, though it may not be easy to define this call, it will be readily allowed, that it must, at least, imply, through the influence of the Holy Ghost, first, a fervent love to souls, and a deep concern for their salvation. Secondly, A fervent love to the LORD JESUS, and an earnest desire to advance his honour and interest in the world. Thirdly, A single eye to the glory of God, in the salvation of souls, excluding all worldly, carnal, and selfish views, such as a regard to wealth, honour, pleasure, or ease. Fourthly, A willingness to endure any hardship or suffering, a man may meet with in the execution of his office. Fifthly, a persuasion that he is called, by whatever means that persuasion may be produced; and an attraction of mind to the work, which, however, may be mixed, sometimes with great reluctance, arising from a sense of his unworthiness of so high, and holy a calling, and unfitness for so difficult and important an office.

9. But lest a man should mistake in this matter, and imagine he is called to the work of the ministry, when he is not; added to this internal, it seems necessary that he should also have an external call. The people of God should hear him, should judge of his qualifications for the work, and bear witness to the success of his endeavours in the conversion of some souls from sin to righteousness, and in the edification of others. And his brethren in the ministry should also hear him, converse with him, and make diligent inquiry concerning his acquaintance with, and experience in divine things; as also, concerning his behaviour among men, and his reasons for believing it his duty to preach the gospel. And, if they judge him qualified and called to that blessed work, they should, in a solemn manner, with prayer and fasting, set him apart for it. Thus, when the Lord Jesus said, by the Holy Ghost, "separate me

Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them," the other prophets and teachers, in the church at Antioch, "fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them." And thus St. Paul appointed Timothy and Titus to "ordain elders in every city." The reason of this is obvious; the knowledge and experience of those that are already in the ministry, renders them best qualified to judge of the call and qualifications of such as are candidates, while a peculiar blessing must attend their advice and prayers. To those, therefore, who are thus qualified and called, is the charge contained in my text given; and it is at their peril to disobey it. "Though they preach the gospel, they have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon them," Yea, "Wo be unto them if they preach not the gospel." "If they do this thing willingly, they have their reward," but if against their will, still they must do it, for "a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto them." But,

III. Where must they preach it, and to whom? This is the next point that comes under our consideration.

1. "Go ye," said the Lord Jesus, "into all the world." Although some of the preachers of the gospel may be peculiarly entrusted with the care of this or that people, and it may be their duty to feed and oversee certain flocks in preference to others, yet they are none of them entirely confined to any particular parish, district, country, kingdom, empire, or quarter of the globe: not to the temperate, torrid, or frigid zone; but when the Lord calls, and divine providence points out the way, they are to go wherever any rational creatures can be found that are willing to hear and obey the gospel. Like St. Paul, they are debtors, both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise.

2. But it may be objected, There are not temples, churches, chapels, synagogues, meeting-houses, nor any places, proper for, or dedicated to, the worship of the true God, every where; and where there are, they may not be admitted to preach in them: what must they do in this case? Must they wait till means can be used to induce people to build such places? I answer, By no means. People must be instructed in the great truths of the gospel, and must be more or less convinced of, and affected by them, before they will wish to have places of worship erected, that being assembled in them they may hear these truths explained to them, and enforced upon them. And although it may be supposed that in

this and other countries where christianity is professed, people universally understand, and are well disposed toward the propagation of it, yet matter of fact proves, that if the religion of Jesus be considered, in that simplicity, purity, and power, in which it is represented unto us in the New Testament, it is neither practised nor understood by the generality of people in this land, nay, nor regarded. Let these preachers, therefore, go forth, like the first servants of Christ, and proclaim the glad tidings of salvation wherever they find an open door. Let "wisdom cry without, and let her voice be heard in the streets." Like our Lord and his apostles, let them preach on mountains, in the high-ways, or by the hedges; or in private houses, market-houses, or barns; yea, wherever they can collect a congregation, though but of two or three, that are willing to hear. And let them declare their important message.

3. "To every creature;" that is, to every rational creature of the fallen race of Adam. All have need of this gospel, and that in all these branches of it which have been mentioned. Mankind being all naturally ignorant and out of the way, and there being none, according to the testimony of David and St. Paul, that understand divine things, all need the truths of the gospel, and the Spirit of truth, of wisdom, and of revelation, to communicate the saving knowledge of them. Again, all having sinned and come short of the glory of God, the whole world being guilty before God, and by nature children of wrath, depraved, weak, and wretched, therefore all need pardon, the divine favour, regeneration, and all the other privileges of this gospel. And lastly, all being naturally lukewarm, indolent, and prone to go astray, they need the precepts of the gospel to quicken and direct them, and the Holy Spirit to write them on their hearts.

4. And as all have need of this gospel, so none are excluded. First, None are excluded by any decree of God. He, as Creator of all, "is loving to every man, and his tender mercies are over all his works." He is the Parent of the human race, and cannot, in the nature of things, debar any of his rational offspring from the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of himself, their Friend, and their Father. He is the preserver and benefactor of all, in whom they live, move, and have their being; and who hath not left himself without witness among them, but furnishes them with daily proofs of his goodness, "giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful sea-

sons, and filling their mouths with food, and their hearts with gladness;" and surely he cannot be unwilling to save the persons whom he daily preserves, and on whom he showers his daily and hourly benefits. Nay, he is the Redeemer of all, who hath "so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" yea, whose Son died for all, when all were dead; gave himself a ransom for all, and by divine grace or favour, tasted death for every man. And is it possible he should shut the door of salvation against any that he hath purchased with his Son's blood? Hence it is that he is expressly termed the "*Saviour of all men, although especially of those that believe,*" "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," should "be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

5. And as none are excluded by any decree of God, so none are shut out by any natural or moral incapacity. None that are not idiots, (in which case they are not accountable for their actions, nor the proper subjects of rewards and punishments) are so ignorant as to be incapable of understanding the truths of the gospel, if enlightened by the Spirit of God, which is free for all, and promised to all that sincerely and earnestly ask it. None are so guilty, as to be debarred the privileges of the gospel, purchased for all that will accept them, by the death of Christ, and offered to all by the free mercy of God. None are so weak and depraved, as to be unable to obey the precepts of the gospel, if assisted by the grace of God in Christ Jesus, which bringing salvation, hath appeared unto all men, as the apostle testifies,\* and may be received by all. Hence it is, (and this leads me to the last particular,) that,

Fourthly, Faith is justly required of all, on the peril of everlasting damnation. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

1. From what has been said, it will easily appear, both what faith is, and how justly it is required in order to everlasting salvation. It respects the gospel in all the three grand branches of it above-mentioned. First, As the gospel is a revelation of *Truths*, it implies that, in consequence of an attentive consideration and thorough knowledge of them, we be persuaded of the certainty and importance of these truths, and that in such a lively and op-

\* Titus ii. 11, 12.

rative manner, that our hearts are truly affected, and our lives duly influenced by them from day to day. These truths, coming to us not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, are the power of God unto our salvation. For as soon, and in proportion as we thus believe, "we are translated out of darkness into marvellous light:" in other words, we are saved from ignorance and error, into the light of knowledge and truth. Secondly, As the gospel is an offer of *privileges*, faith in it implies, that we accept that offer in the way God hath appointed, viz. The way of "Repentance towards God, and confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ," the High Priest of our profession, who by his death hath obtained these privileges for us, and in his gospel, makes them over to all that repent and believe in him. By faith in this sense, "we are justified from all things:" we are saved from the guilt of sin, into the divine favour, are adopted into God's family, regenerated through his grace, and restored in a degree, at least, to his likeness. Thirdly, As the gospel is a promulgation of *laws*, faith in it implies, that we acknowledge the authority of the Lawgiver, and yield ourselves up to obey his laws, looking to him, and depending on him, as a *Saviour*, for power to enable us so to do, and trusting in the mercy of God, through his merits, for the pardon of our daily infirmities and defects. By faith, in this respect, we are saved into universal holiness of heart and life, and obtain "a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards man," with great boldness in the profession of the gospel.

2. It appears by this, that our Lord's promise is, and must be always strictly fulfilled, "He that believeth shall be saved." By believing in, and receiving Christ, and his gospel, with regard to the truths it reveals, the privileges it offers, and the laws it enjoins, we are saved even here, from ignorance and error, sin and misery; we are enlightened, justified, sanctified, and comforted. And persevering to believe, we continue to be saved, and that in proportion to the degree of our faith. The greater number of divine truths we receive by faith, and the more fully and clearly we are persuaded of them, and impressed by them, the more must our minds be enlightened with true and saving knowledge. The more constantly we apply to, and the more firmly we trust in, Christ for the privileges of the gospel, the more must we be encouraged and

comforted, purified and strengthened. And the more we submit, by faith, to the authority, and comply with the injunctions of the laws of the gospel, looking to the Lawgiver, who is also the Saviour, for grace and strength, the more shall we be saved from the appearance of evil; and the more holy shall we become "in all manner of conversation and godliness." Thus, the just continues to live by faith, and to live more abundantly. The *full assurance of faith*, always attended with the *full assurance of hope*, never fails to be productive of *perfect love*, even the love that *casteth out fear*: and that love is followed by an equal degree of every inward grace and outward virtue. And the believer "enduring to the end," and being "faithful unto death," receives the crown of life, and is saved eternally.

3. Now, when the gospel is preached to those who have not already been admitted members of the visible church, and when such are brought cordially to receive it, it is necessary, whatever danger of persecution may be incurred thereby, that they should *publicly profess* their repentance and faith, by submitting to the ordinance of baptism. Therefore, our Lord says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." And St. Paul declares in words of nearly a similar import, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." This was undoubtedly the practice of the primitive church, with regard to those adult heathens or Jews, who were converted to christianity. They were not admitted to baptism till they professed repentance for sin, and faith in the gospel. Then, and not before, they were *sprinkled* or *washed* with water, as a token that they were "sprinkled from an evil conscience, and washed in the laver of regeneration." But we cannot infer from this, that the children of christian parents were debarred from baptism, till they were capable of believing personally: on the contrary, we have reason to suppose, from the very nature of the new covenant, as well as from many passages of scripture, and the authentic records of the primitive church, that they were generally baptized in their infancy or childhood. But as this is not a proper time to discuss such a doctrine, referring any that may wish for information upon this head, to the books and tracts written professionally on the subject, I go on to observe, that if our Lord should be considered by any as intimating here, the necessity of being bap-

tized in order to salvation, in case there be an opportunity for it; yet he *cannot* be understood, as making it necessary for any converts to receive baptism from the *very same persons* that were instrumental in bringing them to repentance. If they be but baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, it seems a matter of little moment, by whom the ceremony is performed. St. Paul, it is certain, was an instrument in the hands of God, of bringing hundreds to repentance in the city of Corinth, but according to the account he gives us, he only baptized *two* persons there, and the household of a *third*. From this, it appears, both that he considered it as a matter of much greater importance to preach the gospel than to baptize; and also, that he judged many persons to be sufficiently qualified to perform the latter office, who were not called to be extensively useful in the execution of the former. And no wonder, for, by preaching the gospel, the seed of faith is sown, which, as in adults it must precede baptism, so it is of much greater necessity and importance.

4. This is implied in the next clause, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." Our Lord does not say, "*He that believeth not, and is not baptized*," but simply, "*He that believeth not, shall be damned.*" If a person believe the gospel, with such a faith as is above described, he shall be saved, even if, through want of opportunity, or his own involuntary prejudices, he should be prevented from receiving the washing of baptismal water. But although he may have had this, whether in his infancy or in his adult age, yet if he do not believe with a right faith, "he shall be damned," or *condemned*, as the original word is. Indeed, as St. John testifies,\* he is "condemned already." Not receiving the gospel, as to the truths, privileges, and precepts of it, with a "faith working by love," he remains in that state of ignorance and sin, of depravity and weakness, in which all are by nature; having contracted an increased guilt, and being, of course, exposed to greater punishment for rejecting the grace of God offered in the gospel. "For this," adds the same apostle in the next verse, "is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." And, living and dying in this state, he cannot escape condemnation at the day of judgment. For, on the one hand, being in a state of spiritual darkness and death, he has neither title to, nor meetness for, the vision and enjoyment

\* John iii. 18.



of God in glory; and, on the other hand, having rejected the means of illumination, justification, and renovation, afforded him in the gospel, he has merited, and from a holy and just God, must meet with, condemnation and misery, proportioned to his guilt. For, "if the word spoken by angels," viz. the law delivered on Sinai by the ministry of angels, "was steadfast, and every transgression and act of disobedience, received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him; God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

"Examine yourselves," therefore, my brethren, "whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you," in all his offices and characters, as your light and life, your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, "except ye be reprobates?" See that you do not deceive yourselves in a matter of such moment, a matter on which your everlasting salvation depends; and take care you do not rest till that gospel which has come to you in word, come also in power, and in much assurance," and you find your mind enlightened by its truths, your heart enriched and comforted with its privileges, and your life regulated by, and conformed to its precepts. Thus will you find it the power of God to your salvation from sin here, and from all its consequences hereafter.

And as to us, my brethren, who are employed in the dispensation of this gospel of the grace of God, let us examine ourselves narrowly, as to our *call* to, and *qualifications* for, the important office in which we are engaged; and when we are satisfied, in some measure, as to these, let us make it our care to execute our trust faithfully. "Let us study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Let us make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with the gospel of Christ, with respect to all the doctrines, promises, and commands of it; and let us take care that we inculcate every part of it, keeping back from our people nothing that would be profitable to them. Like the great apostle of the Gentiles, while we instruct them publicly, and from house to house, let us especially testify "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," with the genuine fruit

thereof, universal holiness of heart and life. Of these things, let us take care to be ourselves *living witnesses*; that speaking from experience, we may speak with demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Let us recommend our doctrine by our practice, and while we serve the Lord *with all humility of mind*, and simplicity of heart, let us be examples to believers, in *conversation*, in *behaviour*, in *love*, in *faith*, in *purity*: and let us "*take heed to ourselves*," as well as to the *sundry flocks* "over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." In order hereto, let us "give diligent attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; and follow after godliness, righteousness, faith, hope, love, patience, meekness." Let us "watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of evangelists, and make full proof of our ministry." Let us "meditate on these things, and give ourselves wholly to them, that our profiting may appear unto all." In fine, "Let us take heed to ourselves, and to our doctrine," and continue so to do, for in this way, "we shall both save ourselves, and those that hear us."



## SERMON II.

ON THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST;  
AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT BEING PROPERLY AC-  
QUAINTED WITH IT.

PREACHED

AT THE NEW CHAPEL, IN LOWGATE, HULL, DEC. 30. 1787.

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*“ But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.”*

2 Cor. iii. 3, 4.

1. **A** MOMENT'S reflection upon the preceding verses, with which this passage of scripture is closely connected, will cast much light upon it, and assist us to understand its purport. The apostle, in the foregoing chapter, having drawn a comparison between the gospel and the law, the Christian and Mosaic economy, and shown the superiority of the former to the latter, proceeds, in the beginning of this chapter, to speak of the conduct of himself and his fellow-apostles, who were entrusted with the dispensation of this gospel.

2. *Seeing then* (says he) *we have received this ministry*, a ministry so superior to that wherewith Moses was entrusted, more excellent in its nature, and more beneficial in its effects, transforming all who receive it into the image of God; *as we have obtained mercy* to be accounted faithful, as God has in mercy accepted us as his servants in the gospel, and supported us in our work; *we faint not*, are not discouraged, do not desist from the glorious enterprize: *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty*, whatever a person has need to hide or be ashamed of; *not walking in crafti-*

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ness, not making use of guile, fraud, or low cunning, *nor handling the word of God deceitfully*, not corrupting it with impure mixtures of our own, (as vintners sometimes mix their wines with baser liquors,) not adding to it, diminishing from it, nor striving to accommodate it to the taste of our hearers; *but by manifestation of the truth*, by speaking the whole truth clearly and plainly, *commending ourselves to every man's conscience*, appealing to the consciences of sinners for the truth of what we say, or rather addressing ourselves to their consciences, aiming principally to convince and awaken *these*; and all this *in the sight of God*, knowing he is a witness to our behaviour in his work, and will shortly call us to give an account, and therefore desiring to approve ourselves to him.

3. *But if*, notwithstanding the excellency of the doctrine we teach, and the plain, clear, and powerful manner in which we deliver ourselves, *our gospel also* (for so it should be translated,) as well as the law, *be hid*, (*κεκαλυμμενον*, veiled or concealed, as the face of Moses by the veil, to which he alludes) "it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." The Jews in general were ignorant of the law, and their ignorance was attended with the most fatal consequences; yet still they might have been saved by becoming acquainted with the gospel; but if they were strangers to the gospel also, there was no remedy for them, but they were lost without hope of recovery. The same is affirmed concerning all mankind in general, as well as the Jews in particular. If any child of man, to whom the gospel is plainly and powerfully preached, (for what have we to do to judge those to whom it is not preached?) still remain ignorant of its nature, disobedient to its commands, and unexperienced in its privileges and blessings, the apostle pronounces in the most express terms that he *is lost*, lost now, and in the way to be lost for ever.

4. Surely then it highly concerns *us* to whom this gospel is preached, thoroughly to understand it and experience its efficacy, and to be well assured that we do so: Surely if we are wise, we shall not rest in an uncertainty here, shall not satisfy ourselves with any thing short of a clear assurance that we are savingly acquainted

with the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—Now with a view to assist you in this important matter, I beg your candid and serious attention while I inquire into

- I. The nature and design of the gospel.
- II. The consequences of being ignorant of it.

And first, I am to inquire into the nature and design of the gospel of Christ.

1. It is well known that the Greek word which we translate gospel, means "*good news*," or "*glad tidings*." Such the gospel undoubtedly is to every child of man; *glad tidings of great joy unto all people*. Such all account it to be who are rightly informed concerning it, who know its worth and their want of it. For it is tidings of eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, health to the sick; tidings of light to them that sit in darkness, of strength to such as are weak and helpless, of liberty to those bound in misery and iron, and of pardon and life to persons condemned to die. In other words, it is tidings of forgiveness of sins, of holiness, and of heaven, to such as are notoriously guilty, utterly depraved, and altogether hell-deserving; tidings of the highest honour and most consummate happiness to persons sunk into the greatest depth of infamy and wretchedness. In the gospel we learn that God "hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant;—salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us;—that we might serve him without fear in righteousness and holiness before him all the days of our life."\* In short, by the gospel *glory is brought to God in the highest, peace is proclaimed upon earth, and the good will of heaven is manifested to men*; for it discovers to us a *Saviour who is Christ the Lord*, divinely appointed and sufficiently qualified to rescue fallen man from sin and misery, and reinstate him in the favour and image of God.

2. But I must be a little more particular. The whole gospel proceeds on this supposition, that mankind are in a fallen state, that they have lost the favour and image of God, and are by nature ignorant, sinful, guilty, and helpless: "that there is none that understandeth, that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, that

\* Luke i. 68—75.

the whole world are guilty before God, and that we are all without strength."\* On this foundation the gospel is built: take away this and it has nothing to support it. Deny the fall of man, his original depravity, the one source of all his actual transgressions, and you deny the whole gospel of Christ, all that deserves the name of gospel or glad tidings. For sure, to deny that we are sick, is to deny we have any need of a physician; and if we are not guilty and condemned, he does but insult us who offers us a pardon. Let then the secret infidels of our day speak out; let them tell us in plain terms that they disbelieve the gospel of Christ; let them openly avow their sentiments and reject christianity altogether. This would be acting a far more honourable part, (and they too are men of honour!) than under colour of friendship and with professions of regard, slyly to stab it in the dark, and cowardly to endeavour that in secret which they dare not attempt openly.

3. Taking it for granted, then, that mankind are lost, the gospel proposes their restoration. It is exactly suited to our case: it is just such a dispensation as we want: it is a remedy every way adequate to our disease. It offers us all that we lost in Adam, and much more than we ever had. It shows us how we may escape sin, and death, and hell, and how we may recover holiness and heaven, the favour and image of God here, and the enjoyment of his glory for ever hereafter.

4. But all this will appear more manifest if we consider, a little, the short but full account the apostle has given us of the gospel in the preceding chapter, where he compares it with the law. Ver. 9, he calls the law, *the ministration of condemnation*, and the gospel the *ministration of righteousness*. By the law there, he principally means the moral law which alone was *written and engraven on stones*, ver. 7. and this he calls the ministration of condemnation, because it condemns mankind for their violation of it. Had we observed and kept it in all points, at all times, and in all respects, perfectly, universally and constantly, instead of *condemning*, it would have acquitted and rewarded us: *For the law saith, He that doeth these things shall live by them.*† But because we have all violated in one or more points, (*and he that offends, though*

\* Rom. iii. 11—23. and v. 6.

† Rom. x. 5.

only in one point, is guilty of all,\* therefore it condemns us all. And hence the apostle declares, *As many as are of the works of the law, (or seek to be justified by them,) are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

5. Such is the condition of all men by nature. *All having sinned and come short of the glory of God,* all are guilty before God, children of wrath, and under sentence of condemnation to the second death, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. And the law considered in itself, in its precepts and penalties, knows no mercy, but denounces judgment without mercy. It provides no way of escape. But the gospel does: it is a *ministration of righteousness*: it shows us how we may be pardoned and accepted consistently with the justice and truth of God; how we may be delivered from the curse of the law, and yet the authority of it be preserved inviolate. Therein the "day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to us who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.† For therein the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,‡ God's method of justifying sinners by faith in the righteousness of Christ. Therein we learn that "God made Christ sin (or a sin-offering) for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:"§ that God "hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness (both justice and mercy) for the remission of sins that are past: || that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."¶ Hence it is that, notwithstanding our guilt and impotence, we may be "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that there is in Jesus;" yea, God can "be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," he can pardon and accept the sinner, without any impeachment of his divine perfections, or any derogation from the authority of his holy law.

6. On this ground it is, that the gospel offers us a free, full, and universal pardon for all our past offences. It assures us, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and that he hath committed to his apostles the word of reconciliation."\*\* They therefore, according to the com-

\* Jam. ii. 10. † Luke i. 78. ‡ Rom. i. 17. § 2 Cor. v. 21. || Rom. iii. 25.

¶ Gal. iii. 13.

\*\* 2 Cor. v. 19.



mission Christ had given them, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God, not only preached repentance, but also remission of sins in his name among all nations: In his name they offered, and that to all without exception,

“ Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon  
By means that speak its value infinite!  
A pardon bought with blood! with blood divine!  
With blood divine of him we made our foe!  
Persisted to provoke! tho’ woo’d and aw’d,  
Blest and chastis’d, yet fragrant rebels still!”

And in order to the enjoyment of this pardon, they required nothing of mankind but repentance towards God, and faith, living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, both which they represented as the gifts of God. For, with the prophets they bore witness that if we “ draw nigh to God, he will draw nigh to us!”† and that “ whosoever believeth in Christ, doth receive the forgiveness of sins; yea, that by him all who believe are justified from all things.”‡ Thus we see it is clearly revealed and expressly declared in the gospel, that because of what Christ hath done and suffered, the moment we truly believe on him, (viz. with a penitent and loving heart,) “ God is merciful to our unrighteousness, and our sins and iniquities he remembers no more.” He treats us as though we had never offended, accepts us through the Beloved into the number of his children, and we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,‡ even the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

7. This leads me to speak of another principal blessing of the gospel, concerning which also we are informed in the former chapter, where, ver. 7, the apostle calls the law *the ministration of death*, and (ver. 8.) the gospel *the ministration of the Spirit*. He calls the law the ministration of death, not only because it condemned wilful transgressors to temporal death, and condemns us all to the second death; but also because in consequence of our violation of it we are deprived of union with God, in which our spiritual life as much consists, as our natural life in the union of soul and body. Our sins have separated between us and our God; we are alienated from the life of God, and of consequence are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins.

\* James iv. 8. † Acts xiii. 39. ‡ Gal. iii. 14.

8. To illustrate this a little. No sooner has the soul left the body than natural life is at an end. The body has no longer any sensibility of pleasure or pain. It has no longer any sensation: it has eyes, but sees not, ears, but hears not. It has no longer any power; it cannot move, or act, or make resistance, but may be dragged hither and thither at will. It is helpless, tends to putrefaction, and is only fit to be removed out of the sight of the living, to whom it is now become loathsome and abominable.—In like manner no sooner has God left the soul than spiritual life is at an end. The soul has no longer any sensibility of sin, its evil nature and dreadful tendency; any conscious grief when overtaken by it, or joy when preserved from it. It has no longer (if I may so speak) any spiritual sensation: it *sees* not by faith *him that is invisible*, *hears* not the *voice* of Christ, nor *feels the powers of the world to come*. In other words, it has no saving knowledge in divine things; God, and the things of God, are concealed from it. It has no longer any power; it cannot move one step heavenward, perform any thing properly good, nor resist and conquer temptation; but the devil, the world, and the flesh, drag it hither and thither, at pleasure and uncontrolled. It is helpless, corrupted by sin, filthy and polluted, and only fit to be removed out of the sight (as it were) of an holy God, to whom it is now become abominable, and buried in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

9. In this condition the moral law leaves mankind. Considered in itself as a covenant of works, it points us to no remedy, but rather pronounces us incurable, and our case desperate. Not so the gospel; it is a *ministration of the Spirit*. It informs us of, and offers to us the Holy Spirit of God, whose office it is to restore our souls to spiritual life, and heal all the diseases which by sin we have contracted. Therein we are told that when Christ “ascended up on high and led captivity captive, he received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them,”\* that in him “all fulness dwells, and that out of his fulness we may receive grace for grace.”† Therein we are informed of the “saving grace of God appearing to all men,” and of “the true light enlightening every man that cometh into the world.”‡ And we are assured if we do not quench this light and reject this grace, it shall be imparted more and more to guide, renew, and comfort us. For in the

\* Psal. lxxviii. 18. Eph. iv. 8. † John i. 16. ‡ Tit. ii. 11. John i. 9.

gospel Christ offers "to baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire," to "live in us, that we may live also," to "quicken us, and raise us up, and make us sit together with himself in heavenly places." He promises, if we will "come to him and drink, out of our belly," (figuratively speaking) "shall flow rivers of living water,"\* such abundance of spiritual life shall we possess, that it shall overflow (as it were) for the quickening and refreshment of others; yea, he assures us (if we ask) he "will give us living water, and that water shall be in us a well of water springing up to life eternal."† Now "all this he speaks of the Spirit which they who believe on him do receive," that Spirit which is offered in the gospel, and which accompanying its truths when delivered, renders them *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*

10. By this Spirit we are again united to God, and put in possession of spiritual life. Our eyes are opened, and we see the dreadful situation we are in by nature and practice; we discover the ruin that hangs over our guilty heads, and threatens to bury us in eternal destruction. Our deaf ears are unstopped, and we hear the voice of him "*that raiseth the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were,*" calleth us to come forth out of the grave of sin that we may live a new life, *a life hid with Christ in God.* I mean, our understanding is enlightened with the light of life, and we are made acquainted with things spiritual and divine, which, while destitute of the Spirit, we could not discern. Our conscience also is roused from its lethargy, and we are convinced of sin and of righteousness. We are now no longer insensible of grief and pain on account of the sins we have committed, and the punishment we have deserved; or of joy and delight, on account of what Christ hath done and suffered for us, and the prospect of eternal glory he hath opened to our view. But we feel the most tender and lively affections, excited by the things of God, which before we could contemplate with total unconcern.

11. The Holy Spirit has stripped sin of its disguise, and beholding the monster in all its deformity and mischief, we fear and tremble at the thoughts of our former danger from it, and are distressed for our foolish and wicked intimacy with so destructive an enemy. Holiness is now unmasked, and blooming in all its beauty, kindles in our hearts the most fervent love to, and inflames our souls with

\* John vii. 37, 38. † John iv. 10, 14.

the warmest desires after an object so incomparably excellent and worthy of our highest regard. We lament and are amazed at our former indifference, and resolve to make amends (so to speak) for what is past, by the most careful attention to, and diligent endeavours after it, for the time to come. In the meantime, considering the *great and precious promises*, which are all given to us, that we *may be made partakers of the divine nature*, we rejoice in hope of possessing, to our entire and endless satisfaction, this holiness so amiable in our eyes.

12. *In hope* of possessing it, did I say? Nay, we rejoice in the actual possession of it in a great degree. For, being "in Christ, we are new creatures, old things are done away and all things in us are become new." Sin hath not dominion over us, which in time past it had, because *we are not under the law* (the covenant of works which killeth, nor the Mosaic dispensation which was imperfect,) but *under grace*, a dispensation of pardoning mercy, which *giveth life*. And of divine influences which save from sin. This covenant of grace, which is the "law of the Spirit of Life from Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death:" and being hereby "made free from sin, we become servants to God, bear fruit unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life."\* For through a faith of the operation of God, (the grand means of sanctification as well as justification,) being persuaded of God's true and faithful promises, and relying upon him for the accomplishment of them, we derive the Spirit of life, of light, and power into our souls, and assisted by his all-sufficient grace, "we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God." Believing, we love, and loving, we obey: our obedience is sincere, universal, constant, and persevering; we pay a due respect to all his commandments, and become at last "holy, as he that hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation and godliness."

13. Hence that same Spirit which is our light in darkness, our strength in weakness, our life in death, our entire sanctification; is also our succour in temptation, our comfort in trouble, our true and only happiness.—We can now rejoice in the divine favour, as well as in the "testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have our conversation in the world."† Our

\* Rom. viii. 2. and vi. 18.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

guilty fears, desponding doubts, and overwhelming griefs, give place and disappear, while the Comforter shines forth, in all his radiant glory, and revives and cheers our drooping hearts. Through his agency the fogs and mists of ignorance and error, sin and misery, suspend their baleful influence, nay, speedily vanish, and light and truth, holiness and heaven, diffuse their joyous lustre throughout our souls. He pacifies the conscience, calms the passions, and introduces into our minds a peace which passeth all understanding. He inflames us with love, inspires with hope, and fills us with joy, even a joy unspeakable and full of glory. By his operation we are assured of the favour of God, adopted into his family, and prepared for the glory and felicity above. And though "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him," yet because God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,\* therefore we do and must rejoice in prospect of them. "We abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost," and therefore in joy; "we rejoice greatly," (even though "for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations,") in expectation of soon possessing an "inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not way, reserved in heaven for us,"† and an earnest of which we have by the Spirit in our hearts.

14. Such are some of the happy effects produced by that Spirit which the gospel offers, and which is the chief glory of it, its distinguishing privilege. In this respect chiefly, we discern the superiority of the *Christian* to the *Mosaic* dispensation. Not but that the Holy Spirit was in some degree given under the law; undoubtedly it was: whatever holiness or happiness the pious Israelites possessed, they owed to its influences, and very eminent for holiness and happiness, it is manifest, many of them were. But it was not given so *largely* nor so *universally* as since Christ's glorification, after he had finished the work which was given him to do. This conclusion we cannot but draw from a variety of passages in holy writ, which it is unnecessary to quote on this occasion. One I shall mention, which is so plain and express, and full to the purpose, that it may well serve instead of a thousand, and help us to understand others which in different places occur upon this subject, but

\* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

† 1 Pet. i. 4—6.

are less clear and determinate. John vii. 37 and 38, the apostle tells us, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, (hath testified in many places,) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this (St. John says,) he spake of the Spirit, which they who believed on him, *εμελλον λαμβανειν*, were afterwards to receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." From hence it is manifest, beyond all contradiction, that there is a sense in which the Spirit was not given before Christ's glorification, as it was to be given afterwards, and that this sense respects not *only* or chiefly his extraordinary and miraculous operations, but also and *especially* his ordinary influences, because it is promised to all believers without limitation, in all nations and ages.

15. One more property of the gospel, I shall take occasion, from the preceding chapter, to mention. The apostle there, ver. 11, affirms of the *law* that it was to be *abolished*, and of the *gospel* that it *remaineth*. The Mosaic dispensation was of a temporary nature, and only intended to continue for a time: it was to make way for and give place to better, when in "the fulness of time God should send forth his Son, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." But the gospel is an institution that shall abide for ever. As it is the *best* dispensation God ever made with man, so it is the *last* he will ever make. We look for none to succeed it: nay, we do not expect any alteration to be made in it. On the contrary, we are assured, it is unchangeable in its nature, and eternal in its consequences. It is the one, fixed, and unalterable way in which God will save sinners while the world stands: and all saved in this way shall for ever rejoice in the salvation thus obtained. It will not only continue with them through life, as their glory and their joy, but through death also. When they "*walk through the valley of the shadow of death, they shall fear no evil,*" for the salvation of the gospel is with them. This, like Elijah's mantle, shall cause the waters of mortality to divide hither and thither, that they may go through on dry land. And shall it desert them when passed over, when in Canaan? Oh no! They are then but entering upon the full enjoyment of gospel blessings, the entire possession of their hea-

venly inheritance: They then *receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.*

16. *For life and immortality are brought to light, by the gospel.* Not contented within the narrow bounds of time, it launches out into an eternal state, and there expatiates at large. It not only acquaints us with what shall hereafter be transacted within the sphere of creation and limits of time, but it unfolds the mysteries of eternity, and conducts our contemplations through the immensity of the Godhead. "It burns the present world, triumphs over death by a general resurrection, and opens all into an eternal state." The restoration of *those* bodies to immortal life, which were reduced to corruption and dust in the grave; the conflagration and dissolution of this beautiful system of things; the decisive trial of men and angels at *his* bar, who once expired upon an ignominious cross between two thieves; and the issue of all in the everlasting destruction of the finally impenitent, and the eternal glory of the righteous; these are the important events revealed in the gospel, but which I must now forbear to consider.

17. And now, my brethren, say if this gospel, so surprising and wonderful in its discoveries; so deep and unsearchable in its mysteries; so alarming and dreadful in its threatenings; so comforting and delightful in its promises; and so enriching and ennobling in its privileges and blessings; say if this gospel do not well deserve the serious attention, diligent study, and hearty reception of all!

"What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these?  
Such contemplations mount us; and should mount  
The soul still higher; and never glance on man,  
Unraptured, uninflamed!.....  
Oh! the burst gates, crush'd sting, demolish'd throne,  
Last gasp of vanquish'd death! shout earth and heav'n,  
This sum of Good to Man!"

Surely this gospel, so true and faithful, so just and reasonable, so suitable and advantageous, so excellent in itself, and so beneficial to us, is well worthy of all acceptance! High and low, young and old, rich and poor, have equal need of it, may be equally blest by it, and are equally concerned to bid it a most hearty welcome! All orders and degrees of men should embrace this gospel with the utmost fervour of desire and warmth of affection, the most absolute confidence and ecstatic joy. But alas! how far is this from being the case!

How far are the generality, notwithstanding their need of this gospel, and the blessed effects it would produce if properly received, from heartily and cheerfully embracing it! Thousands there have been in every age, and thousands there are in this age, yea, in this nation, who (whatever they may pretend to the contrary) manifest by their tempers and conduct that they are yet unacquainted with that gospel which they profess.

Now that we may be able to judge whether their character and conduct deserves our imitation, it is worth our while to consider, as was proposed,

II. The *consequences* of rejecting or not being savingly acquainted with the gospel.

1. Upon this head little need be said, the case is so exceedingly plain. It is sufficiently evident from what has been already advanced, that as the gospel finds all mankind in a lost condition, destitute of the favour and image of God, and liable to his wrath and eternal damnation; so it is intended to recover them from their fall, and to restore them to that holiness and happiness which they have lost. And it is a dispensation manifestly well calculated, nay, altogether sufficient to answer this end. It is a remedy, not only every way suited to our disease, but of sufficient virtue to expel it, and put us in possession of our former health and happiness. And all who embrace this gospel, according to the design of its author, prove its efficacy, and find to their present and eternal comfort, that it does in fact accomplish all that it has promised to the ruined race of Adam.

2. But at the same time, be it observed, that as it is an *all-sufficient* remedy, so it is the *only* sufficient one. There is no other mean of health and happiness; no other way of salvation, but that which this gospel reveals. *There is no other name, given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved*, but that of Christ, which this gospel makes known. There is no other *sacrifice for sin*, which can take it away, and procure for us a pardon, but that which this gospel points out. There is no other *Spirit* to discover to us our want of that sacrifice, and to enable us to depend upon it with penitent and obedient hearts, but that which this gospel offers. Hence it certainly follows, (as it is in our text,) *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those that are lost*. All



that are unacquainted with it, that do not experience its divine efficacy, remain in that lost, ruined, wretched condition, in which all are by nature, and that without help and without hope. No other remedy will ever be offered, no other way of salvation ever revealed, no other mean of happiness ever prescribed; but they must for ever suffer all the miserable consequences of their fall in Adam. They must remain diseased and dead in sin here, till they are adjudged to the second death hereafter: they must continue polluted, accursed, miserable, till they are bid to *depart accursed into everlasting fire*, which will not purify them from, but increase their pollutions, where he *that is unholy* will be more and more *unholy still*, and of consequence will be the more tormented.

3. Such, in the nature of things, must be *the end of those who obey not the gospel of Christ*. They sin against the remedy, and must therefore perish without remedy: they will not come unto Christ that they may have life; they can receive it from no other, and therefore, they abide in death till they are sealed up in death eternal. But is this all? Have they no other misery to dread but *this*, which is merely a consequence of their fallen state? This punishment, thus consequential, will, no doubt, be great beyond conception, and might well deter any considerate and serious mind from rejecting the gospel of Christ. But yet this is not all the impenitent have to fear. There is further reserved for them a superadded and increased misery as a just recompense of their ingratitude and rebellion, in rejecting the salvation offered in the gospel. For surely, if, after all that has been *designed* by infinite love, *contrived* by infinite wisdom, and *executed* by infinite power: if, after all the unparalleled sufferings and astonishing transactions of the Son of God, with the amazing process of divine grace in our behalf, from first to last; if, after all the superintending care, the awful judgments, and distinguishing blessings of God's providence; the plain directions, terrible threatenings, and comfortable promises of God's word; the solemn warnings, affectionate addresses, and earnest invitations of God's ministers; and above all, the condescending visitations, moving discoveries, and powerful pleadings of God's Spirit; if, after all this (I say,) we still ungratefully reject the gospel of Christ, and steel our hearts against its efficacy, nothing remaineth for us, but a *fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall*

*devour us as adversaries*, a judgment far more severe, and an indignation far hotter than would have befallen us, if so much had not been done for our recovery.

4. Concerning this matter the scripture is plain and express. *This*, it tells us, *is the condemnation*, not that all died in Adam, and are by nature in a lost estate; (although even on this account we are condemned, and the condemnation is sufficiently dreadful,) *but that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* That provision is made for the instruction, holiness, and happiness of mankind, and they chose rather to remain in their original ignorance, sin, and misery; therefore, they shall be condemned to a greater punishment and a more aggravated ruin. This is further manifest from the conduct of God towards the Israelites, who abused the light and privileges of a more dark and imperfect dispensation; a dispensation established with far less apparatus of grace and mercy, and less illustrious displays of love and power; which did not cost the Godhead so dear (if I may so speak) and upon the success of which his heart was not so much set. Now was their contempt and abuse of this inferior display of divine goodness suffered to pass unpunished? Far, very far from it. "Every transgression and act of disobedience (says the apostle) received a just recompense of reward;" and "they that despised the law of Moses died without mercy under two or three witnesses." May we not then argue with the apostle, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace! If they escaped not who refused him who spake on earth, (*viz.* Moses) much less shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven!" And "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression thereof severely punished, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at first begun to be spoken (not by angels, but) by the Lord himself, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him; God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will."

5. From these declarations of holy scripture, they who neglect or reject the salvation of the gospel, may judge what they have

to expect, even judgment in extreme without any mixture of mercy, and lasting as the days of eternity! Unhappy creatures! "Their judgment of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not! For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell," (though no Saviour died for them, no salvation was offered to them, or rejected by them,) "and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment;" much less will he spare them who have multiplied their offences as the sand on the sea-shore, and have rejected a pardon, procured for them by the most exquisite sufferings, and ignominious, painful death of God's own Son!

6. And does it not then concern *us*, my brethren, most seriously to inquire, whether we reject this gospel, and neglect the great salvation offered in it? Can we omit so to do, and not be wanting in *prudence* as well as *grace*? As devoid of *wisdom* as of *piety*? Surely, if we are careless about a matter of such infinite importance, we show that we as truly disregard our *own welfare* as the *honour of God*, and are as certainly enemies to *ourselves*, as to our great and gracious *Creator*. Inquire then, I beseech you, I do not say, into your *knowledge*, but into your *experience* in this matter, and ask your hearts, Whether you have seen your need of, and cordially embraced those blessings which have this day been set before you? Has the gospel been a means, through the blood of Christ and the Spirit of God, of ministering to you *righteousness* and *life*? Has it justified your persons and renewed your nature? Have you found peace with God through it, and power? Adoption into his family, and a restoration to his likeness? If you have hitherto, not only stopped short of these privileges, but have even rested contented without them, be assured, whatever knowledge you have gotten of the gospel in *theory*, you are yet unacquainted with it in *experience*. It has not, by any means, answered its intended end upon you, but is still really *hid to you*, and you remain in a lost estate, and are in the high road to be lost for ever!

7. May the Lord incline you to lay this to heart ere it be too late! May you feel your want of those blessings, which are freely offered you in the gospel of Christ, and gratefully receive them! The gospel has come to you in *word*, may you never rest till it also come to you in *power*, and with the *Holy Ghost*, and with much *assurance*! In order hereto, may you *seek the Lord*, while he may

*be found, and call upon him while he is near! May the wicked among you forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and may you all turn unto the Lord, that he may have mercy upon you, and unto our God, that he may abundantly pardon! May you turn to him in true repentance and unfeigned faith, a faith of the operation of his Spirit! May you ask that this repentance and faith may be given you, and seek, in the use of appointed means, that you may find! Thus may the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every penitent, believing soul, be the powerful means of your salvation! Being justified from all things through faith in the blood of Christ, and sanctified through the operation of his Spirit, may your conversation be such as becometh the gospel on earth, till you receive your heavenly inheritance, that eternal life and happy immortality brought to light by the gospel! Amen!*



## SERMON III.

THE DEVICES WHEREBY THE GOD OF THIS WORLD PREVENTS THE EFFICACY OF THE GOSPEL.

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“*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ—should shine unto them.*” ....2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

1. IN a former discourse on this important passage of holy writ, I endeavoured to show the *Nature* and *Design* of the gospel of Christ, and the *dreadful consequences* which attend our *rejecting it*. And, undoubtedly, it is of so excellent a nature, and proposes a design so benevolent and glorious, that all, to whom it is offered, ought in reason and duty, to embrace it heartily and without delay; even supposing they might neglect so to do without suffering any inconvenience. But when it is further considered, to what extreme and endless misery they certainly expose themselves who reject this gospel, one would suppose no child of man who reflects at all upon the subject, could hesitate one moment about it; one would imagine that motives of *self-interest*, at least, would prevail, where *duty* and *gratitude* had no influence; and that a *fear of punishment* would *compel* those, whom redeeming Love did not constrain, nor promises of happiness allure.

2. And, blessed be God, one or other of these considerations do, through the influence of divine grace, (absolutely needful in this weak and disordered state of human nature,) persuade many to comply with the design of this glorious gospel. But alas! this is by no means the case in general, (I speak not of Jews, Turks, and Heathens, but of professing Christians:) The generality even of

*these* do, most certainly, reject the gospel of Christ, and neglect the great salvation offered by it. Into the reason of this conduct it is worth our while to inquire, especially as this may be a mean of preserving us from an imitation of it, which, I am sure, is no way desirable. This I shall take occasion to do from the words of our text, where the apostle has given us a key to unlock this mystery; "The god of this world (says he) hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them."

3. The inspired penman (it seems) still alludes to the case of Moses, who put a vail over his face, so that the glory of it could not be discerned by the Israelites. Thus, as he has intimated in the preceding chapter, a vail of obscurity was cast over that dispensation, through which the Jews (whose minds also were blinded) could not discover the end and design of it. Hence they were not savingly benefited by it; it did not lead them to Christ, as was intended. Now, although the gospel be not veiled, but suffered to shine out in full lustre; yet *the god of this world*, industrious to prevent the salvation of mankind, by *blinding the minds of them that believe not*, hinders them from discerning the light of this glorious gospel, or from being enlightened by it.

Three particulars offer themselves to our consideration on this subject.

1st. Who is meant by *the god of this world*, and why he is so called?

2dly. Whom we are to understand by *those that believe not*?

3dly. How the god of this world blinds their minds?

1. With regard to the *first* of these, "Who is meant by the god of this world, and why he is so called;" I should have thought it unnecessary to say any thing by way of explication, had I not occasionally met with some who interpret this of *Jehovah*, the *God of Love*, the *Saviour of all men*, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*; as if he, in order to prevent the salvation of his creatures, whom he hath redeemed with his Son's most precious blood, acted the part of the grand adversary of mankind, and blinded their minds, by sin and unbelief, lest they should be enlightened by that very gospel which he has provided, in his infinite goodness, for their illumination. The bare mention of so wild a notion as this, is, with men of understanding and piety, sufficient to con-

fute it. By *the god of this world*, the apostle undoubtedly means, *Satan*, who is elsewhere called "the prince of this world," and "the ruler of the darkness of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience." This apostate spirit, this enemy of God and man, (and not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,) is doubtless concerned to hinder the success of the gospel, which is designed for the overthrow of his kingdom, and with this view exerts, to the utmost, all his power and policy from day to day, continually *lying in wait to deceive*, like a subtle serpent, and like a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour.

"He now is plotting how he may seduce,  
Us also from obedience, that with him,  
Depriv'd of happiness, we may partake  
His punishment, eternal misery,  
Which would be all his solace and revenge,  
As a despite done 'gainst the Most High."

2. Some (wise above what is written,) would account for this expression, whereby Satan is called *the god of this world*, by supposing that this world was originally under the dominion of the fallen angels before their rebellion, and was the seat of their kingdom; and that, upon their fall, as a punishment for their crime, it was reduced into that chaotic state, described, Genesis i. 1. where we read, *The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep*. Hence it was, they further suppose, that when the earth was put into its paradisaical state, and man was placed in it, (who they think was created to supply the place of the fallen angels,) God did not entirely banish them this world, but still permitted them to wander to and fro in it, and not only to tempt the human race, for their trial, but also to exercise some authority over the elements and other creatures; though under certain restrictions, beyond which they cannot pass. But it is certain all this is mere conjecture, without any countenance from any part of Scripture. And it is plain, Satan may be called *the god of this world*, with sufficient propriety, without supposing any thing of this kind, even on the same principles on which he is termed "the prince of this world," and "the ruler of the darkness of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air," and that is,



because of the influence he has over mankind in general, and the use he makes of the dazzling vanities and allurements of this world, to attain and preserve that influence.

4. Accordingly, the expression here used is more properly translated, *the god of this age*. i. e. of the people of this world, or of mankind, while the period of this world lasts. And surely, in order to justify the apostle's manner of speaking, it is not necessary to suppose that the people of this world build temples to Satan, or pay him a solemn and formal worship, although even that, in effect, was done by the heathen. But as Jehovah is called the God of his people, because they are his *subjects*, obedient to his will, and devoted to his service; so, for the same reason, is Satan called the God of this world. Mankind, in general, obey and serve him, and he reigns in and over them with all authority. They willingly *commit sin*, and therefore they *are of the devil: his servants they are*, because *they obey him*, and from him they must expect to receive their wages. *They lie in wickedness* (*ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*, in the wicked one) and shall have their portion with him.

5. And this is the case of all who *believe not*, who have not that faith in this gospel whereof cometh salvation. For the apostle tells us in our text, that *Satan hath blinded the minds of them that believe not*, and elsewhere,\* that he *worketh ἐνεργῶς* (worketh with energy, with mighty power) *in the children of disobedience*, or, as the word may be properly rendered, of *unbelief*. This brings me to the next particular, viz. To show,

## II. Whom we are to understand by those *that believe not*.

And, 1st. That all infidels who do not acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, nor admit the christian revelation to be of God, are of the number of those *that believe not*, will not be denied by any, who know any thing even of the theory of religion. That the devil (how little soever they may think they have to do with him, though they may utterly deny his very existence, and be confident there is no such being in nature;) yet, I say, that Satan hath blinded *their minds*, and works in *them* with mighty power, with uncontrolled authority, we are well assured. It is something amazing, and what excites one's compassion rather than provokes one's indignation, to hear *these creatures* boast of their superior knowledge, and to see

\* Eph. ii. 2.

them value themselves upon their *free thinking*, unbiassed, they suppose, by popular prejudices; while they are in reality blinded by the god of this world, *and led captive by the devil at his will*, the very bond-slaves of Satan, and the dupes of a vain and deluded mind. Surely one must pity the infatuation of these

“Pompous sons of reason idoliz’d  
And vilified at once; of reason dead,  
Then deified, as monarchs were of old;”

Who, as a punishment for their pride and self-conceit, and because “they receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved, are given up to strong delusion to believe a lie, that they may all be damned *who do not obey the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.*” They pretend indeed a regard for truth, and plead strongly their right to think for themselves, a right which nobody will wish to deny them; but alas: as Dr. Young justly observes,

“While love of truth thro’ all their camp resounds,  
They draw pride’s curtain o’er the noon-tide ray,  
Spike up their inch of reason on the point  
Of philosophic wit, call’d argument;  
And then, exulting in their taper, cry,  
Behold the sun! and, Indian like, adore.”

*Light is come into the world, but they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*

2. But not only those who reject the christian revelation altogether, come under the character of them that *believe not*: those also must be considered as included under the same denomination, who, though they admit the gospel to be of divine authority, yet neglect or renounce some of its principal privileges, and perhaps ridicule and reproach those who profess to receive them, as enthusiasts and fanatics. For instance: If the gospel indeed offer pardon of sin and acceptance with GOD, through the mediation of Christ, together with the Holy Spirit to seal these blessings upon our hearts, and to enable us to walk worthy of them; then all who deny or neglect the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and *the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins*, do in effect deny and neglect the gospel itself, and are therefore undoubtedly blinded by the god of this world, and to be ranked among those *that believe not*. Yea, and,

3dly. We must give the same appellation to all who rest without *saving faith*: the *faith* which is not only an *assent* to, and a *conviction* of, the *truths* of the gospel; but also a *dependence on its promises*, and a *heartly acceptance of its privileges*: the *faith* which, besides a persuasion of what the gospel reveals in *general*, implies further, an entire approbation of, and hearty acquiescence in, the plan of salvation by Christ in *particular*: the *faith* which is both *the evidence of things not seen*, and *the substance of things hoped for*; whereby we are both assured of things spiritual and eternal, and anticipate the enjoyment of things heavenly and divine, already possessing an earnest of our future inheritance in our hearts. *He that thus believeth* "with his heart unto righteousness," certainly *hath eternal life*, hath a title to it, and a foretaste of it, for through Christ "all that believe are justified from all things," and "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." But he that doth not thus believe, but rests satisfied without this faith, "hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" he remains in that wretched state of sin, and guilt, and wrath, in which he was by nature, unrestored, unforgiven; having a superadded condemnation for neglecting so great salvation as is offered through the Mediator. The gospel, which is only the *power of God unto salvation to him that believeth*, is hid to him, and he is still in a lost condition.

I now proceed to show (as was proposed)

III. How Satan *blinds the minds of those that believe not*, so as to keep them shut up in unbelief, and to hinder the *glorious gospel of Christ from shining unto them*, that they may be saved.

1. The god of this world knows that the gospel will only be heartily and thankfully received (and to receive it otherwise is not to receive it at all) by those who know its worth and their want of it; and that only those can know this who are deeply concerned for the salvation of their souls. This therefore is his *first point*, to keep mankind unconcerned about their salvation. With this view he labours to conceal from them the vanity of the world, and of all that it contains, its unsatisfactory nature and short duration. He contrives to engage and entangle them in such a multiplicity of business, to charm and stupify them with such a vicissitude of pleasure, to divert and entertain them with such a variety of amusements, that they have neither leisure, power, nor inclination for any serious reflection on the importance of things eternal.

2. Impelled by an unseen force, of which they are insensible, nay, which they are taught to deny and ridicule, they fly from the exchange to the tavern, from the tavern to the play, and from the play to intemperance and debauchery. They drive furiously from merchandise to company, from company to excess, from excess to the stupidity of sleep, and in the meantime forget that they are only wandering from vanity to vanity, and prove by this restless toil and labour that this world is not their rest. Or, if on some occasion a conviction of this forces itself upon their minds, and,

..... "Kind experience cries,  
There's nothing here but what us nothing weighs,"

They summon up all their courage, and exclude the thought as an intruding tyrant, come to torment them before the time. They run round and round in the circle of business, pleasure, and amusement, only intent upon what is beneath their feet, or eager to catch the delusive phantom, which, perpetually dancing before them, craftily entices them forward; and in the mean time, they do not observe, by faith, the consummation of all things, the melting elements, the quaking earth, the falling stars, the darkened sun, the departing heavens, and the descending triumph of the victorious Son of God, who ere long will command, "Bring forth these mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, and slay them before me."

3. Day passes after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, and they draw near the chambers of death, the repositories of all living; and that invisible state where strict justice will examine and almighty wrath punish, with unrelenting fury, their wicked impertinence and trifling; yet still they go on in the same silly pursuit, unconcerned and unreformed, as if life would always last, and they were not accountable for their conduct, or as if this world were their only portion, and while endeavouring to secure it, they were rationally employed. Time flies, and "on his broad pinions, swifter than the wind," bears them rapidly along towards the confines of a boundless eternity, into which he resigns them for their bliss or wo, endless and extreme, according to their present behaviour: But they are thoughtless amidst it all, amused and entertained with the objects they meet with in their speedy course; or lulled into a fatal slumber by the even and insensible motion, they do not awake to sober recollection, till, cast down the

steep precipice of death, they are shocked to find themselves falling, beyond recovery, into a boundless eternity.

4. Thus (as our poet beautifully describes it)

.....“ Life speeds away  
From point to point, tho' seeming to stand still;  
The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth!  
Too subtle is the movement to be seen;  
But soon man's hour is up, and he is gone!”

Life is all trifled away and the great business of life is left undone : *They stand all the day idle and neglect to work in the vineyard, till the night of death cometh wherein no man can work.* They are hurried out of this world before they well consider why they were sent into it, and surprised into another, before they have made any preparation for a favourable reception or comfortable abode there. They enter upon an eternal state of existence, for the boundless and everlasting demands of which, so to speak, they have made no provision, have laid up no treasure. They have squandered away their talents in sin and folly, neglected to pay the debt of wisdom, and now are become bankrupts : the justice of God arrests them, and they are delivered into the power of malicious tormentors, *to be confined in the dark prison of hell, till they shall pay the uttermost farthing.*

5. Now Satan has an hand in all this. Through his influence it is (inwardly upon the mind or outwardly upon the senses) that the flight of time is not discerned, and,

“ We scarce believe we're older for our years :  
That all mankind mistake their time o' day,  
Even age itself: Fresh hopes are hourly sown  
In furrow'd brows. So gentle life's descent,  
We shut our eyes, and think it is a plain.”

He engages our attention by the objects of sense, draws the veil of unbelief betwixt us and eternity ; and lest that should not suffice, lest the merciful arrows of conviction, taken from the quiver of the gospel and levelled at the heart by the Spirit of Truth, should penetrate that veil, he further obscures our prospect with the fumes of pleasure, and clouds of prejudice, arising from unruly passions and appetites, immersed in sensual gratifications.

6. But, 2dly. If notwithstanding all his care to keep us quiet and insensible, the gracious beams of divine light find their way to our minds, through all intervening obstacles, and disturb our slumbers: if we are roused from our lethargy, and awakened to a deep sense of the importance of salvation, fully resolved to mind the one thing needful: then Satan, craftily yielding where he can no longer withstand, persuades us to defer to a more convenient season, what he grants it is reasonable we should one day attend to. "By and by, he artfully insinuates, you will be in a better situation, have fewer hindrances and more helps in religious matters, and will find it less difficult to ensure a happy eternity. At present you have some business of consequence to transact, some engagements to fulfil, some affairs to settle, which do not well consist with religion. Besides, it will be better to change your conduct by degrees, and not all at once; to slide into seriousness imperceptibly; for by this means you will avoid the ridicule of your companions, and be less liable to the charge of hypocrisy, enthusiasm, or melancholy. And you have time enough upon your hands, are in good health, younger than many of your neighbours who are as careless as you, and are likely to live many years. God is merciful, and will pardon you, though on a death-bed, and receive you to work in his vineyard even at the eleventh hour."

7. Thus our sly adversary too often prevails, and what we cannot but purpose, we postpone. We still resolve to be very religious, but *not yet*. At some future period, we cannot positively say when, we intend to be very good, very exemplary, yea, burning and shining lights. And it is well if we are not a little vain on this account, proud of our future goodness!

"We pay ourselves the compliment to think  
 We one day shall not drivel, and our pride,  
 On this reversion, takes up ready praise,  
 At least our own; our future selves applauds;  
 How excellent that life we ne'er shall lead!"

In the mean time, he craftily keeps out of sight the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death. We forget that our breath is in our nostrils, and that we may, like many of our friends and neighbours, be hurried hence at a moment's warning: that we may never live to see that future period we build our everlasting all upon, no, nor one future hour: but suppose we should, that God may then justly deny that grace to assist us (and without it we can do nothing)

which was before offered, and rejected or abused. But, proceeding on false principles, we take for granted what ought first to be proved, and rely upon that as certain which is, of all things, the most uncertain. *Perhaps* we may live till to-morrow, *perhaps* God may then vouchsafe us his grace, and therefore we defer our repentance for the present.

.....“ On this *perhaps*,  
 This peradventure, infamous for lies,  
 As on a rock of adamant, we build  
 Our mountain hopes: Spin our eternal schemes,  
 And big with life's futurities, expire.

8. And not only the *young*, or the *middle-aged*, but the *old* too, come under this condemnation.—Though they have already grieved and quenched the Spirit so often, that they have great reason to think he will soon bid them a final farewell, if he have not even *now* actually done it; though they have already arrived at the utmost boundaries of man's life, at the very margin of the grave, and are tottering over it through age and infirmity, in danger of being suddenly tumbled in by the stroke of affliction, and covered up by the command of death: yet even *they* think, “It is time enough yet,” and feebly mutter, when unable to speak plain, something about *repenting hereafter*. Though oppressed with the burden of years, bowed down with infirmity, and weakened with pain, they doatingly suppose they shall, by and by, do the business of eternity, run the christian race, and *work out their own salvation*; —Though their sight is dim'd by age and beclouded with disease, so that they cannot see what is at hand: though all their faculties are weakened; yet they fondly imagine they discern, in prospect, months and years of leisure, health, and ease, which they will spend for God and their souls. Thus,

“ The hoary fool, who all his days  
 Hath laboured with continued sorrow,  
 Yet still goes on, and fondly lays  
 The desperate bet upon *to-morrow*:  
 To-morrow comes; 'tis noon;—'tis night:  
 This day, like all the former, flies;  
 Yet on he goes to seek delight  
 To-morrow;—till *to-night* he dies.”

9. But, 3dly, If we are so awakened by the grace of God, to a sense of the absolute importance of things eternal, that we re-

solve to devote ourselves to him; and so convinced of the *shortness and uncertainty* of life, that we determine to delay no longer; —then Satan's next aim must be to prevent our finding the only way of salvation, and to put us upon a wrong road. For this purpose he diverts our attention from the *spirituality, obligation, and extent* of the law of God, the *universal, constant, and persevering* obedience it requires, and the dreadful punishment it threatens to all the violators of it; in order that, not comparing our hearts and lives with it, we may remain strangers to our *guilt and weakness*. Thus, he knows we shall continue ignorant of our *want* of the gospel, and so shall be hindered from embracing its glorious privileges.

10. For not seeing our many, great, and aggravated iniquities, we must be insensible of the guilt we have contracted, the punishment we have deserved, and our own inability to make any satisfaction for our sins, or to avert the impending ruin. Thus we cannot discern our want of the atoning blood and perfect righteousness of the appointed Mediator, in order to our justification before God. Hence, it is no wonder if we imitate the Jews of old, who "had zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; for being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God." Again, not seeing the depravity of our nature and the necessity of a change, because "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord,*" or not knowing our own insufficiency for any thing that is good, we must be unacquainted with our need of that Spirit of holiness and power which God hath promised in the gospel. Hence it is no wonder if, "having a form of godliness, we deny the power of it, if having a name to live, we remain dead:" it is no wonder, if we put confidence in the flesh, lean to our own understanding, trust in our own strength, and perish at last without remedy

11. Thus many who have been open sinners, rest in a mere outward reformation, lopping off some of the branches of sin, while they leave, not only the roots deeply fixed in the ground of their hearts, *as with bands of iron and brass*; but also the unwieldy stock not hewn down; I mean, their stubborn *will* still unsubdued by grace, still proud and refractory, and bent upon serving the world and themselves. And thus others, who have not been notorious sinners, content themselves with this consideration, that they are not



so bad as many of their neighbours, and, "If we are not saved, (say they) what will become of the generality of the world?" And thus daubing the corrupted wall of their depraved nature, with the untempered mortar of self-righteousness, they vainly suppose it can stand the shock of death and judgment, when it is ready to fall at every thrust of adversity, or breeze of temptation!

12. Many, however, blessed be God, are not taken in this snare, but in spite of Satan and his devices, are convinced of sin and its dreadful consequences.—It would now be in vain for the *god of this world* to attempt persuading *these*, that they may safely defer the concerns of their souls to a yet future period. They see and feel, to their sorrow, that they have already trifled too long, and greatly endangered, if not altogether precluded their salvation. They tremble to think, how the axe of God's justice was laid to the root of their barren souls, and how narrowly they escaped being cut down, as cumberers of the ground; a punishment they well deserved. They are ashamed and confounded under a sense of their sin and ingratitude, when they consider how long they have robbed *him* of their bodies and souls, their time and talents, from whom they received all, and to whose service all ought to have been constantly devoted. They are distressed at their folly and madness, when they reflect, how many years they have thoughtlessly wandered to and fro through the earth, *seeking rest but finding none*, vainly expecting that happiness from the world which is to be found in God alone; shunning religion as a wretched and melancholy thing, whereas they now see it is the only source of true and lasting felicity. And shall they still go on adding one degree of sin and ingratitude to another? No, this they dare not do; nor can all Satan's power or policy shake their fixed resolution founded in the strength of Jehovah, no longer to tread in their former steps.

13. He does not however yet give them up, does not despair of working their ruin after all. But he takes a new course, and alters the plan of his operations. *Before*, he endeavoured to destroy them by *presumption* and *delays*: *now* his aim is to effect the same purpose by *dejection* and *despondency*. He suggests therefore that their sins are too many and great to be forgiven, that their souls are too much enslaved to the power of evil habits ever to be delivered. Knowing their regard to the word of God, he labours to countenance his temptations with its authority, that they may have

the greater influence. "You have blasphemed, (he argues,) against the Holy Ghost, and therefore must expect no forgiveness neither in this world nor in that which is to come. You might indeed once have found mercy, but it is now too late: you have sinned so long, so much, so presumptuously, in despite of so many invitations, warnings, promises, threatenings, which ought to have led you to repentance, that you must now expect judgment without mercy." "Because he called and you refused, he stretched out his hands and you did not regard, therefore he also now laughs at your calamity, and mocks when your fear is come. When your fear is come as desolation,—when distress and anguish are come upon you, you may indeed call, but he will not answer; you may seek him early, but you shall not find him. For that you hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: you would none of his counsel, and despised all his reproof; therefore you shall eat the fruit of your own way, and be filled with your own devices." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And are you holy? Alas! you are altogether polluted, and who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? As soon might the Ethiop change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as you, accustomed to do evil, should learn to do well. For the Holy Spirit is done striving with you, and you are now left to the hardness of your heart, and given up to a reprobate mind."

14. By these and such like suggestions Satan sometimes prevails, and the awakened sinner, giving up all for lost, sinks down into dejection and despair, not daring to rely on the faithful promises of God through Christ. Fearing, however, lest if they still continue sensible of the deep importance of salvation, and desirous to obtain it, though at present without hope, they may, some way or other, *hereafter* meet with that encouragement, which *now* they cannot find; to prevent this, and ensure their damnation, the enemy labours to drown them in sensuality and vice, or to bury them in business and care; and sometimes, though less frequently, because he is not permitted, to drive them into distraction, madness, and self-murder.

15. He suggests therefore, "Since no attention, desire, or diligence of yours, can alter the decree which is already gone out against you, why should you torment yourself before the time? why should you make yourself miserable by thinking one moment

about death or eternity? Nay, rather banish all thoughts about these things, which only serve to distress you, and enjoy life while it lasts. You can but go to hell after all, and go to hell you must as it is, if indeed there is an hell. But who knows whether or no there be any such place; perhaps your body and soul die together, and shall never more exist: and why should you venture a certainty for an uncertainty? Let fools and fanatics do this: But be you wise for yourself. At all hazards enjoy the present, let what will come of the future. But in fact, (proceeds he,) the future is out of the question, it is nothing to *you*: perhaps it is all mere imagination; but if not, it is certain *you* have no interest there. The present world is *your* all: therefore, enjoy and make the most of it. Eat, drink, and be merry. This, even Solomon tells you, "is your portion, than which there is nothing better for a man, in the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun. Go thy way then, (says he,) eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the woman whom thou lovest all the days of thy vanity, for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun."

16. Thus this old serpent, long experienced in the arts of seduction, craftily interweaves his nets with threads of scripture, forced from their natural sense and misapplied, that he may the more easily ensnare and detain in his power unwary souls. Not being acquainted with his devices, they are too often caught in them. So silent and natural are his suggestions, that they mistake them for the mere operations of their own minds, and never suspect he has any hand in them, and so plausible and shrewd are his reasonings, that they yield to them with little or no reluctance. Indeed, if they *considered* and *prayed* to the Father of lights for the illumination of his Spirit, they would soon discover the fallacy of his arguments; but not considering, or trusting to their own understanding, the grand deceiver is too cunning for them, and accomplishes their ruin ere they are aware.

17. This however, blessed be God, is the case with only very few that are convinced of sin. The generality, we have reason to believe, of penitent and broken-hearted sinners are enabled to *withstand in the evil day*, to resist the devil, and he flees from

them. Laying hold on the shield of faith, offered them by God, whose gift it is; they repel his fiery darts and are preserved unhurt. By a faith of the operation of God, they see and are persuaded that *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*: that through it, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." They see that in Christ all fulness dwells, that his grace is sufficient for them, and through this strengthening them, they can do all things, can overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God." They believe "he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him," and that "whosoever cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out." They therefore apply to him, and trust their guilty, depraved, and wretched souls to his care, and it is done unto them according to their faith. They find redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins: they are accepted in the Beloved: they receive the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry "Abba, Father," and the fruits of this Spirit are *love, joy, and peace*, holiness and happiness, a preparation for, and an earnest of, eternal life. Thus, notwithstanding all Satan's efforts to the contrary, the gospel *shines unto them* and they are enlightened by it, enlightened with the *light of life*, "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus; and walking in the light, as he is in the light, they expect, in the way of universal holiness, an admission into those heavenly mansions, where the *Lord will be their everlasting light, and their God their glory.*"

18. And now, my brethren, having pointed out unto you some of those many devices, whereby Satan beguiles unwary souls, let me beseech you to consider whether you are ensnared by him? Do not rashly conclude you are not, till you have thoroughly examined yourselves as to all the particulars mentioned above. And remember, if that gospel which you have heard has not proved the *power of God unto your salvation* from the guilt and dominion of sin; you are to this day, in one respect or other, ensnared by him. Do you not stumble at the very threshold, not being yet awakened to a true sense of the importance of salvation, nor deeply engaged in the pursuit of it, but wholly attached to, and eagerly bent upon, attaining the transitory vanities of this

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world? Alas! my brethren, how hath the god of this world blinded you! Surely while you expect to find happiness in earthly things, whether in riches, honours, or pleasures, you dream, as one observes,

—“Of things impossible, (could sleep do more?)  
Of joy perpetual, in perpetual change,  
Of stable pleasure, on the tossing wave,  
Eternal sunshine in the storms of life.”

Pray, open your eyes! stop! consider! It is a phantom you pursue! You cannot grasp it. It does and always will elude your fond embrace. *Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which profiteth not? Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?* Think, O! think, what will you be profited, *should you gain even the whole world and lose your soul?* That immortal soul which Christ hath redeemed with his most precious blood, and the value of which is above rubies?

But perhaps impressed with a sense of this, you are already resolved to *give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* But are you not delaying the important business to what you think a more convenient season?

“All promise is poor dilatory man,  
And that through every stage!”

Perhaps you think, it is time enough yet. But is it not late enough? Have you not already served the world, the flesh, and the devil, long enough? Have you not long enough rebelled against God, crucified his Son afresh, and grieved the Spirit of grace? Have you not been long enough *unholy* and *unhappy*, a robber of God, and a murderer of your soul? Surely you have; yea, too long. And why will you suffer Satan to infatuate and make a prey of you any longer? Consider what condition you would be in, if the Lord should say, “My Spirit shall no longer strive with that man: He is wedded to his idols, let him alone: Let him fill up the measure of his iniquities, and ripen for a more aggravated destruction!” And are you sure he will not do this? May he not justly do it? Surely he may, and you have cause to wonder that it is not done already.—Besides, think, where you would be, should

death, relentless death, step in between you and repentance, and arrest you in the midst of your delays? And have you any assurance to the contrary? You know you have not. You are sensible you have no certainty of living *a day, an hour, or a moment* to an end. Wherefore delay no longer; but, as "*now is the accepted time, now the day of salvation, so, To-day, while it is called, To-day, hear his voice, and harden not your heart.*"

19. And take heed you do not mistake the way. Remember Christ hath said, "I am the way, no man cometh unto the Father but by me" You are a sinner, a guilty, helpless sinner, and cannot therefore come to God with acceptance, but through his Son, the only Mediator between him and us. Go not about then to *establish your own righteousness, but submit yourself to the righteousness of God.* "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Believe on Christ, and thou shalt be justified by faith in Christ:" yea, Christ will live in thee, and thou shalt live indeed, shalt live a new life, *hid with Christ in God*; and "when Christ thy life shall appear, thou shalt appear with him in glory."

20. Once more. I beseech thee be not *discouraged*. Be thy sins ever so many, ever so aggravated, yet still, "stagger not at the promise of God through unbelief," but be thou like Abraham, "strong in faith, giving glory to God, fully assured that what he hath promised, he also will perform." Now he hath promised, that "those that confess and forsake their sins shall find mercy;" that "all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven" unto penitent sinners; that he will "be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities he will remember no more." He hath promised to "cleanse them from all their filthiness and from all their idols, to give them a new heart and put within them a new spirit, yea, to put his Spirit within them, that they may walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments. Therefore, Why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith, Wherefore dost thou doubt? O, give no place to the devil. Yield not to unbelief: but rest assured, in spite of all the suggestions of Satan, and the evil reasonings of flesh and blood, that notwithstanding thy guilt and weakness, "he is faithful and just, both to forgive thee thy sins, and to cleanse thee from all unrighteousness." Putting thy whole trust then, in his merits, who "was delivered for thy offences, raised for thy justification," and who "ever liveth to make intercession for thee," and to appear

as thy advocate before the throne of the majesty on high; "come with boldness to the throne of grace, and thou shalt find mercy, and obtain grace to help in time of need." Thou shalt be justified from all things, shalt be regenerated and made a new creature: *The Spirit of God and of glory shall rest upon thee*: and at last being *sanctified throughout*, and filled with the fulness of God, thy spirit, soul, and body, shall be preserved blameless to his heavenly Kingdom!

# SERMON IV.

ON THE

## SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

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*The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power....2 Thess. i. 8, 9.*

1. **THE** second coming of our Lord, and the amazing scenes which will then be opened, to the everlasting confusion of his enemies, and the perpetual joy of his saints, are subjects which frequently occur in holy writ. The prophets and apostles, Christ and his evangelists, speak often and largely of these matters; and though with some variety of phrase and manner of representation, yet without any contradiction. And they all treat them, not as points of mere speculation, the contemplation of which has a tendency to increase our knowledge, and exalt our minds, but also and chiefly as discoveries of the utmost importance and concern to us all, which when cordially believed and attentively considered, have, through divine grace, the most happy influence on our temper and conduct. And it is highly probable that Christianity would flourish much more than it does among us, if the ministers of the Gospel imitated, in this, their example, and led both saints and sinners to the more frequent and serious consideration of those events which will soon take place.

2. Would we successfully call sinners to repentance? Like Paul preaching at Athens, we must testify that "God hath appoint-



ed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained."—Would we make the *sinners in Zion afraid*? Would we wish to see *fearfulness surprise the hypocrites*? With the Prophet we must demand, "Who can endure devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Would we persuade the delicate and effeminate to self-denial and mortification, to "cut off the right hand and to pluck out the right eye which offend?" We must, with our Lord, remind them, that it "is better one of their members should perish, than that their whole body should be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." Would we fortify the timorous against the fear of man which always *bringeth a snare*, and often leadeth into sin? We must exhort them in the words of Jesus, 'not to fear those who can only kill the body, but rather to fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in hell.'

3. In short, whether we would rouse the careless, or excite the indolent, or reclaim the backslider, or comfort the distressed, or succour the tempted, or encourage the faint-hearted, or animate the faithful soldier of Jesus Christ, patiently to endure hardships, courageously to fight his enemies, valiantly conquer the powers of darkness, and seize the crown of everlasting life;—we must bring the day of judgment into view, with the terrors of hell and the joys of heaven, and fetch our arguments, motives and encouragements, thence—Thus will the *stout hearted*, and *those who are far from righteousness* tremble, with Felix (who was alarmed at Paul's reasoning concerning a judgment to come) and inquiring "What must we do to be saved?" will "repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out." And thus will the true believer rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and while for "the joy that is set before him he endures the cross and despises the shame," he will "give all diligence to be found of Christ at his coming in peace, and without spot and blameless."

4. Since then these are such necessary and fruitful subjects of discourse, and so repeatedly offered to our consideration in the sacred scriptures, it may be profitable for us frequently to employ our thoughts upon them. That we may do it for a few moments at this time, I have made choice of this most alarming passage of scripture, in which the apostle, with a view to their comfort and support under their sufferings, puts the persecuted church of God at Thessalonica, in remembrance of the very different state.

of things which would soon take place, with regard to them and their persecutors. "God (says he,) will recompense tribulation to those who trouble you, and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who (adds he) shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

In these words we have,

I. The *certainty and manner* of our Lord's second coming.

II. The *character* of them who shall then be the objects of his wrath.

III. The *nature and duration* of the punishment which he will inflict upon them.

These are all very important points, and well deserve our most serious consideration.

In this discourse I shall confine myself to the first of them, *viz.*

I. The *certainty and manner* of our Lord's second coming.

1. As to the *certainty* of his second coming, they who read and credit the oracles of God, can entertain no doubt at all concerning it. It is there foretold and described so frequently and clearly, and with such variety of method and expression, that the most careless reader can hardly avoid observing and understanding it. If therefore I produce some Scripture testimonies of this Truth, it is not so much with a view to illustrate and confirm it, as to impress so useful a subject more deeply upon our minds, for it is too manifest, that it may be believed and understood, where it has by no means, its proper influence.

2. I observe then, that this event was foretold by the ancient prophets, as well as by Christ and his apostles. Even "Enoch of old prophesied, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thou-

sand of his saints to execute judgment upon all." A truth this, of which the Psalmist was not ignorant, for in the fiftieth psalm, he testifies, "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him: he shall call the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people." These predictions, so clear and express that their sense must be obvious to all, are confirmed and illustrated by the testimony of Daniel, chap. vii. ver. 9, 10. "I beheld (says he) till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened!" What a sublime and inimitable grand description have we here, mixed with admirable simplicity? How far does it exceed, in these respects, every thing to be met with in merely human compositions? How plainly does it appear to have been the effect, not of genius and art, but of a mind, through the influences of the divine Spirit, elevated with the grandeur, awed with the majesty, and struck with the terror of the subject.

3. These ancient prophecies of our Lord's second coming have the sanction of his own authority, not only as being inspired by him, but as being confirmed by most express declarations, delivered by himself, as well while upon earth, as after his ascension into heaven, and that, both before friends and enemies. I shall produce only two or three of these as specimens of the rest. Thus when Caiaphas, the elders and scribes, had the boldness, or presumptuous wickedness rather, to call their Creator and final Judge to take his trial at their tribunal; before these he testified, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." To his friends and followers, he often foretold the same event, though with a different view, not merely to convince and alarm, but also and especially to comfort and encourage them. Thus, when predicting and describing the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the Jewish church and polity, he slides (as it were) insensibly into this important subject typified by that, declaring, "After the

tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." And in the next chapter, (Matth. xxv.) which it seems contains the last public discourse our Lord delivered before he was offered up, he declares to all, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations."

4. To these express and particular declarations, delivered by our Lord, while he tabernacled upon earth in his state of humiliation, we may subjoin his testimony from heaven, after he entered upon his state of exaltation, and was invested with all power in heaven and on earth. The *faithful and true Witness*, the *Alpha and Omega*, when he takes his solemn leave of us, in the conclusion of the records of truth, testifies both to his friends and foes, "Behold, I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." And again, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give unto every man according as his work shall be." And yet again, *He that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly.* To which the church replies, "Amen; so come, Lord Jesus." Thus by three testimonies from the lips of Eternal Veracity, is this glorious truth established.

5. But that a doctrine so superior to reason, and yet absolutely certain and deeply interesting, might want no kind of evidence, calculated to gain it credit, messengers were sent immediately from heaven to bear witness to it. Thus when our Lord had given his apostles their last commission, and "while they beheld, he was taken up from them, a cloud receiving him out of their sight; while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven."

6. This testimony of the holy angels, or of the spirits of the just made perfect, is frequently confirmed by that of the Holy Spi-

rit in the mouths of the apostles. But as I would not be tedious, I forbear to quote any particular passages, choosing rather to refer you to their sermons, as recorded by St. Luke in the Acts, and to their various epistles, where you frequently meet with many glorious descriptions of this grand event. The testimonies already produced are more than sufficient, not only to establish us in the firm belief of this comfortable truth, but also (which is most wanting) to impress it deeply upon our minds. Good reason have we to settle it in our hearts, that as our Lord is "gone before to prepare a place for us, so he will come again to receive us to himself, that where he is we may be also; that to those who look for him he will appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Yes,

" At the destin'd period shall return  
He, once on earth, who bled for human guilt,  
And with him all our triumph o'er the tomb."

For then will he "change our vile bodies, and render them like unto his glorious body. Then will he "be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe."

7. Let us rest assured then, though "the vision is for an appointed time, yet in the end it shall speak and shall not lie." When the exact period shall arrive indeed we know not, nor can we expect to know, since (as our Lord assures us) it is kept a secret, not only from all the men upon earth, but likewise from all the angels in heaven. But this we know, it will only be deferred till the *mystery of God shall be finished*; till the prophecies shall be all fulfilled, and a sufficient number redeemed from among men.—If therefore any scoffers arise in these last days, "walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were:" we reply, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." No time is long or short with him who is *eternal*: he can do the work of a thousand years in one day, and a thousand years, nay, the longest time, is no delay to him. He is not, therefore, "slow concerning his promise of coming again, though some men count it slowness; but he is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but rather that all should come to repentance."

8. "But the day of the Lord will come," and that suddenly and unexpectedly, "as a thief in the night, so that when men shall say, *Peace and safety*, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." For, "Behold, (says Jesus) I come as a thief," at unawares, and "at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.—Blessed is he, therefore, that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. Watch we, therefore, for we know not at what hour our Lord doth come. For if we will not watch, he will come as a thief, and we shall not know what hour he will come upon us. If, like the evil servant, we say in our heart, Our Lord delayeth his coming, and begin to smite our fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, our Lord shall come in a day when we look not for him, and in an hour that we are not aware of, and will cut us asunder, and appoint us our portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The certainty of our Lord's second coming being evident beyond contradiction or dispute to all who credit the holy scriptures, I proceed, as was proposed, to inquire next more particularly into the *manner* of his coming, according to the representation given of it in our text. For this too is doubtless a subject of inquiry well worthy the attention of all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity, to whom nothing that concerns him, will appear trivial or unimportant. Consider we then,

2dly, In *what form*, with *what attendants*; and in *what circumstances* he will appear.

1. Will God's eternal Son again for our sakes debase himself of his glory, relinquish his felicity, assume our nature, and suffer in our stead? Being *made flesh*, will the Creator of all again become destitute of every earthly accommodation, so as not even to *have* "a place where to lay his head," *though* the very "foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests?" Will he again endure hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, weariness and hardship of every kind? Will the sovereign Lord of the universe, and the final Judge of angels and of men, again suffer himself to be apprehended by his creatures, arraigned, tried, and condemned; to be insulted, spit upon, scourged, and crucified? Will the ever-blessed Jesus again groan under a mountain of guilt, and sustain the wrath

of incensed justice, till he is constrained to confess, that his "soul is exceeding sorrowful," and "sweat, as it were, great drops of blood?" Will the Prince of life again suffer the pangs of death, and the Light of the world go out in darkness?

2. Oh, no! Those days of his humiliation and sorrow are past, and will return no more. For having vanquished his and our enemies upon the cross, and led them in triumph at his chariot-wheels, when he ascended far above all heavens, in reward of his victorious sufferings, he is invested with power and dominion irresistible and eternal, and is raised to a throne of glory at the Father's right hand. Because when "he was in the form of God, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in the fashion of a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those in earth, and those under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And now he reigns in bliss and glory supreme, Sovereign of angels and men, King of kings, and Lord of lords. The government of the universe rests upon his shoulders, and all persons and things are at his disposal, and under his direction.

3. This dignity and glory of our exalted Lord is, however, hid from the world; and hence their disobedience to his commands, contempt of his authority, and neglect of his salvation. But at his second coming he will be manifested in all his excellent majesty, and therefore it is called the *revelation* of Jesus Christ. For then it will be revealed, to the eternal confusion of his foes, and the perpetual joy of his redeemed, what he is and will for ever be. Then will he blaze forth

" In all the splendour of the Deity!  
Darken the sun, confound the brightest star,  
His Father's image perfectly express!  
The nations then shall own him for their God,  
And the whole world confess th' almighty Judge."

Then will it be seen whom they insulted and reviled, when they said, "Hail, King of the Jews," and,—“He saved others, himself

he cannot save." Then will it appear for whose blood they clamoured, when they cried out, "Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him." Then will Pilate see who it was that he condemned to die, and Caiaphas whom he charged with blasphemy. Yea, then will the whole race of impenitent transgressors acknowledge, however reluctant, the dignity and power of that man, whom they refused to reign over them. For then will he be revealed as the *effulgence of his Father's glory*, and the *express image of his person*, even as *God over all, blessed for ever*, possessed of infinite and unlimited authority, and all possible perfections!

....." Ah, how unlike  
The babe of Bethlehem! how unlike the man  
That groan'd on Calvary! Yet he it is,—  
That man of sorrows! Ah, how chang'd!"

4. Concerning this matter we can have no doubt at all, the scripture is so full and express upon the head. The passages above quoted, and which I need not here repeat, are a sufficient confirmation of it. Our Lord there speaks of his "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven:" and again, of his "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;" and yet again, of his "coming in his glory with all his holy angels with him, when he will sit upon the throne of his glory." I shall only add here, just such was the representation of him made to St. John, when he "saw heaven opened, and, behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written which no man knew but himself, and he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called The Word of God. And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

5. What a glorious discovery was here afforded the apostle! What a grand and most sublime description does he give us! What an august personage is here represented to our view! But, ah! how much more will the representation strike us when it is made



by Christ in person, and we shall see him as he is!—Shall see heaven open, and the Son of God in the pomp of majesty ineffable descending!—Shall see,

“ On an empercal, flying throne,  
Awfully rais'd, heav'n's everlasting Son!  
Virtue, dominion, praise, omnipotence,  
Support the train of their triumphant Prince;  
Night shades the solem arches of his brows,  
And on his cheek the purple morning glows!”

And now what is all the fulsome pride of human greatness, and the affected pomp which decorates worms of the earth, to this inherent dignity and ineffable majesty of the glorious Redeemer! Ah, how does this refulgent Sun of Righteousness, thus beaming forth in his meridian glory, eclipse all the borrowed brightness of feeble mortals? Surely all the renowned statesmen, victorious generals, famed conquerors, powerful emperors, and mighty monarchs, which have ever dignified the annals of human history, and shone with faint rays during the dreary night of this world, shall disappear in the presence of this God of glory, when at the morning of the resurrection, the day of eternity dawns upon us, just as the stars vanish before the rising sun! Ah! how will all the “kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men,” be then ashamed of that vain grandeur, on account of which they valued themselves, and confounded at their foolish and unreasonable pride, while they who pierced him, and neglected his great salvation, shall wail because of him!

6. But further, To give us a still clearer view of the dignity of our exalted Saviour, and the glory of his second coming, besides his *personal* excellencies and divine majesty, which will be then fully displayed, his *attendants* are likewise mentioned in our text, and in other parts of scripture, and therefore should not be passed over in silence; for they will yet more illustrate that glorious day of his triumph.—We have already seen how he shall be *revealed from heaven*, which shall (as it were) unfold its chrystal ports, or cleave its starry plains asunder, and discover instantly to our view a “great white throne, and him who sits upon it, from whose face heaven and earth flee away, and there is no place found for them;” and at the sight of whom, consternation, terror, and dismay shall overwhelm the ungodly, and extinguish every gleam of com-

fort, and ray of hope. But the apostle further says in our text, that he shall be attended with his *mighty angels*, a circumstance which is attested by our Lord himself in the predictions he gave while upon earth of his second coming, (as quoted above,) and which he likewise included in the representation of that event made to his servants Daniel and John. The latter of whom tells us, he saw "the armies of heaven following him, clothed in fine linen white and clean;" and the former "beheld thousand thousands ministering unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him." What a glorious retinue have we here! How different from the twelve poor fishermen who attended, (shall I say?) or rather deserted him in his days of humiliation! Ah me! in how different a character, and in what different circumstances, does the Saviour now appear!

"How chang'd from him who meekly prostrate laid,  
 Vouchsaf'd to wash the feet himself had made:  
 From him who was forsook, betray'd, deny'd;  
 Languish'd, pray'd, bled, thirsted, groan'd, and died;  
 Hung, pierc'd and bare, insulted by the foe,  
 All heaven in tears above, earth unconcern'd below!"

7. These his holy angels will not only accompany him as attendants upon his person, to manifest his divine power and authority, and to display his royal grandeur and magnificence, but likewise as ministers of his will, to execute his purposes of love to his people, and of wrath to his enemies. These, as harbingers of his glory, shall prepare the way before him, and make ready for the appearance of the universal Judge! "I saw (says the apostle John) a mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, and he set his right foot upon the sea and his left foot upon the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth, and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And he lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and earth, and the sea, that there should be time no longer; but the mystery of God should be finished, as he had declared to his servants the prophets."

And now before,

“ In grandeur terrible all heaven descend,  
 A swift archangel with his golden wing,  
 As clouds and blots, that darken and disgrace  
 The scene divine, sweeps stars and suns aside:  
 And thus, all dross remov'd, heav'n's own pure day  
 Full on the confines of our Ether flames.”

8. Preparation being thus made, the Son of man appears “in his glory, and all his holy angels with him.” And now he sends these “his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they gather together his elect from one end of heaven to the other.” And as they are employed, as the instruments of his good-will and condescending grace to his redeemed, whom they will separate from the world, and *gather as wheat into his garner*; so likewise shall they be the ministers of his vengeance to the wicked, whom at the time of the general harvest, they shall *gather together like tares*, and *bind in bundles to burn them*. Yes, at the end of the world, “the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them who do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

9. Another circumstance mentioned in our text, attending our Lord's second coming, (and the last I shall now take notice of) is, that he shall be revealed in *flaming fire*. This particular was also represented to Daniel, in that prophetic vision which God gave him of Christ's coming. He saw (as he tells us) “his throne like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire, while a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him.”—As of old “the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of those cities, and that which grew upon the ground,” so at the consummation of all things, when he arises to shake terribly the earth, with that fiery stream which issues and comes forth from before him, he will “burn up the earth with its increase, and melt down the foundations of the mountains;” yea, “a fire shall be kindled in his anger, which shall burn to the nethermost hell,—shall burn and shall not be quenched.” We know that “the heavens and the earth which now are, are by the word

of God kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." And when that period arrives, while the "heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth and all its works shall be totally burnt up."

....." At that destin'd hour,  
By the loud trumpet summon'd to the charge,  
See all the formidable sons of fire,  
Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play  
Their various engines; all at once disgorge  
Their blazing magazines, and take by storm  
This poor, terrestrial citadel of man."

10. To add the greater terror to this most terrible period, the scriptures represent it as happening at midnight—"At midnight (says Jesus) there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him." And perhaps the apostle, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, intimates the same, where he says, "Of the times and seasons ye have no need that I should write unto you, for ye yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."—'Tis true, this cannot be the case with respect to the whole earth, it being always day in one part or other of it; but it may be the case with regard to those parts of the earth which are most inhabited, and have been most favoured with the light of the gospel. These may be enveloped with the dismal shades of darkness, when this awful day instantly blazes forth. So it seems our poet, whose sentiments on this subject are always as just as they are striking, and whom, therefore, I can hardly quote too often, supposed when he said,—

" At midnight, when mankind are wrapt in peace,  
And worldly fancy feeds on golden dreams;  
At midnight, 'tis presum'd, this scene will burst  
From tenfold darkness, sudden as the spark  
From smitten steel, from nitrous grain the blaze;  
Man, starting from his couch, shall sleep no more."

11. Then, as was represented to St. John, "shall there be a great earthquake, and the sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon shall become as blood, and the stars of heaven shall fall unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heavens shall depart as

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a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their place: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand." Who, indeed, when

" Above, beneath, around, amazement all!  
Terror and glory join'd in their extremes!  
Our God in grandeur, and our world on fire!"

12. And now let us turn aside and see this great sight. Let us stand still and consider this solemn scene here opened to our view! By the help of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, let us contemplate the awful majesty and terrible grandeur of this day, if our weak senses can endure the dreadful glory of its light, or our feeble faculties sustain the effulgence of its overpowering brightness, and astonishing terrors.—Ah! how must it surprise and alarm the secure sinner, and how must it strike all men with amazement and awe, in the dead of night, to be suddenly awaked out of the repose of their last sleep, by the confused noise and deafening roar of trumpets sounding, thunders grumbling, stars rushing, elements melting, waves dashing, the sea tossing, and the earth quaking! Ah! how will the stoutest heart fail for fear, and sink with horrible dread, to hear the sudden crush of worlds, and behold the wreck of universal nature! To see

....." Each mountain height  
Outburn Vesuvius; rocks eternal pour  
Their melted mass, as rivers once they pour'd;  
Stars rush, and final ruin fiercely drive  
Her ploughshare o'er creation!"

How will the stubborn infidel, who treated these discoveries as the inventions of fancy, and the hardened sinner, who despised and neglected them; ah! how will they start from the slumbers of midnight, the bed of debauching pleasures, or the couch of rioting and revelling excess, in wild affright and disorder, when they shall behold with their eyes, and feel, to their sorrow, what once they

would not believe, or willingly forget! Now they can disbelieve and forget no longer. The great and terrible day of the Lord is arrived.

“ The fatal period, the great hour is come,  
 And nature shrinks at her approaching doom ;  
 Loud peals of thunder give the sign, and all  
 His terrors in array surround the ball :  
 Sharp lightnings with the meteor's blaze conspire,  
 And darting downward set the world on fire !”

Now the day is actually “ come, which burns as an oven, and all the proud, (all infidels,) and all that do wickedly, (all impenitent sinners,) shall be as stubble : The day is come that shall burn them up, and leave them neither root or branch.”

18. “ Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in the holy mountain, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand : a day of darkness and of gloominess ; a day of clouds and of thick darkness !” Jesus descends with his holy angels ; “ a fire devour-eth before them, and behind them a flame burneth.” See, ye blind, the victorious blaze of irresistible and all-conquering fire ! It rends the rocks, consumes the forests, melts down the mountains, lays cities, yea, whole kingdoms, in ashes, and envelopes the whole earth ! Behold, it rises, swells, spreads, and overwhelms all with an universal deluge ! While in the meantime,

“ Black rising clouds the thicken'd ether choke,  
 And spiry flame shoot through the rolling smoke,  
 With keen vibrations cut the sullen night,  
 And streak the darken'd sky with dreadful light.”

Hear, ye deaf, the rebelling and aggravated roar of hoarse muttering thunder, the mighty voice of the great archangel, and the all-alarming trump of God ! Feel, ye stout-hearted, the earth quaking and opening, the mountains trembling and removing, the hills reeling and sinking, the valleys heaving and rising ! Feel, or be for ever hardened, the shock of conflicting elements, and the dash of ruined worlds !

14. Awake ! awake ! ye sleepy sinners ! shake off your fatal slumbers ! Arise from the bed of sloth, and the lap of enchanting

pleasures! Haste, haste, and flee for shelter from this day of wrath and unrelenting fury! If you delay till this day overtake you, then, alas! whither can you flee? The earth quakes, trembles, and opens under your feet; the storm of divine vengeance lowers and bursts upon your guilty heads, and ruin and perdition surround you on every hand! The frowning Judge, whose just indignation you have provoked, and whose almighty wrath your sins have kindled, fixes his piercing eye upon you, and marks you out as the butt, at which he will shoot his fiery arrows, and direct the thunderbolts of his everlasting indignation. And now it is in vain to cry to the rocks and mountains to fall upon you and hide you; the rocks and mountains cleave asunder, yea, flee away, and leave you destitute and forsaken, exposed to all the artillery of omnipotent fury, and in the midst of dark and fiery torment.

15. *Oh, that men were wise, that they would understand this, that they would consider their latter end! Oh, that they would lay these things to heart, and "take heed lest at any time their heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon them unawares, for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the earth!" Oh, that they would "watch and pray always, that they might escape those things which are coming upon the earth, and stand before the Son of man, with joy and not with grief.*

## SERMON V.

### THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO SHALL BE CONDEMNED BY CHRIST AT HIS COMING.

*The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.*

1. **I**T being absolutely certain that our Lord will come again, and when he comes, will be revealed in all the glory of his majesty, and in all the terror of his justice; not properly in the character of a *Saviour*, but in that of a *Judge*, to examine into the conduct of all mankind, and pass a final sentence upon them according to their works;—it surely concerns all men to lay these things to heart, and to prepare for his appearing. And it equally concerns us not to defer this business, not only because what is always reasonable and fit to be done, cannot be done too soon; but because a delay may be of the most dangerous consequence, for at “such an hour as we think not, the Son of man cometh,” to call us hence by death, as well as to judge the world in righteousness, and if, when he cometh, he find us unprepared, we are undone for ever.

2. And yet (dreadful to say) almost all mankind live from day to day in entire forgetfulness or total neglect of this matter! While every thing else, however trifling and impertinent, is studiously and



eagerly prosecuted, this is almost universally disregarded. The toy of business is diligently attended, the phantom of honour unweariedly pursued, the enchantments of pleasure assiduously courted, the dream of amusement solicitously sought; in short, the things of time and sense, though transitory in their duration, uncertain in their stay, unsatisfactory in their nature, and even perplexing in their enjoyment; *these* engage the attention, and engross the affections of high and low, young and old, rich and poor.—In the meantime, our immortal interests, the favour of our God, and the eternal advantages and pleasures of religion, are generally buried in oblivion, and neglected. Unreasonable is this conduct indeed, but too certainly may it be laid to the charge of the generality of mankind, whose whole behaviour clearly demonstrates that they are more intent upon providing for their momentary abode on earth, than their everlasting existence in heaven; and on securing the favour and applause of their fellow-worms, than the good-will and approbation of their final Judge! But in this respect, let not *us* follow the multitude to do evil, to offend our God, and throw away our own souls! Nay rather, let us take care to be those persons whom the Lord will acquit and reward at his coming, that we may make our appearances at his bar with joy and not with grief.

3. But who are those persons? and what character do they bear? To know this we have only to inquire whom the Lord Jesus will condemn at his coming, for the character of these is exactly the reverse of that of the former. Now this is described in the words of our text, and that very fully and clearly, although at the same time with great brevity. The Apostle tells us that Christ, when he is revealed, will “take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Having then already considered the *certainty* and *manner* of our Lord’s second coming, I proceed, as was proposed,

Secondly, to inquire into the *character* of those who shall be condemned at his coming to misery and perdition. The Apostle informs us,

- 1st. *They know not God.* And,  
2dly. *They obey not the Gospel.*

And, 1st. *They know not God.*

1. There is hardly any subject within the whole compass of religion, concerning which people in general are so grossly mistaken as the *knowledge of God*. All men profess to know God, though, alas! the generality by unholy tempers and wicked works, contradict that profession, and prove themselves to be entire strangers to him. If a man have but heard or read a little about the Author of his being, if he do but believe his existence and perfections, he forthwith concludes that he knows God, and is very much offended if you presume to call his knowledge of him in question! though at the same time, this pretended acquaintance with his Maker has no happy influence upon his spirit and behaviour, but they are just the same, which one might suppose they would be, if he were a mere Atheist in the world.

2. Though he professes to be persuaded of the infinite glory and ineffable majesty of the eternal *JEHOVAH*, yet he does not inwardly reverence and humbly adore him; but is light and trifling, stupid and insensible, perhaps, even in his immediate presence, and during the solemnity of his divine worship. Though he declares his assent to the immaculate holiness and inflexible justice of the righteous Governor and final Judge of the world, yet he is not abased under a sense of his sinfulness and guilt, nor does he abhor himself as in dust and ashes; but he is proud and impenitent, presuming upon the goodness of his heart, if his life have not been altogether blameless, and laying his own righteousness as the foundation of his acceptance with God. Though (he thinks) he has no doubt at all of the boundless mercy and incomprehensible love of God in Christ; yet he does not cheerfully trust him with humble confidence, and joyfully praise him with grateful acknowledgments; the pure flame of divine love does not glow upon the altar of his heart, nor does he devote his body and soul as a living sacrifice to God by Jesus Christ. But, on the contrary, he desponds and repines under dark and afflictive dispensations of Providence, while he ungratefully admits the vain world, Jehovah's rival, to share, yea, engross his affections; and most treacherously harbours sin and Satan, the Lord's enemies, in the inmost recesses of his soul.

3. So little is he benefited by the knowledge of God. But, in truth, what he possesses is not the knowledge of God, for if it were,

it would infallibly produce the effects ascribed to this principle in the word of God. It would beget in him deep humility before God, entire confidence towards him, fervent love to him, and universal obedience; in short, holiness and happiness, a pledge and foretaste of eternal life. So we learn from the sacred scriptures. "I have heard of thee (says Job) by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." "They that know thy name (says the Psalmist) will put their trust in thee." "He that loveth not (adds St. John) knoweth not God, for God is love. And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." From hence it appears, where these effects are not, the true knowledge of God is not: An empty shadow, vain resemblance, or fleeting idea of it, there may be, but that no more deserves to be called the *knowledge of God*, than the shadow, picture, or idea of a man deserves to be called a man; and it can no more enliven, comfort, or purify our souls, than a painted fire can refine metals from their dross, or revive and warm our bodies; or, than the motion of a candle can illuminate a dark room.

4. No: the knowledge of God is an endowment far superior to what the generality imagine; more noble in its *origin*, excellent in its *nature*, and happy in its *consequences*. It is born from above; it is the fruit of the Spirit of God, shining within us, and enlightening our minds. For though all the divine perfections, especially his wisdom, power, and love, beam forth with effulgent glory in all his works, particularly in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; yet, the eyes of our understanding being blinded, we still remain destitute of the true and saving knowledge of God, till "he who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shine into our heart, (as the Apostle expresses it) to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face (or person) of Christ Jesus." Then, and not before, can we testify with St. John, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know the True One, and we are in the True One, by his Son Jesus Christ. This is the True God and eternal life."

5. And as the knowledge of God is descended from heaven, so is its *excellent nature* equal to its *divine original*. It is such an impression of God upon the soul, and such a clear, full and affecting

discovery of him as transforms us, more or less, into his divine likeness. It is *the beholding* (as St. Paul says) *with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord*, in such a manner that we "are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord!" It is, through the teaching of his word and Spirit, such an acquaintance with God, in his Being and Attributes, together with those relations in which he is pleased to stand towards us, as produces a correspondent temper of mind and conduct of life in us towards God.

6. To be a little more particular: 1st, The knowledge of God never fails to *humble us* before him. For it implies such a view of his nature and perfections, his self-existence, independence, sovereignty, and eternity; his omniscience, omnipotence, justice, and purity; his greatness and goodness; as manifests in the clearest light our own ignorance and weakness, guilt and misery, and lays us in the very dust in his presence, "Wo is me, for I am undone, (said Isaiah) for I am a man of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." "Behold, I am vile, (said Job on a like occasion,) what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." We never see superior excellence but we are abased by the comparison: We never reflect on the perfection and happiness of an holy angel or glorified saint; nay, we never come into the company of an eminently holy man, though he is still encompassed with infirmity, but we are more or less humbled. How much more then, must we be humbled at the sight and in the presence of *that Being*, who is the one source of perfection and happiness to all his creatures, and in comparison of whom the whole circle of created excellence is no more than a drop to the immense ocean! And though we only see him through a glass darkly, while in this world, and therefore cannot feel such a depth of self-abasement, as those heavenly beings feel who *see him as he is*, and who, covering their faces with their wings, fall prostrate in his presence, and rest not day nor night, crying, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts! the whole earth is full of thy glory!" yet in proportion to the degree of our acquaintance with him, we shall be ashamed and humbled before him; especially considering our sins against him, and the corruption and depravity of our whole nature, which renders us utterly unfit for converse with him, and deserving of his eternal displeasure. Surely a sense of *this*, at least, must

lay us at his feet, and make us own with the prophet, "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

"I loathe myself when him I see,  
And into nothing fall;  
Am lost and swallow'd up in thee,  
My God, my all in all!

My humbled soul, when thou art near,  
In dust and ashes lies:  
How shall I in thy sight appear,  
Or meet thy purer eyes!"

7. Another never-failing fruit of the knowledge of God, is *confidence in him*. "They that know thy name (says the Psalmist) will put their trust in thee." The reason of this is evident. They that know him, know him to be infinite in wisdom, and power, and goodness. They know him to be so wise as to be perfectly acquainted with all their wants, so powerful as to be well able to supply those wants, and so gracious, that he will withhold nothing good from those that walk uprightly. And though their sins against him might give them just cause to dread that wrath which they see they have merited, and beget in their minds painful suspicions and distressing fears; yet when they know that "he hath so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but have everlasting life;" and when, being fully convinced of sin, they believe in Christ with a faith of the operation of God, and are justified by the faith of Christ;—then does their dread of God's displeasure give place to a sense of his favour, and their doubts and fears respecting his goodness, yield to a confidence in his mercy, manifested in the pardon of all their sins through Jesus Christ. And then

....."All the clouds  
Which conscious guilt spreads o'er their shudd'ring souls  
Vanish before his reconciling eyes."

Thus knowing God as a reconciled Father, who has accepted them through the Beloved, and made them his children by adoption and grace, they trust in him for direction in all difficulties, protection in all dangers, succour in all troubles, and a supply of all

their wants. And though they know they shall not be without chastisement, (for what son is he whom his father chasteneth not?) yet do they know also that their heavenly Father *chastiseth them, not willingly, but for their profit*, and are persuaded that *all things shall work together for their good*, as they are conscious that they *love God*.

8. This leads me to mention another particular, never to be separated from the knowledge of God, which is, *the love of God*. For "Love is of God, (says St. John) and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." When the apostle says, *God is love*, he means both that God is lovely in himself, and also that he is loving to us. In his own nature, he is amiable, excellent, yea, absolutely perfect; and to all the creatures he hath made, to mankind in particular, he is infinitely gracious and beneficent: Therefore it is in the nature of things impossible to be acquainted with him and not to love him. Nor shall our love to this greatest and best of beings be merely a love of *esteem* due to his infinite perfections, or even a love of *desire* arising from a sense of our want of his presence and favour: but, over and above this, we shall also love him with a love of *delight*. We shall take complacency in his divine attributes, and in those relations in which he is pleased to stand to us as our Father and our Friend, and shall find our happiness in fellowship with him. We shall be able to adopt the words of Jeremiah, saying, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him;" and those of the Psalmist, "The Lord is the lot of mine inheritance, and the portion of my cup: the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage."

9. One thing more I shall notice here as a constant fruit of the knowledge of God, and that is *obedience*. For "He that saith he knoweth God and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." So testifies the beloved disciple, and also adds, that "Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." And the same is the most sure and infallible proof of our *love* likewise, for "This is the love of God, (says the same apostle,) "that we keep his commandments;" and, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them (declares the faithful and true Witness) he it is that loveth me." So that a conscientious care to keep all the commandments of God, even those which flesh

and blood dislike most, and to walk in all well-pleasing before him from day to day, is a never-failing consequence of our knowledge of God, and love to him; and *then*, and *only* then, "shall we not be ashamed" of professing these endowments, "when we have respect to all his commandments," and "keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man."

10. And here I cannot but observe, upon the whole, how well the scriptures guard the knowledge of God (which is only another word for true religion) on all sides against the false claims, which deluded men put in for it from opposite quarters. The self-righteous Pharisee, who lays his own works, of which he has a mistaken opinion, as the foundation of his acceptance with God, is cut off by the two first of the particulars I have mentioned, for he is neither abased before God for his sins, nor has he an humble confidence in the divine mercy. The third of these marks, shows the emptiness of the *formalist's* boast, whose lukewarm heart and trifling spirit testify against him, that he has not the love of God in him. And as for the *Antinomian*, who "makes void the law through faith," and "continues in sin because grace abounds," he finds his reproof and condemnation in the last particular. For though he "says he knows God," (and indeed he has need to say it, for no one would have inferred it from his life,) yet because he "keepeth not his commandments," we are sure that "he is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

11. From this account of the knowledge of God, and its inseparable effects, it is easy to see who they are that *know him not*, and of consequence who they are upon whom Christ, at his second coming, will take vengeance. They are those who have no higher and better acquaintance with God, than that which they have attained by the exercise of their natural faculties and rational powers, in the consideration of his word and works, having never received the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation (as the apostle speaks, Eph. i. 17.) in the knowledge of him." They are those who have never (as it were) seen him by faith, or been inwardly enlightened with a discovery of his glorious perfections, and therefore do not "abhor themselves, and repent as in dust and ashes." They are those who do not know "God in Christ reconciling them unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them:" and therefore not being persuaded that he is "pacified towards them after all they

have done," they do not trust in him as a tender Father and a faithful friend, in covenant with them through Jesus Christ. They are those who do not "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon them," and therefore do not consciously "love him, who hath first loved them." They are those, lastly, who perhaps "*profess to know God,*" but "*by works deny him,*" not keeping his commandments, or keeping them merely in external things, and that with reluctance, from a principle of slavish fear, as though God were a hard master, and as though obedience to him were a task enjoined, which it would be our interest and happiness to be excused from performing.—Upon all such will Christ, when he is revealed, take vengeance.

I now proceed to the other particular mentioned in our text, concerning the character of those whom our Lord will condemn.

## II. *They obey not the gospel of Christ.*

A few observations on this point, will greatly illustrate what has already been advanced, and enable us still better to judge concerning our true state and condition. I mean to pursue the same method I did under the former head, showing positively what is implied in *obeying the gospel*, that we may infer from thence who they are that *disobey it*.

1. It will be easily understood what is meant by *obeying the gospel*, if we consider what the gospel is. And this may be learnt, in some measure, even from the original word, (translated *gospel* in the New Testament,) which, it is well known, signifies *good news*, or *glad tidings*. Accordingly, what is termed *gospel* in the 4th of St. Luke, is translated *good tidings* in the 51st of Isaiah; and the preachers of the gospel are represented in the same chapter (ver. 7th) as bringing "*good tidings,*" as *publishing peace*, as *bringing good tidings of good*, as *publishing salvation*. This then is the very essence of the gospel, *good tidings*, or *tidings of good*, even of peace and salvation, of peace with God, and salvation from sin and misery. To explain this a little.

2. The gospel brings us tidings of forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God, of free and full justification through faith in the Lord Jesus. It allows, indeed, nay, testifies, that "there is none righteous, (by nature) no, not one, that all have sinned and come



short of the glory of God, that the whole world is guilty before God, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." And in consequence of this, it declares, "that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight." But then at the same time it assures us, that "God hath set forth his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness (both his justice and mercy) for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." It affirms, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and that he "hath committed to his servants the word of reconciliation." And hence they agree to offer pardoning mercy to all penitent sinners, and to bear witness, that "whosoever believeth in Christ doth receive forgiveness of sins;" yea, that "by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified" by their own obedience.

3. Hence it appears what it is to obey the gospel in this view of it, as it is a manifestation of pardoning mercy through a Mediator. It is, 1st, To see and feel ourselves guilty before God, and therefore to renounce all confidence in our own righteousness, from a conviction of its insufficiency for our justification. It is, 2dly, To apply to the all-sufficient merits of our Redeemer with penitent hearts, forsaking our sins, and putting our whole trust in him for salvation, present and eternal. It is, 3dly, Firmly to believe and appropriate to ourselves God's gracious promises of pardon and everlasting life made to us for his sake. This is implied in believing in Christ, and all who thus believe, are "justified by the faith of Christ," and, in this respect, *obey the gospel*.

4. Indeed we cannot thus believe of ourselves; but then for our comfort, the gospel is further a dispensation of the Spirit of God, given to work this faith in us, witness this justification to our souls, and sanctifying our nature, to restore us to that image of God in which we were originally created. It supposes that our "sins have separated between us and God," and caused him to hide *his face from us*, whence "we are alienated from the life of God, and even dead in trespasses and sins." It takes for granted (and well it may, for it is matter of daily and universal observation, confirmed by experience) that we are altogether depraved and polluted through sin, inasmuch that "every imagination of the thoughts of

our hearts is only evil, and that continually:" from which corrupt fountain the most pernicious streams are perpetually flowing; so that we are earthly, sensual, and devilish; all our tempers, words, and works, being in direct opposition to the law of God.—But then, notwithstanding, yea, *because* of this depravity and ruin of our once pure and perfect nature, and, with a view to its removal, it informs us that as Christ "died for our sins, and rose again for our justification," so, "being exalted to the Father's right hand, he hath received the promise of the Holy Ghost," which he "sheds forth abundantly" on the children of men, inviting all *that thirst*, yea, and *whosoever will*, to come and partake of it.

5. Now this Spirit is an universal remedy for all the disorders of our fallen nature.—Hereby the darkness is removed from our minds, and the hardness from our hearts; our understanding is enlightened, our will subdued, our affections set upon things above, and all our unholy tempers and corrupt inclinations purged away. Hereby we "die unto sin, and live unto righteousness;" "put off the old man, and put on the new." By this, the divine nature is communicated to us, and the divine image stamped upon us; we are transformed into the likeness, and conformed to the will of God. Here wisdom lights her lamp, and from hence love kindles her fire. This feeds the flames of devotion, and without this, prayer and praise are cold and languid. By this, the life of God is opened in the soul, and the kingdom of God set up in the heart. Being joined to the Lord, we become one spirit with him, and we dwell in him and he in us. In a word, heaven is brought down upon earth, and an earnest of our future inheritance is given us, until the full redemption of the purchased possession.

6. But be it observed, though this Spirit more or less enlightens and strives with all (as appears not only from scripture, but also from experience, all men, the most abandoned not excepted, having at one time or another, felt remorse on account of sin, and some desire after holiness,) yet in these his *saving* influences, he is only imparted to those who follow his drawings, and comply with his design. For this Spirit of light and love does not operate upon us as if we were inanimate matter, lifeless and inactive, but as rational creatures, endowed with a power to *yield to*, or *resist* his sacred operations. Accordingly, we are exhorted not to *grieve* nor *quench* the Holy Spirit of God, by opposing his work; but, on the contra-

ry, working with him, "to mortify the deeds of the body, that we may live." And "living in the Spirit," we are further directed to "walk in the Spirit," that is, to suffer ourselves to be led by him into all truth, holiness, and happiness, that we may bring forth all his blessed fruits, and abound in every holy temper, word, and work.—And this is the very thing implied in *obeying the gospel* in this second view of it, as it is a *dispensation of the Spirit*.

7. Thus shall we be obedient to the gospel in every other respect. We shall be delivered (as it were) into the mould of its *doctrines*, every feature and lineament of it being inscribed upon us. We shall revere its *threatenings*, and steadily guard against that temper and conduct which would expose us to the execution of them. We shall obey all its *commands* with fidelity and cheerfulness, rejoicing hereby to show our love to our glorious Redeemer. We shall cordially embrace its *exceeding great and precious promises*, earnestly desiring and expecting their full accomplishment. And in the meantime, we shall calmly, yea, and joyfully, suffer all the obloquy, reproach, and persecution to which our profession may lay us open, "knowing that our *reward* is great in heaven." Lastly, for this *reward*, with all the bliss and glory prepared for the children of God, we shall patiently wait, longing and looking for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, to put a final period to our time of trial and suffering, and "receive us to himself, that where he is we may be also."

These particulars might have been enlarged upon for the further illustration of this head; but as this would open up too much matter to be comprised in one sermon; I beg leave to sum up what has already been advanced by way of inquiry, and so to conclude this plain but interesting discourse.

1. I ask thee, then, whosoever thou art that readest these lines, hast thou the foundation of all true religion? Dost thou know the *only true God*? Has he been revealed to thy inmost soul by his Holy Spirit in all his divine perfections? And has this manifestation of him been effectual to transform thee (in some measure at least) into his image, and render thee a true follower of God? Has it humbled thy pride and covered thee with shame, scattered thy fears and inspired thee with confidence, destroyed thy idols, and united thy heart to the source of all beauty and goodness? Dost thou know him in his *holiness* and *justice*, and art thou convinced of

sin? In his *mercy* and *love*, and art thou reconciled to him? Has he discovered himself to thee as thy *Friend*, who is pacified towards thee after all thou hast done? As thy *Father*, who has made thee his child, and given thee the Spirit of adoption in thy heart? And as thy *God*, who has taken thee into covenant with himself, through Christ, and is become thy portion and treasure in time and in eternity?

2. I ask further, Dost thou not only "know the only true God," but "Jesus Christ also, whom he hath sent," the only Mediator between God and man, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead, and in whom alone there is salvation for a lost world? In other words, Dost thou *obey the gospel*, and is it become the *power of God to thy salvation*? Hast thou seen and felt thy absolute need of the incomparable blessings it offers, free justification through the blood of Christ, and entire sanctification by the Spirit of God? And hast thou accounted tidings of these unsearchable riches of Christ, "glad tidings of great joy?" Hast thou beheld thyself to be a guilty, helpless, perishing sinner, condemned by thy own conscience, accursed by God's holy law, exposed to his fierce wrath, and obnoxious to eternal misery?—In this wretched situation, hast thou eagerly heard, and joyfully believed, the most gracious proclamation of pardon, made by the ambassadors of the King of heaven? Hast "thou believed in Christ, that thou mightest be justified by the faith of Christ?" And dost thou daily evidence the truth of thy faith by thy works? Professing "to be justified by Christ," are thou not "found a sinner," continuing in sin, but being "made free from sin, art thou become a servant to righteousness?" Hast thou received the Holy Ghost since thou believedst," and has that Spirit of grace enlightened, quickened, and purified thy soul? Dost thou "live and walk in the Spirit," and is thy "conversation such as becometh the gospel? Dost thou "walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God?"

3. Be it known unto thee, whosoever thou art, of whatever sentiment, of whatever denomination, of whatever party, if thou canst not answer these questions in the affirmative, if thou dost not know God and obey the gospel, as has been described, thou art at present most certainly one of those upon whom Christ, when he cometh, will take vengeance. But, blessed be God, thou dost not need to

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remain such. Thou hast it in thy power, through the tender mercy of our God, to "acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace," that after all, "good may come unto thee." Only let there be no delay: forthwith "come out from among the wicked, be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and he will receive thee, and will be a Father unto thee." "Draw nigh to God," through Christ, "in that new and living way" of faith, "which he hath consecrated for thee," and he "will draw nigh to thee:" he will *show thee his glory*: will "manifest himself to thee as he does not unto the world;" and thou shalt know him, whom to know *is life eternal*, while the gospel of Christ becomes the very gate of heaven to thy believing soul.

## SERMON VI.

THE

### FUTURE MISERY OF THE WICKED.

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*The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9.*

1. **I**T is remarkable, that in the account here given us by the apostle, of the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the eternally awful consequences of it, he represents our Lord's second coming to be rather in order to the salvation of his own people, than the punishment of the wicked. For although he mentions his taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel, he declares in the 10th verse, that the end, the *principal end* of his coming is, that he "may be glorified in his saints, and admired of all that believe."

2. How plain is it from hence, as well as from a thousand other considerations, that mercy is our Lord's darling attribute, and that judgment is his strange work. He delights to dispense pardons and confer rewards; but it is with reluctance that he passes sentence of condemnation, or inflicts punishment on any. From the apostle's manner of representing the matter, one would conclude that he would much rather pass the ungodly by, did not the na-

changeable perfections of his nature, the divine authority of his laws, and the unalterable rights of his government, oblige him to call them into judgment. But inasmuch as all his other attributes must be manifested and honoured, as well as his love, his law magnified, and the equity of his government maintained; therefore he must and will "render to every man according to his works. to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life; but to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man who worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile, for there is no respect of persons with God." As certainly as he will account his saints *worthy* through his own worthiness, "of the kingdom for which they suffer," so certainly, "when he is revealed, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, will he take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel."

In two former discourses on these words, the *certainty* and *manner* of our Lord's second coming, as also the *character* of those whom he will then condemn, have been particularly considered. I now proceed, as was proposed, to show,

III. The *nature* and *duration* of their misery. But, that we may justify the ways of God to man, and prevent any abuse which might be made of this doctrine to the disparagement of the divine goodness, I think it proper to premise a few words concerning the *reason* of their condemnation and punishment.

1. This is signified in the words of our text, which speak of Christ's "taking vengeance on them, and punishing them." The expressions (especially in the original,) intimate an unbecoming and injurious conduct in them towards God, which being examined into, they now receive the due reward of their deeds. Inquire we then, what their conduct has been, and we shall easily see the reason of their misery. And here I do not mention their violation of the law of innocence, or covenant of works, made with our first parents before their fall, because the scriptures nowhere (that I remember) represent this as the cause of the condemnation of any at the day of judgment. But with our Lord, I observe, "This is the condemnation, (the reason of the condemnation) of those

who perish, "that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, their deeds being evil." They "rejected the counsel of God against themselves;" they *neglected* the *gospel salvation*; "they would not come unto Christ that they might have life; they refused "him to reign over them;" they buried, instead of improving, their talent of light and power, slighted the divine mercy, "counted the blood of the covenant a common thing," i. e. they trifled with and abused it, and did final despite to the Spirit of grace," and therefore they are condemned. Or, in the language of our text, Christ takes vengeance on them because they *knew not God*, when they might have known him, and *obeyed not the gospel*, whereas they might have been obedient unto it. Or, in plainer words still, he dooms them unto everlasting fire; not because he appointed them to wrath, and decreed their damnation before they were born, but because he *would* have saved them, and they *would not*, choosing death rather than life, and cursing rather than blessing.

2. And that you may be able to form some idea (though after all it will be faint and inadequate) of the divine justice manifested in their punishment, consider both the conduct of God towards them, and theirs in return towards him. Consider the love of the Father in giving his only-begotten Son, and exposing him to the most dreadful sufferings and ignominious death for those wretched sinners, who had abused his mercies, broken his laws, trampled under foot his authority, and rebelled against his government. Consider the Son of God emptying himself of his glory and happiness, assuming our frail nature in its meanest form, and at last submitting to pain and shame in their greatest extremities; and all this for his bitterest enemies, who slighted his dying love, refused his mild government, and even imbrued their hands in his most precious blood, or daily crucified him afresh: Consider the holy Spirit of grace operating in various ways, and at different times; enlightening, awakening, convincing; alarming with fear, alluring with hope, drawing with love; comforting in trouble, strengthening in weakness, succouring in temptation: and this with a view to beget repentance, faith, and holiness in the soul, as a Spirit of adoption to cry in us "Abba Father," to seal us to the day of redemption, and give us an earnest of our future inheritance in our hearts. Consider him as persisting in these kind offices, notwithstanding all the neglect, contempt, and contumely, wherewith we



treat him : notwithstanding we shut our eyes against his light, stop our ears to his calls, slight his love, reject his favours, and quench his motions; inviting the most impure lusts and diabolical tempers, to supply the place of his spiritual graces, and entertaining the foul fiend of hell in the inmost recesses of our souls, which should be kept sacred to this heavenly inhabitant. In short, consider the amazing plan of our redemption, from first to last, in all its wonderful variety, in all its mysterious grace : Consider the abyss of guilt and misery where it finds us, and from whence it delivers us; the height of bliss and glory to which it advances us, and in which it establishes us; together with the astonishing process of divine love in the accomplishment of this great and good work. In a word, consider the greatness of this salvation provided for us, and offered to us in the gospel; and then say what punishment, what torment do they deserve, and from a holy and just God must they meet with, who neglect and reject it!

3. From a *just* God I say, for they have doubtless nothing further to expect from his mercy and goodness. The sun of divine love is now for ever set upon them. It shone indeed with effulgent brightness during the whole day of life, though it was never suffered to enlighten their minds, clouds of prejudice, exhaled from their sensual souls, obscuring its beams, and the thick veil of unbelief excluding its light; but it will now shine no more! It has resigned them to the scorching fire of divine wrath, which (however reluctant they may be) will effectually enlighten them; but ah! with how different a flame! with how diemal a light! The streams of divine grace, which long watered their still barren souls in vain, are now run out, or rather diverted into a more fruitful soil, and streams of indignation are directed, by infinite justice, to flow in upon and eternally overwhelm them.

4. Being awakened out of the long sleep of death by the tremendous sound of the trump of God, they are summoned to appear before the awful tribunal of the Universal Judge. A great white throne is erected, and he, who is the desire of nations and the joy of angels, sits upon it. "His head and his hair are white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire; his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. In his right-hand he carries seven stars, out of his mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance is as the sun shining in his strength."

“ Where'er serene, he turns propitious eyes,  
 We find a newly open'd paradise :  
 But if resentment reddens their mild beams,  
 The Eden kindles, and the world's in flames :  
 On one hand knowledge shines with purest light ;  
 On one the sword of justice fiercely bright.”

Before this glorious person, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment, and who hath all power in heaven and on earth, trembling and reluctant, they make their appearance, and receive their final sentence at his bar.

5. The books being opened, and every secret thing brought to light, all their thoughts, words, and works, pass in review before him, and undergo a severe scrutiny.—And thus all their transgressions and defects being discovered in all their aggravations, they are recompensed in exact proportion to their demerits. For since they rejected the satisfaction made by Christ, and there remaineth no other sacrifice for sin, divine and infinite justice arrests their guilty souls, and confines them in the dark prison of hell, till they have satisfied all its demands by their personal sufferings, which, alas ! they can never do. They must therefore sink for ever under the enormous weight of that dreadful curse ; which, with respect to them, Christ bore in vain, and must reimburse, (if I may so speak,) by an increased misery, all the expense which divine goodness has been at with them. The love and mercy which were shown these wretched creatures, the blood which was shed for them, the grace which was conferred upon them, shall all be considered, and as they will demonstrate in the blackest light, their ingratitude and obstinacy, so will they greatly enhance their condemnation, and aggravate their torment ! Having thus manifested their *desert* of the punishment provided for them, that it is a debt owed them by *impartial justice* and *despised mercy*, I proceed, as was proposed, to show,

Secondly, The nature and duration of their misery. On this head I shall, 1st, make some general observations, by way of explaining the text and establishing the doctrine.

2dly, I shall take a more particular view of their misery.

3dly, I shall conclude with an earnest address to saints and sinners.

And, 1st, I am to make some general observations, by way of explaining the text and establishing the doctrine.

1. The Apostle calls their misery *destruction*, by which, it is plain, he does not mean "the extinction of their being," or "the annihilation of their nature," because this sense of the word is contrary to the general tenor of the scriptures, which represent the wicked as not only existing after the day of judgment, but as suffering the greatest misery. But by this expression we are plainly to understand, what is inconceivably worse than annihilation, viz. 1st, "The utter ruin of their once holy and happy nature, with the final death of all their comforts and their hopes: and, 2dly, "The entire perversion of all their powers and faculties, which are now employed in rendering them most completely wretched." Meaning to enlarge on these two particulars, when I come to take a nearer view of this misery, I say no more of them at present, but observe,

2. Their destruction is said to be "from the presence of the Lord." This intimates to us what is the chief source of their ruin and misery, viz. their exclusion from his favour and fellowship. In consequence of original and actual sin, and because they rejected the garments of salvation, provided by Christ, and offered in the Gospel, therefore they are found, at the day of judgment, destitute of the divine image, that splendid and comely apparel which is the glory of the holy angels, and which was once the chief ornament and happiness of man in his primeval state. The rotten and filthy rags of their own righteousness, which they had taken pains to patch together and throw over their sinful souls, only serve to increase their deformity, and manifest still more their sin and shame. They cannot hide their pollution and defilement. In spite of all their endeavours they appear stained with the guilt of innumerable transgressions, and all over defiled with iniquity, whose fatal leprosy hath spread its loathsome influence throughout their whole souls, and wofully enfeebled all their powers.

3. They are, therefore, objects of divine disapprobation and abhorrence. "The God who made them will not have mercy on

them, and he who formed them will show them no favour." They are excluded the favour of Jehovah, which is better than life, which diffuses light and joy through the happy regions of immortality, and banishes every shadow of evil far from their peaceful dwellings. They are debarred all communion with, and access to, the Father of their spirits, and the God of all consolation and good hope, who is the only source of true and lasting felicity to his intelligent offspring. They are even shut out of the blissful city, denied all fellowship with saints and angels, and banished far from the dwellings of liberty and joy, into the dreary territories of misery and anguish.

4. Thus being immensely removed from all that is holy and happy, and deserted of the Sun of Righteousness, the light and life of the spiritual world; midnight darkness overwhelms their minds, a furious storm is raised in their passions, and wandering about in endless perplexity, and abandoned to everlasting despair, they are tossed to and fro by the tempestuous hurricanes, and raging flames of those sulphurous regions; and to complete the ruin of their once holy and happy nature, the hedge of their souls being broken down, (I mean the divine protection being withdrawn,) they are exposed to the desolating ravages of the devil and his angels, those wild beasts of the infernal forest, who, ranging forth in those inhospitable realms, overspread with a gloomy and perpetual night, lay their rational and immortal nature utterly waste, and root up and destroy whatever of excellence may remain.

5. But this phrase,—“destruction from the presence of the Lord,” may be also understood in another sense. It seems not only to signify the misery consequent, in the nature of things, upon their banishment from God’s gracious presence, their separation from saints and angels, and their exclusion out of the heavenly city, (generally termed their *punishment of loss*, concerning which I cannot now speak particularly :) It likewise may be considered as intimating, if it do not chiefly intend, that God himself, as he is present in heaven in all his love and goodness, as an inexhaustible source of felicity to his people, as a never-failing river of pleasure, where they may take large and repeated draughts of bliss;—so is he present in hell, in his infinite justice and almighty wrath, as an unfathomable sea of liquid fire, where the wicked must drink in everlasting torture. For as it is the presence of God in his *goodness*,

which diffuses light and joy through the happy regions of immortality, so it is the presence of God in his *vengeance*, which scatters darkness and wo through the dreary regions of misery. As heaven would be no heaven if God did not there manifest his *love*; so hell would be no hell, if God did not there display his *wrath*. It is the presence and agency of God, which gives every thing virtue and efficacy, without which there can be no life, no sensibility, no power. God is, therefore, himself present in hell, to see to the punishment of these rebels against his government, that it may be adequate to the infinity of their guilt. His fiery indignation *kindles*, and his incensed fury feeds the flames of their torment, while his powerful presence and operation maintains their *being*, and renders all their powers most acutely sensible; thus setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it cut most intolerably deep!

6. Nay further: it seems implied in the next expression in our text, "from the glory of his power," that he will exert all his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their nature will admit. He will especially glorify his *power*, and render it illustrious in their damnation. Gladly would he have glorified his rich grace in pardoning their complicated guilt, and his almighty power in restoring them to his image, that they might have been raised to a share in his throne. But despising his great salvation, they would not come unto Christ that they might have life. And now nothing remains but that he glorify himself in their misery, since they refused that happiness which he would have conferred upon them, to the manifestation of his own glory. For he must and will be glorified one way or another in all his creatures; and with respect to these ungrateful and disobedient wretches, he has but one way left in which he can be glorified, and that is, to reward them according to their works, by recompensing their ingratitude and disobedience upon their own guilty heads.

7. Thus (as the apostle testifies, Rom. ix. 22.) while he "makes known the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy," which he hath "afore prepared unto glory," he will also "show his wrath, and make his power known, in the vessels of wrath fitted" (by their own wilful and unnecessitated impenitence) "for destruction, after he has first endured them with much long-suffering." *Show his wrath, and make his power known!* dreadful expressions! what

an unfathomable depth of wo do they imply! Ah! miserable creatures, in whom God will show how severely he can punish, and what a fierce fire of wrath his almighty power can kindle! Surely, as the condition of the saints must be inconceivably joyful, in whom God will *make known* (as the apostle has it) *the riches of his glory*, i. e. display how gloriously rich he is in goodness, and to what a pitch of honour and happiness his omnipotence can raise the objects of his love; so, on the other hand, the state of these sinners must be equally lamentable! Unhappy creatures! from what a height of glory and felicity, into what a depth of infamy and misery have they knowingly and wilfully plunged themselves! And now

“ Their dire punishment is ever strong,  
 Their constitution too, for ever young;  
 Curs'd with returns of vigour still the same,  
 At once to bear and satisfy the flame:  
 Still they are caught, and still they are pursued;  
 They suffer still, and still they are renewed.”

8. For the apostle tells us, their destruction will be *eternal*; a declaration which is confirmed by many other passages of scripture. One or two I shall now produce as a specimen of the rest. Thus Daniel assures us; “ They shall (viz. at the general resurrection) awake to everlasting shame and contempt,”\* even as the saints shall arise “ to everlasting life,” “ they shall go into everlasting punishment,” says the faithful and true Witness, even as “ the righteous shall go into life eternal.” And indeed, the eternity of their misery seems a natural consequence of what has been advanced in the two last paragraphs. For if God will display in them (as has been observed) the *infinity* of his justice, the *severity* of his wrath, and the *omnipotence* of his power, then must their punishment be everlasting, because their nature being finite, it does not appear how he can do this in any limited duration of time, however long. And thus what is wanting in the *degree* of their misery, is made up by its *continuance*. And for the same reason, among others, we conclude, the happiness of the righteous shall be *eternal*, because in them God will manifest the infinite riches of his love and goodness, which, considering the finite capacity of their nature, he cannot do in less than a boundless eternity.

\* Dan. xii. 2.

9. If need were, I might add in confirmation of this doctrine, that as the holiness and obedience of the saints still continue and increase in heaven, and therefore there must be the same and greater reason for their being rewarded with bliss and glory, when they have been millions of ages in happiness, than when they first entered the gates of paradise; so the depravity and disobedience of the wicked still continuing and increasing, there must be the very same, yea, and greater reason for their punishment, when they have been millions of ages in torment, than when they first departed accursed into *everlasting misery!* They must be perpetually swelling their enormous sum of guilt, and still running deeper, immensely deeper in debt to divine and infinite justice. Hence, after the longest imaginable period, they will be so far from having discharged their debt of punishment, that they will find more due, than when they first began to suffer! Dreadful this indeed! but too true!

10. Indeed, the comparison drawn from the happiness of the saints, is not altogether suitable; but alas! the impropriety of it falls on the unfavourable side, and only strengthens my argument the more. For whatever proofs may be brought from other quarters in favour of the eternity of their bliss, which do not equally evince the eternal misery of the wicked; yet, in this point of view, (sure I am) more may be said for the latter than the former. For the righteous, however obedient, do no more than is their duty to do, and therefore (strictly speaking) *merit* nothing at the hand of God. They can make no claim upon his *justice*, but all their hopes of happiness and a continuance therein, are founded upon his gracious promises, which he was free to make or not to make, as he thought good.—But the case is different with the wicked; they have *strictly* and *properly merited* or *deserved* eternal punishment, and are, in fact, obnoxious to it. And hence their apprehensions of it are founded, not barely on his threatenings, but also and chiefly on the unchangeable perfections of his nature.—So that it appears, if this reasoning be just, they have more cause for fearing an *eternal* hell, than the saints have for expecting an *everlasting* heaven!

11. The reason of the divine conduct in giving them this two-fold proof (arising from his threatenings and the perfections of his nature) of a doctrine which, above all others, they hate and wish

to disprove, seems to be his compassion for these infatuated creatures. He means, by this double battery, to silence their evil-reasoning unbelief, which, as an impregnable fort defies the whole force of divine truth, and too often detains the poor soul a captive of sin and Satan, until the judgment of the great day! May his blessed Spirit give the desired efficacy to these engines, which infinite wisdom hath planted against the perverseness of unthinking men! May they level all the strong-holds of Satan, and bring into captivity every unbelieving sinner to the obedience of Christ, before sad experience convince them, that in hell *the worm* of their anguish *dieth not*, and *the fire* of their misery is *not quenched*, but that its flame *ascendeth up for ever and ever!*

I should now take a more particular view of their misery, but as this is too extensive a subject to be discussed at present, I shall defer it to another opportunity, and now conclude with a short improvement of what has been advanced by way of inference and application.

And, 1st, We may infer from what has been said, the infatuation and misery of those *who know not God, and obey not the gospel*. Whether they promise themselves an exemption from this eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; or whether they flatter themselves it will not be so dreadful and intolerable as it is represented to be; or whether they indulge a vain hope of being some time or other released from this infernal prison, it is evident, that they are most miserably blinded by the god of this world, and deceived by the deceitfulness of sin.—O ye that “know not God, and obey not the gospel,” we testify to you upon the authority of the lively oracles of eternal truth, that you are the very persons who are now exposed to this dreadful storm of divine indignation, which already gathers black over your guilty heads, and threatens a desolating downfall of misery and wo? Yes, if your speedy repentance prevent not, upon you, even *you*, an offended and inexorable God will “rain fire and brimstone, storm and tempest, and this shall be your portion to drink.” Let not then that subtle serpent, in whom you trust, beguile you, saying, “You shall not surely die;” for as the Lord liveth, if you persist in your ignorance of God and disobedience to the gospel, you shall surely and eternally die. You “shall drink the very dregs of this cup of trembling, and wring them out.”



“God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he spoken, and will he not do it? Hath he threatened, and will he not make it good?” As sure as he is a being of immutable truth and inflexible justice, and as sure as you have broken his law and rejected his gospel, so sure must you, at the morning of the resurrection, “awake to everlasting shame and contempt,” and at the day of judgment, “depart accursed into everlasting fire.”

2. And suppose you that the empty and uncertain applause of worms of the earth, or the vain and momentary pleasures of sin, or the unsatisfactory and fleeting glitter of golden ore can recompense you for the shame and contempt which will then overwhelm you with eternal confusion, and that pain and anguish which the scorching and fiery lake will pour like water into your bowels, and like oil into your bones? Unthinking and deluded mortal! The praises of thy fellow-sinners will then be turned into insults and hisses, thy cup of pleasure into a draught of wrath, and thy glittering treasures into fiery streams of brimstone and torture. Streams these, which will for ever deluge thy desolated nature; a draught this, which will intoxicate thy soul with eternal horror; and hisses and insults those, with which, as with whips and scorpions, the fiends of hell will perpetually lash thy guilty and self-accusing conscience! Believe me, my poor fellow-mortal, thou canst not, indeed thou canst not bear this devouring fire! Thou canst not dwell with these everlasting burnings! If thou thinkest otherwise, it is because thou hast not counted the cost, but hast rashly credited the devil and thy own deceitful heart, which were both liars from the beginning, and have not abode in the truth. They have agreed to make thee drunk with sensuality and sin, to put out thy eyes, and then to lead thee blindfold into endless ruin, a ruin from whence thou shalt not escape.

3. Oh! think, man, before the intoxicating cup of sin renders thee incapable of thinking, in what a wretched condition thou art soon likely to be, if divine grace prevent not! Oh! look, before the god of this world hath closed thy eyes in eternal darkness, into that tremendous ocean of fiery and unfathomable wrath, into which the stream of time will soon hurry thy frail and leaky vessel! How intolerable and lasting thy misery! Oh! think of eternity! Canst thou number the stars in the firmament, the drops of rain, or

the sand on the sea-shore? Make the experiment; and when thou hast finished the calculation, sit down and reckon up the ages of thy wo! And see that thy account be just. Let every star, every drop, every grain of sand, represent one million of tormenting ages. And when thou hast ascertained the sum, know that as many more millions still remain behind, and yet as many more behind these, and so on without end! Poor infatuated wretch! My heart bleeds for thee!— Gladly would I warn thee that thou come not into this place of torment. Oh! that at length thou wouldst take warning! Oh! that thou wouldst imitate the example of Noah, “who being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, was moved with fear, and prepared an ark for the saving of his house.”

4. I warn thee, thou unholy and ungodly soul, who dost not know God, nor obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, of things not seen as yet: of the glorious coming of that adorable Saviour, whose salvation thou hast rejected, whom thou hast refused to reign over thee, and whom, by sin, thou hast crucified afresh; I warn thee of an approaching and inexorable Judge, who, (if thou repent not) will summon thee, with all thy sins about thee, to his bar, and pass an irreversible sentence upon thee. I warn thee of a descending deluge of divine and infinite wrath, which will speedily drown an impenitent and unbelieving world with a fiery and unfathomable sea of misery! I call upon thee without delay to prepare an ark for the saving of thy soul. Nay, for thy encouragement I tell thee, the ark is already prepared. The almighty love of God, directed by infinite wisdom, hath prepared it; an ark this, which will defend thee against all the storms of wrath, and which will bear thee up above all the waves of misery. Yes, I point thee to that man “who is as a hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” I bid thee *look unto Jesus, and be saved!*

5. Oh! hide thyself by faith in him from the wind of temptation and sin; let his blood, sprinkled upon thy guilty conscience, and his righteousness, put upon thy naked soul, cover thee from the tempest of divine indignation: let his Spirit, flowing into thy heart as a river, refresh and water thy scorched and barren soul; and repose thyself under his cooling shade, until the burning sun of persecution shall go down, and the fiery heat of pain and affliction

shall finally cease! Flee for refuge to this hope set before thee, and all shall be well.—Forsake all known sin, use every appointed mean of grace, and be also careful to maintain and excel in good works. But yet rest not there. Oh! “tarry not in all the plain” of duty, but “escape to this mountain, lest thou be consumed.” And thus, like just Lot, thou shalt be delivered from the common overthrow of the impenitent and unbelieving, and shalt sing the praises of thy Deliverer and Saviour world without end.

## SERMON VII.

THE

### FUTURE MISERY OF THE WICKED.

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*“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. 2 Thess. i. 9.*

1. **H**OW infallibly certain, and how astonishingly grand and striking, are the events presented to our view by the apostle in this alarming passage of holy writ! How well worthy the serious attention, and devout contemplation of all who love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, yea, and of all mankind! And yet, (amazing it is!) they are in general overlooked and disregarded, even by those who profess to be assured of them!

2. The revolutions which are continually happening in the petty states and fluctuating affairs of this world; the accession of temporal princes to their transitory dignities and corruptible crowns; the poor and insignificant conquests obtained by worms of the earth over their fellow-reptiles; the approach of earthly judges, and the trial, condemnation, and punishment of the violators of human laws, *these* are events which short-sighted mortals deem of consequence enough to occupy their thoughts in private, to employ their tongues in conversation, and to dignify the annals of history.

“They think, they talk, they write of these.”

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3. In the meantime, the grand revolution of universal nature; the glorious exaltation of the Prince of the kings of the earth; his complete and everlasting triumph over principalities and powers, and all the potent enemies of his government; the coming of the final Judge of angels and of men; the decisive trial of the whole world at his bar; and the rewards and punishments then to be dispensed to immortal souls, united to incorruptible bodies;—these subjects, though interesting beyond thought, and grand beyond comparison, are, alas! too generally treated with indifference and neglect! These are judged unfit for meditation in secret, lest they should make us melancholy; unworthy of a place in polite and genteel company, for fear they should damp their mirth and spoil their pleasure; and sure it is, he who means to gain either honour or profit by his pen, must take care not to employ it on these dreary and *puritanical* (not to say *methodistical*) subjects, for which this light and airy age has no relish.

4. Blessed be God, that these heart-improving subjects have any place left whither to retire! Blessed be God, that they are not yet quite banished out of the world! They are still (thanks to Divine providence!) allowed to remain in our Bibles, and now and then, (although not often) to ascend the pulpit, and give serious instructions to a few of the poor and illiterate, who are not yet arrived at such a pitch of refinement as to think it beneath them to attend their lectures. But who knows how soon they will be forced from this, their last retreat? Who knows how soon this jovial and licentious age, will forbid us to mention death and judgment, heaven and hell, even in the pulpit, and confine us to discourse on subjects which have less tendency to alarm their fears, and make their minds uneasy? However, as this is not yet the case, let us not neglect to improve the liberty wherewith we are indulged, and in pursuance of our subject, let us, as was proposed, in our last discourse,

Secondly, Take a more particular view of the nature and duration of the misery of the wicked, as proved and explained in the preceding sermon.

1. But here, I confess, my mind recoils. I feel a sensible reluctance to enter upon the consideration of so dark and dismal a subject, a subject which yet, I believe, very necessary to be considered, and not less profitable. For doubtless our Lord and his apostles, would

not have recommended such painful meditations to us, if they were not needful, and calculated to yield us much fruit. To say nothing of their tendency to restrain us from sin, prompt us to duty, excite us to diligence, and awaken our sleepy souls to watchful care and fearful circumspection; reflections upon that *future* and *eternal misery*, which is reserved for the impenitent and unbelieving sinner, and is the just desert of us all, may be of great use to increase our patience under all the afflictions and troubles of this life, so light and momentary in comparison of it. And at the same time, to consider this misery in contrast with that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, which is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, will tend to enlarge our conceptions of that great salvation which Christ hath wrought out for us, and of consequence, to endear the Saviour to us, to whom we owe our redemption from the curse of the law, and our deliverance from the wrath to come.

2. Away then with this reluctance! with this "foolish, this treacherous compassion," (as the benvolent Dr. Doddridge calls it) "which chooses rather to leave men to be consumed, than disturb their slumbers." Let us seriously address ourselves to the consideration of a subject which, though dreary and unpromising in appearance, is notwithstanding productive of much wholesome fruit. Oh, that it may prove such to us all!—Sorry should I be, by discoursing on this point, only to torment some of you before the time: and yet, if you seriously attend to what shall be delivered, and after all still resolve to remain in your sins, it cannot be expected to produce any other effect. If, therefore, that be your resolution, if you be not disposed to bid adieu to all iniquity, and give yourselves up to the service of God without reserve, I would advise you to withdraw, and forbear hearing a discourse which, while that is your disposition, can only distress you. Withdraw, however, with this persuasion, that you are *knowingly* and *wilfully* plunging into an abyss of misery, which you have not courage to open your eyes to behold; and this thought, if I mistake not, will be as a thorn to disturb your beds of indolence and pleasure, and as wormwood and gall intermixed with your cups of riot and excess! Oh, that it may, after all, rouse you from the one, and make you nauseate the other, before you make your bed in hell, and drink the flames of endless torment!

3. In the former discourse upon this subject, in which the text was explained, and the doctrine established, it was observed, that the destruction here spoken of, signified, 1st, "The utter ruin of their once holy and happy nature, and the final death of all their comforts and their hopes;" and, 2dly, "the entire perversion of all their powers and faculties, which shall then be only employed in dishonouring God, and rendering themselves most completely wretched."

Let us enlarge on these two particulars, and then, as was proposed, 3dly, earnestly address both saints and sinners on this important subject. And, 1st, Their once holy and happy nature shall then be utterly ruined, and all their comforts and hopes finally destroyed.

1. Indeed their holiness and happiness was in reality lost in this world, although not irrecoverably. Even here, where "the true light enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world," they were depraved by sin, and immersed in misery, but they knew it not. Being laid fast asleep by the opiates of Satan, and amused by many pleasing dreams of worldly vanity, invented in great variety to employ and entertain them, they wist not what had befallen them. But intoxicated with the enchanting cup of pleasure, and in the midst of their midnight slumbers, though plunged in the filth of iniquity, and fast bound by gigantic lusts, they talked much of the purity of their nature, the freedom of their will, and the light and liberty in which they walked. Though the Devil's captives, confined by him in the prison of sin, bolted and barred by unbelief, and in the territories of hell; yet were they as easy and unconcerned, as if they had been possessed of all possible honour and felicity.

2. At times, indeed, the stormy blast of adversity, the painful smart of affliction, or the terror of God's threatenings, disturbed their repose, and almost awakened their sleepy souls: but another draught of Satan's cup stupifying their senses, and the agreeable song of "Peace, peace," sounding in their ears, lulled them to sleep again, while sin silently doubled their fetters and chains, and unbelief, stopping up every avenue of divine light, added fresh locks and bolts to their prison-doors.—And now they sleep more securely, and dream more madly than ever.—No sooner do they end one dream than they begin another. Scenes of business and amusement

continually open one behind the back of another, that they may not awake out of their fatal slumber, till the officers of divine justice break open their hellish prison, and bring them forth by death for execution, when the time of their probation being ended, the things which make for their peace are for ever hid from their eyes.

3. Then their sleeping and dreaming end together. They suddenly awake to a most keen and dreadful sense of the ruin of their nature, and the final death of all their comforts and their hopes. They feel in a manner words cannot describe, from what a height of holiness and happiness, into what a depth of guilt and misery they are fallen.—Destitute of their Maker's image, and confounded at the discovery of their nakedness and deformity, they fly from the presence of the light, and the sight of saints and angels, now intolerable; and overwhelmed with shame and everlasting contempt, seek for refuge from the anguish they suffer under the shades of infernal darkness. But alas! the flames of hell, though black and dismal, afford light enough to demonstrate their folly and depravity, while the arrows of almighty indignation, prepared by inexorable justice, and directed by unerring wisdom, pursue and overtake them, and piercing them through with unknown sorrows, lay them low at the bottom of that fiery lake, which fed with streams of brimstone, and kindled by the breath of Jehovah, swells, overflows, and torments their ruined souls!

4. Their once holy and happy nature is now ruined, utterly and finally ruined, without any remedy, or the most distant hope of recovery. Their frail vessels, though built of the best materials, yet corrupted by the worm of sin, being conveyed by the ebb of time down the smooth river of life, are now hurried beyond the bar of death, into the fiery and unfathomable sea of divine wrath. In this most tempestuous ocean, tossed by the furious winds of almighty indignation, upon the raging billows of insupportable torment, they suffer a speedy and an eternal shipwreck. Dashed upon the rocks of ruin, or swallowed up in the gulf of despair, they are entirely lost, and not one broken piece of holiness or happiness remains, nor so much as a single plank of hope upon which they may expect, though after millions of ages, to escape to some land of rest. But,

.....“ The hopeless soul  
Bound to the bottom of the flaming pool,



Tho' loath, and ever loud blaspheming, owns  
 'Tis justly doom'd to pour eternal groans;  
 To talk to fiery tempests, and implore  
 The raging flame to give its fury o'er;  
 To writhe, to toss, to pant beneath its load,  
 And bear the weight of an offended God."

And now they have no sleepy opiates to make them forget for one moment their misery: no amusement to divert their attention from their intolerable pain, and no consolation left to lighten, in any degree, the dreadful weight of their sufferings!

5. In their most distressing situation here, some alleviating circumstances rendered their affliction tolerable.—Some remaining good in part relieved them under their greatest losses; some cordial, timely administered, supported them under their severest troubles, and some sympathizing friend, kindly interposing, took a share of their cares upon himself, and helped them to bear the burden of their wo. Or if these things all failed, and they were reduced to the very extremity of distress, yet even then *hope*, flattering hope, which in this world

" Springs eternal in the human breast,"

darting a ray of comfort through the gloom, prevented their case from becoming desperate. But *now* there is the reverse of all this. *All, all* is lost, entirely lost, and nothing of good remains! Every possible evil hath befallen them, and with every possible circumstance of aggravation! No condoling friend lightens their load of sorrow! No beam of hope promises any advantageous change! But on the contrary, tormenting fiends and malicious spirits add to their weight of sufferings by cruel upbraidings; and black despair, hovering over their desponding souls, flaps his raven wings, and foretells an eternity of wo! In those

" Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where joy,  
 Where peace can never come, hope never comes,  
 That comes to all: but torment without end  
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge fed,  
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd."

But farther, (if we have courage to venture further into these dreary territories of the prince of darkness,) the destruction spoken of in our text implies,

2dly, The entire perversion of all their *faculties*, so that they serve only to increase their torment, and render them most completely wretched. Let us consider them briefly and in order.

1. The *imagination*, freed from every clog wherewith its motions were once impeded, when it was encumbered by flesh and blood, being now rendered quick and active as a disembodied spirit, is perpetually traversing, with incredible speed and unwearied diligence, the gloomy regions of hell in quest of wo. And having collected together every consideration of horror, it clothes them all in the most hideous forms, and thereby keeps the poor, affrighted soul, in continual terror and dismay.—The *understanding*, cleared of all the mists of ignorance and fumes of prejudice, wherewith it was obscured in this world, and now discerning every thing in its true light, is ever unhappily busied in comparing the joys of heaven with the torments of hell, and contrasting the happiness they have lost, with the misery they have incurred. It remonstrates, in terms which wound and pierce their inmost souls, upon their *ingratitude, folly, and perverseness*, in rejecting a felicity so valuable in itself, so dearly bought, and so freely and repeatedly offered; while in contradiction to *reason, to duty, and interest*; against the clearest light and the greatest love; notwithstanding the most solemn warnings and earnest entreaties, the exhortations, prayers, tears, and blood of the Son of God himself, they *knowingly and wilfully* plunged into a depth of wo, from whence there is no redemption.

2. In this work of torment, the understanding receives no small assistance from the *memory*, now strengthened to an amazing degree. This faculty brings in review their whole life, and presents to the active mind an endless variety of circumstances, which only tend, like oil poured into the fire, to feed the flames of their misery, and make them burn with more unabating fury.—It reminds them, on the one hand, of the many and undeserved mercies of a kind Creator, a patient Preserver, and a gracious Redeemer, which might have warmed the coldest breast with fervent gratitude and love; and on the other, of the various and alarming judgments executed by the righteous governor of the world, for the terror of evil-doers, which might have broken in pieces the most rocky and adamant heart. But their breasts remained, after all, still cold as ice, and their hearts hard as a nether millstone. It brings to

their remembrance the superintending care of a kind and watchful *providence*, which perpetually and wisely ordered all for their good, removed their hindrances, afforded them helps, and put them in the most favourable circumstances for their restoration. But they perversely, by a diabolical skill in spiritual chymistry, extracted a bitter out of every sweet, turned their helps into hindrances, and their good into evil!

3. By the help of the memory they recollect the many, free, and gracious offers of reconciliation which were made them by the ambassadors of Christ, accompanied with repeated and pressing invitations, to accept those offers and faithful warnings of approaching misery, if they neglected them. They remember how all these were, time after time, attended by the influences of the Spirit, disposing their minds to consider and improve them. At times they were inclined to comply, and almost persuaded to be christians, especially when an alarming Providence cut off, by a sudden and unexpected stroke, some near relation or dear friend, or laid a heavy hand of affliction upon themselves. But alas! some hurry of idle business occupied their minds, some phantom of empty applause engaged their pursuit, some intoxicating draught of the cup of pleasure, unhappily taken, drowned their convictions, or some frothy company or vain amusement, diverted their attention from the one thing needful! And thus they have for ever lost that *exceeding great and eternal weight of glory*, which they had once so fair an opportunity of attaining, and sunk into an unfathomable depth of wo, out of which there is no deliverance!

4. In the meantime, *conscience* is not idle. Once indeed

“ She seem’d to sleep  
On rose and myrtle, lull’d with syren song :  
Once she seem’d nodding o’er her charge, to drop  
On headlong appetite the slacken’d rein,  
And give them up to license unrecall’d.”

But it was all deceit. Even then she registered all their thoughts, and words, and works, and kept a faithful and circumstantial account of their whole conduct. No temper of mind, no action of life escaped her observation; but

“ The sly informer noted every fault,  
And her dread diary with horror fill’d :

Unnotic'd mark'd each moment misapplied  
 On leaves more durable than those of brass :  
 Wrote their whole history, which now she reads  
 In every pale delinquent's private ear."

For being no longer bribed by sin, nor stupified by excess, conscience now tells them the truth, the whole truth, and that in accents most dreadfully severe, from which they can no longer turn away their ears.

5. They are now obliged to hearken, however reluctant, to the tormenting history which *conscience* minutely gives them, of the sabbaths they have broken, the ordinances they have profaned, the oaths they have sworn, the lies they have told, the acts of uncleanness, intemperance, fraud, and oppression, they have committed, the mercies they have abused, the judgments they have slighted. She gives them a particular detail of all the instances of their ingratitude and disobedience to him, who was at once their most indulgent parent and bountiful benefactor : and enlarges much upon their *hypocrisy* before an heart-searching God, their formality in the worship of him who is a Spirit, and their lukewarmness in the pursuit of immortal honour and eternal gain. In short, this long-neglected, and now implacably revengeful power, perpetually holds out to their view the glass of God's holy law, which confounds and torments them with a discovery of their filthiness and deformity. Look which way they will, their sins, the offspring of their folly, summoned by *conscience*, in all their number and aggravations, drest in the most frightful forms, and armed with the most dreadful instruments of torture, stare them in the face with looks of vengeance, and fly upon them with insatiable fury. Thus, like an infernal fiend, she lashes their souls with whips and scorpions, while as a worm she gnaws and consumes their inwards, or like an hungry vulture, preys upon and devours their undecaying vitals.

6. And if the *rational* faculties, the most noble of our nature, are thus busy in executing upon them the indignation and wrath of an offended God, for their depravation and abuse of those faculties, surely the inferior powers, which are but servants to the superior, will not be suffered to remain unemployed.—The *passions* have a considerable share in this work of vengeance assign-

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ed them, and that justly, for they bear a chief part in soliciting man to sin. Indeed some of the passions which imply happiness in their very nature, such as *esteem*, and *hope*, and *joy*, never visit these dreary regions, but take up their abode in purer climes, and under the influence of a milder sky. But all those which sin hath debauched and made pregnant with wo, are banished to those inhospitable realms, far from the dwellings of light and liberty, where they are continually employed in digging deep into mines of misery, and forming of hellish metal instruments of punishment, wherewith to torture damned spirits.

Thus those unhappy creatures feel insatiable *desires* after objects infinitely and eternally removed from them, while to objects ever present and before them, they have an unspeakable *hatred*, and an unconquerable *aversion*. A deluge of remediless *sorrow* perpetually overwhelms them on account of the torment they already suffer; but as if they suffered nothing in comparison of what was yet to come, they are ever terrified with the most dreadful *fear* of unknown waves of wo, which they see continually rising in tremendous mountains, one behind another, and ready to burst upon their hopeless souls with a fresh flood of affliction!

8. And, ah! what they suffer from the mortification of their *pride*, and the everlasting shame and contempt wherewith they are loaded! Proud as Lucifer, they deem themselves worthy of the highest dignity, when, behold, they are sunk to the lowest point of degradation, and are only noticed to be hissed and despised. Hence they fret, rave, and tear; they swell with resentment and rage towards God and one another. The rancour which boils in their breasts vents itself in revengeful looks, horrid imprecations, and impotent efforts of disappointed cruelty. *Discontent*, restless and impatient; *anger*, loud and boisterous; *envy*, pale and ghastly; *malice*, implacable and fierce; in short, all the passions (capable of misery) like so many dogs of hell, let loose and enraged, at the beck of the prince of darkness and his malicious crew, with infernal howling, and barking rage, surround, attack, and rend their wretched souls, crying out for help in vain, with piteous wailings and loud laments! Such is

“ Wo’s wide empire, where deep troubles toss,  
Loud sorrows howl, invenom’d passions bite;

Rav'nous calamities their vitals seize,  
And threat'ning fate wide opens to devour."

9. What hath hitherto been said, refers only to the misery arising from the abused and corrupted faculties of their *souls*; but I must not forget to mention, on this occasion, the sufferings peculiar to the *bodies*, wherewith the wicked will be punished at the morning of the resurrection. And here, to say nothing of that fiery lake, to the bottom of which they will be chained by despised mercy, converted into inexorable wrath, and which surrounds their whole body with its scorching flames, and insinuates itself "like water into their bowels, and like oil into their bones." All their *Senses*, which were formerly excitements to lust and inlets to sin, together with all their *Members* employed on earth as instruments of iniquity, are now, by the appointment of infinite justice, become inlets to misery, and instruments of punishment. Their *Eyes*, accustomed to behold scenes of pleasure and objects of delight, are now terrified with the sight of hideous forms and frightful shapes. Their *Ears*, wont to be entertained with wanton songs and melodious music, are now shocked with doleful groans, lamentable shrieks, and horrible howlings. Their *Nostrils*, formerly revived with fragrant odours and rich perfumes, are now offended with the intolerable stench of sulphur and rottenness; while their *Taste*, used to be regaled with the most generous wines and richest dainties, is now tormented with the nauseousness of brimstone and putrefaction. In the meantime, their *hands*, their *feet*, their *heads*, their *hearts*, their whole body, in short, with all its members, shares in the wo, and contributes to the punishment of these miserable wretches. Thus

"All those powers heaven gave them to supply  
Their soul with pleasure, and bring in their joy,  
Rise up in arms against them, join the foe,  
Sense, reason, memory, increase their wo;  
And there their voice, ordain'd on hymns to dwell,  
Corrupts to groans, and blows the flames of hell;  
There they must look with terror on their gain,  
And with existence, only measure pain."

10. Such is the destruction wherewith Christ, when he cometh, will recompense those who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

I mean, this is a faint *picture* of it. For as to their misery itself, so far have I been, while attempting to describe it, from dipping my pencil in too deep colours, that the whole creation affords none deep enough to represent a thousandth part of its greatness. For as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those who love him;" so the same may we affirm concerning the torments reserved for those who hate him. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive" these: our most enlarged conceptions fall far short of them. However, we see enough of them, (one would suppose) to awaken our fear, and arm our souls with watchful care to avoid them.

This is the end I have had in view, in discoursing on this disagreeable subject. I mean hereby, through the grace of God, to prevent your ever sharing these unknown sufferings, and proving, to your eternal sorrow, how vastly my description falls short of their reality. And that I may not miss my aim, I beg leave to address you a moment by way of application and improvement, before I conclude.

And, 1st, Let me entreat you to recollect what has been proved, and to remember, that while "you know not God, and obey not the gospel," you are perpetually liable to all the unknown and unfathomable horrors of this misery. Yes, this great gulf which Christ and his apostles have unveiled to your view, and advised you to cast a look towards, before you plunge headlong into it; this abyss of misery, beneath your very feet, as it were,

"Expands its jaws, how dreadful to survey!  
And roars outrageous for its destin'd prey."

Ah, my friends; be not so childish as to think the bare shutting your eyes against its dismal gloom, pierced with shafted lightning, and streaked with spiry flames, will make it cease to exist, prevent your falling into it, or render it in any degree the more tolerable. As well might you think to extinguish the sun by closing your eyes, or to avoid a cannon-ball by looking another way. You may indeed turn away your sight from this perdition, fix your attention on some more agreeable subject, and so avoid the present pain which such reflections might produce. But alas!

you will gain little by this; for to shun the consideration of this misery now, is the way to continue in sin, and suffer it eternally hereafter.

2. And wilt thou then shut thine eyes, and leap wilfully and obstinately into ruin? Ah, sinner, think what thou dost! And hast thou then counted the cost? Canst thou indeed bear this devouring fire which yet will not consume thee? Canst thou dwell with these everlasting burnings, for which thou wilt be the everlasting fuel, where

“ Thy torment must transcend  
The reach of time, despair a distant end,  
With dreadful growth shoot forward and arise  
Where thought can't follow, and bold fancy dies.”

Poor unhappy wretch! how infatuated must thou be!—If thy mind were not blinded by the god of this world, and thy very senses drenched in sensuality, and stupified by the opiates of sin, if thou hadst any power of discerning or feeling left, I would ask thee how thou couldst bear to be suddenly stript of all thy earthly possessions, totally deserted of all thy friends, arrested by merciless creditors, confined in a dark dungeon, loaded with heavy irons; and in this condition, starving with hunger and cold, and destitute of every necessary accommodation and attendance, to be visited with torturing pain or some loathsome disease? Sure thou hast love enough for thy money, thy credit, thy friends, thy liberty, thy health, and in fine, thy life, to see that all these calamities befalling thee at once, would be indeed intolerable, to *thee* (at least) who hast no interest in God and heaven. But surely thou dost not think that all these calamities put together, and ten thousand times more and greater, can give an adequate representation of that doleful place, which *infinite wisdom* hath contrived, *almighty power* prepared, and *inexorable justice* destined for the punishment of incorrigible transgressors?

Believe me, all the evils thou hast ever beheld with thine eyes, heard with thine ears, or conceived in thy heart, nay, all that thou couldst ever conceive, if thou wert to spend an eternity in doing nothing else, but devising forms of wo and changes of misery, if all collected together, and appointed to befall thy wretched self in one moment of time, would not furnish thee with an adequate idea of that future and everlasting ruin, in which (if thy speedy repentance prevent not) thou must, ere long, lift up thy ghastly eyes, begging



in vain for a drop of water to cool thy tongue, because thou wilt be tormented in that flame.—And then, Eternity! Eternity! ah, to spend a never-ending eternity in such anguish! To be “ages and ages, and succeeding still new ages,” in that lake of fire, burning with brimstone, and after millions of ages are past and gone, still to have the wretched consolation of knowing that thy misery is no nearer an end, but all, as it were, to begin again! Ah! who can bear even to think of this! The very thought of such wo is enough to make one’s blood run chill, and fill one’s soul with horror! It is enough to make one’s head giddy with fear, to look down that dark and fiery pit into which poor sinners are perpetually plunging, blinded and insensible, till the penetrating fire makes them *feel*, and the glaring flames of Tophet open their eyes to behold themselves undone for ever!

4. Ah! flee, sinner! flee from this wrath to come!—But stay, and first falling down on thy knees, solemnly praise God, that it is not yet too late. Thank him from thy inmost soul, that he has not yet cut thee down, and assigned thee thy portion in this place of torment! But oh! dare not, at the peril of thy soul, tempt his long-suffering any longer!—Do not persist to provoke that fierce and almighty wrath which thy sins have already kindled against thee, and which (had not the precious blood of Christ been poured upon the flame) would long, ere now, have utterly consumed thy unholy soul, and made thee a monument of vengeance to others! Do not, I say, persist to provoke an holy God, lest Christ should cease to interpose, and fiery indignation should, in an instant, blast all thy hopes, and devour thee as his adversary! Consider how many years he has already interceded for thy barren soul, “Let him alone this year also.” But alas! hitherto he has prevailed in vain for thy reprieve, for to this day thou hast borne no good fruit. Still, still thou art only a cumberer of the ground! And who knows whether he has not already put up the last prayer for thee, and commissioned me, by these terrors of the almighty, to dig for the last time about thy roots!—If thou bear fruit, it is well, but if not, if even this earthquake of God’s judgments do not shake thee; if after this Christ come seeking fruit on thee and find none, what remains, but that he say, “Let no fruit grow on thee from henceforth and for ever,” or, “Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?”

5. Therefore, delay no longer, but while thy glass of time is not yet run out; while the sun of divine love is not yet gone down upon thee; while the long-suffering of God the Father still waits to be gracious: while the compassionate friend of sinners still intercedes for thee; while the ever-blessed Spirit is not yet provoked to bid thee an eternal adieu, but still continues to strive with thee;—in short, while there is yet any hope concerning thee among the blessed inhabitants of heaven, that thou mayest, after all, be saved; or any fear concerning thee, among the fiends of hell, lest after all thou shouldst escape that place of torment; before the door of salvation is for ever shut against thee, before yawning Tophet has devoured, and closed its mouth upon thee.—Flee, sinner; flee; at the peril of thy soul, flee! But, whence and whither shalt thou flee?—Flee from thy *sins*, thy *lukewarmness*, thy *unbelief*; flee, to Calvary, to the cross, to Jesus, to the fountain opened in his side, to the blood and water which issue thence, “and arise, wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” Apply by faith in his blood, his merits, to thy guilty conscience; receive by faith the sanctifying graces of his Spirit. Embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life. Let thy conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ. Thus, believe and show thy faith by thy works, and as sure as he is the resurrection and the life, so sure, *though thou wert dead, yet shalt thou live, and living and believing in him, shalt not die eternally.*



# SERMON VIII.

ON

## THE WISDOM OF WINNING SOULS.

PREACHED AT THE CONFERENCE HELD AT LEEDS, JULY,  
1793. AND PUBLISHED AT THE DESIRE OF THE  
PREACHERS.

“ *He that winneth souls is wise.*” Prov. xi. 30.

1. **T**HIS is a book of *Proverbs*, or of *wise* and *weighty* sayings, many of which, although containing self-evident truths, and such as only need to be known that they may be approved, are nevertheless as *surprising* as they are *instructive* and *important*. Although some of them might have been in use among the more wise and civilized parts of mankind for many generations, even from the time that men began to multiply upon the face of the earth, yet it is evident that most of them were first spoken by Solomon. For God had given him “ Wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore: and his wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East, and all the wisdom of Egypt: insomuch that “ all the earth sought unto him to hear his wisdom; for his fame was in all nations.”\* Now, it seems, he expressed his wisdom chiefly in uttering Apophthegms or Proverbs: for, according to the sacred historian, he spake three thousand Proverbs. These, some have thought, were collected and committed to writing by his servants who attended him, and heard his wisdom. But those contained

\* 1 Kings iv. 29. and x. 24.

in this book, which are, I believe, not quite a thousand, and might probably be a selection from the rest, were undoubtedly written by Solomon himself, and that, at the motion and under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

2. Indeed they are worthy of him, the Spirit of *truth*, of *wisdom*, and of *grace*, as their author, and are all of the nature of the fountain from whence they flow ; nor can we easily drink of these pure and transparent streams, without being at once enlightened and refreshed. These Proverbs of Solomon contain the water of life, as well as other parts of the sacred volume; and with one peculiar advantage; we need not dig deep to arrive at it. Their sense is, in general, obvious to the meanest capacity, and that at the first sight, and yet is not the less useful and important for being so easily apprehended. Add to this, that they have a *commanding* influence over the mind and heart; and while they challenge the assent of the understanding, subdue the will, and win the affections. This perhaps may be intimated in the original term here translated *Proverbs*: For it is derived from a word that signifies *to rule*, or *have dominion*.

3. The world, indeed, as a pious and judicious writer observes, is governed by Proverbs, "As saith the Proverb of the ancients,"\* or, in the language of the vulgar. "As the old saying is," has much influence with most people. But there are Proverbs which tend to corrupt men's minds, and harden them in sin. For the devil, the world, and the flesh, have their proverbs. To guard us against the evil influence of these, let us consider and lay to heart these Proverbs of God, that are so salutary, and are intended as an antidote against the baleful effects of the other. For instance: Does Satan suggest that, "it is wise and commendable to give every man as good as he brings," and suffer no injury to pass unrevengeed? To defend our minds against the pernicious tendency of this hellish maxim, let us remember, "That he that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."† Does the flesh inculcate, "He is a wise man that does well to himself," that eats and drinks, and gratifies his appetites? Nay, let us rather believe, insomuch as "If we live after the flesh we shall die;" "that although this way seem-

\* Sam. xxxiv. 13.

† Prov. xvi. 32.

eth right unto a man, the end thereof is the way of death." Does the world preach, "Gain all you can: for he is a wise man that gains wealth?" As a preservative against this, let us be assured and lay it to heart, that, "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;" and that *he*, rather, "that winneth souls is wise."

4. By the *righteous* here, we are to understand those who are such, not in outward appearance only, but in reality; those to whom righteousness is *imputed*, in whom it is *implanted*, and by whom it is *practised*; in other words, those that are justified, regenerated, and rendered obedient to the holy will of God, by a faith working by love. These, by Isaiah, are termed, "Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified,"\* viz. by the fruit they bear. For "herein," said Jesus, "is my heavenly Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit." And their *graces* and *virtues*, with the effect thereof in promoting the honour of God and the good of mankind, are the fruit they bear; such as their faith, hope, and love; justice, mercy, charity; their knowledge, zeal, diligence; their example, instructions, reproofs, and prayers; their interest in heaven, and influence on earth. These are, as the fruit of the tree of life, precious and useful; being the means frequently, of preserving and rendering more useful even the present life; and, which is of much greater moment, of communicating or increasing *spiritual life*, and of bringing men to the enjoyment of *eternal life*.

5. Hence it appears, what great blessings good men are, in the places where divine Providence has cast their lot. They produce abundance of fruit, like that of the tree of life. Nay, they even *win souls*. For the words may be rendered, with equal propriety, *He that is wise winneth souls*. And, understood in this sense, the latter part of the sentence may be considered as explanatory of the former, or as an enlargement of its meaning. Thus, the righteous produce fruit, like that of the tree of life: for being *wise*, they *win souls*. They are trees of *knowledge*, as well as of *life*; not *forbidden*, but *commanded* knowledge; and by communicating their wisdom, they *win souls*, and make them *wise unto salvation*. However, I shall take the words in the sense of our translation, *He that winneth souls is wise*, because when thus understood, they contain a proposition not only of the strictest truth, but

\* Isa. lxiii. 3.

of the deepest importance; and a truth peculiarly worthy of our serious consideration at this time, when we are met together in solemn conference, to consult respecting the *ways* and *means* of winning souls, and of enlarging the kingdom of Christ, and with a view to encourage one another to undertake and prosecute this blessed work faithfully. I hope therefore for your very serious attention, while we consider,

I. What is implied in *winning souls*? and when a soul may be said to be *won*?

II. In *what way* souls may be won, or the *means* to be used in winning them?

III. How it appears that it is *wisdom* to win souls?

IV. *Who* are concerned in this declaration? *Whose* duty it is to win souls?

I. And first, consider we what is implied in winning souls, and when a soul may be said to be won?

1. This phrase, *to win souls*, does not occur, I think, again in scripture, and is capable of being understood in different senses. Some may consider the expression as meaning no more than to win the hearts and affections of others, so as to make them our true friends, sincerely attached to our interest. And it must be confessed, that there are cases in which to do this, is both lawful and commendable. If we ourselves be the real friends of God and mankind, and are employed in promoting the interest of the Redeemer in the world, it is not a blameable, but on the contrary, a virtuous and praiseworthy conduct, to use every prudent and lawful means of engaging the esteem and love of our fellow-creatures, that we may induce them to favour the cause in which we are embarked. In a sense somewhat similar to this, our Lord is to be understood when he commands us, to "make ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness;" that is, by a proper use of the *mammon* or *wealth*, generally employed in an unrighteous manner, "that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations," may appear for us, bear witness to our good works, and bid

us welcome into the heavenly regions. Now, if we may lawfully make ourselves friends, by our beneficence and liberality, with a view to our own happiness, we may much more do it, with a view to the glory of God. But nevertheless, inasmuch as the inspired penman, when he affirms, "He that winneth souls is wise," seems plainly to affirm an *absolute* and *universal truth*; and it is not absolutely and universally true, that he who wins the affections of mankind, and makes them his friends, is *wise*; therefore, we have reason to think this is not the meaning of Solomon in these words.

2. For the same reason, by *winning souls* here, cannot be meant the inducing people to embrace our *opinions*, whether on *religious*, *political*, or any other subjects. It is true, if our opinions be *scriptural*, especially respecting the important matters of religion, we do those no small favour whom we persuade to embrace them. Yet still, as we have reason to believe there are few persons but what are entangled in some errors, and those perhaps of no small moment, it can never be affirmed, absolutely and universally, that he who winneth souls in this sense, that brings them over to his way of thinking, is wise. For if his sentiments be erroneous, and he induce others to embrace them, he may possibly be the cause of their everlasting damnation. For being entangled in error, they may also be led into sin, (all error having, more or less, a destructive tendency,) and of consequence into hell, and in the end their blood may be required at the hands of him who first misled them. So that before we use means to instil our opinions into others, we ought to be well assured that they have the sanction of reason and truth, lest we should be ignorantly administering *poison* instead of wholesome *food*, and murdering those souls we meant to feed. In which case, as our plea of ignorance will be but a small recompense, and a poor support and consolation amidst their everlasting burnings, to those whom we have deprived of eternal life, and plunged into eternal death; so neither will it be allowed before God as a sufficient excuse for our guilt.

3. It will hardly be necessary, after what has just been advanced, to observe, that by winning souls, cannot be meant the bringing people over to the party with which we may happen to be connected. This, it will easily be discerned, may prove a blessing to them or a curse, according as the members of such a party are or are not the true followers of Christ. If they be such, to draw per-



sons into Society and communion with them, may be the mean of saving their souls; for, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." They that "fear the Lord," and are united together in Christian fellowship, "speak often one to another," by way of instruction, reproof, or consolation, as they appear severally to stand in need: yea, they "exhort one another daily," and the consequence generally is, not only that "the Lord hearkens and hears; and a book of remembrance is written," but, by this they prevent *an evil heart of unbelief* from springing up in themselves and others, and preserve one another from being "hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." On the contrary, as we are assured that "a companion of fools shall be destroyed," if we be connected with *fools*, that is, *sinner*s, continuing in sin, and not the real children of God, those whom we draw over to such a party, we draw to their ruin and destruction. So that in this case too, as well as in those before mentioned, it concerns us to consider well what we do. Let us take care that we be connected with the people of God, with those that are wise, holy, and virtuous; and then, the more we induce to enter into fellowship with us, the better. For by having fellowship with the disciples, they will be introduced into fellowship with their Master; and from union with those that are sanctified, they will aspire to an union with him that *sanctifieth*. And their union and communion with him on earth, will infallibly prepare them for, while it manifests their title to, everlasting fellowship with him in heaven.

4. It appears, therefore, that it is a matter of no small moment to *win souls*, even in this sense; to bring them to be united with the children of God. This, however, is not what is primarily meant in our Text. It is not the drawing souls into union with the people of God, but into fellowship with God himself, that is here intended. In other words, it is the "turning of them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith in Christ Jesus." By nature, men are in darkness, and under the dominion of the Prince of darkness. They are the servants, the children, and in some sense, the property of Satan, who is the "god of this world, and worketh with energy in the children of disobedience." "His servants ye are," said St. Paul, "whom ye obey." "Ye are of your father the devil,"

said Jesus, to the unconverted Jews, "for his works ye do." Jews and Gentiles, yea, all mankind, while in an unrenewed state, are, according to the Scriptures, "dead in trespasses and sins, and children of wrath;" that is, under condemnation, and exposed to the wrath of God. Now to *win* them is to bring them into the favour and family of God, that being justified by his grace, born of his Spirit, and made his children, they may be constituted *heirs according to the hope of eternal life*, glorifying him in their bodies and spirits here, and prepared to be glorified with him hereafter.

5. But it will be necessary more particularly to describe those that are thus won. And, 1st, They are *enlightened* by the Spirit as well as Word of God, and made truly acquainted with *themselves*. They are convinced of their sinfulness and guilt, their depravity, weakness, and misery; in consequence of which they experience that humiliation and sorrow for, and that hatred to sin, which constitute that "Repentance which is unto life, and which need not to be repented of." This never fails to be followed with *fruits worthy of repentance*. They "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," in all respects, as they have ability and opportunity. On the one hand they are "blameless and harmless, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation;" and on the other, by their good works, they "shine as lights in the world."

A 2nd particular, implied in the character of such souls as are won, is, they are *enlightened with the saving knowledge of Christ*. He is revealed to them as to his person and offices, his humiliation and exaltation, his grace and glory, in such a manner, that renouncing all dependence on their own righteousness and strength, they trust only on his merit and Spirit, for pardon, holiness, and eternal life. Hereby they obtain an interest in him, and union with him, as their Prophet, Priest, and King, their Redeemer, Saviour, Head, and Husband; made of God unto them, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

In consequence of this, 3dly, as St. Peter testifies, they find him precious, they *sincerely and fervently love him*. Indeed, if they did not, they would want one very important branch of the character of such souls as are won. For, as *grace* and *peace* are the property of all those that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity,\* so "if any

\* Eph. vi. 24.

man love him not, he is anathema ;” that is, under a curse: *Maranatha*, adds the Apostle, a Syriac expression, which means, *The Lord cometh*, viz. to execute that curse, and take vengeance upon him. And it is to be diligently observed, that this love is always productive of the fruits ascribed to it in the word of God, “He that hath my commandments,” saith Jesus, “and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” They, therefore, that love him, and are truly gained over from Belial to Christ, live to him. For “The love of Christ constraineth them” so to do. “None of them liveth to himself, and none of them dieth to himself; but whether they live, they live unto the Lord, or whether they die, they die unto the Lord: living or dying, therefore, they are the Lord’s.”

Hence it is, that, 4thly, as St. Paul testifies, they are *new creatures*. *Old things are passed away, and all things are become new*. For it is so natural for a man to live to himself, to make his own will his law, and his own honour, or interest, or pleasure, his end, in all his words and works, that if any man walk by another rule, viz. the divine will, and direct his actions to another end, viz. the glory of God, he must be born again, or renewed in the spirit of his mind. This, therefore, is an essential branch of the character of a soul that is won. He is “washed in the laver of regeneration, and renewed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” He has “put off the old man, and put on the new, and is created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” And this divine change, begun in his soul, must be increased and perfected. God having “predestinated him to be conformed to the image of his Son,” he must “press to this mark, for the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus; forgetting the things that are behind, and aspiring after the things that are before.” It must be his ruling desire, and principal endeavour, so to follow Christ, that he may have in him the whole mind that was in Christ, and walk as he walked; glorifying God by a holy, unblameable, edifying conduct and conversation; and enduring with resignation and patience towards God, and meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering towards mankind, all the trials and troubles, injuries and affronts, which in the course of Providence he may meet with.

II. I proceed now to consider, 2dly, in what way souls may be won?

1. By the metaphorical expression here used, in the original, the wise man seems to allude to the *catching of birds*, or *fish*, or the *taking of a city* strongly fortified. And, perhaps, without incurring the danger of being deemed very fanciful, I might make use of these comparisons to illustrate my subject. I might observe, that the minds of men while in their natural state, like birds, are light, inconstant and trifling, winged indeed, furnished with affections, that they may ascend towards heaven, but loading those affections with thick clay, with the love of sin and vanity, of money, honour, pleasure; with worldly desires and cares, and sinking down to earth, in consequence of which, they are entangled in the mud and filth of it, and "caught alive in the snares of the devil, and led captive by him at his will."

2. Now in order that "God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may recover themselves out of Satan's snare," they must, 1st, be *alarmed* with faithful representations of the danger they are in while unconverted. They must be given to know that, while in a fallen state, a state of ignorance and sin, of guilt, depravity, and weakness, they are the *subjects*, the *servants*, nay, and the *children* of Satan; joint-heirs with him of future wrath; to which wrath it must be proved to them, they are continually exposed, being continually on the verge of death and eternity. When we have reason to believe they are awakened to a due sense of their danger, and brought to be seriously concerned about eternal things, they must, 2dly, be *allured*, by unfolding the precious promises of God, made to them, if in true repentance and faith they return unto him. A *free and full pardon* for all their past sins, the *especial favour and love* of God, *adoption* into his family, and *regeneration* by his grace, the in-dwelling of his sanctifying *Spirit*, and *communion* with him from day to day, together with his peculiar *care and protection*, must be set before them, and offered to them, "without money and without price." These privileges they must be assured may be enjoyed on earth, while eternal life, felicity, and glory, are laid up for them after death, in the heavenly, everlasting kingdom of their God and Father.

3. Again. That they may make more haste to embrace these blessings, they must, 3dly, be *drawn* with the cords of love, the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the bands of a man, viz. solid

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reason and argument. "God so loved the world," must be our language, "that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Herein," we must cry, "is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and made his only-begotten Son a propitiation for our sins." "For when we were under condemnation, and exposed to wrath, and without strength to help ourselves, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "Now scarcely for a righteous man," we must argue, "will one die: although peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." In this way did the apostles address themselves to the guilty, doubtful, and desponding children of men. Thus did they draw them unto the Lord Jesus, and bring them to experience the constraining power of love divine. Thus did Christ himself draw mankind unto himself. Being "lifted up" upon the cross for lost sinners, being "wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities, and bearing in his own body on the tree, the chastisement of their peace," he led them to reflect on their own sinfulness and guilt, and thus to judge that "if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." And in this we must imitate our Lord and his apostles. We must direct sinners to "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" and to "look upon him whom they have pierced," that they may mourn for those sins which were the causes of his sufferings, and vow to crucify those lusts, which crucified the Son of God. In the meantime, like him, his prophets and apostles, we must reason with them concerning the nature, excellency, and necessity of true religion, and demonstrate how little they will be "profited, if they should gain, even the whole world, and lose their own souls;" and show what a poor recompense any temporal acquisitions, however valued, and coveted, will be for the loss of heavenly riches; and what a small consolation the recollection of past temporal pleasures will be to them, while suffering the tortures of eternal pains.

4. If after all they linger, they must, 4thly, be *driven* with the threatenings of the word of God as with a drawn sword. The

fiery law of the Most High must be disclosed, flashing conviction into the guilty breast, and thundering forth its curses from Sinai, amidst *blackness, and darkness, and tempest*, upon the unholy and profane. Its *precepts* must be unfolded in all their spirituality, extent, and obligation; and its *threatenings* denounced in all their miseries and woes, against every violator of it. "Cursed," must we testify, "is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the moral law to do them." And lest they should suppose, that the gospel is less holy than the law, makes more allowance for sin, and shows more mercy to impenitent sinners, going on in their trespasses,—its more dreadful threatenings must also be declared, in all their awful and tremendous terrors. "He that believeth not," we must bear witness, "shall be damned;" "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." "For this," we must testify, "is the condemnation," the reason of the just condemnation of those that perish, "that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." We must exhort them, therefore, "to give the more earnest heed to the things which they have heard, lest at any time they should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels," (*viz.* the law delivered on Sinai, by their ministry) was steadfast, and every transgression and act of disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall they escape," we must demand, "who neglect so great salvation," as is offered in the gospel? a salvation "which begun to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost?" "He that despised the law of Moses," we must remind them, "died without mercy, under two or three witnesses;" and we must leave them to judge, "of how much sorer punishment," it is certain, "they shall be thought worthy, who trample under foot the Son of God, count the blood of the covenant a common thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace." "See then," we must urge, "that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not that turned away from him that spake on earth, much less shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice," we must proceed, "then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake, not the earth only, but heaven also." This

time of terrible shaking, when Jehovah will arise in all his wrath, to "shake terribly the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land, to shake all nations;" and when he who ought to be "the desire of nations shall come, the second time without sin; shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:"—this awful day of final judgment, "when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all its works, shall be burnt up," must be displayed in all its terrors; and "Who among you," we must ask, "can bear this devouring fire? Who among you can dwell with these everlasting burnings?"

5. These awful discoveries are intended to drive men to Christ, "the hope set before them," that they may take sanctuary in him, as the man-slayer did in the city of refuge, when pursued by the avenger of blood. "But, if we find that instead of having this effect, they rather drive them from him, and that, viewing him as a *Lawgiver* and *Judge*, rather than as a *Redeemer* and *Saviour*; they are terrified under a sense of their sinfulness and guilt, and are afraid to approach him; we must endeavour to encourage them to "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." We must set before them discoveries of his boundless mercy and love, and of his infinite compassion for their manifold infirmities, and must give them assurances of a welcome reception, and of "grace to help in time of need." And we must exhort them, in dependence on this grace, to "strive to enter in at the strait gate: to work out their salvation with fear and trembling; and to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure."

6. That they may find no possible way of escaping, we must endeavour to close them in on all sides. The preachers of the gospel, we must remember, are "fishers of men," and the gospel they preach, is like "a net cast into the sea." This net, formed of the various doctrines, precepts, promises, threatenings, and exhortations of the word of God, we must make strong, by arguments drawn from all quarters, from *nature*, *providence*, and *grace*; from things *visible* and *invisible*; *temporal* and *eternal*; and must unfold and spread it over the souls of men. And then, by applying the word which we have explained, must, as it were, "close the net upon them," that they may indeed be *caught*, so as not to *escape*; and

may be drawn out of the sea of this world, before it becomes a lake of fire burning with brimstone, to the land of life and immortality.

7. To use one metaphor more, which also seems manifestly to be alluded to in the text: Souls must be won as a *city, tower, or strong-hold*, possessed and garrisoned, is won, when it is taken from the enemy. Satan has many *strong-holds*, in many particular *families*, or *individuals*, whom, as having peculiar influence, through their *learning, wealth, or authority*, he labours hard to fortify with unbelief and sin, and to possess and garrison by a diabolical agency, that, through them, he may more easily subdue and retain others in his power. Now even these *forts, and towers, and citadels* of the Prince of darkness, may be taken. "Compel them to come in," says Jesus: "But how? By fire and fagot? By persecution? No: but by reason and scripture, by the Word and Spirit of God, by faith and prayer, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down the strong-holds of Satan, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

8. Upon the whole, those that would win souls must first be deeply concerned to win them, from a sense of their immense value; and this concern must appear in the whole of their deportment, in all their tempers, words, and works. This will induce them, on the one hand, to use their utmost efforts to accomplish an end they have so much at heart; and on the other, carefully to shun and guard against whatever would obstruct the accomplishment of it. Secondly, They must show that they are *won themselves*, and must give full proof of their conversion to God, and regeneration through his grace, by their deadness to sin, their heavenly dispositions of mind, and their watchfulness and circumspect walking. They must be examples to mankind, in all holiness and righteousness, from day to day. They must, thirdly, use the means which God hath appointed, in order to this end, and in particular, reproof, exhortation, and doctrine. And as "Servants of the Lord, they must not strive," must not contend, but must "be gentle towards all men, patient, and apt to teach, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; that they may be saved." I shall only add here, that an-



other and most important mean to be used is that of *prayer, fervent, constant, persevering, and faithful prayer*. For as to *winning souls, of ourselves we can do nothing*. "Nor by wisdom, nor by might," is this great work accomplished, "but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "The help that is done upon earth he doeth it himself;" and he, accordingly, must be sought unto in earnest prayer, that he may do it.

III. We come now to the third general head of discourse: The wisdom of *winning souls*.

1st. They who win souls are *wise*, because they act according to the will of the infinitely wise God, and co-operate with him in the salvation of mankind. "It is not the will of your heavenly Father," said Jesus, the true and faithful interpreter of his Father's will, "that one of these little ones should perish." "He is not willing," said Peter, "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "He willeth all men to be saved," testifies St. Paul, "and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Hence it was, that "he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" yea, "he sent his Son into the world; not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The salvation of souls, therefore, is a matter which God has infinitely at heart, and to accomplish which, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "work hitherto." And he that is employed in winning souls, is, in this particular, a "worker together with God;" which to be, as it is, an high honour, so it is also a great privilege; and he that makes choice of it, manifests great wisdom, even a wisdom resembling the wisdom of God, of which, indeed, it is the blessed fruit and effect.

Again, 2dly, *He that winneth souls is wise*, because he, in a peculiar manner, glorifies God. To glorify God, is to *know* and *acknowledge* the divine glories, or perfections, and to be suitably influenced by them, as to our tempers, words, and works. Now as none will attempt to win souls who do not thus glorify God themselves, so they bring the souls they win to glorify him too. In other words, being themselves "wise unto salvation," they are instrumental in making others so. Fulfilling themselves the divine will, and complying with their indispensable duty; they prevail on

others to do the same. Embracing themselves the inestimable privileges and blessings of the gospel, they persuade others to embrace them likewise. All which discovers great wisdom; nor can any one doubt whether it be wise to win souls, unless he at the same time, doubt whether it be wise to glorify God, and bring others to glorify him; which, in effect, would be to doubt whether *angels* were wiser than *devils*. "The fear of the Lord," says the inspired penman, "that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding;" and of consequence, to bring others to fear him, and to depart from evil, is a still higher degree of wisdom and understanding.

3. That they who win souls are wise, appears further in this: They recover to the great Creator his lost creatures, and to the heavenly Father his lost children. Before souls are *won*, they are *lost*, in many respects;—lost to *God*, whom they do not *serve* and *glorify*;—to their *fellow-creatures*, whom they do not *edify*; and to *themselves*, not being either *holy* or *happy*. But when they are won, they are *found*;—found of *God*, whom they now glorify, answering the end of their creation and preservation;—found of their fellow-creatures, to whom they are now truly useful, and that in matters temporal as well as spiritual;—and found of themselves, being in *Christ new-creatures*, and truly happy in communion with *God*. Now, if it be a *good*, and therefore a *wise* action, to bring back straying sheep or cattle, lost upon the wild mountains, to their rightful owner, and an action yet better and wiser to recover to a kind and indulgent father, his prodigal and lost children; who can describe the wisdom of him that brings back to the great Creator and Parent of the universe, his rational and immortal offspring, that had at once dishonoured him, and rendered themselves most wretched by wandering from him?

4. A further proof of the great wisdom of winning souls is found in this; when souls are won, the *Preserver* and *Benefactor* of men, in whom they *live*, *move*, and *have their being*, and who spares them, and supplies their wants from day to day, that they may turn and live to him, sees the end of his patience and long-suffering towards them at length answered, and receives due praise for his many and undeserved benefits. Now if it be an act of kindness to a neighbour, and therefore of *wisdom*, to bring his disobedient servant, whom he had long fed and clothed, and whose wants he

had supplied, to a sense of his duty to his master, and to induce him to perform the service due to him, to whom he is engaged, and by whom he has been supported; it is, surely, an instance of abundantly greater wisdom, to engage the rational creatures of God to become faithful servants of their divine Master.

5. The wisdom of winning souls will appear in a yet more striking light, if we consider that the souls that are won, are not only *creatures* of God, made, and preserved, and provided for by him, but also his *purchase*, bought with a price of immense value; “redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God.” To estimate, therefore, the wisdom of winning them, is to estimate the value of the blood shed for their redemption. Now this, it is well known, is of infinite worth, as being the blood of a person of infinite dignity. Unspeakable, therefore, is the wisdom of winning souls, whereby the Redeemer is put in possession of the purchase of his blood, and sees the fruit of the travail of his soul, and of his extreme sufferings.

6. Again: As the souls and bodies of men are the purchase of the blood of Christ, so are they designed to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, being made for this end. “Know ye not,” says St. Paul to the believers at Corinth, “that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” And again, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” And yet again, “Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will live in them, and walk in them.” But let it be observed, this is spoken only of *real christians*, of souls truly *won*. They, and only they are, strictly speaking, the temple of God, and have the Spirit of God dwelling in them. As to all others, although *made*, *preserved*, and *redeemed*, to be God’s temples, and a habitation of the Holy One, by his Spirit, yet they are not so in reality: they are rather temples *left desolate*, and buildings in *ruins*. But as soon as they are *won*, they are rebuilt, adorned, and inhabited by the God of glory. He, therefore, that wins souls is wise; for he is an instrument in the hands of God, of rebuilding and beautifying these spiritual temples, and of preparing the way of the King of Glory to the throne on which he most desires to sit and reign, the broken and contrite heart of the humble penitent.

7. As a still further proof of the wisdom of winning souls, let it be observed, that when souls are won, rational and immortal creatures, perishing in ignorance and sin, in depravity, weakness, and misery, are saved. They escape their present impurity and guilt, and attain holiness and happiness; and persevering in the ways of God, they obtain everlasting felicity of soul and body. How great then is the wisdom of winning souls! Were it only the curious machine of man's *body*, so fearfully and wonderfully made, that was rescued from death and corruption, it would be a great acquisition. How much greater and more important a salvation is that of a rational and immortal soul, capable of such high degrees of wisdom, holiness, and happiness, through the countless ages of eternity! To save a perishable jewel, of comparatively small value, from the filth of a dunghill, and place it in the crown of a monarch; and much more, to restore a darling child from a noisome and dangerous disorder to ease and health, would be deemed a wise and worthy action, although that ease and health, like all things here below, were but to last for a short season. But to snatch such a child from the jaws of a lion, the paws of a bear, or from a raging fire, although with great danger to one's self, would be judged an act of still greater wisdom and importance; and yet that lion, that bear, or that fire, would but have devoured, in momentary pain, the infant's body. Its soul would have escaped, through the rage of the flames, or the teeth of the ravenous beast, to rest and happiness. What then shall we think of the salvation of the *whole man*, body and soul, from "the vengeance of eternal fire;"—from "the worm that dieth not, and the flames that shall not be quenched;" from the indignation and wrath of the incensed Deity, and the tribulation and anguish consequent thereupon? Who can describe, or even conceive the wisdom of this? Who can form any adequate idea of the importance of such an action?

8. Indeed, when souls are won; nay, when *one lost sinner* is brought to God, the gain is so great, that joy is given even to the angels of God. "There is joy," said Jesus, "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." How much more over many, over hundreds, thousands, and myriads! How important then, must those divinely illuminated and inconceivably wise intelligences know the salvation of souls to be! And how wise must they judge him, who chooses, in preference to every other

calling, to be employed in saving souls, and feels no care equal to that of being found faithful and successful in his high and holy calling! Surely those *morning stars*, the first-born sons of JEHOVAH, who sang his praises together at the birth of nature, and shouted for joy at the first appearance of a world which was to be the dwelling-place of immortal minds, while clothed with clay:—Surely, those wise and intelligent inhabitants of the heavenly regions, who have viewed with continued attention, the various and stupendous works of their mighty Maker, works of *providence* and *grace*, as well as of *creation*, for six thousand years, would not be moved with a light matter, nor find their large and enlightened spirits suddenly swell and overflow with joy at the sight of a trivial event! Surely, no facts, but such as are of the greatest magnitude, can have any influence on their comprehensive and exalted minds! And yet, behold, these eldest and most experienced sons of the everlasting Jehovah, bursting forth in ecstatic joy and praise, at the conversion of one single sinner! Of what great worth, then, are immortal souls, in the judgment of those best capable of judging; and how wise is the man who considers the saving of them as the most important business he can be employed in on earth?

9. Permit me to mention two or three considerations more on this head. Souls are rarely, if ever won, but much ignorance, sin, and misery, is prevented, even in others, especially among the relations, friends, and neighbours, or acquaintances of the persons thus brought to God; and if they be not converted, they are at least civilized. And this is an acquisition of no small moment. But the matter rarely stops here. The souls won will be instrumental in winning others; and these again will gain others; and who can say where the progress of this good work will end? Nay, it will never end, at least while the world subsists! It will continue and increase till time shall be no more: and the effects of it will remain to all eternity! For, “the kingdom of God is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened.” And again; “The kingdom of God is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which, indeed, is a small seed, but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

10. Now all this will redound to our benefit. Hereby, first, our joy and happiness must be increased in the great day of the Lord. To meet so many souls in glory would afford unspeakable pleasure, even if others had been the instruments of bringing them to God; how much more to know and be assured that God had blessed our endeavours for the effecting that great and glorious work, and that we were the spiritual Fathers of that numerous progeny begotten by the gospel. Secondly, we shall certainly meet with returns of gratitude, love, and kindness, from the souls thus *won*, in a way we at present know nothing of; and perhaps, too, shall receive benefits from them, of a nature of which we can now form no conception. Undoubtedly they will consider themselves as laid under *infinite* and *everlasting* obligations to us for having, under God, rescued them from boundless and eternal torments. They will therefore be our everlasting friends, and in every way in their power, will show us everlasting kindness. Add to this, thirdly, that we shall receive, from the Lord, positive rewards of glory and happiness, according to the number of souls we have won, or rather according to the zeal we have manifested, and the pains we have taken, in endeavouring to win them. For "the Lord is not unfaithful to forget our work and labour of love which we show towards his name," but "every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." And then, fourthly, the gratitude and love which we shall find overflowing our souls towards God, for using us as instruments in his hands, of such great good to our fellow-creatures, will be an everlasting spring of holiness and happiness to us. So that, in every point of view, whether we consider ourselves or others, the glory of God, the good of mankind, or our own advantage, it appears evident to a demonstration, that "he that winneth souls is wise."

11. And, if so, then what shall we say of him that *destroyeth* souls! that so far from gaining them to God, by his conversation or behaviour, drives them from him? May we not say that he is *foolish*? Certainly we may; and his folly is such as no words can possibly describe. He co-operates with Satan, the most *subtle*, indeed, but at the same time the most *foolish* being in the universe of creatures. Instead of glorifying God, as was his *duty* and *interest*, and therefore his *wisdom*, he dishonours him in a very high degree. In proportion to the number of souls he destroys,

he robs the Creator of his rational creatures, and the Parent of the universe of his immortal offspring: Yea, and the Son of God of the purchase of his most precious blood. He deprives the Lord and Master of men and angels, who is also the continual Preserver, and bountiful Benefactor of the human race, of the gratitude and love, of the obedience and service, so justly due to him from those he daily preserves, and whose wants he amply supplies. And he prevents the Holy Spirit of God from entering into, or banishes him out of his own temples: Nay, he destroys the temples themselves, and lays the sanctuaries of Jehovah, the habitations of his holiness, level with the ground, making the sacred houses of God heaps of ruins.

12. Further. He destroys the immortal souls of men, and throws the rational offspring of the Deity into the jaws of the infernal lion, and into the raging flames of everlasting fire. He, therefore, causes grief to angels of light, and all the benevolent inhabitants of heaven, while he gratifies and gives hellish pleasure to Satan, and his cursed associates in rebellion. For, besides that he prevents the salvation of such as would have been saved, had not he thrown obstructions in their way, he increases the sin and wickedness of such as were, and would still have remained the servants of the devil. And all this will redound to his own loss, his dishonour and misery, in the great day of God. When he shall be compelled to entertain a just and comprehensive view of the greatness of his guilt, in being the cause of the everlasting destruction of so many souls, the blood of which, (as the scripture speaks) will be required at his hands; he will be filled with inexpressible confusion, amazement, and terror. And then the souls he has undone, and rendered eternally miserable, will bear towards him everlasting hatred, will pour eternal curses upon his head, and exert all their powers to add to his misery. Like infernal fiends, they will employ an endless eternity in tormenting one to whom, under Satan, they owe their own torments. And, through the wise permission of divine justice, they will, no doubt, have it in their power to take an *ample vengeance* for the everlasting loss which they have sustained, and the endless torments into which they are plunged. Add to this, that God himself will not fail to render positive punishment unto such, according to their deeds; even "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," as a recompense for the evil

they have done, in drawing so many of his rational and immortal creatures into final ruin and destruction. But I forbear to proceed. I hope it is not necessary I should add any more. If we have but a proper idea of the wisdom of *winning* souls, we cannot be insensible of the folly of *destroying* them. May the wisdom of the former, and the folly of the latter, appear to our minds in a more striking and affecting light daily; and may our whole conduct be duly and continually influenced thereby!

IV. But **WHOM** does this subject concern? **WHOSE** office and duty is it to win souls?

1. In answer to this inquiry, let it be observed, this subject concerns some persons in an especial manner: as, first, *ministers* of the gospel. It is their peculiar duty to *win souls*. To *this work* they are *called* of God and man. To *this* they are *dedicated* and *set apart*, in the presence of God and his people. *This* they have voluntarily undertaken, and promised to perform, to the utmost of their power. For *this* they have, if not a plentiful income, or a handsome salary, at least a *maintenance*, and the supply of their daily wants. And for *this*, lastly, they have peculiar advantages, being happily excused from worldly cares and labours, and at liberty to devote their whole time to it. *They*, therefore, are *inexcusable*, if they do not *win souls*; at least, if they do not *labour* to win them, employing for this purpose their time and talents. from day to day, with zeal, fidelity, and diligence, being instant in season and out of season; depending, however, for success, not on their own endeavours, but wholly on the presence and grace of him who hath said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

2. *Parents* are peculiarly concerned here. They, under God, have given *being* to their children, and are, of course, in an especial manner, entrusted with the care of them; and they are under many and great obligations to do all in their power to *win their souls*. Indeed, how, under a conviction of the truth of christianity, they can be easy without doing this, is hard to say. To be persuaded there is a future and everlasting state of happiness and misery, and to see our own children, the offspring of our bodies, in the highway to miss of that happiness, and drop into that misery, and not endeavour to stop them, is surely an argument of a thoughtless or unfeeling heart! What sort of a father is he, that



would not venture his life to rescue his children from devouring fire, or from the teeth of a raging wild beast? What then shall we think of him, who stands by, and looks quietly on, while the grand adversary of men, as a roaring lion, swallows them up quick, and while Tophet opens its mouth and takes them in, transmitting both body and soul to everlasting burnings! If he be worse than an infidel, that does not endeavour to provide for his own household, in temporal matters, and use every lawful means to procure food and clothing for those dependent upon him, what is he that does not study to make provision for the *spiritual* and *everlasting* welfare of his own offspring; but, after having brought them into existence, suffers them to perish, and be eternally tormented in the flames of hell, without one drop of water to cool their tongues? Surely the name of a savage brute is too good for such a monster of cruelty!

3. Not only *ministers* and *parents*, but *masters* are also especially concerned here. Their servants, whether apprentices, journeymen, hired servants, or even day-labourers, while employed in their service, are entrusted to their care; and God, and reason, require that they should attend to the welfare of their servants' souls, as well as pay them their wages, and provide for the maintenance of their bodies. This will more especially appear to be their duty, if it be considered, that while servants perform for their masters the low and laborious offices of life, they are prevented from spending much time in reading, hearing, and other means of instruction; and that their masters, in the meantime, are left more at liberty to pursue the nobler end of human life, and treasure up divine knowledge and grace, with which to enrich themselves and their families. Add to this, that being in general elder, and more experienced as well as more knowing, than their apprentices and servants, and being their superiors, they have authority over them, and great advantages, many ways, for communicating instruction to them; and for these advantages they will undoubtedly be made to give an account.

4. Next to *parents* and *masters*, I might mention *magistrates*, who are continually termed by the most ancient writers, profane as well as sacred, the *pastors* or *shepherds* of their people; a most just and significant appellation, which implies, that it is their office to provide for and superintend the welfare of their subjects. But as it is not likely that my discourse should reach the ears of many

of these, and as it would be of no service to us to be made acquainted with the duty of our superiors, while we are ignorant of our own; I proceed to say, that this subject concerns us *all*. For it is the duty of *all men* to *win souls*; or, at least, to use their utmost endeavours to win them. And accordingly, as has been observed, the words of our text are with equal propriety rendered, *He that is wise winneth souls*. For, it must be considered, that it is not only a point of wisdom to win souls; but he who is *wise*, that is, in the language of scripture, who is *righteous*, will win them. His spirit and conduct, his dispositions and actions, bear witness to the truth, and at once manifest to others what christianity is, and invite them to become christians. Add to this, that as he has ability and opportunity, he will not fail to drop a word for God, will speak to others, in praise of that Saviour he so sincerely and dearly loves, and will recommend to them that pure and undefiled religion, which he finds to be such a source of consolation to his own soul. He will reprove sin, exhort to obedience, communicate information to the ignorant, respecting the *great truths, privileges, and duties* of the gospel; and will *tell* such as *fear God*, for their encouragement, "what God hath done for his soul." His discourse will be serious, instructive, and edifying, and will continually minister grace to the hearers; tending both to bring lost sinners to God, and to preserve those that are already brought to him. So that we are none of us unconcerned in this matter. We must all remember, that it is an essential part of the character of a truly wise or righteous person, man or woman, to *win souls*; and that no one is, perhaps, truly wise or righteous, before God, who is not more or less successful in this way.

5. Nay, this is not all. It is not only certain that he, who having time and opportunity for it, does not win souls, is not *truly wise or righteous*, but according to our Lord, he that does not *win* them, will *destroy* them. For "he that is not for me," said that true and faithful Witness, "is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." And that this is, and must be the case, is evident to a demonstration, to any considerate mind. For, as he who is truly wise and righteous will, by his conversation and behaviour, "shine as a light in the world," and others, "seeing his good works," will imitate the same, and "glorify their heavenly Father;" So he that is of a contrary spirit

and conduct, will, in a similar way, propagate his own likeness, and spread profaneness and immorality, as far as his influence can reach : like a person that has the plague, he will, more or less, infect all that are about him, and make them unholy and unrighteous as he is. So that there is no standing neuter in this affair. If we will not be employed for *Christ*,—*Satan* will employ us. If we will not work in *Christ's* vineyard, and plant the trees of righteousness, or water what others have planted, we shall be occupied in the barren and dry heaths of the wilderness, in possession of the *god of this world*, and shall contribute to the growth of thorns and briars, those *roots of bitterness*, which are so ready to spring up and *trouble many*. And then, after destroying the souls of others, we shall lose our own ; and the blood of the souls we have destroyed will be required at our hands.

6. And now, my brethren, our time is gone, otherwise I meant, before I concluded, to have called your attention to the amazing and everlasting importance of this doctrine, and to have exhorted you diligently to consider and lay it to heart. These things are either *true* or *false*. \*If they be *false*, let them meet with that inattention and disregard which they merit. But if they be *true*, as I am confident you *know* them to be, then how *deeply*, nay, how *infinitely* do they concern us all, and especially those of us who have taken upon us the solemn and important office of preaching the gospel? Surely *we*, at least, shall be inexcusable, if we do not prosecute this business faithfully, and make it our chief concern every day to *win souls*. Added to the obligations that lie upon us, in common with others, to be diligent in this work, you see the nature of our office lays us under *other* and *peculiar* engagements. Let *us*, therefore, especially attend to it. Let it be our sincere and fervent desire, and our daily endeavour, to win souls. That we may but accomplish this great and blessed end of our important calling, let us not account our *ease*, our *honour*, our *liberty*, or even our *lives*, dear unto ourselves. Let us be willing to engage in any labour, to undergo any fatigue, and to endure any hardship or suffering, so we may but “ fulfil the ministry we have received of the Lord Jesus,” and save immortal souls from everlasting death.

7. Let us regard success in this work above all other considerations whatever. Indeed, other considerations, in the line of life

we have chosen, there are none which can have any weight with a thinking mind. Prospects of *gain* we have not: our excellent plan allows us only the supply of our necessary wants, and indeed, hardly that. *Preferment* we cannot expect, except from our great Master, in consequence of our discharging our duty faithfully. *Honour* and *applause* are equally out of our reach, unless among the few poor people to whom we minister. We are, therefore, compelled, even by our situation, to act in this business from *pure motives*, if we act at all, or act rationally. Let these motives, then, the only motives which are justifiable, or worthy of regard, be allowed to have their full weight with us, and let us abandon the very idea of any other. Let who will enter upon, and pursue this sacred calling, with a view to *ease*, *honour*, or *interest*, let *our end* be only the glory of God, in the salvation of souls. This is the only end we can reasonably hope to attain, others being all precluded; and this, which infinitely excels all others, blessed be God, we may attain. In some, yea, in a *great* degree, it has been attained already by many of you; especially by *you*, my fathers and brethren, who are old in the work. You have won many souls, and hereby God has been greatly glorified, while thousands of mankind have been, or shall be, eternally benefited. Go on, then, my dear, and much esteemed brethren, as you have begun, and persevered hitherto; only, if possible, with greater diligence than ever, running faster, as your race grows shorter; and, as far as the decay of your health and strength will allow, labouring harder in proportion as your time for labour hastens to a period. And let those of us that are younger, and those that have but lately given themselves up to the work, emulate the zeal, and activity of our elder brethren, and strive to exceed even *them* in labours and success. In so doing we shall provoke, not their *envy*, but their love. Let us learn of them, and that more and more perfectly every day, the happy art of *saving souls*. In order hereto, let us make ourselves better acquainted than ever, with God, and *Christ*, and the *Scriptures*; as also with *human nature*, the *deceitfulness of sin*, and the various *wiles of the devil*. And as practice makes perfect, let us labour to become, daily, greater proficient in this blessed business of winning souls, by daily endeavouring to win them. Let us "give attendance to reading, to instruction, to exhortation." Let us "preach the word;

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be instant in season and out of season; convince, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Let us meditate on these things, and give ourselves wholly to them, that so our profiting may appear unto all."

8. And let us not confine our instructions, reproofs, or exhortations, to the pulpit, and the large assemblies of God's people; as if souls were only to be won in public, and it were beneath us to labour much to save them, unless we saw a prospect of saving several at once. Let us remember what pains our Lord and Master took with *one, single, sinful woman*, at Jacob's well,—as well as with divers other individuals in private: and let us teach *from house to house*, as well as *publicly*. Let us speak for God as we have opportunity, instructing, advising, rebuking, exhorting, those we come in company with, or can have access to. And let us water the seed sown with continual and fervent prayer, that God may cause it to spring up, and bear fruit to his glory.

9. Upon the whole; let us all, preachers and hearers, see that we have this blessed and important work at heart, and use every mean in our power to promote it; looking unto God alone, and not to any efforts of ours, for success. Let *parents, masters, magistrates*, nay, and *subjects, children*, and *servants*, conspire together, to help it forward. Let us all endeavour to improve our several stations and situations in life, with the various talents and advantages entrusted to our management, to the attainment of this most desirable end. Let all be pressed into this service, and made to minister to the salvation of souls. Whatever influence our piety, virtue, learning, knowledge, eloquence, wealth, honour, pre-eminence, authority, or any other gift or endowment give any of us, let it be employed for this purpose; let it be laid at the feet of Christ, and dedicated to his praise, in promoting the great work for which he came into the world, and for which he shed his precious blood. Let us not think it too much to bestow a little care, labour, or money, upon that for which he was pleased to give up his life. And let us not fail to second and enforce all our endeavours, this way, by a conduct according to the gospel. Let our example speak, and show others, what it is to be won over to God, and how such ought to walk and please him in all things. Thus let us "show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light," by imitating him who "came to seek and

save that which was lost," and who "went about doing good;" And "our labour will not be in vain, in the Lord." He will, undoubtedly, give success, more or less; and being the children of God ourselves, we shall rejoice over many lost brethren and sisters in Christ, brought back to their heavenly Father's family. These will be our companions here, in our way to the kingdom, and our crown of rejoicing in the kingdom itself hereafter. They will surround, with us, the eternal throne, and spend everlasting ages in shouting "salvation to God and the Lamb," and ascribing "blessing, and honour, and praise, and glory, to him that hath loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and his Father."



# SERMON IX.

ON THE LIFE AND LABOURS OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

PREACHED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE AT MANCHESTER,  
JULY 26, 1791, AT THEIR FIRST ANNUAL MEETING  
AFTER HIS DEATH.

HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.

*Remember them that had the rule over you, who spake to you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Hebrews xiii. 7.*

1. I MAKE no apology for reading the passage thus, though not quite according to our common translation, because that must appear improper even to an English reader, as being manifestly contradictory to itself. For it supposes the persons here referred to, to be *dead*, and yet speaks of them as *now* presiding over the Hebrews. Bishop *Lloyd*, in his funeral sermon for bishop *Wilkins*, gives it as his opinion that the words may refer to the two *James's*, viz. *James* the elder, the Son of *Zebedee*, the brother of *John*, who was beheaded by Herod in the year of our Lord 44, and *James* the less, the son of *Alpheus* or *Cleophas*, the *brother*, that is, the *kinsman* of our Lord, who also, it seems, was taken hence before the writing of this epistle, suffering martyrdom, as is supposed, in the year 62. And when it is considered that both of these apostles had resided at Jerusalem, and had had the oversight of



the church there, and that the latter James had been removed only a few months when this epistle was written, having been preserved to instruct and oversee the Hebrew Christians almost twenty years after the death of the former, it must appear highly probable that the bishop is right in his conjectures. At the same time, however, the apostle expresses himself in such a manner as to include all, who, under the direction of these apostles, had spoken the word of God to the Hebrews, and had presided in their assemblies.

2. But as no scripture is of any *private* or *particular* interpretation, but is intended to be of *general* use, may we not consider this apostolic advice as given to ourselves, with a reference to those eminent servants of God whom the Lord has lately removed from among us, viz. the Rev. *John Fletcher*, the Rev. *Charles Wesley*, and the Rev. *John Wesley*? men famous in their day, and eminently distinguished in the churches, for their abilities, their labours, and their success in spreading the gospel of the grace of God. In particular, we seem, on this occasion, to be called upon to remember the person last mentioned, who, though the first of them in the work, and more advanced in age than either of the others, was yet spared to outlive them both, and almost all his contemporaries, and was under God our *father* and *overseer*; who presided over us and spake to us the word of God for above half a century, and whose presence amongst us at these meetings was of peculiar use and importance to us.

3. Indeed, *him* we cannot but remember, especially now, when we find such a want of his parental instruction, advice, and authority. However, while we bewail the loss we have sustained, and lament the day when the Lord took away our head from us; and while we humble ourselves before God for our great unfaithfulness, and misimprovement of our privileges, let us not forget how long he lent his honoured servant to us, and to what an advanced age he lengthened out his useful life. And while we praise him for this, as well as for many other instances of his undeserved kindness to the community with which we are united, let us earnestly pray that he would sanctify the dispensation, and in some degree make up our loss, by causing a large measure of his Spirit to descend upon all his servants before him, employed in publishing the gospel of his grace!

4. As my intention in this discourse is to recommend the *faith* of our departed Father to your imitation, it will not be foreign to my purpose to endeavour to bring to your remembrance,—

I. A few *particulars* that respect his *life* and *character* as a *man*, as a *scholar*, as a *christian*, and as a *minister of Christ*, a *shepherd* and *bishop of souls*. This, I hope, will prepare the way for your receiving more favourably,—

II. The exhortation I purpose giving you to *follow his faith*,—considering,

III. The *end of his conversation*.

And, *first*, I am to remind you of a few particulars that respect the life and character of that great man,

1. Though the true faith of our Lord Jesus Christ may certainly be found, and often is found, in persons of small intellectual abilities, yet it must be owned that it appears in such to great disadvantage. Their ideas of the great doctrines of the gospel are neither *clear* nor *distinct*, nor are they able to arrange them in proper order, for the improvement of their own knowledge, or the edification of others. The precious truths of Christianity lie in their minds like *gold*, or *silver*, or *precious stones* in the earth, mixed with much *dross*, and in great disorder. In persons of greater discernment and of a more enlarged mind and refined taste, they may be compared to *precious stones* cut and polished, and set in tablets of gold, or to gold and silver refined from their dross, and formed into beautiful and useful vessels. Such was our late Rev. father and pastor, a man of a most comprehensive mind and sublime genius. His judgment was clear, his fancy lively, his reason strong, and his memory tenacious. No man could be better qualified by nature for discerning the truth, or for representing it to others in the most clear and convincing point of view.

2. And he had every help which education could well give him. He was perfect in those ancient languages in which the holy scriptures were originally written, and particularly so in *Greek*, the original language of the New Testament. This, as a tutor, he taught many years at Oxford, and, it seems, *Hebrew* also, if not

publicly and professionally, at least to some individuals in private. For we find the late Rev. James Hervey, in one of his letters to him, thanking him, as for many other favours, so especially "for teaching him Hebrew." He understood several of the modern tongues, as *French* and *German*. He excelled in *Logic*, was well skilled in *Natural Philosophy*, as his many volumes published on that subject show, and was an accurate *historian*. And what perhaps affords yet greater help towards the discovery of truth, than any of the branches of literature already mentioned, as tending to habituate a person to think closely upon a subject, and to distinguish between *probability* and *certainty*, he was well read in *Mathematics*, especially in those branches of them which have the nearest relation to usefulness in life. As to *divinity*, I need say nothing. His voluminous writings show how much he had studied, and how well he understood that subject.

3. But it will be objected here, and that with great reason, that all these and such like endowments, are not sufficient to qualify a man for understanding the truth as it is in Jesus. It will be urged, that the "*natural man*," (*φύσις*, the man who has indeed a *rational soul* in his body, but no *divine inspiration* in his soul,) "discerneth not the things of God, nay, that they are foolishness unto him, and that he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned;" and that "*the things of God knoweth no man but by the Spirit of God*." This is freely granted, and therefore his natural abilities, and his advantages of education, would not have been so much as hinted at in this discourse, could we not have given, also, good proof, that "He that commanded light to shine out of darkness, had shined into his heart to enlighten him with the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ Jesus."

4. It is well known to this congregation, that although he had been strictly educated, and was unblameable as to his outward conduct from a child, yet it was not till about the twenty-second year of his age, when he was pressed by his father to enter into holy orders, that he became acquainted with the nature and necessity of *inward* religion. By reading that incomparable book, *Thomas a Kempis's Christian Pattern*, which a kind Providence threw in his way, he was brought to see that true religion is seated in the heart, and that to be *renewed in the spirit of our minds*, is of as great necessity as to have our practice regulated by the command-

ments of God. This religion he now began to aim at, and though not yet properly convinced of sin nor acquainted with the depravity of his nature, he soon tasted much sweetness in aspiring after it. Meeting also, as he informs us, with a religious friend, he began to alter the whole course of his conversation, and to set himself in earnest upon living a new life. He set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. He communicated every week. He watched against all sin, whether in word or deed, and aimed at, and prayed for, inward holiness.

5. "Soon after this," says he, "removing to another college, I executed a resolution which I was before convinced was of the utmost importance, viz. to shake off, at once, all my trifling acquaintance. I began now to see, more and more, the value of time, and to apply myself closer to study. I watched more carefully against actual sin, and advised others to be religious according to that scheme of religion by which I modelled my own life. And meeting now with Mr. Law's *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection*, I was convinced more than ever of the exceeding height and depth, length and breadth of the law of God. The light now flowed in so mightily upon my soul, that every thing appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying him, as I had never done before. Accordingly, I began visiting the prisons, assisting the poor and sick in the town, and doing what ether good I could by my presence or little fortune to the bodies and souls of men. To this end I abridged myself" (would to God, my brethren, we were all disposed to do the same!) "of all superfluities, and of many of what are called the necessaries of life. A little after I began observing the Wednesday and Friday fasts, commonly observed in the ancient church, tasting no food till three o'clock in the afternoon."

6. All this while, however, he was in a great measure a stranger to faith in Christ, and indeed was but little acquainted with himself. Hence, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, he did not submit himself to the righteousness of God." Accordingly, he was still uncertain as to his acceptance with God, and in bondage to the fear of death. "At this," says he, "I was then not a little surprized, not imagining I had all this time been building on the sand, and that other

foundation can no man lay, than that is laid by God, even Jesus Christ."

7. But in a little time God opened his eyes, and manifested in him, as he has done in many others, the truth of that promise, "If any man will do my will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Observing, on shipboard, in his passage to America, the calm and composed behaviour of a few Germans, during some very tremendous storms, he was convinced they were in a very different state from himself, as they were manifestly raised above the fear of death. Some conversation he had with Mr. Sprangenberg, a German minister, after he lauded, was a means of giving him still farther light; and before he set sail to return to England, December 22, 1737, about two years and four months after he had left his own country, the hardships and persecutions he had met with in that remote part of the world, had been so sanctified to him, that he was brought to a very full acquaintance with his own heart, and thus was prepared for that discovery of the love of God in Christ Jesus, which it pleased God soon after to afford him.

8. It was on the 8th of January, 1738, that, being on his passage home, he wrote as follows: "By the most infallible of proofs, *inward feeling*, I am convinced, 1. Of *unbelief*, having no such faith in Christ as will prevent my heart from being troubled. 2. Of *pride*, throughout my life past, inasmuch as I thought I had what I find I have not. 3. Of *gross irrecollection*, inasmuch as in a *storm* I cry to God every moment, in a *calm* not. 4. Of levity and luxuriance of spirit, recurring whenever the pressure is taken off, and appearing by my speaking words not tending to edify; but most by my manner of speaking of my enemies. Lord save, or I perish! Save me, 1. By such a *faith* as implies peace in life and death. 2. By such *humility* as may fill my heart, from this hour for ever, with a piercing uninterrupted sense, 'I have done nothing hitherto,' having evidently built without a foundation. 3. By such a *recollec-tion* as may cry to thee every moment, especially when all is *calm*. 4. By steadiness, seriousness, sobriety of spirit, avoiding as fire every word that tendeth not to edification, and never speaking of any that oppose me or sin against God, without all my own sins set in array before my face." Could he who wrote these words be unacquainted with himself?

9. A fortnight after he speaks yet more clearly: some of his expressions are, "I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh! who shall convert me? Who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well, nay, and believe too, when no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say,—To die is gain.

"I have a sin of fear that when I have spun  
My last thread I shall perish on the shore.

"I think verily if the gospel be true I am safe.—But in a storm I think, What if the gospel be not true? Then thou art of all men the most foolish. For what hast thou given thy goods, thy ease, thy friends, thy reputation, thy country, thy life? For what art thou wandering over the face of the earth? A dream, a cunningly devised fable? O! Who will deliver me from this fear of death? What shall I do? Where shall I flee from it?"

10. Again, a little after, he says, "It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why (what I least of all suspected) that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God. I am not mad though I thus speak, but I speak the words of truth and soberness; if, happily, some of those who still dream may awake and see, that as I am, so are they."

"This have I learned in the ends of the earth, that I am fallen short of the glory of God; that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable, and consequently my whole life (seeing it cannot be that an evil tree should bring forth good fruit:) that alienated as I am from "the life of God, I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell: that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making an atonement for the least of those sins which are more in number than the hairs of my head, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide his righteous judgment: that having the sentence of death in my heart, and having nothing in, or of myself to plead, I have no hope but that of being justified freely, through, the redemption that is in

Christ Jesus: I have no hope but that if I seek I shall find Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

11. Of this faith he seems to have had at this time, a very clear notion, although not so clear as he afterwards obtained, partly by conversing with Peter Bohler, and some others, and partly by continually searching the scriptures upon this head. In this way it pleased God soon to convince him that saving faith (as our church expresses it) is "a sure trust and confidence, which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven and he is reconciled to the favour of God." He saw too, that holiness and happiness, that love, peace, and joy, are the never failing fruits of this faith, and that it is frequently given in a moment. But still he himself was not in possession of it: and this was, for some weeks, a source of great bitterness and distress, to his soul. "I feel what you say," (says he, in a letter to a friend) "at this time, though not enough; for I am under the same condemnation. I see that the whole law of God is holy, just and good. I know every thought, every temper of my soul, ought to bear God's image and superscription. But how am I fallen from the glory of God; I feel that I am sold under sin. I know too, that I deserve nothing but wrath, being full of all abominations; and having no good thing in me to atone for them, or to remove the wrath of God. All my works, my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves. So that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy; I am unholy. God is a consuming fire; I am altogether a sinner meet to be consumed. Yet, I hear a voice (and is it not the voice of God?) saying, 'believe and thou shalt be saved. He that believeth is passed from death to life.'"

12. He who wrote these words could not be far from the kingdom of God. Deeply convinced of sin, as he manifestly was, of his *depravity*, and *weakness*, as well as of his *guilt*, and groaning for redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of his sins, and a new nature, he could not be long without finding mercy. Accordingly a day or two after, while at a meeting in Aldergate-street, he was enabled to cast his soul on Christ, and to trust in him alone for salvation, and an assurance was given him, that his sins were blotted out, and he reconciled to the favour of God

The peace and love he immediately felt in his soul, and the spirit of prayer which he found for his enemies, were sufficient evidences that the work was genuine.

13. But the grand and most satisfactory evidence of any man's conversion is his subsequent temper and conduct. These in the Rev. Mr. Wesley, I trust, were such as confirmed his profession. This congregation, I am persuaded will not think I exaggerate, if I represent him as remarkable for almost every grace and virtue that does or can adorn a follower of Jesus. He was strong in *faith* and mighty in *prayer*, not a few, in the course of his sixty years' labours in the Lord's vineyard, having been healed in body or mind, or both, while he was engaged in prayer to God with or for them. His *resolution* in undertaking and prosecuting whatever he believed would be for the glory of God and the good of mankind was unconquerable. Nor was he discouraged by difficulties, how many or great soever. His *confidence* in God, his *courage*, and *tranquillity*, amidst tumults of the people, waves of the sea, dangers and deaths, were equally remarkable. He trusted in the Lord, and therefore, was kept in perfect peace: nay, was as Mount Zion which cannot be removed. And what shall I say of his *humility*? Of the very deep and constant sense he manifestly had of his infirmities and imperfections, and of his continual need of the mercy of God and of the merits of Christ? This was undoubtedly, to his dying day, the uninterrupted temper of his mind, and language of his lips and life. His *resignation*, likewise, to the divine will, and *patience* under the dispensations of his providence, were equally manifest, as also his *meekness*, *gentleness*, and *long-suffering*, amidst the very many insults, and injuries, and much ill usage he met with. And as no man was ever more attached and faithful to his *friends*, so no man ever more freely forgave his enemies, of which class, it is well known, like all other great and good men, he had not a few.

14. But how remarkable soever he might be for these graces, he was yet more eminent for *benevolence*, *mercy*, and *charity*. His life was *one continued good work*, *one constant labour* to do good to the bodies and souls of men. And as he fed thousands and myriads with the living bread, so also not a few with the bread that perisheth. Whatever he could spare from the profits of his fellowship before his marriage, or from the income arising from the



sale of his books afterwards, together with the donations occasionally made him by particular friends, was wholly distributed to the sick and needy. He was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; a light (as it were) to them that sat in darkness, making the hearts of the fatherless and the widows to sing for joy. His *generosity* and *liberality* according to his power cannot be described nor hardly conceived by those that did not know him. His *temperance* also and *self-denial* must not be passed over in silence. It is true that, for many years last past, many, in town and country, were eager to show their love to him and his friends, by providing very liberally when he was to visit them on his journeys through the kingdom. But it is well known that his general rule was only to eat of one dish. In short, all the graces and virtues that adorn the christian character, were more or less found in him, and that mixed with such sweetness, affability, courtesy, and good-breeding, that he was the delight of every company he came into; nor was it possible, almost, for any one to be a few minutes present while he was conversing with his friends, in a free and familiar manner, without being at once edified and highly delighted. He had read and seen so much; was so well acquainted with men and things, with the world and with the church, that he had an inexhaustible fund for entertaining and useful conversation: nor could any feast, how elegant and sumptuous so ever, afford half the pleasure and delight which his most enlivening and exhilarating discourse afforded.

15. As a *preacher*, he was always heard with deep attention, generally with much profit, and not seldom with surprizing and wonderful effect; whether of sorrow in those that were cut to the heart by his word, or of joy in those whose tears were wiped away, and whose wounds were healed by the balm of his doctrine. He was always *concise* and *clear*. He never advanced any thing *unnecessary* or *more than enough*, nor delivered himself in a manner that was not intelligible to the meanest of his hearers, if attentive. He was often *full*, as well as clear, and to such as were intelligent, gave perfect satisfaction upon almost every subject he undertook to explain. And his preaching was so *forcible* and *convincing* that it was hardly possible to hear him attentively, without being as much displeas'd at one's self, as one was pleas'd with the preacher. The Lord's word in his mouth was indeed "quick and

powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

16. As a *writer* he is much to be admired. He employed his pen on almost all subjects that are useful to mankind, and treated them in a manner always agreeable and often highly pleasing. His method was easy, natural, and exact. His style, though not laboured and flowery (a kind of style which he never admired) yet was pure, perspicuous, and manly; much like that of Addison, universally acknowledged one of the most pleasing writers this or any nation has produced. Although most of his publications are in prose, yet they are written in such a lively and entertaining manner, that they are read with as much pleasure as most poetical compositions. Of his abilities in poetry too, he has given us many specimens. And it appears that had his more serious and important studies and labours permitted him to employ himself in that way, he would not have fallen short of his brothers Charles or Samuel Wesley, or the pious and ingenious Dr. Watts.

17. I have only to speak of him in the character of a *shepherd* and *bishop* of souls, in which he peculiarly shone, which was his *chief calling*, and his principal employment, and for which he was most admirably fitted by nature, and by grace. As probably no person has existed since the apostles' days, who ever had so many souls under his care, so many to *feed* and *oversee*; so, perhaps no one was ever better qualified for such a work. The *health*, *strength*, and *activity* of his body, capable of so much labour and fatigue, the *vigour*, *resolution*, and *firmness* of his mind, regarding neither pleasure nor pain, and recollected and undaunted in the midst of the greatest difficulties and dangers; the retentiveness of his memory, enabling him to recollect the persons, names, and places of abode of such multitudes of people; his extensive knowledge of things human and divine; his deep and long experience both of the devices of Satan, and of the work of God in the soul, and above all, the grace of God that was in him:—these and such like endowments fitted him for this great work; and he executed it in a manner which few have done before, or, I believe, will do after him.

18. Add to this, that in proportion as the societies increased in *London*, *Bristol*, *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, *Leeds*, *Manchester*, and all

over Great Britain and Ireland; and it became more and more impossible he should superintend and take care of them all, should provide food for their souls, oversee their behaviour, take notice of, and prepare and administer remedies for their spiritual diseases, and lead them forward in the paths of righteousness; and as few or none of the clergy of the established church were willing to expose themselves to reproach, and engage heartily with him in the work; he had wisdom and courage enough to go out of the common tract, to take the Lord Jesus and his apostles for his models, and to avail himself of the gifts and grace bestowed for this very purpose, no doubt, upon many of his people. Hence dividing the societies into little companies called classes; he appointed the most knowing, the most experienced, and the most pious, to take charge of the rest. Several of these, from praying with and advising their little companies in private, proceeded in consequence of pressing invitations, to exhort them and others in public, and in the end even to expound to them, and enforce upon them the word of God.

19. In this way a great company of preachers now assembled here, have been providentially raised up, in general without an University education, or even any acquaintance with the learned languages (although some of them are well skilled therein) to supply his lack of service; to *oversee* and *feed* in his absence, the multitudes of flocks he had gathered, and to take care of them, now he is no more. An astonishing instance of the divine goodness this indeed! For had it not been for this, would not you, my brethren, and some thousands of congregations beside, in Great Britain, Ireland, and America, have been this day as sheep without a shepherd? By *these*, as well as by his *life*, which will long be remembered, and his *writings*, which will continue to be published and read, he *being dead yet speaketh*, and I trust will speak while England is a nation, or while the English language is known upon the earth. May you and I, my dear brethren, have ears to hear, and hearts to understand! Many of them will address us during this Conference. May we *mark, learn, and digest* the blessed truths that shall drop from their lips! the same, I am well persuaded, with those which, in years past, were so frequently dropping from the lips of our aged and reverend father, now removed from us, when with his sons in the gospel about him, he was wont to discourse to us from this and other pulpits. May we recollect and long remember his salutary

*doctrine!* May it be fixed in our minds as a nail in a sure place! May it have its proper influence upon our hearts and lives! Thus, as my text advises, and as I was, *Secondly*, to exhort, we shall find it less difficult to *follow his faith*.

II. Having enlarged so much on the former head, I shall despatch what I have to say on this and the following in a few words.

1. *Faith* here, as in a few more passages of scripture, may be put for the *object of faith, the truths believed*. And the importance of it in this sense must be obvious to all who attend to the *mighty*, I may say, the *infinite* difference there is between *truth* and a *lie*, and the consequences that do and will follow upon believing the one or the other. There are indeed some, yea, many things relating to the *present life* which we may view in a false light, and may believe a *lie* instead of *the truth* respecting them, and no bad, at least, no *eternally* bad and destructive consequences will follow the mistake. And the reason is plain, this life, with every thing in it, is of short duration, and is passing away like a dream of the night. But the case is different with regard to things that appertain to the life to come. To receive a lie for *truth* with respect to most of *these*, is to involve ourselves in ignorance, sin, and misery, and to preclude our partaking of the salvation of God.

2. For instance, to entertain mistaken views of ourselves, and of the state we are in by nature; to suppose, with the Jews, that we *see*, when in reality we are *blind*; or, with the Pharisees, that we are *holy* and *righteous*, when we are guilty and depraved; or, with St. Paul in his unconverted state, that we are doing God service while we are opposing his truth and persecuting his servants, is effectually to prevent our being enlightened, justified, or brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; it is to keep ourselves at an immense distance from that poverty of spirit, that humiliation of soul, that holy mourning, to which alone the Lord hath promised the consolation of his favour, and it is to feed that pride of heart which is an abomination before God. The same may be said concerning the *divine nature, the person of Christ, the way of salvation* through a Mediator, the *will of God*, and our *duty*: to have mistaken views of these subjects, must, on the one hand, preclude these happy effects which would follow upon right

views of them, and, on the other, produce consequences proportionably hurtful.

3. The gospel is represented in scripture as the great mean of turning people "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." But will any man say that a *lie* enlightens, or gives real and useful information, like *truth*; and that believing a lie will make us free, as the Lord Jesus has assured us, knowing the truth will? St. James informs us that we are "begotten again by the word of truth." St. Peter speaks of our "purifying our souls by obeying the truth," and our Lord prays that we may be "sanctified by the truth." But dare any man affirm that a lie will produce the same effects? that we may be begotten again and made the children of God by a *lie*, may purify our souls by obeying a *lie*, and may even be entirely sanctified and fitted for heaven by a *lie*? Let no man therefore persuade us that it is a matter of no moment what we believe or what sentiments we entertain in religion. If that were the case, *zeal for God* would be sufficient, and it would not signify at all whether that zeal were according to knowledge, contrary to the express and repeated declarations of St. Paul. Be upon your guard, therefore, in this point, and remember that we are *chosen to salvation*, as by *sanctification of the Spirit*, so also by *belief of the truth*.

4. What this truth is, I need not now stay to declare. It is well known to this congregation to comprehend those grand doctrines which are termed by the apostle the *analogy of faith*, viz. those that respect the depravity of human nature, the atonement of Christ, the influences of the Spirit of God, justification, sanctification, and eternal life. But it is declared at large, as in many of Mr. Wesley's other works, so especially in his *Notes on the New Testament*, and in his *four volumes of Sermons*. Those who wish to see it defended more fully and particularly, will meet with ample satisfaction in reading his *Appeals to men of Reason and Religion*, his answer to *Dr. Taylor on Original Sin*, and his many other controversial pieces. In the meantime, compare what you read with the oracles of God, and bring every doctrine to the test of that infallible *touchstone*. This, you know, is the *only rule*, and the *sufficient rule* of faith as well as of practice. Search, then, *the scriptures, for in them ye have eternal life*; and if you do this

without prejudice, in humility and simplicity, sincerely desiring to know and embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, and looking unto God for the teaching of his Spirit, I have no more doubt of your finding in them the grand doctrines which our late pastor and president so continually taught by word and writing, and so ably defended, than I doubt whether you will find in them, that *there is a God*, or that Jesus of Nazareth is his Son.

5. But we need not confine the term *faith* to the *object* of faith, the *truths* believed. The expression may also mean here our *belief* or persuasion of those truths. In this sense also let me recommend the faith of our departed pastor to your imitation. See that you be persuaded, *truly* and *deeply* persuaded, as he was, of the *certainty* and *importance* of these truths. See that the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all the great doctrines of it, *come to you*, as it did to the Thessalonians, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." See that you *so* believe that it may be the *power of God unto salvation* to your believing souls: so that it may have its proper influence upon your temper and conduct, while you are, as it were, cast into the mould of it, and all your dispositions, words, and actions, are as *becometh the gospel of Christ*.

6. But some will perhaps be inclined to think that *faith* here means *justifying* and *saving faith*, even that faith in Christ, and in the mercy of God, and in the promises of the gospel through him, which whosoever hath is "justified from all things, has peace with God, has the love of God shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost given to him, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God." And certainly, my brethren, it is our duty to take care, that, in this sense also, we *follow his faith*: that like him, we "believe in Christ, so as to be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the deeds of the law;" that we believe with a faith of the *operation of God*, a faith *working by love*, a faith *overcoming the world*, and *purifying the heart*. This, indeed, is the most important point of all. For if "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" it surely must be of the deepest importance that we believe aright on him, for eternal life is attained in this, and in no other way.

7. It is above all necessary that we, who speak in the name of God, have faith in this sense! that we be justified ourselves, converted, regenerated, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. To preach *this faith* is our grand calling, nor need we go forth unless to preach it. Almost every other branch of christian doctrine has advocates in abundance without us. But with regard to *faith working by love*, and *justification by faith*, together with a *new birth*, or a *new creation*, manifesting itself by universal holiness of heart and life, the case is different:—To preach *these* is the proper office of a *Methodist preacher*, this being the very doctrine, as we have seen in the former part of this discourse, which our late Rev. father continually inculcated. And if it be our duty to *preach* it, surely it is equally, or more, our duty to *experience* it. For certainly we would not wish to be *hypocrites*, going about and recommending to others what we have no experience of ourselves.

8. I shall only mention one thing more here. Probably some will think that *faith* here stands for *faithfulness*. And certainly there can be no impropriety in taking the word in this sense, whether primarily intended by the apostle or not, and recommending the faithfulness of our departed friend and father to your imitation. But who can describe his faith, in this view of it? Who can give those, that did not know him, any just idea of his faithfulness in the employment of his time, and of every talent his great Master had entrusted him with? Nay, who, that did not know him, would credit one half of what might be said, and must be said, if one do any justice to the subject? But it is my happiness this evening, to address those that in some measure knew him. And however marvellous and bordering upon romance it might appear to others, you know it to be a fact, and therefore, will fully believe me when I say, that during the last fifty years of his life, there seldom was a day in which he did not preach twice, thrice, or even four times; travel, during nine months out of ten of the year, thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty miles, (and for many years on horseback,) answer half a dozen, or even a dozen letters; converse with a number of persons, and yet found time to write, and go on with some work intended for the press. So that we may reckon he generally preached one thousand, or twelve hundred sermons every year, travelled three thousand, or even four thousand miles, wrote two thousand letters, conversed privately

with ten thousand, or twelve thousand people, over and above meeting societies, keeping watch-nights and love-feasts, administering the Lord's Supper to thousands of communicants in town and country, and writing and publishing, I know not how many books on all subjects. It would be incredible that any one man should go through so much work, if we did not know it to be a fact, that he went through it, and that, through the help of God, by attending to *one single circumstance*, and that is, to the *proper use of his time*; observing himself most carefully the advice given to us, my brethren, in the large Minutes of Conference; "Be punctual, be diligent. Never "be unemployed a moment: Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time. Neither spend any more time in any place than is strictly necessary."

9. From about the twenty-second year of his age, when, as he tells his brother Samuel in a letter, "Leisure and he had taken leave of each other, and he proposed to be busy as long as he lived, if his health should be so long indulged to him," he made it a constant rule, as is well known, to rise at four in the morning: and from the observation of this rule even sickness could scarce prevent him. From that hour till he went to rest at night (which was about nine) it may be safely said that he never willingly lost one moment. *Amusement* or *relaxation* he used none, save what arose from change of employment. His whole life was one scene of serious business. From morning to night, allowing time for his meals, he was either reading, or writing, or preaching, or travelling, or conversing seriously with those who applied to him for advice about matters temporal or spiritual. Nay, and frequently when on horseback, in the former part of his life, and almost always in the chaise (since he was obliged through weakness of body to make use of that means of conveyance) he was reading, unless when he judged it better to employ his thoughts in considering some subject intended for the pulpit or the press.

10. We see in him the wonders that time can do: "Time," (as Dr. Young says)

"Than gold more sacred, more a load  
Than lead to fools, and fools reputed wise."

And we see, too, in him the fulfilment of that gracious promise,  
*To him that hath shall be given.* He had, that is, employed,



according to the design of the giver, the time vouchsafed him, and therefore the Lord gave him *much of it*. Consider him as *awake* and active from four in the morning till nine or ten at night, and you will find reason to conclude that he lived more in *one year* than many do in a half a dozen. Add to this, that the Lord protracted his life to the long date of, at least, *eighty-eight years*. So that his life was long indeed, longer, all things considered, than almost any in these latter ages do or will attain to; and what is better, wholly employed for the glory of God and the good of mankind. It may be safely said, that from the time he was twenty-two years of age, till his dying day, he hardly ever employed *one hour*, wrote *one line*, travelled *one mile*, or almost uttered *one sentence*, but what was, at least, designed by him to be useful to his fellow-creatures, nay, and in general, one way or other was useful.

11. How many thousands have been relieved, or cured in bodily complaints, by his advice given verbally, or in that most useful little book, termed *Primitive Physic*. How many tens of thousands owe to him, under God, the health, yea, and everlasting happiness of their souls! How many families and individuals, at variance, has he reconciled, and how much peace and harmony has he been a mean of imparting where it never had been, or of restoring where it had been lost! How many drunken and debauched husbands and fathers have been reclaimed from their vices, and their families saved from beggary and ruin; and how much *industry, frugality, temperance, and chastity*, and of consequence *prosperity*, have through him, been spread through this and other kingdoms! How many hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of miserable objects have been, or still are, relieved by his own charities, or by those of which he was, under God, the main-spring, and either set on foot, or promoted! How many at this moment, are praising God on earth that ever there was such a man, and how many more in heaven! How many thousands and myriads, during these fifty or sixty years that he has so successfully exercised his ministry on earth, converted to God, by his instrumentality, directly or indirectly, have gone before him to paradise, and were ready to bid him welcome when he arrived! and how many hundreds of thousands, in *England, Scotland, Ireland, America*, and the *West Indies*, nay, and in other parts of the earth to which his writings have reached, or

may hereafter reach, are waiting, or shall hereafter wait, to follow after! Oh! what a meeting, my dear brethren! How many sons and daughters, begotten by him through the gospel, shall at that day rise up and call him blessed! shall own and confess him their spiritual father, while he looks round with astonishment, and asks, *Who hath begotten me these? These, where had they been?*

“I will invite you, my father and my friend,” (said Mr. Hervey in a letter to him, dated in the year 1736,) “to meet me among the spirits of the just made perfect, since I am not like to see you any more in the flesh. Then will I bid you welcome, yea, I will tell of your love before the universal assembly, and at the tremendous tribunal. I will hear, with joy, the Lord Jesus say of you, (Oh! you that are greatly beloved!) *Well done, good and faithful servant!* You have served your Lord, and your generation with your might. You have finished the work which my Father gave you to do. If others have turned their thousands, you have turned your ten thousands from the power of Satan unto God. Receive, therefore, a glorious kingdom, a beautiful and immortal crown from my hand. Enter with the children I have given you, with the souls you have won, O thou blessed one, thou heir of glory! enter in at those everlasting doors, and receive there the reward of thy labours, even fulness of joy for ever and ever.”

13. And if Mr. *Hervey* be so eager to come forward and welcome our venerable father into heavenly mansions, shall his son in the gospel, Mr. *Fletcher*, be backward? Shall his dear brother and fellow-labourer, Mr. *Charles Wesley*, stand aloof? Shall Mr. *Whitefield*, whose labours commenced with his, and who with him bore the burden and heat of the day, but finished his task many years sooner?—Shall not he rise up and bid him enter? Methinks even Mr. *Toplady* has lost his bitterness, and is melted into love? But why should I name individuals? An immense multitude that knew him in the flesh, and that never knew him, shall join the inviting and applauding chorus, prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, saints, confessors, and martyrs, gathered out of every nation and age, shall be glad to testify their love towards so faithful and eminent a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus. May we, my brethren, be of this company! I hope in God many of us shall. Many of you have long been, and are at this moment, the

sincere friends of the Lord Jesus, and therefore, of whatever denomination or party, cannot be his enemies, cannot be the enemies of one so owned of God, and who has been made such an universal blessing to mankind.

14. Thus have I been led, without intending it, to speak also of the "end of his conversation," and to anticipate, in a great measure, what might have been advanced under the third head. I shall, therefore, only add to what has been said, that the *wonderful success* God gave to his labours, the *amazing reformation* he made him the great instrument of effecting in this and other kingdoms, the *glorious exit* he made out of life, after having persevered in the good way in which he had begun, to the end; and the *great and blessed reward* which, we doubt not, he partly has received already, and will hereafter more abundantly receive at the resurrection of the just; these particulars all included in τὸ τέλος τῆς ἐκείνου ἀναστροφῆς, that end of his conversation which we are called upon to consider, certainly contain strong and powerful arguments why we should *follow his faith* in the several senses that have been noticed, and proceed on in the way in which he, who for so many years "had the rule over us, and spoke to us the word of God," went before us.

15. Let us, then, my brethren, steadily abide by the doctrine he taught, and discipline he established, and continue to pursue the plan he in his wisdom saw fit to adopt, being, indeed, as we know providentially led into it, contrary to his pre-conceived prejudices; a plan which God has been pleased greatly to smile upon, and to crown with wonderful success. Let us not attempt to mend it, for indeed we are not able; but taking it up just as it is, let us adhere to it, and go on in the same tract in which we have many of us persevered for twenty, or thirty, or even forty years. It is now too late in the day for us to change: but if otherwise, to what can we change for the better? Let us, however, mend our pace, and quicken our diligence, as our time grows shorter. And as the shades of the evening are coming on, let us, in imitation of our departed pastor, work the harder, "work while it is day, because the night cometh in which no man can work." Though we have not received his talents, let not that discourage us. Our present duty and our future reward are not, and will not, be measured by the *number* or *greatness* of our talents, or even by our *success* in

the use of them, but by our diligence in employing them according to the design of him who entrusted them to our management. "Every man, we are to remember, shall receive his own reward according to his own labour; and when our Lord cometh, his reward is with him, to give to every man according as his work shall be. *Perstaded of this, let us not make our having received fewer talents than our late Rev. father, an excuse for hiding any of them in a napkin, much less for burying them all in the earth. But if we have received but one, let us be the more diligent that our one may gain two, and our two five, and perhaps also our five ten. Thus shall we also hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord:" thus shall we also receive a full reward in the kingdom of our Father.*

END OF THE SERMON.

The following character of the Rev. Mr. WESLEY, appeared in a certain Periodical Publication, and in some of the London papers. It fell into my hands a few days before the Conference, and, happening to have it with me, I read it to the congregation after preaching the above sermon. It was so highly approved of by most, if not all that heard it, that I judge I shall do an acceptable piece of service to my readers by subjoining it here.

## A CHARACTER

OF THE CELEBRATED

JOHN WESLEY, A. M.

LATE FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

WHO DIED MARCH 2, 1791, AGED EIGHTY-EIGHT YEARS.

THIS venerable man, in his indefatigable zeal in the discharge of his duty, has been long witnessed by the world; but, as mankind are not always inclined to put a generous construction on the exertion of singular talents, his motives were imputed to the love of popularity, ambition, and lucre. It now appears that he was actuated by a disinterested regard to the immortal interest of mankind. He laboured, and studied, and preached, and wrote to propagate

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what he believed to be the gospel of Christ. The intervals of these engagements were employed in governing the churches he had planted, regulating the concerns of his numerous societies, assisting the necessities, solving the difficulties, and soothing the afflictions of his hearers. He observed so rigid a temperance, and allowed himself so little repose, that he seemed to be above the infirmities of a ture, and to act independent of the earthly tenement he occupied. The recital of the occurrences of every day of his life would be the greatest encomium.

Had he loved wealth, he might have accumulated without bounds; had he been fond of power, his influence would have been worth courting by any party. I do not say that he was without ambition; he had that which christianity need not blush at, and which virtue is proud to confess. I do not mean that which is gratified by splendour and large possessions; but that which commands the hearts and affections, the homage and gratitude of thousands. For him they felt sentiments of veneration only inferior to those which they paid to heaven; to him they looked as their father, their benefactor, their guide to glory and immortality; for him they fell prostrate before God, with prayers and tears to spare his doom, and prolong his stay. Such a recompense as this is sufficient to repay the toils of the longest life. Short of *this*, greatness is contemptible impotence. Before this, lofty prelates bow, and princes hide their diminished heads.

His zeal was not a transient blaze, but a steady and constant flame. The ardour of his spirit was neither damped by difficulty, nor subdued by age. This was ascribed by himself to the power of divine grace; by the world to enthusiasm. Be it what it will, it is what Philosophers must envy, and infidels respect; it is that which gives energy to the soul, and without which there can be no greatness or heroism.

Why should we condemn that in religion which we applaud in every other profession and pursuit? He had a vigour and elevation of mind, which nothing but the belief of the divine favour and presence could inspire. This threw a lustre round his infirmities, changed his bed of sickness into a triumphal car, and made his *exit* resemble an Apotheosis rather than a dissolution.

He was qualified to excel in every branch of literature; he was versed in the learned tongues, in Metaphysics, in Oratory, in Logic,

in Criticism, and every requisite of a christian minister; his style was nervous, clear, and manly; his preaching was pathetic and persuasive; his journals are artless and interesting; his compositions and compilations to promote knowledge and piety were almost innumerable.

I do not say he was without faults, or above mistakes; but they were lost in the multitude of his excellencies and virtues.

To gain the admiration of an ignorant and superstitious age, requires only a little artifice and address; to stand the test of these times, when all pretensions to sanctity are stigmatized as hypocrisy, is a proof of genuine piety and real usefulness. His great object was, to revive the obsolete doctrines and extinguished spirit of the church of England; and they who are its friends, cannot be his enemies. Yet for this he was treated as a fanatic and impostor, and exposed to every species of slander and persecution. Even bishops and dignitaries entered the lists against him; but he never declined the combat, and generally proved victorious. He appealed to the Homilies, the Articles, and the Scriptures, as vouchers for his doctrine; and they who could not decide upon the merits of the controversy, were witnesses of the effects of his labours; and they judged of the tree by its fruit. It is true, he did not succeed much in the higher walks of life; but that impeached his cause no more than it did that of the first planters of the gospel. However, if he had been capable of assuming vanity upon that score, he might have ranked among his friends some persons of the first distinction, who would have done honour to any party.

After surviving almost all his adversaries, and acquiring respect among those who were the most distant from him in principles, he lived to see the plant he had reared spreading its branches far and wide, and inviting not only these kingdoms, but the western world, to repose under its shade. Who can doubt of the continuance of a cause so deeply established; though at the same time, all must be sensible of the difficulty, if not the impossibility of finding a suitable successor? No sect, since the first ages of christianity, could boast a founder of such extensive talents and endowments. If he had been a candidate for literary fame, he might have succeeded to his utmost wishes; but he sought not the praise of men, he regarded learning only as the instrument of usefulness. The great purpose of his life was doing good. For this he relinquished all honour

and preferment; to this he dedicated all his powers of body and mind; at all times and in all places, in season and out of season, by gentleness, by terror, by argument, by persuasion, by reason, by interest, by every motive, and every inducement, he strove with unwearied assiduity to turn men from the error of their ways, and awaken them to virtue and religion. To the bed of sickness or the couch of prosperity, to the prison or the hospital, the house of mourning or the house of feasting, wherever there was a friend to serve, or a soul to save, he readily repaired, to administer assistance or advice, reproof or consolation. He thought no office too humiliating, no condescension too low, no undertaking too arduous, to reclaim the meanest of God's offspring. The souls of all men were precious in his sight, and the value of an immortal creature beyond all estimation. He penetrated the abodes of wretchedness and ignorance, to rescue the profligate from perdition; and he communicated light to those who sat in darkness, and the shadow of death. He changed the outcasts of society into useful members, civilized even savages, and filled those lips with prayer and praise, that had been accustomed only to oaths and imprecations.

But as the strongest religious impressions are apt to become languid without discipline and practice, he divided his people into classes and bands according to their attainments. He appointed frequent meetings for prayer and conversation, where they gave an account of their experience, their hopes and fears, their joys and troubles; by which means they were united to each other, and their common profession; they became centinels upon each other's conduct, and securities for each other's character. Thus the seeds he sowed sprang up and flourished, bearing the rich fruits of every grace and virtue; thus he governed and preserved his numerous societies, watching their improvement with a paternal care, and encouraging them to be faithful to the end.

But I will not attempt to draw his full character, nor to estimate the extent of his labours and services: they will be best known, when he shall deliver up his commission into the hands of his Great Master,—“Lord, here am I, and the children which thou gavest me.”

N. B. This most extraordinary man, in the course of the last sixty years, has been the blessed instrument in the hands of God

to revive his work of True, Primitive Religion, not only in England, Scotland, and Ireland, but in that large quarter of the globe, America. In all of these places, he travelled in the greatness of his zeal, in person, by the sweat of his brow, and with his life in his hand; like his great Master, delivering the message of the Lord to the poor, but precious and never-dying souls of men.

But glory be to Jehovah, his labours did not stop here, as tens of thousands of poor negroes, (and indeed their masters too,) in the West-Indies, both English, Dutch, and Danish Isles, can testify. In fine, we shall say of him separately, as was said of the holy apostles jointly; viz. That God's word is by him carried through all the earth; yea, even to the world's end.—O, that my life were like his!





# SERMON X.

ON

## THE TRUE GLORY OF A HOUSE OF GOD.

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE NEW CHAPEL,  
IN LOWGATE, HULL, ON SUNDAY,  
DEC. 23, 1787.

*The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts: And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts. Haggai ii. 9.*

1. **NOTWITHSTANDING** that the Babylonish captivity had been a means of humbling that small remnant of Jews that survived it, and of curing the whole nation of idolatry, into which (it seems) they never afterwards fell: yet we have reason to believe, that the generality of them still remained carnal in their views and affections. Hence, like the rest of mankind, while in a carnal state, they were most taken with external things. When, therefore, they saw the house nearly finished, which was built after their return from Babylon, and compared it with Solomon's Temple, the splendour of which many of them could remember, it appeared in their eyes as nothing in comparison of that former most sumptuous fabric. Hence they were ready to be discouraged, as if the chief glory of a place of worship consisted in the great wealth lavished in the external decorations of it. To prevent this, therefore, and encourage them to go on with their undertaking, as well as to reprove them for their inactivity and sloth, the Lord raised up and sent to them his servants Haggai and Zachariah, who both proph-

sied in the second year of Darius the king of Persia, under whose dominion the Jews then were.

2. "In the seventh month of that year came the word of the Lord by the prophet Haggai, saying, Who is left among you that saw this house in its first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes, in comparison of it, as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and Joshua the high priest, and be strong all the people of the land, saith the Lord, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts. According to the word which I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts."

3. Hence it appears, that though Solomon's temple, which was a great part of it overlaid with gold and silver, and was in other respects, perhaps, the most magnificent structure ever erected upon the earth, far exceeded this latter house in outward ornaments, yet that this should excel it in real glory. The reason was, the *desire of all nations*, the Saviour of sinners, the Christ of God, the living and true Temple of Jehovah, of which these outward temples were but types and shadows, was to appear in it.—Here the true light was to shine, and disperse the darkness that had covered former nations and ages. Here the power of God was to be exerted in signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were to be the seals of a new and better covenant. Here the ancient prophecies were to find their accomplishment, and the types and shadows, whereby God had taught his church in its minority, were to be answered by the great antitype, and to give way to the truth and grace wherewith he would enlighten and perfect its mature age. Here the glad tidings of salvation were to be published to a lost world, and the Spirit of God, in a rich variety of gifts and graces, was to be poured out on all that should believe and embrace those tidings. *In this place the Lord of Hosts was to give peace*, and here he was

to open a pure and spiritual religion, whereby every soul, possessed of that peace, might not only worship him *in spirit and in truth*, but might even become himself a temple of the Deity, and *an habitation of God through the Spirit*.

4. The glory of this latter house, therefore, was to exceed the glory of the former. And thus we are furnished with a rule whereby we may measure the true glory of places of worship in all ages, and under every dispensation of divine grace, but especially under the gospel. It consists, not in any thing external, but in the presence of the Lord Jesus, and in the communication of gifts and graces, there made by him to the upright, devout, and spiritual worshipper. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts: Son, give me thy heart. Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool: where is the house ye build me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

But as this is a point of great importance, and particularly suitable for our meditation at this time, when we first appear in this new house, so superior in outward things, to that in which we formerly assembled; we will dwell a little longer upon it, and inquire,—

I. What is the true glory of a *house of God*, or place of public worship; and when it may be said, that one place exceeds another in glory?

II. We will consider the gracious promise here made, which, when fulfilled in such places, renders them glorious indeed!

"In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."

I. The *first* thing that I shall take notice of as constituting the true glory of a house of God, is that the *pure* word of God be *fully, clearly, and powerfully* preached in it.—Places of worship are erected in order that those who worship in them, being screened from what might annoy in the different seasons, commodiously

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seated, and shut in with the Lord, may wait upon him, in hearing his word and in prayer, without distraction of mind and interruption from outward things. But they will hear his word to little purpose unless what they hear be the *pure, unadulterated* word of God. This of all things is most important, that what is delivered from the pulpit, be the *very truth of God*, unmixed with the corrupt fancies of men. Without this, the hearers are not instructed but deluded; not directed in the right way of salvation, but misled into by-paths of error, and if not irrecoverably lost, yet greatly hindered in their christian course, and prevented from making the progress they otherwise might make in knowledge and holiness.

2. It is true, considering the weakness of the human understanding in the best, and the prejudices which preachers as well as others are exposed to from various quarters; and considering too, that God has denied to these later ages that plenary superintendency of inspiration, which rendered the apostles and first teachers of christianity infallible; it is not to be expected that any ministers of Christ *now* should be right in *all points*, even such as are small and trivial. But surely every one taught of God, may and will be right as to the *grand, leading, and fundamental* truths of christianity, those that are so clearly, fully, and constantly revealed and inculcated in the *holy* scriptures, and are necessary to be known in order to salvation. With respect to *these* at least, they may say with the apostles, "We are not as many who corrupt" (or as the Greek signifies, who adulterate) "the word of God," as some vintners do their wines, intermixing them with baser liquors; "but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ," truths which he approves and blesses. And then with respect to some lesser matters, if they should be mistaken, their mistake will do no material hurt, especially as they will for the most part keep it to themselves, seldom mentioning it in public, and never dwelling long upon any thing that is unessential.

3. And I would just observe here, by the way, that the best method a preacher can pursue to ensure this point, that he preaches only *truth* and not *error* to his hearers, is, to confine himself as far as possible to matters essential, for with respect to *these*, a man of God will hardly err. Whereas, when instead of this, a minister takes upon him to intermeddle with all controversies and discuss all questions, he is hardly ever right throughout, but is in the

mistake or another in every sermon, and in some sermons perhaps in many. And this, at best, is a great waste of time and prostitution of the sacred office of preaching the gospel.

But to return,

4. I mentioned, 2dly, that this pure word of God must be preached *fully*; that as we deliver *nothing but the truth*, so that we declare the *whole truth*, at least as far as it is necessary to be declared in order to the edification and salvation of our hearers. This rule, though of equal importance with that last mentioned, is yet much more frequently transgressed. Many, who do not *corrupt*, yet *mutilate* the truth as it is in Jesus, and represent to mankind a lame and imperfect system of doctrine. They *keep back something* that would be profitable, "and shun to declare the whole counsel of God."

5. Thus some, who very properly explain the *nature* and enforce the *necessity of repentance towards God*, are nevertheless very deficient on the subject of *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*; others, who speak with great clearness on *faith*, and *justification* by faith, are wanting as to *holiness*, either not preaching it *at all*, or not in that *extent* in which it is explained and enforced in the oracles of God, or not with an *earnestness* that bears any proportion to its deep importance. Others, again, who fail not to testify, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and who describe its nature and point out its excellency admirably well as far as it is *internal*, are yet short on the head of outward *good works*, either not inculcating them at all, lest they should be deemed *legal preachers*, (as the phrase is,) or not with a frequency and fervency that is any way proportionable to the amazing stress laid on them by our Lord and his apostles; or perhaps they do not descend sufficiently to particulars, but content themselves with recommending them in the general; or, it may be, they confine their discourses to certain *kinds of good works*, to which their hearers have not much objection, and omit to inculcate others, though equally important, and absolutely necessary to be performed. I might enlarge and produce many more instances of this partial way of preaching. I might particularly name *watchfulness*, *self-denial*, *taking up the daily cross*, *redeeming time*, employing our money and other talents to the glory of God and for the good of mankind, as subjects often urged in the holy scriptures, but seldom, very seldom so much as

mentioned in some pulpits. But as this would carry me away from my design, I forbear,

And observe, 3dly, That as it is a real glory to a place of worship that the gospel be preached in it *purely*, without any false mixture, and *fully*, without any important defect; so also that it be preached *clearly*; I mean that the *method* and *language* be intelligible and plain. This is a very desirable thing indeed, inasmuch as without it a preacher will not be well understood, and of consequence will be of little use. And though, as to this point, there is and will be a great difference, all that preach the gospel not having, in an equal degree, the gift of *thinking clearly* upon subjects, or of arranging their thoughts in proper order, or of expressing them in easy and intelligible language; yet none will be very deficient in perspicuity, who accustom themselves to scriptural ideas, and to express those ideas in scriptural words. But where this is neglected, and other authors (the mystic, suppose, or any others that depart from the Bible) are more studied and imitated than the prophets and apostles, it is no wonder if the speaker, perhaps affecting *mystery* and *obscurity*, become unintelligible, even upon the plainest subjects. Happy those preachers who take the apostle Peter's advice on this head, and not desiring to be wise above what is written, endeavour, whenever they speak in public, to speak as the oracles of God! and happy those hearers that sit under such preachers.

7. Once more upon this point; another thing included in this glory of the divine word, which I mentioned, is that it be spoken *with power*, I mean, that it reach the *hearts* of the hearers, and be effectual to their conversion, edification, and comfort. Now in order to this, two things are essentially necessary, 1st. That the preacher experience and practise himself what he inculcates upon others: and 2dly, that he have the presence of his Master with him, and the heavenly unction of his Spirit accompanying his word. Without the *former*, a preacher will not *feel himself* what he delivers, and of consequence will not make others feel; and without the *latter*, whatever effect is produced will be very transient. But where both these are united, the sacred truths of the gospel, like live coals from the altar, proceeding from a mind burning with divine love, by the blessed agency of the Holy Spirit, will fall flaming upon the souls of the hearers, and that in such abundance,

as not only to melt a heart of wax, but even a heart of *ice*, or rend in sunder a heart of *marble*, so that the waters of genuine repentance will flow forth, and a way be made for the entrance of the Lord of glory into the soul of the humble worshipper.

8. This leads me to mention a *second* particular, constituting the true glory of a house of God, viz. that *good, spiritual good*, be done in it. Now, 1st, good is done when the dark minds of men are enlightened, and they are made acquainted with things spiritual and divine; when they are brought to know themselves to be those fallen creatures that the scriptures describe, *ignorant, sinful, guilty, depraved, weak, and wretched*; when they are instructed in the way of salvation through faith in a Mediator between God and man; in the will of God and their duty; when God himself, in his nature and attributes, in his word and works, is made known to them, that they may no longer blindly worship and serve an unknown God, but being acquainted with him, may pay him the homage and obedience he requires and will accept. Good is done yet more, 2dly, when men are not only enlightened to *see*, but awakened to *feel*, (as it were) divine truths, so that they come to them (as St. Paul has it) "not in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance;" when they are not only *convinced of sin*, but also of *righteousness*, and "being justified by faith find peace with God," and are "in Christ new creatures." Good is done most of all, 3dly, when those that are born of God's Spirit are trained up for his kingdom, and instead of being suffered to halt in, or go back from his ways, are led forward in all holiness and usefulness, both inward and outward, so as to be made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," and receive a *full reward* in the kingdom of their Father!

9. Hence will arise a *third* glory: such a place will be crowded with *attentive, intelligent* hearers, *humble, devout* worshippers, *exemplary, useful* christians; with hearers that attend to and understand what is spoken, that can distinguish truth from error, and can discern between wholesome food and poison; with worshippers that "worship the Father in spirit and in truth," that "pray in the Holy Ghost," praise God from a sense of his goodness, and being "joined to the Lord in one Spirit, have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ;" with christians, who have the *Spirit* as well as the *letter* of christianity, the *power* as well as the



*form* of godliness, who have in them the "mind that was in Christ, and walk as he also walked," who adorn their profession by an unblameable conduct, and bless their town and neighbourhood by an uninterrupted course of good works, done to the bodies and souls of men. This, my brethren, is a glory indeed, and such as would shed a lustre upon a building very inferior to this in external workmanship. God grant that this glory may belong to this place! I doubt not but the hearts of hundreds of you say, Amen! And I trust your prayers will be heard: but, to prevent your being discouraged, you must remember, this is a work of time, and that the gospel does not find people pious, but is intended to make them such.

10. At first, and for some time, many that attend here will be the reverse of the characters I have noticed, both ignorant and wicked, both careless and useless. Nay, and there is reason to fear, notwithstanding all that can be done for them, that many will remain such. But, I trust, not all. Some, at least, and (I would fain hope) not a few, will meet with a spiritual cure in this Bethesda, this house of mercy, this hospital of souls, which God hath inclined and enabled you to erect out of compassion for your sick and dying fellow-creatures. And be sure you never despair of any, be they ever so far gone in the wasting and painful disorders of sin, but bring them hither with you, and in earnest prayer and supplication, recommend them to the attention and care of that great and good Physician of souls, who (I trust) will not fail to attend here from time to time, and visit every ward in this spiritual infirmary. May he find *thee* out, in thy disabled and languishing state, thou poor, disconsolate mourner!

11. This brings me to the *fourth* real glory of a house of God, and the last I shall now mention, viz. *The presence of the Master in his own house*, of the Father of the family in his own family, And this is graciously promised in his word of truth, all the promises of which are *Yea and Amen*. "Where two or three are met together in my name, says Jesus, there am I in the midst of them." "In every place where I record my name, says God the Father, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." This, my brethren, is the *chief glory* of a place of worship, that the God of glory be in it to bless his worshippers. But this is a glory that depends, not upon the place, but upon those that wor-

ship in it. It is not skill in architecture, manifested in the beauty or commodiousness of the *church, chapel, or preaching-house*, that can invite or ensure the divine presence, but it is the *seriousness, humility, faith, and devotion* of those that assemble therein, that will be crowned with that blessing. For though God grants his presence and all his blessings of mere grace and mercy, yet *levity and pride, unbelief and formality*, (not to mention known and wilful sin) in his professing people, will always be a bar and hindrance to the communication of them. And the Lord by withdrawing himself and keeping at a distance from such worshippers, will show that he is displeased with and resents their conduct. Let us therefore expect and wait for his presence in his own way, and we shall not be disappointed.

12. And now it will not be difficult to say when one place exceeds another in glory. That place where the word of God is preached most *purely*, with fewest human mixtures; most *fully*, nothing being kept back that would be profitable; most *clearly*, the *language* being plain and the *method* natural and distinct; most *powerfully*, the Spirit of God accompanying what is spoken, and rendering it the power of God unto salvation to those that attend: That place where the most good is done, where the greatest number of sinners are converted to God, and those that are converted are built up in holiness: That place where the greatest number of real christians and spiritual worshippers assemble to hear the word of God, and join together in prayer and praise; and where the Lord most manifests his presence, displays his glory, and pours out his Spirit;—That place (I say) undoubtedly exceeds other places in glory, even though it should have nothing external, as to beauty or ornament, or even commodiousness belonging to it.

13. My dear brethren, it will fill your hearts with gratitude, to look back and see that your last house was not without its glory in all these respects. There the *pure* word of God was (I hope) *fully* and *clearly* preached, and that with a measure of *divine power* accompanying and rendering it effectual to the conversion, edification, and comfort of many souls. There many that were ignorant received instruction, many that were guilty received forgiveness, and many that had long lived in all manner of vice and profaneness, were “created in Jesus Christ unto good works,” and have since that time “adorned the doctrine of God their

Saviour in all things." Some of these (who would have rejoiced to have seen what we see this day) have already finished their course, and are now with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; and others are here present at this time, and can bear witness to the truth of what I say.

14. But though, in these respects, the former house was glorious, excuse me, if I this day express a hope that this latter house will exceed in glory. If I did not fear it might have the appearance of boasting, and if I did not think it better to let the event speak for itself in this case, I would proceed to give you some reasons of this hope. I would say, that the preachers, as a body, for whose use this place is intended, are much advanced in knowledge and experience, and that from hence one may reasonably expect the gospel will be preached by them more *purely, fully, and clearly*, than it was years ago. I trust also that many of them are grown in grace and in a conformity to their living head, whence one may hope their word will be attended with more power, and will be made a greater blessing. I might observe, that this house, being much larger than the other, affords a larger field to labour in, and makes room for a greater number of sick and disordered souls than could get admittance into the other comparatively small place, that they may receive a cure and recover spiritual health. The consequence of this will be, more true worshippers will assemble here than attended at the former house, and in answer to their prayers (I trust) a more glorious display of the divine presence will be witnessed.

15. But while I go on hinting to you, in this way, the grounds of my hope that the glory of this latter house will exceed the glory of the former, I find myself secretly checked by a fear, lest as your congregation increases, and you grow more into repute in the town and neighbourhood, the spirit of the world should increase among you and mar your rising glory. And I think it my duty to say, that it is not impossible, but our crafty adversary (of whose devices you are not ignorant) may hope to bring *evil* out of this *good*, and make what ought to be the occasion of our *rise* the means of our *fall*. For while the greater *commodiousness*, not to say *neatness* and *beauty* of this lovely place, invites more of the rich and gay to associate with you in your worship, there is a danger lest this should be an introduction to that acquaintance

with them, which indeed may and will, if *you* are faithful, do them an eternal good, and make them bless the day that ever they came within these doors; but if not, may gradually do you hurt, cause your "fine gold to become dim," and "intermix your wine with water." Leaving therefore the event to determine fully which house will exceed in glory, I hasten,

II. To call your attention to the gracious promise here made with regard to the Temple at Jerusalem, where the Saviour was to appear, and every place where his gospel is properly preached, and he is present by his Spirit, "In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts."

1. To understand this divine promise, we must recollect that man is by nature *at enmity with God*. According to the doctrine of scripture, a doctrine confirmed by the experience of all nations and ages, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, the whole world is guilty before God," and all mankind "are by nature children of wrath," that is, are under condemnation, and exposed to divine wrath on account of their original depravity and actual transgressions. There is an enmity on the part of man towards God: "The carnal mind, (says St. Paul,) is enmity against God, it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And in consequence of this, there is *wrath* on the part of God towards man, "wrath revealed from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

2. Now as we were *without strength* in this matter, and could neither by our own works remove the wrath on God's part, and reconcile him to us, nor by our own power remove the enmity on our part and reconcile ourselves to God, therefore God hath provided a Mediator between himself and us to make up this breach, in a way consistent with his own honour and our salvation. That *he* might be *glorified* while *man* was *saved*, that is, that the *evil of sin* might be manifested while its *guilt* was cancelled; that God might display his *justice* in punishing it, while he manifested his *mercy* in pardoning it, he "sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful *flesh* to be a sacrifice for sin, thereby condemning sin in the *flesh*." "On him he hath laid the iniquities of us all, hath wounded him for our transgressions, and bruized him for our iniquities, and caused him to bear the chastisement of our peace." "Him he hath

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set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, to declare, I say, his righteousness," that is, his justice as well as mercy, "that he might be just," while he is the merciful "justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." *This man*, therefore, is said by Micah to *be the peace*, chap. v. 5. And St. Paul tells us, Col. i. 19, &c. "that it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace by the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself. "He is *the peace* between Jews and Gentiles, (as we are assured, Eph. ii. 14.) "who makes both one, breaking down the middle wall of partition (viz. the ceremonial law) that was between them;" and much more is he the peace between man and God, "reconciling us to God by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

3. To dwell a moment upon this: it appears from most of the passages just quoted, that Christ by his death not only atones for sin, and reconciles *God to us*, but also *us to God*. His death upon the cross being the most wonderful instance of God's love to a lost world, which ever was or could be given, has a manifest tendency, in its own nature, when discovered to the soul in all its mysterious grace, to soften, melt, subdue, and win over the whole heart to God. "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn," says the prophet Zachariah. "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me," says Jesus. "The love of Christ constraineth us, (says St. Paul,) while we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again."

" Thus while I hear my Saviour God,  
 Count o'er my sins, a heavy load,  
 He bore upon the tree;  
 Inward I blush with secret shame,  
 And weep, and love, and bless the name,  
 That knew nor sin, nor grief, nor shame,  
 But bore them all for me."

It is true, the sufferings and death of Christ cannot produce this effect without the influence of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to "take of the things of Jesus and show them unto us." But then his death also opens a way for our receiving that influence. For

being "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, he hath ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious;" hath "received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit," to work repentance and faith in us, to subdue our enmity, and influence our hearts with peace and love.

4. For be it observed, though *peace with God* is free for all; though none are excluded from it who do not exclude themselves; though the Lord proclaims "peace, peace, to him that is near, and to him that is afar off;" yet none can partake of it without "repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." As God will never be reconciled to an impenitent, unbelieving sinner, so such an one is not reconciled to God, and never can enjoy peace of mind; no, *the wicked*, the inwardly as well as outwardly wicked, the unconverted, the unregenerate, "are like the troubled sea which cannot rest; There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." *Repentance*, therefore, is absolutely necessary, yea, and *fruits meet for repentance*. Equally necessary is *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, without which, notwithstanding our repentance, we are still "condemned, and the wrath of God abideth on us." And this faith, we must remember, must work by love, overcome the world, and purify the heart. When a true penitent comes to God by this faith, casting his soul, with all his sins, on the Lord Jesus, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and embracing the promises of God made through him, God becomes "merciful to his unrighteousness, and remembers his sins and iniquities no more." And "being justified by faith he has peace with God."

5. Now the never-failing fruit of this peace with God is *peace of mind*. For as "there is no condemnation from God, to those that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," so neither are they condemned in their own hearts. Their past sins being pardoned, and their present corruptions being conquered, it cannot be but they must have the answer of a *good conscience*, "a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man." Hence they must have *confidence towards God*, and will be enabled to cast their care upon him for all that they want for body and soul, for time and for eternity. And the fruit of this will be a serenity of mind, a tranquillity of spirit, which the apostle

calls "a peace that passeth all understanding." "Thou wilt keep him," says Isaiah, "in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Pride, self-will, discontent, impatience, anger, malice, envy, distrust, anxiety, and other unhappy and uneasy passions, being subdued; and humility, resignation, meekness, and love, taking place, they must (as our Lord expresses it) "find rest to their souls," and "the peace of God will keep their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

6. And will not such, "as much as in them lieth, live peaceably with all men?" Surely, they will not knowingly injure any man in his person, property, or character; and when others injure them, they will manifest a *meek, gentle, and forgiving* spirit. Injustice, oppression, guile, fraud, covetousness, ambition, and other causes of quarrelling being removed, peace will take place in families and neighbourhoods; and in proportion as this religion gains ground, peace will spread its influence over all the earth, so that "men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Such is the happy tendency of the religion of Jesus, a religion of peace and love!

"Sweet peace it brings wherever it arrives,  
It builds our quiet, as it forms our lives,  
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,  
And opens in each breast a little heaven."

Such are the trophies of the Prince of Peace, whose nativity we are about to celebrate. Well might the heavenly host usher in his birth by proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men."

7. Now this peace is represented in my text as the *gift of God*. "In this place will I give peace." And whether we consider the great *Peace-maker*, the Mediator between God and man, who is the Father's *gift* to a lost world; or whether we consider the *repentance* and *faith* whereby we obtain an interest in him, which are the gifts of God and of the operation of his Spirit; or whether we consider the *peace* itself consequent hereupon, the expression is undoubtedly proper: *The Lord gives peace*. It is not purchased by our works, it is not effected by our strength, but it is the free, undeserved gift of the Divine mercy, brought into our souls by the

inspiration of his Holy Spirit. Free grace bestows the inestimable blessing upon those that are utterly unworthy ; guilty man, without any pretensions to merit, only receives it, and the Holy Ghost seals it upon the conscience, and diffuses it abroad in the heart. " Thus all things are of God, who reconciles us to himself by Jesus Christ, and commits to his servants the word of reconciliation. They therefore are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech us by them : they pray us in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. For God made him to be sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

8. And because the Mediator between God and man, through whom we obtain peace, was to appear in this second temple, and while it stood, was to be offered a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; because the gospel of peace was to be published, and the Spirit of peace bestowed there ; therefore the Lord says, "*in this place* will I give peace." A promise this, which, at least in a secondary sense, may be applied to every place where the *same Mediator*, though invisible, is present, the *same* sacrifice for sin held up, the *same* gospel of peace proclaimed, and the *same* spirit of peace conferred. Where God by his word reconciles sinners to himself ; where he calls them to repentance, and enables them to believe in the Lord Jesus with their *hearts unto righteousness* ; where he justifies them from all things, and gives them peace with himself, and peace of mind ; where he influences their heart with love to one another, and disposes them to live peaceably with all men ; there surely he may properly be said to *give peace*. I doubt not but the event will show that he will give it *here*.

9. And when you observe the word preached here crowned with this gift, and made the means of communicating such an inestimable blessing as *peace with God*, to your fellow-creatures, a blessing that draws after it all the unsearchable riches of grace and glory, how will your hearts rejoice that the Lord inclined you to engage in and help forward this design, and how well bestowed will you think the little money that you have contributed towards it. And, it may be, that some person very *near* and *dear* to you may here find this pearl of great price, an intimate acquaintance suppose, a friend whom you love as your own soul, a brother, a sister, a wife, a child, (for these you will doubtless endeavour to bring along with you, at all opportunities, to this house of prayer) and in that case how



will your joy be doubled, and the nearer and dearer the parties are to you, the greater will be your joy that they found a spiritual cure in this house of mercy which you (through Divine grace inclining you) had a hand in erecting.

10. But whatever joy it may yield you in *time*, to see sinners converted here, you will rejoice much more on this account in *eternity*! When your disembodied spirit in the paradise of God, and more especially your whole person at the judgment-seat of Christ, sees light in his light, and having your faculties enlarged and strengthened beyond what is now conceivable, when you look forward through everlasting ages, and view on the one hand fiery torments escaped, and on the other heavenly joys attained through your building this place, by a great multitude of precious souls, some of them once nearly allied to you by sundry close ties, and *all* your fellow-creatures and your fellow-sinners; *all* the offspring of that one God whom you love, and the purchase of that precious blood which was equally shed for you and for them, how unspeakable must be your joy! But I forbear to enlarge upon a thought too great for utterance, and which, if pursued, would be an inlet to consolation, too overwhelming for flesh and blood to bear; and that this blessed work of saving souls may be this day begun, and that upon our first appearing here, we may reap the first-fruits of that *harvest* of conversions to be hereafter gathered in this place; before I conclude, I beg leave just to add a few words by way of application and improvement of what has been advanced.

1. I have been describing, my brethren, and pointing out the way to that *peace with God, and peace of mind*, which is promised to be given in this place, and is the only thing that can render life comfortable, death safe, and eternity happy. And now I call upon you to examine yourselves touching this matter, whether this peace be yours. To know this, recollect, I beseech you, what has been said and proved to you from God's word, that there is *no peace to the wicked* that go on in sin, to the impenitent and unbelieving, the unconverted and unregenerate.

2. If you are of this number, be assured, you have neither lot nor part in this matter. Whether you be outward sinners, such as drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers; fornicators, adulterers, unclean persons; liars, slanderers, evil-speakers; guilty of fraud, vio-

lence, oppression; unjust, unmerciful, deceitful; or whether you be under the power of your inward corruptions, as pride, self-will, discontent; anger, malice, envy; hatred, animosity, revenge; covetousness, lust, ambition; or whether, although your temper be even, and your conduct regular, yet at the same time, your soul be unrenewed, your heart cold, and your worship formal, and, though you have the *form*, you be devoid of the *power* of religion; be it known to you, you have no share in this blessing which I have been describing: God is not at peace with you, even as you are not at peace with him. On the contrary, his "wrath is revealed from heaven" against you, as "against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Wherefore we warn you, "be not deceived, God is not mocked:" As sure as he is a being of unspotted holiness and inflexible justice, so sure, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" you who "sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." His holiness will be to you a consuming fire, his justice will execute strict judgment upon you, and you shall infallibly "perish from the way, if his wrath is kindled, yea, but a little," how much more when it burns with unabating fury, "consumes the earth with its increase, and melts down the foundation of the mountains," when "it burns and shall not be quenched?" O ye unholy and profane, "how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

3. There is but one way in which you can escape this, and that, I fear, is a way in which you do not choose to walk. It is the way of unfeigned repentance, lively faith, and new obedience. *Thus, and only thus*, can you find mercy with the Lord, and stand approved before the Son of man. Oh hear the voice, the sweet and melting voice of mercy! "As I live (saith the Lord) I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth; therefore, turn and live ye. Cease to do evil, learn to do well; wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Come now, and let us reason together, (saith the Lord) though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red as crimson they shall be as wool; for all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven" unto penitent sinners through the Redeemer, whose "blood cleanseth from all sin." "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,

and by him all, that" with penitent hearts, "believe, are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by" their own obedience.

4. And does not this cheering voice of mercy gladden thy very heart, thou ungodly, guilty, and self-condemned sinner? Dost thou not see cause, great cause to praise him, that the door of salvation is not yet shut against thee, *thee*, (I say) who hast so long refused to enter in at it? That he has not yet cut *thee* down who hast so long only cumbered the ground? Oh praise him, if thou hast any sense of gratitude left, that he still waits to be gracious, still extends the arms of his mercy and love to embrace thy guilty soul!—But at the same time, consider, thou knowest not how soon the door may be shut against thee if thou still deferrest to enter: Thou knowest not how soon he may shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure, if thou still delayest to take refuge there! Remember, the *goodness of God* ought to lead thee to *repentance*, but if it have not that happy effect, *thou* wilt soon find it changed into a sea of wrathful indignation to overwhelm thy hopeless soul!

5. I testify to thee this day, in the name of the once-crucified, but now highly exalted Saviour, whom thou hast hitherto despised and rejected; if that amazing love which brought him from the palaces of heaven, where he was attended and worshipped by myriads of angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, into this howling wilderness, this world of wo, where he was forsaken of all, even of the twelve poor fishermen, his only attendants; which induced him to assume this vile body, subject to infirmity, pain, and death, that thou mightest rise through his fall, and be exalted through his humiliation; mightest be invested with the divine nature, with holiness, immortality, and bliss, and dwell in mansions of glory for ever;—the wonderful love which exposed him to hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, shame and contempt, that thy famished and starving soul might be fed with the bread of life, refreshed with the wine of divine love, clothed with the garments of salvation, and honoured before an assembled world;—the mysterious love which subjected him to the severe stroke of his Father's justice, the most malevolent spite of his own creatures, and the most implacable malice of infernal fiends, that thou mightest be delivered from the power of Satan, enjoy

the good-will of saints and angels, and be happy in the smile and favour of thy God; the unsearchable love which filled his soul with unknown agony in the garden, crowned his head with sharp thorns in the judgment-hall, tore his back with knotty whips before Pilate, nailed his body to the execrable cross between the vilest miscreants, and opened a fountain in his side where thou mightest quench thy thirst for happiness, and wash away the filth of sin;—if this great, amazing, and unfathomable love (I say) do not win thy heart, and melt thee in its holy flame into a vessel of honour, I testify to thee, it will suddenly be converted into fiery indignation, which will kindle upon and consume thy body and soul in its unquenchable flames!

Foolish man, what art thou doing? Despisest thou the riches of his glory, the paradise of his delights, the dignity of his crown, which he tenderly and earnestly invites thee to share? Slightest thou his love? His bleeding, agonizing, expiring love!—Has he not suffered enough? Art thou resolved to crucify him afresh and put him to open shame? Sinner, forbear! Cease to revile and buffet that lovely person! Cease to spit in that divine face which angels gaze upon with rapture! How canst thou bruise that sacred head! Ah! do not drive those rude nails still further! Why wilt thou give that guiltless heart another and a deeper wound? Sinner, what evil hath he done? Wherein hath he injured thee? Injured thee! alas! he hath loved thee even unto death, and quenched by his precious blood the flames of hell kindling about thy unholy soul! And dost thou thus requite his undeserved favour and boundless love? Wretched man, abstain! Join no more the murderers of thy Saviour! Bid adieu to their company! Let his love overcome thee! Throw down the weapons of thy rebellion; fall at his dear feet, pierced by thy crimes, and distilling a sacred balm to heal thy wounded soul! And kiss the Son lest he be angry! Remember he has authority to execute judgment, to save or to destroy. “He has the keys of death and of hell; he opens and no man shuts, shuts and no man opens.” If he once “swear in his wrath thou shalt not enter into his rest,” thy die will be cast, and thy wretched fate determined for ever! Now is the accepted time! now is the day of salvation! Now knock at the door of mercy, and say, *Lord, Lord, open to me!*

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And he *will* open to thee; he will pardon, accept, and bless thee, and even thou shalt ensure the *things which belong to thy peace before they are for ever hid from thine eyes!*

# SERMON XI.

PREACHED

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

MRS. FOSTER,

AT THE CHAPEL IN CHERRY-STREET, BIRMINGHAM,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 29, 1790.

*I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1 Thess iv. 13, 14.*

1. **A**N eminent *French* writer, *Mons. Saurin*, has given it as his opinion, that this is one of the most difficult texts in the New Testament. Accordingly he presents us with a long and learned exposition of it, in which he proceeds upon a very singular hypothesis. He supposes "that the desire which prevailed in the primitive christians to see Christ when he should appear to judgment, made them lament those of their brethren who died, as cut off from that hope; and that it was in reference to *this*, that the apostle assured them in this passage, that such would be entirely on a level with those of their brethren who should then be found alive." This supposition seems to me as improbable as it is extraordinary. It is not at all likely that the christians at *Thessalonica*, who had for some time sat under the ministry of an apostle, should either be so ignorant as to imagine that those of their brethren who died, were cut off from the hope of seeing Christ, when he should appear again, or, if they had imagined this, that they should have grieved particularly on that account.

2. Besides, this hypothesis, instead of solving any difficulty there may be in the text, or casting any peculiar light upon it, only tends to render it more obscure, and to involve the subject in greater difficulties. For one may naturally inquire (as a judicious and pious writer has justly observed) why the apostle does not directly tell them that there was no "particular room for such lamentations on this account, as they themselves, and many succeeding generations, were to die before the coming of Christ." To answer this objection, *M. Saurin* is driven to acknowledge, that "the apostle did not urge *that*, because he did not then exactly know whether Christ's appearance would be in that age, or at some much more remote distance of time."

3. But though we should allow that the apostle's *ignorance* as to *that point*, might be very consistent with the knowledge of all that was necessary to the preaching of the gospel, and the full and proper execution of his office; yet we have no authority from his own epistles, or from any accounts that antiquity has handed down concerning him, to suppose that he was ignorant respecting it. It is true, from the following words in the 15th verse, *We who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord*, some have inferred that the apostle expected himself to be found alive at our Lord's second coming. But this inference they would hardly have drawn, had they observed how common it is with all the inspired writers to speak as if they included themselves, when in reality they did not intend it. Thus *Hosca* says, *There (viz. in Bethel) God spake with us*. Surely, *Hosca* was not at *Bethel*, nay, was not in existence, when God spake with *Jacob* there. The Psalmist, speaking of the dividing of the *Red Sea*,\* says, *There did we rejoice in him*. And yet he could not be present when the *Red Sea* was divided. In like manner, the apostle *James*, speaking of the tongue, says, *Therewith curse we men*. Certainly he did not curse men. Just so, *St. Paul* did not mean to be understood strictly in these words, as if he asserted that he should be alive when Jesus should appear to judgment! but he speaks of those who should be found alive at that time.

4. That this is the true interpretation of the apostle's words, appears from hence, that in several of his epistles he plainly

\* Psalm lxi. 6.

expresses his expectation of dying before the coming of Christ, (see Phil. i. 20. 1 Cor. vi. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 6.) And in the 2d epistle to this people, assures them that the "day of the Lord was not at hand, and would not come, except there came a falling away first, and the man of sin were revealed, the son of perdition,"\* of whom he prophesies such things as were not likely at all to be fulfilled in that pure age of the church. Add to this, that what he said on this occasion, he said *by the word of the Lord*, that is, by an express revelation from him, and surely the *Lord* could not be mistaken. He knew his apostle would not be found alive at his second coming.

5. The above-mentioned hypothesis, therefore, is not to be admitted. And there is no need of it. The text is easily explained without it. We have only to suppose, that the apostle had observed himself while at *Thessalonica*, or had been informed by *Timothy*, after he left that city, how tenderly many of his new converts had been affected by the departure of such as had been taken from them since they had embraced christianity, and that he intended in these words, to suggest considerations, which, if believed and laid to heart, would be effectual, if not entirely to *remove*, yet greatly to *moderate* their sorrow. And at the same time, foreseeing what a temptation to excessive grief among the tender-hearted and benevolent followers of Jesus, the death of their brethren, especially of such as were peculiarly dear to them, would be in every age; he might also, in this admirable passage, consult the benefit of future ages, even of as many as should read his excellent epistles to the end of time.

And, as the pious writer quoted above, justly observes, "Who can be sufficiently thankful for the strong consolation these divine words administer!" How many drooping hearts have been cheered by them in every age, while successively mourning over the pious dead! How often have we ourselves been driven to them, as to a sacred anchor, when our hearts have been overwhelmed within us! And if God continue us a few years longer, what repeated occasions may arise of our flying to them again!"

6. Let us fly to them at this time, my brethren, in our distress for the loss, sudden and unlooked-for, of one dear to many of you,



snatched away in the bloom of youth, and in the pride of her years, from a mourning and disconsolate husband, (to whom I hope the severe stroke will be sanctified,) and from a rising progeny, who are yet too young to be sensible of the loss they have sustained, or to shed one tear on the mournful occasion! I doubt not, my brethren, but you will join with me in praying that their *mother's* God, the parent of the orphan, and the helper of the helpless, may be the protection of their infancy, the guide of their youth, and the support and consolation of their riper age! And that many years hence, when her prayers have been heard for them, and they are born of the Spirit of God, made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and have long served God and their generation faithfully, according to the divine will, they may be welcomed by her that bare them, (and who in giving life to them suffered death herself) into everlasting habitations! It is true, she was hardly spared long enough with them to know them all on earth, and much less to give them an opportunity of knowing her; yet, I doubt not, but she will acknowledge them in that day for *her children*, while they also are divinely instructed to look up and call her mother! Then the present breach will be more than made up! The husband will again receive his wife, and the mother will embrace her children! But, oh! how changed! All immortal! All glorious! and in a world where pain and parting, sin and sorrow, are no more! There in those bright realms, no tender and dying mothers, with bleeding hearts, weep over the helpless infants from whom they are about to be torn, and whom they are to leave behind in an ensnaring and troublesome world: And, no affectionate, inconsolable husbands cling to the cold remains of departed wives! There pious friends and relatives, separated for a season, are united again to be parted no more. And there, their felicity is pure without alloy, full without measure, and lasting without end!

In discoursing further from this important, comfortable, and I think not obscure passage, I wish to call your attention,

I. To the Character of those who may properly be said to *sleep in Jesus*.

II. To the Hope which we entertain concerning such, with the foundation and certainty of this hope, and,

III. To the proper Fruit of it, if not entirely to remove, yet greatly to moderate our sorrow, and turn it into a lasting mean of good.

And, 1st, we are to consider who they are that *sleep in Jesus*.

1. Upon this head I shall say but little, for I consider myself as discoursing to a congregation who are frequently addressed on such topics, and who certainly, in general, are not ignorant concerning them. You know, my brethren, that a man cannot, with any propriety, be said to *sleep in Jesus*, unless he first be *in Jesus*, that is, unless he be possessed of a real, vital union with him. This union with Christ is much spoken of, and frequently inculcated in the New Testament, and is illustrated by our Lord in the xvth chapter of St. John's gospel, by the union which subsists between the *vine* and its *branches*. Now the branch is not only *supported* by the vine, and *adheres* to it, but it derives *sap*, and of consequence *growth* and *fruitfulness* from it. Just so, they that are united to Jesus not only depend upon and cleave to him, but "receive out of his fulness grace to help in time of need." And their knowledge in divine things, their holiness and happiness, yea, and their usefulness too, in a great measure, depend hereupon. "I am the Vine, (says he,) ye are the branches. Abide in me, and I in you; for as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." A most express and important declaration. Would to God it were laid to heart by all professors of religion!

2. St. *Paul* uses another comparison. In divers parts of his epistle, he illustrates the union which a believer has with Christ, by that which the members of the human body have with the head of it. "As the body is one, (says he,) and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink of one Spirit."\* And again, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."† Now the human body is not only *guided* and *governed* by the head, but has life and nourishment communicated therefrom. In allusion to

\* 1 Cor. xii. 12. † Ver. 27.

this, the apostle exhorts us to "grow up into Christ, who is the head, in all things; from whom, (adds he,) the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body."\* He speaks to the same purpose in the epistle to the Colossians: "He is the head of his body, the church;—the head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with all the increase of God."†

3. The Lord Jesus, therefore, our living Head, not only *instructs and guides* us as our *prophet*, and *commands and governs* us as our *King*; but as the *High Priest* of our profession, who *ever liveth to make intercession for us*, he receives of the Father and communicates to us those supplies of grace, those influences of the Holy Spirit, whereby we not only grow up into him our living Head in all things, and in due time arrive at the measure of the stature of his fulness; but are enabled to act the part assigned us as particular members of the body for the good of the whole. And then, as there is a real and sensible sympathy between the head and its members, so we are assured that the High Priest of our profession is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and tenderly sympathizes with us; while, on the other hand, we have "fellowship with him in his sufferings," and are affected with the wants and distresses of every fellow-member of his mystical body.

4. It appears from all this, 2dly, that those who have *union* with Jesus, have also an *interest* in him, just as a branch has an interest in the tree in which it grows, such as it has in no other tree in the world; and the member an interest in the head of the body to which it belongs, such as it has in the head of no other body. "My beloved is mine," says the spouse, "and I am his." Christ is theirs, and they are his. They are *his*, being dedicated to him in faith and love, and employed for him in duty and service, *living* no longer "unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." And he is *theirs*, being "made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." As their *wisdom*, he teaches them by his word and Spirit to know both their duty and their happiness, and though they were once *darkness*,

\* Eph. iv. 15. † Col. i. 18. and ii. 19.

they are now light in him, the Lord. As their *righteousness*, he justifies them from all things, and through him they have peace with God. As their *sanctification*, he communicates that grace, whereby they are not only delivered from the *power*, but at length purged from the *defilement* of sin, and restored to the "image of him that created them," even *righteousness* and *true holiness*. And as their *redemption*, he will, in due time, rescue them from all the consequences of the fall, will ransom their very bodies from the grave, and fix them in glory and felicity for ever.

5. As to the *means* whereby we obtain this high privilege, and the *marks* whereby we are satisfied ourselves, and give proof to others that we possess it, I need say but little. It is manifest from what has already been advanced, that it is not the being baptized with water, and making a profession of christianity, that can either entitle us to, or put us in possession of such an inestimable blessing. No: a person may, according to St. *Paul's* doctrine,\* "profess to know God, and yet by works deny him," as it is but too visible, the greatest part of the professors of christianity do at this day. Nor is it enough that "he that names the name of Christ," or has that name named upon him in baptism, "departs from iniquity," and is in all outward things unblameable. Even this will not entitle a man to this blessing, or prove that he is in possession of it. For we may have "a name to live, when we are dead."† And whatever a man may be in his outward deportment, however blameless, however exemplary, yet if he be not "born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" if he have not the "Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," and if Christ be not "in him, dwelling in his heart by faith, he is a reprobate."‡ Neither will the most diligent and constant attendance upon the means of grace and ordinances of God, whether public or private, unite us savingly to Christ, or afford sure proof of our being possessed of an interest in him. For, if St. *Paul* may be credited, a man may have a *form of godliness*, and may be destitute of the *power*, and if the faithful and true Witness may be depended upon, the only *true worshippers* are those "that worship the Father in Spirit and in truth." Nay, and as to *good works*, even works of *mercy*, done to the bodies and souls of men, on which the greatest stress seems

\* Tit. i. 16.

† Rev. iii. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

to be laid by most, yet even *these* themselves, however largely and earnestly inculcated in the holy scriptures, are not, properly speaking, the *means whereby* we are ingrafted into Christ, nor are they of themselves sufficient evidences that we belong to him. "For though I give all my goods to feed the poor, (says the last-mentioned apostle,\*) and have not love, I am nothing." For "in Christ Jesus, nothing availeth, but faith that worketh by love."†

6. This is properly the *mean* whereby we obtain this blessing, even *faith working by love*, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the glad tidings of salvation through him. For so he himself tells us, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; he that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God." These words of our Lord are echoed by *John* the Baptist, and confirmed, if they need any confirmation, by the testimony of all the apostles: "He that believeth on the Son," saith the Baptist, "hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "By grace are ye saved through faith," saith *St. Paul*: "The just," adds he, "shall live by faith." And speaking of himself and of every true christian, he observes, "The life I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who hath loved me, and given himself for me." "These things," says *St. John*, "have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe," that is, may continue to believe, "on the name of the Son of God."

7. But let it be observed, that this faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, always preceded by *repentance towards God*, is not barely "a conviction that Jesus of *Nazareth* is the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world:" for it is certain the devils believe this, and yet are not saved, and thousands upon earth have the same faith, and yet live and die in their sins: nor is it merely a persuasion, however real and strong, that he hath done and suffered all that is recorded in the New Testament concerning him, and therefore is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 3. † Gal. v. 6.

God by him. But, added to this, it implies, according to the account frequently given of it by our Lord himself, and by his apostles, *a coming to him*, and *confiding in him for salvation*, together with the *receiving of him* in every office and character which he sustains. This clearly appears from the following, and such like passages. "COME unto me, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—If any man thirst, let him COME unto me and drink.—He that COMETH unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.—That we should be to the praise of his glory who first TRUSTED in Christ.—To as many as RECEIVED him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name."

8. Now by this faith, which is of the operation of the Spirit of God, are we ingrafted into Christ, and made new creatures in him. "Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new!" The old man is put off, and the new man is put on, and we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, are renewed after the image of him that created us. We have in us the mind that was in Christ: we resemble him in all spiritual graces and heavenly virtues, and being conformed to him inwardly, we make it our care also to copy after him outwardly, and to walk as he walked.

He then that *lives*, and in consequence thereof *dies*, in the possession of this faith, and by this faith in a state of union with the Lord Jesus: he that has an *interest* in him, so that he can say, *My beloved is mine*, and has drunk into his Spirit, so that he can testify, *he dwells in me*. He that has "Christ formed in him the hope of glory," and diligently follows his blessed example; imitating his humility, resignation, and patience; his meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering; his love, purity, and obedience: he that holds on, and holds out; that *overcomes* to the last, that is, *faithful unto death*, and *endures unto the end*; he certainly sleeps in Jesus, and is entitled to all the blessings comprehended in the *hope* which the scripture encourages us to entertain concerning such.

But, II. What is this hope? This is the next thing to be considered.

1. With respect to this, I observe, 1st, that our hope concerning them is, that they only *sleep*: They are not *dead*. This is the

expression used by the apostle in my text. He does not say, that those of whom he speaks, *die*, but that they *sleep* in Jesus. The same word he also uses elsewhere, "Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."\* "We shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed."† But then we must take care we do not misunderstand the apostle. He does not speak this of the soul, but only of the *body*. It is not the former, but the latter that *sleepest*; *sleepest*, as *Daniel* expresses it, in the *dust of the earth*, where certainly the soul is not.

2. It is true, this distinction between *soul* and *body*, believed and maintained almost universally among the very heathen, is discarded by many in our age; particularly by a great man, whose doctrine many years ago published to the world, in his *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*, and in his *Philosophical Necessity*, is, That man has *no soul*, no rational and immortal principle within him, but is a purely *mechanical being*, wholly made of matter, and of consequence at death, wholly turns to dust! Though this unphilosophical, unscriptural, and uncomfortable doctrine, is sufficiently exposed in two Tracts, published two years ago, which many of you have read, especially the *ESSAY* in proof of an *immortal spirit in man*; yet for the sake of many here present to-night, who have not seen these tracts, I shall dwell a little upon the subject, and bring forward again a few texts of scripture, which no *wit* nor *artifice* of man, will ever be able to reconcile with that system. Indeed, the doctrine of *Materialism* is as contrary to *sound philosophy*, as it is to *scriptural christianity*. Even *that* teaches, and has always taught, that *mere matter cannot think*, and *that spirit cannot die*, unless, I mean, by an act of the omnipotent Creator's will, who certainly can as easily reduce to *nothing*, as he could call forth from *nothing*, any creature he has made. But though I mention this, it is not my intention to rest this weighty matter upon the uncertain decisions of philosophy. No; to the *law* and the *testimony* I make my appeal, and am persuaded, my brethren, that you in general will allow with me, that if any man speak not according to these infallible records, it is not owing to his *superior light*, but to his *greater darkness*. It is because there is *no light in him*.

\* 1 Cor. xi. 30. † 1 Cor. xv. 51.

3. Among a multitude of passages, which I might quote on this occasion, from these lively oracles of divine truth, and which would be to my purpose, the following seem manifestly to teach that *distinction* between *soul* and *body*, between *spirit* and *matter*, which I speak of, and which the church of Christ has in all ages firmly believed. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it."\* "If Christ be in you, yet the body is dead, (*σῆμα*, *mortal*) because of sin, (formerly committed) but the spirit, (or soul) is life, (is immortal) because of righteousness; and if he that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you,—he will also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."† "Fear not them that can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell."‡ "Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, (God knoweth:)—he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable things, which it is not possible for man to utter."§ "I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up; knowing that shortly I must put off my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me."|| Now I appeal to any reasonable man, *heathen* or *christian*, whether these texts do not imply that man has a *soul*, and whether it be possible to put any tolerable sense upon them, on the supposition that he has not?

4. And that the soul does not sleep with the body, but is in a degree of happiness or misery immediately after death, is equally manifest, from the same inspired writings.

"The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried: and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."¶ And that this is a representation of what happens immediately after death, and not of what will take place at the second coming of Christ, when all the dead will be raised, and the living changed, is plain from the 27th and 28th verses, in which we are informed, that while this passed in the invisible world, the rich man's brethren were still alive upon the earth, living, it seems, in an ungodly manner, and therefore, he

\* Eccles. xii. 7. † Rom. viii. 10, 11. ‡ Matt. x. 28. § 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4. || 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. ¶ Luke xvi. 22.



wished them to be warned "lest they also should come into that place of torment."

5. In the 9th verse of the same chapter, our Lord represents those whom we have relieved by the *mammon of unrighteousness*, and made our friends, as ready (supposing they go before us) to receive us "when we fail," that is, plainly, when we die, "into everlasting habitations." St. Paul, in the 6th to the *Hebrews*, speaks of some as already "inheriting the promises, through faith and patience," and exhorts us to be followers of them; and in the 12th chapter, informs us, who and where they are. For speaking of "Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," he not only mentions "God the Judge of all, Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, an innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first-born; but also particularly names "the spirits of the just made perfect," as one particular class of inhabitants in that heavenly world. In consistency with which, one of the scenes of that divine book which closes the sacred canon of Scripture, presents us with a view of the souls of the martyrs, not *dead*, nor *asleep*, but alive and active, yea, "crying with a loud voice, and saying, how long, O Lord, thou Holy One and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?" St. Peter informs us of "spirits in prison, which were formerly disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing." And as our Lord himself proves, from the words of God to *Moses* at the bush, that *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, were then *alive*, so all the evangelists, that have recorded the wonderful fact of our Lord's transfiguration on the mount, have also been particular in informing us, that there appeared unto him *Moses and Elias*. Now of "Moses, the servant of the Lord," it is certain that he "died, and that the Lord buried him in a valley over against Beth-peor, though no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." *He*, therefore, at least, must have been a departed spirit, and a spirit not *asleep*, certainly, but awake, intelligent, and active; for *he* as well as *Elias*, conversed in some unknown way with our Lord, respecting the decess which he should accomplish at *Jerusalem*. The disciples therefore when they thought they had seen a *spirit*, though mistaken as to the *fact*, yet, were not mistaken as to their *theory*. Such a

thing might be that a *spirit* might appear, which indeed our Lord allows in his discourse with them on that occasion, saying, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have."

But to put this matter beyond all dispute, I will quote a few texts more, which not only prove the soul to be distinct from the body, and show that it does not *sleep*, but give us clear and satisfactory information where the souls of the faithful departed this life are, *viz. with Jesus*. As it is declared by St. Paul, in the next chapter, to have been the design of our Lord in dying for us, "that whether we sleep or wake, (die or live,) we might live together with him," so we find him demanding of his Father this privilege for all his disciples before he died, saying, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me."\* And knowing that his Father heard him always, at the same time that he commended his own Spirit into the hands of his Father, he promised this to the dying thief, in the following well-known words, "Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Nay, and before this, knowing how great would be the efficacy of his death, and the prevalency of his intercession, he promised the same privilege to all his then disciples, yea, to all that should believe on him in every nation and age, saying, "If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come and receive you to myself, that where I am, ye may be also." "He that believeth on me, though he die (*καὶ ἀποθάνῃ*) yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." According to what he had testified before, "This is the bread that came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die: if a man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my words, he shall never see death."†

7. The apostles and primitive christians, guided as they were by the infallible Spirit of their Head, certainly understood the meaning of these gracious declarations and promises of the Lord Jesus, and in what light they understood them, they themselves have informed us. "Lord Jesus," said dying Stephen, "receive my Spirit." "We know," says St. Paul, "if the earthly house of

\* John xvii. 24.

† John vi. 49. &amp; viii. 51.

this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;—knowing, that while we sojourn in the body, we are absent from the Lord.—We are confident, (I say) and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. And we labour, whether present or absent, to be accepted of him.” The same apostle speaking of himself, in his epistle to the *Philippians*, says, “To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. And what I should choose I know not. For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better; but to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being persuaded of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant through Jesus Christ, by my coming to you again.”

3. Now these are a few of the scriptures, on which we ground our hope, respecting the *immediate* happiness of such as *sleep in Jesus*. On this foundation, we believe, 1st, that the soul is *distinct* from the body, and *outlives it*: 2dly, that it does *not sleep*: and 3dly, that the souls of the faithful are *with Jesus*. And let him who is able come forward, and remove our foundation. Let any who can show us, either that there are no such texts in the Bible, or, if there be, that we mistake their meaning: or if he can do neither of these, let him prove to us that the Bible is not of God, and that Jesus Christ and his apostles are not to be depended on. Till one or other, or *all* of these things be done, we shall hold fast our confidence and hope, respecting our departed friends that have lived and died in the faith of Christ, and in the love of God, and shall believe firmly the voice from heaven, which St. John heard pronouncing the “dead blessed, that die in the Lord:” and commanding him to *write* the cheering declaration: We shall depend upon the testimony of the infallible Spirit, which condescended to set his seal to the reviving and comfortable doctrine, in the following remarkable words, “Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest (literally, may be refreshed) after their labours, *ἵνα ἀναπαύσῃται ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν*; and their works follow them.”

9. In the meantime, a second branch of our hope is, that even their bodies are not lost, nay, are not *dead*, at least not *finally* and *for ever*. They only *sleep*, "sleep (as Daniel says) in the dust of the earth." The death of the bodies of the saints is very properly termed *sleep*. In sleep the *senses* are all locked up, the *members* lie motionless, and the body is at rest. Just so at death, we *see* not with these eyes, *hear* not with these ears, *taste* not with this palate, and are not sensible of any objects that surround us. All our members are lifeless and motionless, cold and unfeeling.

"The languishing head is at rest,  
Its thinking and aching are o'er;  
The quiet, immoveable breast  
Is heav'd by affliction no more.

"This heart is no longer the seat  
Of trouble, and torturing pain;  
It ceases to flutter and beat,  
It never shall flutter again."

The *fever* no longer rages and burns. The *stone* no longer racks and torments. The *consumption* no longer wastes and enfeebles. The fainting of *weakness*, and the anguish of *pain*, are felt and suffered no more. The cold clay is as void of *sense* as it is of *motion*, and is as far removed from *perception* as from *activity*.

"This earth is affected no more  
With sickness, or shaken with pain;  
The war in the members is o'er,  
And never shall vex him again:

"No anger henceforward or shame  
Shall redden the innocent clay;  
Extinct is the animal flame,  
And passion is vanish'd away."

10. This is the greatest blessing of all, that the *flesh* no longer "lusts against the spirit," and that the corruptible body no longer presses down the soul. The cage is broken, and the confined captive has recovered its liberty. The prison-walls are fallen down, and the prisoner is set free. The cumbrous clay is shaken off, and

the winged seraph has found its way to the throne of the *Most High*, in whose presence it *adores* and *burns*, converses with its fellow-spirits, and drinks immortal life and felicity. Nor is this the summit of its honour, or the consummation of its joy. A robe of glory is provided to clothe it: a palace of pleasure is built to accommodate it. A new body shall arise out of the ashes of the fallen tabernacle, which it shall be no disgrace to a son or daughter of the Lord Almighty to wear. A body *healthy, vigorous, immortal*; free from every infirmity, and incapable of any kind or degree of pain: a body that shall be *luminous, bright, and splendid*, active as a flame of fire, and quick as the forked lightning: a spiritual body, conformed unto Christ's glorious body.

11. This is the principal reason why the death of the body is termed its *sleep*. It is to assure us, it shall awake again. For "all that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." The Lord Jesus will come and awake them. They shall "hear his voice and live:" shall "hear his voice and come forth," they that sleep in him, "to the resurrection of life," and they that sleep not in him, "to the resurrection of damnation." And oh! what a time shall that be! As one observes, "Who can now conceive the rapture with which so many millions shall start up at once from their beds of dust, all arrayed in robes of glory, and, spurning the earth in which they have been so long entombed, and all that is mortal and corruptible, shall soar aloft in one joyful company, with those who shall then be found alive, 'to meet the Lord in the air,' forming a mighty host, 'bright as the sun, clear as the moon, and awful as an army with banners.'"

12. To enlarge a little upon this animating subject. It appears from the apostle's discourse concerning it,\* that though strictly speaking, it is not the *same body* which died that is raised again, yet out of the substance of the body which fell shall a new body arise, not in a *natural* but *supernatural* way, by an extraordinary and miraculous exertion of the almighty power of God. And it appears too, that the *death* of the body is so far from being any obstruction to its resurrection, that it is a necessary means in order thereto. "That which thou sowest, (says he,) is not quickened except it die. And thou sowest not that body which shall be, but

\* 1 Cor. xv.

the bare grain ;—and God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to each of the seeds its own body." God, therefore, will give human creatures, human bodies, bodies *suitable* and *peculiar* to their kind ; but wonderfully changed from what they are at present.

13. For "it is sown (an expressive word, committed as seed to the ground) in corruption," not only having the principles of corruption in its composition, and naturally tending to decay, but already beginning to putrify, dissolve, and turn to the dust out of which it was taken ; "it shall be raised in incorruption," having no such principle in its frame, but utterly incapable of either dissolution or decay. Again ; whereas "it is sown in weakness," deprived even of the feeble strength it once enjoyed, and now unable to help itself ; "it is raised in power," in vigour, strength, and activity, far beyond what we can now conceive, one man possessing, I will not say the power of a million, or of the whole human race, for what comparison can be made between *mortal* and *immortal* ? between *dust* of the earth, and *flames of fire* ? between *crawling insects*, and *spiritual beings* ?—but the power of an *angel of God*. And we know how soon one *angel* slew in the camp of the *Assyrians*, one hundred and fourscore and five thousand men !

14. He informs us further, "It is sown in dishonour," our present body being at the best, so unclean, so infirm, so uncemely, that it is (as the apostle expresses it,\* the body,) τῆς ταπεινωσεως ἡμῶν, of our humiliation. For it is not an *honour* but a *disgrace* to a son of the Most High, an heir of the God of glory, to appear in such *mean* and *mortal* clothing ; and at the time of its dissolution, when it is sown in the earth, it is shocking to behold, even to those that loved it best : but, "it is raised in glory," in a glory, according to *Daniel*, like that of the *brightness of the firmament*, or of the *stars*, and according to our Lord, like that of the *sun*, shining in his strength. For "the righteous, (says he,) shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." "He shall change our vile body," says St. *Paul*, the body which now, in our fallen state, sinks us so low, and so shockingly displays that *sin* brings *shame* : he shall change this, and "make it conformable to his own glorious body." Of the glory of this body our Lord seems to have intended to give his disciples a specimen when,

\* Phil. iii. 21.

being transfigured before them, "his countenance shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;"—"white and glistening," says another evangelist;—"shining exceeding white, as snow, such as no fuller upon earth can whiten," says another: Certainly it will be such as no mortal eye could bear to behold.

15. One thing more the apostle observes, "It is sown a natural (or animal) body," a body of flesh and blood, gross and gravitating; breathing, eating, drinking, sleeping, and by these means nourished and supported like the bodies of brutes. "It is raised a spiritual body," of a most refined contexture, pure, subtile, and active as light, endued with qualities of a spiritual nature, and raised far above the need of these, or any such like animal refreshments. For if, "as was the earthy," the first man Adam after his fall, "such be they also that are earthy," that are descended from him; in like manner, "as is the heavenly," the second man, the Lord from heaven, "such are they also that are heavenly," that were in him, new creatures, while on earth, and have slept in him. They shall be conformed to him in *body*, as well as in *soul*, and shall as certainly "bear the image of the heavenly" as ever they bore "the image of the earthly." If therefore, my brethren we are "now the sons of God," we need not be anxious or uneasy, though "it doth not yet fully appear what we shall be, for we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," which, it is certain, in our present state, we could not bear to do.

16. As to the *time* when this wonderful change shall be wrought; and the *circumstances* attending it, the apostle informs us, and that, as he says, "by the word of the Lord," by an express revelation from the Lord. "If we believe, (says he,) that Jesus died and rose again, even so those also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;" that is, plainly, he will bring their *souls* with him, for as to their *bodies*, they, strictly speaking are not, with him now, but with us here on earth. But their *souls* or *spirits* being with him, as we have seen, from the moment of their quitting the body, he will bring them with him, when he returns, partly to grace his triumph, and partly to be again reunited to the bodies they had left behind, which shall now be raised, changed, and glorified, and made suitable habitations for them. "For," adds he, "we who are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord,

shall not prevent," shall not be beforehand with, or enjoy any privilege above "those who are asleep. For the Lord himself, viz. Jesus, shall descend from heaven with a shout," κλινομαλι literally a shout of triumph, or a proclamation made by a great multitude, probably by those "armies of heaven that follow him," and those "thousand thousands that minister unto him," "with the voice of the archangel," a voice so *loud* and *tremendous*, that it shall not only be heard by all the living, but accompanied with the divine power, shall, it seems, even awake the dead. The apostle adds, "and with the trump of God," sounding, no doubt, much louder and more awfully than that which was heard by the camp of *Israel*, from mount *Sinai*, when the law was given, though that "shook the whole mountain so that it quaked greatly, and all the people in the camp trembled," yea, Moses himself, accustomed as he was to the most terrible displays of the divine glory, confessed, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

17. The apostle goes on, "And the dead in Christ shall rise first," that is, before the living are changed, springing forth out of their beds of dust in forms of glory, and rising up into the air in countless multitudes, from every part of the habitable globe, yea in thousands and myriads from the bottom of the great deep, from the unseen caverns of the mighty and immense ocean. Then, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump, the living shall be changed. Without any effort of theirs, they shall put off the mortal clothing, and shall put on the immortal; shall suddenly feel themselves transformed in all their powers; changed from *dull, heavy, inactive* lumps of clay, to spiritual and immortal beings: Shall tread upon the air, shall rise into the skies, shall ascend and soar away with their new-raised friends and companions, to meet their heavenly Lord. Him they loved when *unseen*, in consideration of what they believed he had done and suffered for them. But now, with shouts of joy and triumph, they welcome his approach: for he appears the second time without sin to their final and everlasting salvation, and renders himself and all his glories visible to the strong and powerful view of their spiritual and immortal bodies, possessed of *perfect and unwearied* vision. Being owned by him as his followers, and confessed and acquitted at his judgment-seat, they are made assessors with him in judgment on evil men and angels, approving and



applauding the righteous sentence which will then be passed, and joining in the condemnation of the enemies of God and of his Christ.

18. And while these shall "go away into everlasting punishment," the righteous shall be received into life, and felicity *eternal*. For theirs shall not be the triumph of a day, a year, ten thousand years, nor of any limited duration of time, however long: but they shall be "ever with the Lord." This will indeed be the consummation of their felicity, viz. the *eternity* of it. As it knows no *measure*, but is unbounded in *degree*; so it shall know no *period*, but shall be unlimited in *duration*. "He that is holy shall be holy still:" he that is happy shall be happy still. They shall go no more out of the heavenly city, the city that has the glory of God; whose "windows are like a precious stone, clear as crystal;" whose "walls are jasper;" yea, are "adorned with all manner of precious stones;" whose "streets are of pure gold, transparent as glass:" a city that has "no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" that "has no need of the sun or moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth enlighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." A city therefore, where there is no night; where there shall be no more curse," no sin, sorrow, nor suffering of any kind: "but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads, and they shall reign for ever and ever:" every subject being a king, and every king a son and heir of the Most High: "an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ."

" Oh ye blest scenes of permanent delight!  
 Full above measure! lasting beyond bounds!  
 A *perpetuity* of bliss, is bliss!  
 Could ye, so rich in raptures, fear an end,  
 That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy,  
 And quite unparadise the realms of bliss!"

19. But it may be asked, What certainty have we of all this? What is the foundation of our hope respecting these important particulars? The apostle informs us in the words of our text. "If we believe (says he,) that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." From the death

and resurrection of Christ, we infer the certainty of our resurrection and immortality. For, not to mention that the *immortality* of the *soul*, and the *resurrection* of the *body* were, as we have seen, two important branches of the doctrine which he taught, and that his death and resurrection sealed and confirmed his doctrine, and demonstrated the *infallible truth*, as well as *deep importance* of every part of it; let it be observed, that he died and rose again, not merely for *himself*, but also and especially for *us*: not as an *individual* of *Adam's* race, but as a *public person*, a head and representative of all the faithful. He died and rose as the *second Adam*, and all mankind, particularly the righteous, died and rose in him. He passed through death into life as our *forerunner*; as the *first-fruits* of them that slept, or should afterwards sleep in him; and the whole harvest of the faithful dead shall follow after; shall feel the virtue of his resurrection; and be drawn by him into life and immortality; yea, and the impenitent and disobedient also, although to them it will not be a happy, but a miserable immortality. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

He, who by his death and resurrection showed himself to be the *Prince of Life*, who when imprisoned in death, "could not be holden by it;" who when he had voluntarily laid down his life, manifested that he "had power to take it again:" he who "liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of death and of the invisible world;—he will not only take charge of our departing spirits, when, like dying *Stephen*, we shall commit them to him, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" but he will also "change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his own glorious body, by the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

We may join, therefore, the author last quoted, and say,

....." In his blest *life*  
 I see the *path*, and in his *death* the *price*,  
 And in his great *ascent* the *proof* supreme  
 Of immortality,—And did he rise?  
 Hear, O ye nations! hear it, O ye dead!  
 He rose! He rose! He burst the bars of death!  
 ..... Whose nature, then,  
 Took wing, and mounted with him to the skies?

Then, then, I rose; then first humanity  
 Triumphant passed the chrysal ports of bliss,  
 (Stupendous guest!) and seiz'd eternal youth,  
 Seiz'd in our name!"

And now, my brethren, say, if those who *know* and *believe* these things, have any cause to grieve immoderately on account of the departure of their friends, who have "slept in Jesus," and are gone hence to partake of this felicity and glory.

III. This was the third particular to be considered. But having enlarged so much on the last head, I shall pass it over slightly.

1. The apostle, observe, does not forbid our sorrowing, but only our sorrowing as "those that have no hope." And surely the doctrine we have this day had under consideration is well calculated to produce that effect. It may not, indeed, entirely remove our sorrow: it may not make us *Stoicks*, or render us *hard* and *unfeeling*. It is not intended by the author of our nature that it should. He has implanted *affections* in us, and it is not his will to eradicate these affections, or to forbid their being excited at proper times, and in a proper measure. The man *Jesus* wept at the grave of *Lazarus*, and certainly was not blameable for so doing. "For he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And now he is in heaven, he sympathizes with us, and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." We therefore, may sorrow. Nature may shed a tear over those we love. But, in the midst of all, we must *possess our souls in patience*, and remain masters of our *reason* and of our *peace*, believing that God doth "all things well," and that "all things work for good to them that love God."

2. To be a little more particular. To mourn the dead, especially those that have died in the Lord, is not only *lawful*, but *commendable*. It is a duty. The not doing it is reproved by God himself as a *sin*. "The righteous perisheth, (says he,) and no man layeth it to heart."\* And, it is threatened as a curse to *Jehoiachim*, the son of *Josiah*, that he should die *unlamented*, and be buried with the burial of an ass.† But we must not sorrow "as others, who have no hope:" we who have the *Bible* in our hands,

\* Isa. lvii. 1. † Jer. xxii. 18, 19.

and to whom "life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel," must not sorrow as the heathen, who being without the sacred scriptures, "without God, and without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise," were also "without hope" as to another life, not assured even of the immortality of the soul, and utterly unacquainted with the resurrection of the body. Hence, considering their friends as lost, and never expecting to see them again, they sorrowed excessively, and frequently expressed their sorrow by cutting their flesh, making themselves bald, singing doleful songs, and uttering lamentable ejaculations, a custom which it seems, the *Jews* in our Lord's time had learned.\* Now we, who are assured of the great and comfortable truths which have now been laid before you, must not sorrow in this manner, for those of our friends and relations, who, we have reason to believe, are gone hence to be with Jesus.

3. Let us consider further, that whether our sorrow be on *their* account, or on *our own*, it is unnecessary, and indeed without reason. As to *them*, certainly we have no cause to sorrow excessively on their account. They are not *lost* themselves; and they have *lost nothing*; but on the contrary have *gained much*. Their *souls* are not lost. They committed them to Jesus, and well knew in whom they believed;" and he will not fail to "keep what they committed unto him safe unto that day." Their *bodies* are not lost, but are entrusted, as seed to the ground, to spring up and flourish in new beauty, at the appointed season. *No part of them* therefore, is lost. *All* is safe in the divine *keeping*; and all shall be brought forth and restored with great improvement, with *divine* and *infinite* advantage.

"Why then their loss deplore, that are not lost?  
 Why wanders wretched thought their tombs around,  
 In infidel distress? Are *angels* there?  
 Slumbers, rak'd up in dust, ethereal fire?  
 They live! They greatly live, a life on earth  
 Unkindled, unconceiv'd; and from an eye  
 Of tenderness, let heavenly pity fall  
 On us, more justly number'd with the dead!

\* Matt. ix. 23.

4. And as they are not lost themselves, so they have lost nothing. Unless it be a loss to have done with labour and toil, care and fear; to be freed from sin and sorrow, infirmity, pain, and death;—to be made healthy, vigorous, immortal;—to be permitted to leave the place of their exile, and return to their own country, city, house, and home:—to be united in a holy and happy family with the *wise* and *good*, gathered out of all nations and ages, the *greatest* and *best* of men!—to be incorporated in a blessed and heavenly society with *angels* and *archangels*, yea, with *Christ* himself, and *God our Father*! To have access unto him, and fellowship with him, and that not by means and ordinances, and through an interposing vail, as on earth, but *immediately*, and *face to face*! To behold his glory! to taste his love! to be ravished with his beauty! to share his felicity, and be conformed to his perfections! To call him *Father*, and be *sensible*, *fully* sensible of his paternal affection and regard, while as his sons, they surround his throne, and, bearing his image, exult in his favour!—If *this* be a loss, then indeed have they suffered loss: but if not, if it be quite the reverse, then surely instead of mourning, we have rather cause to rejoice in their exaltation and honour.

5. “If ye loved me, (said Jesus,) ye would rejoice that I said, I go to my Father.” Surely, if we loved them aright, loved them *rationally* and *wisely*, and did not rather, at the bottom, love *ourselves* in pretending to love *them*, in the midst of our sorrow we should even rejoice that they are gone “to their Father and our Father, to their God and our God;” are gone to *Jesus*, their elder Brother and Saviour, who was delivered unto death for their offences, and to the blessed *angels* of God, who, in the days of their flesh, ministered to them as to the heirs of salvation; are gone to the *holy prophets* and *apostles* of the Lamb, whose heavenly doctrine and blessed example, so often edified and quickened them, while they “took heed thereunto as to a light shining in a dark place;” are gone to the noble army of martyrs and confessors, and to all “the ransomed of the Lord, returned to Zion with singing, and everlasting joy upon their heads!” Surely, instead of mourning for them, we should mourn for ourselves, and say,

“Oh! when will death, (now stingless) like a friend  
Admit me of their choir? O when will death,

This mouldering, old, partition-wall thrown down,  
 Give beings, one in nature, one abode?  
 Oh! death divine! that giv'st us to the skies!  
 That re-admits't us, through the guardian hands  
 Of elder brethren, to our Father's throne!"

"Who (said *Tully*, a heathen) would lament the death of a friend, unless he supposed him deprived of all the comforts of life, and sensible of the loss of them." How much more may a *christian* forbear to lament the death of those who, though deprived of the *poor, low* enjoyments of this life, are so far from being sensible of having suffered any loss on that account, that they perceive themselves to be infinite gainers, and are in possession of a *felicity* and *glory* that knows neither *measure* nor *end*.

6. Instead, therefore, of grieving immoderately that our friends have entered into rest before us, and gained the blessed port which we toil hard to find, let us rather, out of love to them, rejoice that *they* at least are safe landed. And though we, their companions, are left behind, let us take comfort in considering it is but for a little while. The time is fast approaching when we too shall *make the land*. While the prosperous gales of divine grace arising swell our sails, and waft our vessel towards the shore, the tide of some returning affliction will flow, and convey it into the heavenly harbour. Then our friends that went before shall rejoice to see us arrive safe, and crowd to bid us welcome. And we, I doubt not, shall have the comfort of finding many escaped thither under the direction of their invisible Captain and Pilot, concerning whom we had entertained a thousand distressing fears, lest, during the storm and tempest, they had suffered shipwreck, and been lost amidst the raging billows. And oh! what a meeting shall that be! What mutual joy and congratulations, increased and heightened by the great and threatening dangers the parties had passed through, and the narrow escapes they had had.—Let us look forward to the happy time. Let us comfort our hearts with the prospect of it, amidst the winds and waves of this troublesome world. Let us entreat our Pilot to stay with us, and take the charge of our valuable vessel, richly laden with the immense treasure of an immortal soul, but very liable to be run aground upon the sand-banks of this world, to be dashed against the rocks of pride, or even swallowed up in the whirlpools of pleasure. Let us spread the sails of our

*affections* to catch the gales of those heavenly influences that arise to waft us to the promised land. And let us set *faith* at the helm, and charge it to eye the compass of the divine word, graciously given to be our directory during our voyage through the trackless ocean. And when the wind of temptation blows hard against us, and the waves of our corrupt inclinations and passions, rising, would bear us back, let us cast the anchor of our hope within the veil, and wait the moment of a favourable change. That moment will soon arrive. The wind will be fair, and the tide rise. The heavenly country will appear in sight. We shall descry its towers at a distance. The glittering spires of the *New Jerusalem* will attract our attention. The peaceful haven will open before us, and we shall enter, full sail, the long expected and much desired port of eternal rest.

“ There all the ship’s company meet,  
 Who sail’d with their Saviour beneath;  
 With shoutings each other they greet,  
 And triumph o’er trouble and death:  
 The voyage of life’s at an end;  
 The mortal affliction is past!  
 The age, that in heaven they spend,  
 For ever and ever shall last.”

7. But while I thus encourage your hopes, with respect to yourselves and your departed friends, and exhort you to go forward with alacrity and joy to meet your final foe, and join again the dear companions of your life, in company with whom you endured so many hardships, and weathered out so many storms; let me not neglect to give you *one caution*. Let me not forget to remind you that your success in the arduous contest depends on your being *in Christ*, on your *living* and *dying in him*. Thus only can you hope to meet death with comfort. “ There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus:” whereas, with regard to those that are not in him, they are not only in the way to meet with condemnation after death, and at the final Judgment, but they “ are condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on them.” See therefore, that in the *first* place you ensure this point; that by *repentance towards God* and *faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, you obtain that *interest in*, and *union with*,

the Lord Jesus, which only can disarm death of his sting, and devest him of his terrors; and, therefore, which only can free you from the fear of that formidable foe, and give you confidence and courage at the appointed hour of combat.

“ Still frowns grim death? Guilt points the tyrant’s spear.  
 Who can appease its anguish? how it burns!  
 What hand the barb’d, envenom’d dart can draw?  
 What healing hand can pour the balm of peace?  
 And turn my sight undaunted on the tomb?  
 With joy, with grief, that healing hand I see!  
 The skies it form’d: and yet it bleeds for me!  
 But bleeds the balm I want! Yet, still it bleeds!”

This balm must be applied: the hand that yields it, must apply it, and, by applying it, heal the wounded mind, and give peace to the labouring conscience. This the great and good Physician of souls is as *willing* as he is *able* to do. For “inasmuch as we are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver those, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.” “Come then unto him, ye that are weary and heavy laden, and he will give you rest: and, be assured, “Whosoever cometh, he will in nowise cast out.”

8. And that there may be no *delay* in beginning, nor indolence in prosecuting this important business, let me observe further, that if those who are “in Christ new creatures,” have nothing to *fear*, but every thing to *hope*, from the approaching hour of their dissolution; those who are *not in him*, have every thing to *fear*, and nothing to *hope*. They have to fear that their souls shall not die, but be immortal in misery; that their bodies shall be raised again, to share in the torment;—that they shall meet their companions in sin; a dreadful meeting that indeed!—that they shall appear and be condemned at the judgment-seat of Christ; that they shall be for ever with—whom shall I say? *Jesus* and *his* angels? no, but with *Satan* and *his* angels! And have they not sometimes an anticipation as well as foresight of this? I rather think they have: and that if



“ The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven,”

the dying apartment of the ungodly is often in the very suburbs of hell. I fear the following lines of that fine though mournful poem, styled, *The Grave*, are but too descriptive of what is frequently felt on these occasions :—

“ At that dread moment, how the frantic soul  
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement !  
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help ;  
But shrieks in vain ! . . . . .  
A little longer ! ah ! a little longer,  
Might she but stay to wash away her crimes,  
And fit her for her passage ! Moving sight !  
Her very eyes weep blood, and every sigh  
She heaves, is big with horror ! but the foe,  
Like a stanch murderer, steady to his purpose,  
Pursues her close through every lane of life,  
Nor misses once the track, but presses on  
Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,  
At once she sinks !”

That this may not be your case, my brethren, do not trifle with an affair of such consequence. See that you make it, what it really is, your *chief concern*, your *principal* business to be the Lord's, and to live to him ! And take heed that you do not delay one day, one hour. Oh ! remember you know not what a day, or hour may bring forth. “ To-day, therefore, while it is called to-day, if ye will hear his voice,” if ye ever intend to hear it, “ harden not your hearts :” but “ Acquaint yourselves with him, and be at peace : Thereby good will come unto you ;” and how great a good eternity only can disclose !

That our sister, whose unexpected death has given occasion to this discourse, already enjoys a portion of that good, we have great reason to believe. As you will naturally expect me to give you some account of her before I conclude, I submit the following brief *Narrative* to your consideration, which I have drawn up from the best information I could obtain.

Mrs. Foster was the daughter of the late Mr. John Booth, of Manchester, by his first wife, who died a few months after she was born. Her father being a dissenter, brought her up in the Calvinist profession, and gave her a genteel education at a boarding-school, in Chester. After she left school, she was introduced into gay company, and indulged in all the vanities of high life; till her father, who was a merchant, experiencing some considerable losses in his business, became insolvent. She then went to live with a distant relation near Leeds, and soon after put herself apprentice to a milliner in that town. Here she had cause to bless God for bringing her acquainted with some of the people called Methodists, whose example, conversation, and prayers, were made of great use to her soul. One that was then very intimate with her, Miss Cl——, observes,

2. "I had the pleasure of being acquainted with Mrs. Foster from her first coming to Leeds, which was about the middle of April, 1782. Though she was then a stranger to the real power of religion, she differed much from the generality of young persons. Being brought up a dissenter she diligently attended their meetings, and I believe, made conscience of using private prayer, twice a day at least. In the beginning of June, she went one Sunday evening to hear Mr. Mather, at the Methodist preaching-house, and was much struck with his sermon. Afterwards she went along with me to a prayer-meeting, which Mrs. Cr——, and my mother attended at a friend's house, where she was very deeply affected indeed. I remember her saying to me as we came out, 'Oh! my friend, I would give all the world, if I had it, to possess what your mother possesses,' and added, 'I have always thought myself a christian till now, and have imagined that I had a good heart, but am now convinced I have been deceived.' When she came home she retired, and taking up the Bible, opened it at the following words, *Of a truth I perceive God is no respecter of persons.* This text was a great support to her all the time she was seeking the divine favour, which was about three months. During this period she suffered much, both from within and from without. Sometimes indeed her mind was sweetly drawn after God and much encouraged, but in general her distress was very great. Tuesday the 16th of August, Mrs. Cr—— took her and me to a meeting, where a few select friends assembled once a

fortnight to spend an hour or two in prayer. Here the agony of her soul quite overpowered her bodily strength. Several persons prayed for her, and at length she was a little comforted. She was prevailed upon to go with me to a friend's house where we spent the greatest part of the night in prayer and praise. She felt a real change take place in her soul, but wanted the witness of the Spirit that she was a child of God. And, blessed be the Lord, she did not wait long for it. The next evening, as Mr. Hopper was preaching from,—‘My son, give me thy heart,’ she was enabled to make the surrender, and those words, ‘I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine,’ were strongly applied to her mind. She could now with confidence cry, *Abba Father! My Lord, and my God!* And the *Sunday* following at a meeting, at *Seacroft*, she declared openly what God had done for her soul.

“Her outward situation exposed her to many painful exercises, but they had the blessed tendency of driving her nearer to the Lord. And he was so peculiarly gracious to her, that in the midst of many and great hindrances, she was enabled to press forward, and, I believe, desired nothing in comparison of being devoted to God. This appears from a letter she wrote me December 3, 1783, part of which is as follows. ‘After all the Lord has done for me, I still feel an evil heart of unbelief. I have been much tempted this week to fear that I have deceived myself, but have been relieved by conversing freely with Mrs. Cr—— she put Mr. Wesley’s Treatise on Christian Perfection into my hand; and the more I read it, the more I am convinced that the will of God is my *sanctification*; and by his grace I am determined never to rest till all that is within me is *holiness to the Lord.*’ ”

3. To this account given by her friend, I would add, that about this time, as I am informed by another who knew her well, she not only generally walked in the light of God’s countenance, but was frequently so happy in the love of her adorable Saviour, as not to be able to sleep at night for the consolation she felt in her soul. She was a pattern of diligence; in using all the means of grace, both private and public, frequently attending the preaching of the word, even at five o’clock in the morning, delicate, and often unwell as she was; and making it her daily care to read the scriptures, and call upon the name of the Lord in secret.

4. About a quarter of a year after her marriage with Mr. Foster, (which was in the year 1784,) she had a miscarriage, and was so ill that her life was despaired of. During these weeks of confinement, when she had no prospect before her but of immediate death, she was not only perfectly resigned to the divine will, but could frequently rejoice in hope of his glory, persuaded if the Lord should take her it would be to himself. All her concern was, that her husband might be enabled to receive the severe stroke without murmuring, and to support the trial with *faith* and *patience* worthy of a christian. In order to this, she desired a serious friend who visited her, to apprize him of the dangerous situation she was in, and to endeavour to prepare him for the approaching shock. However, it pleased God, at that time, to disappoint their fears, and spare her life.

5. During her pregnancy of her first child, she was very apprehensive she should die in child-bearing, and under that impression, which increased as the time of her travail drew nearer, she wrote a paper which her husband found in a private drawer the *April* following, and which I shall subjoin to this account. However, in this instance also, the Lord was pleased to disappoint her. She was safely delivered, *December 9*, 1785, and soon restored; and bore her husband three more children, the two elder of which, as well as the first-born, are still alive.

6. In 1786, they removed to this town. How her soul prospered, and how she conducted herself since that time, many of you know. I believe she was *serious*, *watchful*, and *exemplary*. I have been acquainted with her about a year, and during that time have conversed with her frequently. I have seen little either in her temper or conduct to blame, but much to commend; particularly her humility, meekness, and patience, under many and great trials; her industry, frugality, and diligent attention to her family affairs: her very *kind*, *courteous*, and *obliging* behaviour to all that came near her, of which all you that knew her will bear witness. She endeavoured to set the Lord before her, and behave as one that was conscious his eye was upon her, being circumspect in all things, and desirous of improving conversation to the best of purposes. She attended the ministry of the word, particularly on the Lord's day, more frequently than her strength would well permit, one of the Chapels which she attended, being little less than

a mile from their house. In this perhaps she went to an extreme: but having, I believe, chiefly through the very weak and nervous state of her body, fallen into doubts as to her acceptance with God, she was very desirous of recovering the light of his countenance, which induced her sometimes to go, perhaps, beyond her strength. I hope she did recover it before she departed. But of this she was not permitted to give any verbal evidence. Indeed, what could one reasonably expect of this kind from a woman in the pangs of child-bearing, and whose labour, like *Rachel's* of old, was very hard.

7. The same thought that she should die, which had followed her when pregnant of her first child, and indeed, I believe, of her other children, was, during this last pregnancy, much more powerfully impressed upon her mind. She told her husband and several of her friends, that she should certainly die as soon as she was delivered. But, though appearances, from her delicate frame and poor state of health, were unfavourable, they were willing to hope she would be brought safe through as she had been before. However, the Lord, who very probably had sent that impression as a previous warning, saw fit to appoint otherwise. She was with some difficulty delivered, and soon after expired. The child also, though I am informed born alive, died immediately. The paper I mentioned is as follows, and though written, as I said, in *November, 1785*, may be considered, I think, as speaking her dying language.

8. "My dearest love, for whose sake alone I desire to live, trusting if the Lord have other ends in view, he will prepare me before he take me hence, I hope you will not fail to perform the last will of one that loves you better than life itself. Look at this, when I am removed from you. But let not your heart be troubled. Trust and believe in him who is able to help you, and will stand by you in every time of trial.—If he take me from you, he does it for your good. Come to the Lord, and lie at his feet, and say, Lord, do with me as seemeth good in thy sight; only keep me from murmuring. You know what a hindrance I have been to you in the heavenly race. The Lord has removed me that you may trust in him alone, and serve him with all your heart. He will not admit of a rival. He has permitted us to be happily united for one year: but oh! what poor returns have we made! How unfaithful have we been to the grace bestowed!

“ But let me beg of my dearest not to look back ; but press forward for the prize of eternal rest. If those in another world can grieve, surely I shall grieve to see you loitering and mourning. But why should you be distressed, perhaps the Lord will commission me to be as one of your guardian angels, to attend you by day, and watch your bed by night, that no evil may befall you. And if I shall then be capable of choosing one employment in preference to another, surely I shall choose that which has the nearest relation to one that was all that was dear to me below.

“ I will lay no commands upon you that shall be grievous to you. I do not wish you not to *marry* again. Only be careful in the choice of a *wife*. Let her be joined to *Christ* before she be joined to *you*. Be strict in *family-duty*: let nothing hinder *that*. For the neglect of that duty brings deadness and barrenness upon the soul. Be earnest with the Lord in private, that he may bless you both, with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. Be not conformed to this world, neither in *dress* nor *conversation*, for both work death.

“ If I leave you a dear pledge of love, let it be boarded at *Darfield*, with my dear father and mother. Save all my clothes for it, and every thing that belongs to me. Pretty lamb! My heart bleeds for it and you! Methinks, I see you look at our offspring, and think of your *Polly*! O for resignation!—Let my remains be laid where you intend to lie. Let our ashes be united, that we may rise together at the day of judgment. For though there shall be neither *marrying* nor *giving* in marriage in that day, yet we shall know each other, and shall rejoice to meet again, where parting shall be no more, but all shall be perfect happiness to all eternity!

“ If my, dear, very dear husband feel, when reading this, what I felt when writing it, he will know what *comfort* there is in *grief*, what *pleasure* in *mourning*! For my heart pants for you! struggles to get free from *creature-love*! flies back to your bosom! I fancy my arms around your neck: my love bathed in tears:—but at last both forced to submit! I lie pale! My love, mourning, kisses my clay-cold cheek; presses my hand; bids me speak one more farewell word; but all in vain! His *Polly's* breath is resigned to God who gave it! His heart is ready to burst. He looks for a comforter: but she who used to comfort him in time of trouble, is

no more!—Therefore, flee for refuge to Christ the Lord, the only help in trouble. He will support you. I know he will. I know he loves you with an everlasting love; and though all earthly comforts fail, the Lord is your portion! How good he is, in that he takes me first. For I could not support the loss of my dear husband. How often has my heart bled for fear of your leaving me. But the Lord is love itself, therefore we will unite to praise him to all eternity.

MARY FOSTER.\*

## SERMON XII.

ON THE

### NATURE AND EXTENT OF SANCTIFICATION.

*May the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.*

1. **SANCTIFICATION** is much spoken of, and strongly inculcated throughout the sacred scriptures. Its nature is there described, and its absolute necessity and great excellency pointed out in various forms of expression. "This is the will of God, (says St. Paul,\*) even your sanctification;" and his will, we know, is of indispensable obligation upon all his creatures; to comply with it, and be made conformable to it, is at once our duty and our happiness. "Ye are chosen to salvation," that is, happiness in heaven, (says he again,†) "through sanctification of the Spirit." Salvation is the end, sanctification the way; a way in which all must walk who would arrive at that desirable end. For, says the same apostle, "Without holiness, (*αγιασμος*, *sanctification*,) no man shall see

\* 1 Thess. iv. 3. † 2 Thess. ii. 13.



the Lord." Whatever a man attains, if he attain not this, he shall be excluded the presence, and denied the blissful vision of God; he shall be shut out of heaven, and thrust down to hell. On the contrary, the *sanctified*, the "pure in heart," stand entitled to the inheritance above, as St. Paul declares,\* and as the faithful and true Witness testifies,† "shall see God," shall know and enjoy him for ever.

2. So great is the necessity and excellency of sanctification, that it is the grand end God has in view in all the dispensations of his providence and grace to the children of men. "Christ gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it: He suffered without the camp, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood." The Spirit of God is termed the *Holy Spirit*, and the *Spirit of holiness*; not only because he is holy in *himself*, but also because it is his office to sanctify and make us holy: and God "chastens us for our profit, that we may be made partakers of his holiness." Yea, and in every dispensation towards us, whether pleasing or painful, God has this same end in view, for "his divine power has given us all things that pertain unto life and unto godliness," as well as those exceeding great and precious promises" whereby these blessings are made over to us, "that we may be made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world."

3. Hence it is that much hath been said of sanctification in every age since christianity was first established in the world until now. It has appeared to be of such great importance, that many who have had the glory of God and the good of mankind at heart, have written upon the subject, and not a few of these admirably well. Many excellent things have been advanced upon this point both by ancient and modern authors; by our own countrymen and by strangers. And it is a doctrine concerning which there has been but little dispute, unless in our own age, an age fruitful of controversies of all kinds. And probably it would have been less disputed even now, had the scriptures been more attentively and carefully consulted on the head. But be that as it will, as the subject is by no means exhausted, and as the scriptures only can make us wise unto salvation, whatever others do, let us consider them dili-

\* Acts xxvi. 18. † Matt. v. 8.

gently upon all points of doctrine, and especially upon *this*, so manifestly of the greatest consequence. Having then seen the importance of sanctification, proceed we now to consider,

1st. Its *nature* and *extent*. And,

2dly. How we may attain it.

And, 1st. Let us consider the *nature* and *extent* of sanctification.

1. *Sanctification* is often ascribed in the Old Testament to things without life. In the books of Moses, the tabernacle, altar, laver of brass, the priests' garments, and various other things used in the Israelitish worship, are said to be *sanctified*. So afterwards, in the historical books, the temple and the various utensils in the temple-service are said to be *sanctified*. Now all that can be meant by that expression thus applied, is, that they were separated from common and profane use, and dedicated to the immediate worship and service of God. And indeed this seems to be the primary and original meaning both of the Hebrew word,  $\text{קִדְּשׁ}$ , in the Old Testament, and of the Greek word,  $\alpha\gamma\iota\alpha\zeta\omega$ , in the New, translated to *sanctify*: They both signify to *separate* and to *dedicate*, *devote*, or *consecrate*. Thus the whole body of priests were sanctified in a ceremonial manner, they were separated from common and civil employments, and consecrated to the service of God in his sanctuary.

2. This observation may give us light respecting the nature of our sanctification. It also implies a *separation* and *dedication*, not indeed, ceremonial and figurative, but *real*: a real separation from sin and the service thereof, and a dedication to God and his service. Accordingly, it is said, Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people," a people consecrated entirely to him; and "he died for all, that they who live," who are quickened by his death, "might not henceforth," from the time they are quickened, "live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." Passages of scripture these, which point out unto us very clearly the nature of that sanctification, which we have already seen to be the grand end of the death of Christ.

3. But this matter will be still better understood by considering the words of our text: "May the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, *ολοκληρις*. The word is of very extensive meaning, and signifies "every part, and every part perfectly." And what we are to understand by *every part*, we learn from the following clause: "And may the whole of you, (*αλοκληρον υμων*, all that belongs to you,) the spirit, the soul, and the body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is an exact translation of the words, and it appears therefrom that the apostle in this passage, considers man as divided into three parts, which he very expressly and particularly enumerates, *the spirit, the soul, and the body*, prefixing the article to each.

4. I am well aware that some persons, eminent for learning and piety, consider this text in a somewhat different light. They suppose that by the word *spirit*, the Apostle means their *spiritual estate*, viz. the Spirit of God, with his various graces, wishing that it might be preserved to them whole and entire: that by the other two phrases, *soul* and *body* (which they say make up the whole man) he means their natural estate, wishing it also might be preserved blameless. They argue, that man cannot consist of three parts, appears hence, "the soul is either matter or not matter, there is no medium: But if it be matter, it is part of the body; if not matter, it coincides with the spirit." (See Bengelius and Wesley's Notes.) This reasoning is perhaps very just; it is possibly more *philosophical* to consider man as consisting only of a *material* and *immaterial* part. But then, is it certain that St. Paul spoke with philosophical exactness here? Is it not rather probable that he alluded to the then prevailing opinions, and followed the Greek writers, who, it is certain, frequently consider man as composed of three parts, *spirit, soul, and body*. This he might do without any intention of teaching us the niceties of philosophy, and merely that he might express the matter he had in hand more strongly, leaving points of mere speculation just as he found them; even as we, who firmly believe that man consists only of two parts, do nevertheless frequently pray that our *body, soul, and spirit* may be consecrated to God, by which form of expression we would only be understood to mean all *that belongs to us, all our powers and faculties* of soul and body. Be this as it will; in this light I beg leave to understand the Apostle, as meaning, by these different phrases, to signify

that every part of us, all our faculties, and all our members, must be sanctified and devoted wholly to God; a doctrine which, it will be readily allowed, the whole scripture inculcates upon us.

5. By the (*το πνευμα.*) *Spirit*, I would, with the Greek writers, understand the *superior* faculties of the mind, such as the *understanding*, *will*, *conscience*, and *memory*, which are purely spiritual, and exist (no doubt) in the blessed angels, and in the spirits of just men made perfect. By the (*η ψυχη*) *soul*, I mean the *inferior* faculties, the *passions* and *appetites*, which it seems we have in common with the beasts that perish, only more refined. And by the *body*, I intend all that is material. Now let us briefly consider how each of these is to be sanctified.

And, 1st, The *spirit*, including the *understanding*, *will*, *conscience*, and *memory*. By the *understanding*, I here mean, that faculty whereby we *apprehend*, *consider*, *judge*, and *reason*. Now experience and scripture agree to inform us, that this stands in great need of sanctification, for it is naturally overspread with gross darkness, and employed as an instrument of iniquity. "Darkness covers the earth" says the prophet, "and gross darkness the people." All mankind, by nature, like the Ephesians, are "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them;" and hence the apostle affirms, "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." This is true of the Jews and Gentiles, who are one and all become "vain in their imaginations, and their foolish, *ασυνετος*, undiscerning, heart is darkened." We are therefore grossly ignorant of what it most concerns us to know: what we are, whence we came, and whither we are going: What the world is in which we live, and whether we are to live in another: if so, how we may ensure happiness there, and how get rid of our present misery: who is the author of our being, what he is in himself, and what he is to us: what obligations we are under to him, and how we may fulfil these obligations: the value of his favour, and how we may attain it. Plain it is, the heathen in general could never come to any certainty in these respects; and if we are not so dark as they, we owe it to the oracles of God. But the truth is, though by the scriptures we have some *speculative* knowledge in these points, yet our knowledge has no proper influence upon us while destitute of the illumination of the Holy

Ghost, but we are practically as ignorant as they, as far from all *saving knowledge* in things spiritual and divine.

7. But by sanctification, a manifest alteration is made. The *understanding* is then freed from its natural darkness in the things of God, and is enlightened by divine truth, to receive whose cheering beams it now dedicates its powers. Hereby we attain that knowledge, which before we had no conception of, nor desire after. Spiritual things appear to us in a new light, and we judge of them in a new manner. We have neither that aversion to consider, nor that inability to understand them which we before laboured under; but we think of them with delight, and apprehend them with readiness. Hence we become savingly acquainted with them. "We know the truth, and the truth makes us free." "The gospel comes to us, not in word only, but also in power:" being "turned from darkness to light," and disposed to receive more and more light continually, we are also turned "from the power of Satan unto God." In other words, the light communicated to our *understanding* influences our *will*, and brings it into subjection to the holy will of God, whom we *serve* as well as *know*, and whose service we find to be perfect freedom. This leads me to observe, 2dly, that,

8. From the darkness of the *understanding* arises the perverseness of the *will*, which in our unholy state of nature opposes the holy will of God. Not discerning the vanity of the *world*, its unsatisfactory nature, and short duration, we choose it for our portion, and foolishly seek our happiness in it. Not knowing the all-sufficiency of *God*, and his willingness to afford us solid and lasting comfort in his favour and presence, we shun his ways, and decline all fellowship with him. Not seeing the sinfulness of *sin*, and its destructive consequences, we do not loathe and abhor it, but roll it under our tongue as a sweet morsel, and are prone to commit it, as the sparks to fly upwards. To *holiness* we have a strange aversion, arising from our ignorance of its excellent nature and blessed consequences. God's commandments we refuse to obey; they are grievous to us, because we understand not their reasonableness and happy tendency. To his dispensations we will not submit, not knowing that they are directed by infinite wisdom and almighty love, and assuredly work for good to them that love God. Now this perverse will is that *φρονημα σαρκος*, "that carnal mind, which is enmity against God, which is not subject to the law of God,

neither indeed can be," under the dominion of which, whosoever is, "he cannot please God."

9. But by the sanctification of the *will*, following the sanctification of the *understanding*, a glorious change is wrought. For being enlightened with the knowledge of God, we are no longer averse to his service, but consider it at once our duty and happiness to love him, and live to his glory. The vail which covered the world and concealed its vanity being withdrawn, we turn our backs upon it, and, astonished at our former folly, cry out, "what have I to do any more with idols?" and affirm, concerning the creatures, "Miserable comforters are ye all." *Sin* appears in all its deformity, accompanied with a long train of miseries, and we flee from its pernicious touch, and "abhor the garment spotted by the flesh." *Holiness* shines forth in all its lustre and beauty, and we embrace it with our whole soul. We have respect to all God's commandments, and delight to fulfil them, convinced they are "true and righteous altogether, more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter than honey and the honey-comb; and moreover, that in keeping of them there is great reward." We acquiesce in all the dispensations of his providence, and with sweet complacency and delight acknowledge, "good is the will of the Lord." How many soever our disappointments, losses, and sufferings are, still we say, "not my will but thine be done. Be it unto me even as thou wilt."

"We see the hand, we worship and adore,  
And justify the all-disposing power."

10. In the sanctification of the *Spirit*, I suppose, is included, 3dly, that of the *conscience*; which has as much need of being renewed as our other powers, it being equally depraved with them. For it is naturally blinded and mistaken, hardened and insensible. Unacquainted with the will of God, it does not give us due information concerning it, but erroneously approves where it should condemn, and condemns where it should approve. It gives an uncertain sound; who then can prepare himself for obedience? Nay, too often it gives no sound at all, but suffers us to go on quietly in the way of our heart, and to walk after the desire of our eyes. It is its duty indeed, like a faithful watchman, to warn us of approaching danger, and advertise us of the

advances of our enemies. But alas ! intoxicated with the stupefying potions of sin,

..... " It sleeps  
On rose and myrtle, lull'd with syren song."

Our threefold enemy assaults, prevails, and conquers; we are wounded, mangled, and slain; but still conscience gives no alarm, still we are insensible of our misery. We are, as the apostle expresses it, *απηλγηκοις*, *past feeling*. Temptation hurries us hither and thither at pleasure, we drive furiously in the way of sin, and (if divine grace prevent not) we never stop, till down the precipice of death we rush into the dreadful lake, where conscience awakes into "a worm that dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched."

11. This would be the case with all mankind were it not for the grace of God. This makes the difference wherever it is. But, suppose through the influence of that grace, operating different ways, our conscience is awakened from its sleep, and roused from its lethargy; suppose, further, it is no longer erroneous, but rightly informed concerning the will of God, yet still it is not sanctified till it be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, but is what the apostle calls *an evil conscience*, stained and polluted with sin and guilt. Such was David's conscience when he said, "Innumerable evils compass me about, mine iniquities have taken such hold upon me, that I cannot look up, therefore my heart faileth me." "My wounds stink and are corrupt through my foolishness." Such was the conscience of the publican, when he prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Such that of the jailor, when he "came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas," and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And such the consciences of the three thousand, converted on the day of pentecost, when being "pricked to the heart, they cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

12. Now the *sanctification* of the conscience, implies an acquittance from guilt, a freedom from condemnation, or the remission of sins, and acceptance with God; in consequence of which we are now no longer obnoxious to God's wrath, and liable to everlasting punishment, but being possessed of his favour, are entitled to eter-

nal life. That our conscience may be thus sanctified, it is absolutely necessary, 1st, That we should be in Christ by faith, and have an interest in his sufferings. For it is the blood of Christ alone which cleanseth from the guilt of sin, and it is only to those that "are in him that there is no condemnation." And then, 2dly, that we may continue in this state of reconciliation with God, it is further necessary that we "walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit,\* that we walk in all God's ordinances and commandments blameless." For if we would "rejoice in the testimony of our conscience," we must "have our conversation in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God." Thus only can we have a conscience "void of offence towards God and man."

13. It is easy to see, that in what I have now said respecting the conscience, I include all that is generally understood by *Justification*, which is the name whereby this work is commonly called, both in the scriptures and in the writings of the most eminent divines. I have only to add, when this inestimable blessing is conferred upon us, and we "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" when we "taste that the Lord is gracious," and can apply to ourselves the following words with confidence,

" O love, thou bottomless abyss!  
 My sins are swallowed up in thee!  
 Cover'd is mine unrighteousness,  
 Nor spot of guilt remains in me!  
 While Jesu's blood through earth and skies,  
 Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries!

Then let us dedicate our conscience to the Lord, that being guided by his word and Spirit, it may direct us in the way of duty, and warn us of the danger we are in from the assaults of our spiritual enemies; and thus will it be properly sanctified and employed according to the will of him, who sent that guardian angel to conduct us through the snares of this world to his heavenly kingdom.

14. Once more on this head: The *memory* must be sanctified. So we call that wonderful power God hath bestowed upon us, of recalling former ideas and recollecting past events. This *faculty*,

\* Rom. viii. 1.



though strangely weakened and corrupted by the fall, still retains a surprising degree of strength and vigour in some; all ages having produced individuals whose power of recollection has been amazing. But with the generality the case is different: their memories are exceedingly treacherous: which by no means proves that their souls have sustained more moral injury by sin than others, but only that their bodies are less perfect: for it is well known that the memory depends on the brain, and is stronger or weaker, as the modification of that organ is more or less calculated for exerting this function. But, be it *strong* or *weak*, it is certainly, like our other powers, greatly corrupted in all. Instead of being, as was originally intended, a well-ordered repository of divine truths and useful remarks, drawn from experience and observation, it is become a mere sink of sin, or a lumber-room of impertinence and folly. We commonly remember best what it would be well to forget, and forget what we ought to remember. Our minds, like a leaky vessel, readily let out the pure water of life, while they seldom fail to retain the filth of sin, and dregs of vanity. What is pious and useful makes but a very faint impression, and is therefore soon forgot, whereas what is impure and prejudicial, being agreeable to our carnal hearts, sinks deep and remains long.

15. But the case is quite altered when the memory is *sanctified*. Then the things of God, appearing to the mind in all their importance, make a deep and lasting impression upon us: whereas earthly and temporal things, the vanity and short duration of which the understanding discovers, do not much affect us, and therefore are not remembered. Thus the memory is weakened with regard to those things which are trifling and hurtful, and strengthened with regard to those which are important and useful. Or rather, it casts away the former as unworthy of a place in such a sacred repository, and retains the latter, as things that deserve to be locked up in the cabinet of the heart. The *understanding*, the leading faculty, being enlightened, and the *will* rendered obedient to its dictates, the *memory* is only entrusted with what is useful and excellent, to which it is more at liberty to attend, and will keep with greater faithfulness, being freed from the care of that useless lumber, which before distracted and overcharged it. Add to this, that "the Spirit helps our weak infirmities," and brings to our

remembrance the things we have seen and heard, and that at the very time when it is most needful. In this way is the damage our memory hath sustained by the fall much repaired. However, as it depends so much (as has been said) on a bodily organ, it cannot be supposed it will be restored to its original state, till the body itself is created anew by a glorious resurrection. Then, and not before, shall we be freed from this and every other infirmity.

16. In the meantime, be the memory strong or weak, it may be *sanctified*, and no longer employed as an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin, but devoted to the honour and service of God. Instead of serving the designs of Satan, and ministering to our guilt and misery, by supplying fuel to our *pride, resentment, and lust*; it may serve the purpose of God's glory, and help to promote our holiness and happiness, by reminding us of motives to humility, faith, and love. Many have *strong* but *unsanctified* memories, which serve only to increase their knowledge, not their *grace*; and, of consequence, to aggravate their condemnation. But by sanctification, the *memory* being consecrated to God and religion, becomes a sacred storehouse for the christian's supply in his journey through this wilderness to the New Jerusalem. There the word of truth is laid up, whence he is furnished with "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left," with food to nourish, and with medicine to heal the disorders of his soul. There former experiences are preserved, which being reviewed, afford much matter for humiliation and gratitude, and greatly add to his confidence and joy. And there the dispensations of Divine Providence, whether of a public or a private nature, whether towards himself or others with whom he has been acquainted, are kept in store, and being reflected upon, serve both for caution and for comfort; both to guard him against those sins and follies for which God hath chastised him and others, and to prompt him to that holy living, and those good works, which fail not of meeting with a present reward. Above all, there he treasures up the commandments of God, with many prudential rules of duty, that he may never be at a loss to know the way wherein he ought to go, and "how he ought to walk therein so as to please God."

We come now to consider, 2dly, the sanctification of the *soul*, (*ψυχη*) including under that term the *passions* and *appetites*.

1. By the *passions*, I mean those *affections* or *emotions* of the mind, which are excited upon the apprehension of any *real* or *supposed* good or evil. When we apprehend any thing good or excellent, we *love* (that is, esteem and take complacency in) it; if it appear any way suitable to us, we *desire* it, and that more or less, as it appears more or less suitable. If there be any prospect of attaining it, we *hope* for it, and our hope is in proportion to such a prospect. If we have actually attained it, and find it answer our expectations, we *rejoice* in the possession of it.—On the other hand, when we apprehend any thing *evil*, we *hate* it; if it appear hurtful to us, we are *averse* to it. If, farther, it seem likely to befall us, we *fear* it; and if it do in fact befall us, it excites *sorrow* and *distress*. These are generally accounted the principal and leading *passions*, from which all the rest are derived, and to which they may be referred, *viz.* *love* and *hatred*, *desire* and *aversion*, *hope* and *fear*, *joy* and *sorrow*; and these I shall confine myself to at present.

2. Now all these must be *sanctified*, being naturally irregular or inordinate. It is a melancholy truth, manifest from daily experience and observation, and confirmed by the testimony of scripture, that we are even prone to *love* what we should *hate*, and *hate* what we should *love*: *desire* what we should *abhor*; and *abhor* what we should *desire*; *hope* for what we should rather *fear*; and *fear* what should excite our *hope*; *rejoice* in that which ought to give us *sorrow*; and *sorrow* for that which ought to afford us *joy*. And certainly, the supposed *good things* of this world, such as riches, honours, health, ease, the pleasures of sense, and those of imagination, naturally excite our *love* and *desire*; *hope* and *joy*; while the supposed *evil things* of the world, such as poverty, disgrace, sickness, pain, labour, toil, awaken in us the contrary passions of *hatred*, *aversion*, *fear*, and *sorrow*.

3. It is true, there is a sense in which this is lawful, *viz.* when it is in perfect subordination to God and his holy will; I mean, when these different and contrary passions are excited in us in a regular manner, in a due degree, and are only indulged for God's sake, and with a view to his glory. But surely, this is not the case with us before, or any farther than we are sanctified. Previous to this change being wrought upon us, not only the forementioned things of the world reputed *good*, but *sin* itself is the object of our *love* and

*desire, hope, and joy* : while God and religion, holiness and obedience, things spiritual and divine, are *hated and avoided*, as though they were evil in themselves, and prejudicial to us. That this is the case, all who are enlightened by the Spirit of God, have seen and felt to their sorrow ; and as for those who are still unawakened, I beg leave to remind them of the words of inspiration, " The heart (including the affections) is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ;" and again, " God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and that continually ;—evil from his youth up."

4. How much then do our passions need to be sanctified ! How necessary is it that a change should be wrought in them ! That they should be properly restrained and duly regulated ! Subjected to the will of God, and fixed upon their proper objects ! all which is implied in their sanctification. " The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God," says St. Paul,\* that is, May the whole train of your affections be under the influence of the love of God. Now this is really and fully done when we are sanctified. Then God and his holy will, religion and virtue, holiness here, and happiness hereafter, engage our chief attention, and possess the supreme place in our affections. We highly *esteem* and fervently *love* them, eagerly *desire*, and diligently pursue them : they are the objects of our *hope* and *joy*, and we take complacency and delight in them from day to day. And if we *desire* or *delight* in any thing else, it is in subordination to God and his holy will. We are therefore " crucified unto the world, and the world is crucified unto us : " we are saved from the love of things temporal, from all undue attachment to them, and desire after them, well knowing, " if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

5. In the meantime, our *aversion* to the *evil things* of the world, as poverty, reproach, sickness, and pain, is so moderated, that we are resigned to suffer them when God shall so appoint ; neither *fearing* them when absent with any fear that hath torment, nor *sorrowing* as those that have no hope nor portion in God, when they are present. But rather we desire often to " have fellowship with

\* 2 Thess. iii. 5.

Christ in his sufferings, and rejoice that he is magnified in our body," whether by ease or pain, "life or death." Yea, when our "afflictions abound, our consolations do much more abound." At the same time, *sin*, all *sin*, whatever honour, or pleasure, or profit it promises, is the objec. of our *hatred and abhorrence*. We are heartily *sorry* for our past sins, the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, and by the grace of God we determine for the future not to repeat them. We have an utter *hatred* to every appearance of evil, and a filial *fear* of offending him whom our souls love. And thus are all our passions exercised upon their proper objects, and duly regulated.

6. Having dwelt so long upon the foregoing particulars, I shall say less upon the *appetites*, the sanctification of which comes next to be considered. By the *appetites*, I mean those *propensities* or *inclinations* which are suited to an animal nature, and which God hath for wise ends implanted in us, whom he hath endued with such a nature. *These* it is not the will of God to eradicate, any more than our *passions*, but only to regulate and restrain them, of which surely they have great need. For, alas! how frequently, how almost universally are they indulged to excess! How much delicacy and expensive superfluity in eating and drinking! How many useless, nay, destructive dishes and invented liquors! How much intemperance among all orders and degrees of men! How much gluttony and drunkenness! How many estates are squandered away! How many families reduced to beggary, to gratify a vile appetite, to fulfil a beastly desire! And, what is yet more to be deplored, how many thus ruin a good constitution, and bring various diseases upon themselves, at once painful and loathsome, which it is beyond the power of medicine to remedy, and which terminate at last in an untimely death; while, in the meantime, they deprive themselves of the divine favour, and cast their souls into endless perdition! "Their end is destruction, because their God is their belly, and their glory is their shame." In fine, how much uncleanness of every kind, the scandal and reproach, I will not say of christianity, but of human nature itself! How far, in these respects, is man degraded beneath the brutes that perish!

7. Now the sanctification of our *appetites* puts an entire end to all this, and enables us to live *soberly*, as well as *righteously* and *godly* in this present world, strictly cultivating temperance and

chastity in all their branches. It implies the crucifixion of all desire after superfluous or delicate food, and the restraint or eradication of all impure lusts whatsoever. Then shall we only take that quantity and quality of food which is most conducive to our bodily health, and best fits us for the service of God in that lawful calling wherein his providence hath placed us. Then shall we manifest in all our tempers, words, and works, the inward purity of our hearts. We shall glorify God by chastity and modesty in a single life, the more excellent way to those who can receive it, or by temperance and fidelity in a marriage state, which is honourable in all, and necessary for many. In either state we shall preserve ourselves free from the "pollutions that are in the world through lust." Remembering that our *bodies* as well as *souls*, are temples of the Holy Ghost, and bought with the blood of Christ, we shall not prostitute them to sin and the devil by gratifying any base desire, but shall keep them holy, that we may "glorify God, as well in our body as spirit, which are God's."

This leads me, 3dly, to subjoin a few words on the *sanctification of the body*.

1. The *spirit* and *soul* being depraved, seduced from God, debauched by sin, and devoted to the service of Satan, the *body*, a mere servant and instrument in their hands, is obliged to accompany them in their revolt, and obey the dictates of its leaders. As the *understanding* of the natural man does not discern the evil of sin, nor his *conscience* remonstrate against it; as his *will* and *affections* choose and embrace it, and his *appetites* hurry him on to the commission of it, it is no wonder if his flesh "serve the law of sin," and he "present his members as instruments of unrighteousness" thereunto. Indeed the members of our bodies may be always said to *serve sin*, when we are not influenced by the love of God, and a regard to his glory; because then our *motives* and *ends* are not good, nor of consequence, the words and actions to which they give birth. Our eye is not *single*, but *evil*, and hence "our whole body is full of darkness," our whole conduct a scene of sin: We serve ourselves and the devil, but not the Lord Jesus. And however innocent our outward deportment may appear before men, it is far from meeting with his approbation "who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins of the children of men."

2. But, alas! too often it is not outwardly innocent, but we "present our members servants to uncleanness, and iniquity unto iniquity." Our *eyes* are employed in *beholding vanity*, if not in gratifying the lustful, envious, or covetous desire. Our *ears* are attentive to idle songs, to flattering lips, and a slauderous tongue. If our *hands* do not pick and steal, rob and defraud, hurt and maim any one: if they do not injure our neighbour in his person or property, yet they are perhaps incentives to concupiscence or wrath, or negligent in our calling and in relieving the indigent. If our feet be not "swift to shed blood," if they do not assist us to pursue, overtake, and abuse or destroy those for whom Christ died; yet do they perhaps "walk in the way of sinners and follow the multitude to do evil," conveying us to places of debauchery and excess, riot and uncleanness. And our *tongue*, that glory of our frame, whereby we should praise our God and edify our fellow-creatures, supposing shame and humanity preserve it (would to God they always did!) from "blaspheming that holy name whereby we are called," and cursing our brethren of mankind: yet will it backbite and slander the absent, or talk unprofitably before such as are present. Thus, through sin, do we abuse and dishonour our own bodies, and turn the gifts of God against him. We do not, indeed, *hidc* our Lord's *talent in a napkin*, but we do what is still worse, we employ it to his manifest dishonour.

3. But observe the change *sanctification* produces, even in the use of our body. Then it is that we comply with the Apostle's exhortation, "let not sin reign in your mortal body, to obey it in the lusts thereof, neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves to God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Our *eyes* are now employed in reading the word of God, and discovering the wonders of his wisdom, power, and love, manifested in the works of creation. Our *ears* are open to receive instruction, to hearken to the complaint of the poor, and the distress of the afflicted. Our *tongues* proclaim the loving-kindness of the Lord, and speak of all his wondrous works. "Grace is poured into our lips," and "the law of kindness dwells upon our tongue." "Our conversation is seasoned with salt, meet to minister grace to the hearers." Our *hands* are exerted in honest labour, or stretched out in acts of charity, according to the ability God hath given.

Our feet convey us to the house of God, the assembly of the saints, and we walk in all his pleasant ways: we walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, and serve him with every faculty of our soul and member of our body.

4. Thus have we seen how every part of us is to be sanctified; I have only to add, before I dismiss this head of my discourse, 4thly, That it is further intended by the word *ολοκληρις*, that every part should be sanctified *perfectly*. Not as if the apostle meant that any bounds could be set to this sanctification, so that we could, at any period, say, "hitherto shalt thou go and no further:" not as if there were any state to be arrived at on earth, wherein our holiness should be incapable of increase. Surely no: nor, is it probable, even in heaven. It seems essential to the happiness of a creature, a finite being, that it should continually advance in perfection. And this it may do through millions of ages, and still come infinitely short of the perfection of God. It appears from what has been said, that the sanctification of our other powers arises from, and depends upon, the sanctification of the *understanding*. The more the understanding is enlightened in the *true knowledge* of God, the more our *will* and *affections* centre in him as our chief good. The more we discern, by the light of grace, the vanity of the world, the more must our hearts be disengaged from it. The same I may say of sin in general: the more *evil* it appears, the more shall we hate and guard against it. And with regard to *holiness*, the more excellent in its nature, and happy in its tendency it seems to us, the more shall we love and pursue it. Now, who can say he is as much enlightened in these respects as he may be? Surely none. And surely then, none can reasonably think he is arrived at the top of the ladder in holiness, and can therefore advance no further. But while we are in the world, we may and must consider it to be our duty and privilege, to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

2. But when the apostle prays that we may be *perfectly* sanctified, he means as far as we are capable of being in this world; "that the darkness may pass away, and the true light continually shine:" "that we may walk in the light, as he is in the light," *having daily fellowship with him, and one with another*. "That we may have an unction from the holy one teaching us all things," the "spirit of truth guiding us into all truth." He means further, that



our *will* should be wholly conformed to, and swallowed up in the will of God, so that we may lie in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter, to be disposed of according to his will, and formed after his likeness, choosing him for our only portion, and resigning up all our designs and desires to him. Again, that our *conscience* should continually feel the cleansing virtue of Jesus's blood; that we should wash in the fountain and be ever clean, saying, from the heart,

“Every moment, Lord, I have,  
The merit of thy death;”

and that we should find continual matter of rejoicing in the testimony of a good and tender conscience. He means, lastly, that our *passions* and *appetites* should be so regulated and inflamed with divine love, that “a peace passing understanding may keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus,” and we may “dwell in love, and in God, and God in us.” Thus shall we be able to adopt the following language, very expressive of the full assurance of hope :

“’Tis done at last, the great deciding part,  
The world's subdued, and thou hast all my heart :  
It triumphs in the change, and fixes here,  
Nor does another separation fear;  
No various scenes to come, no change of place,  
Shall thy lov'd image from my soul efface ;  
Nor length, nor breadth, nor distant height above,  
Nor depth below shall part me from thy love.”

And all this, that “whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all to the glory of God ;” that whatever we do in word or deed, we may “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, through him.”

3. And now, shall not this blessing be ours ? Can we hear of this renovation of our fallen nature, of this health and good constitution of soul, and not long to possess it ? Surely this *sanctification*, so excellent in itself, and so beneficial in its effects, must appear in the eyes of all that are enlightened, to be far more desirable than the most valuable of those earthly vanities, which so universally engage the attention, and engross the affections of mankind ! Surely one

cannot even transiently behold this divine perfection and beauty, without emotion, and cannot attentively consider it without being overcome with desire, and made (as it were) sick of love! How lovely is this image of God, this divine nature! How honourable and happy to be clothed with it! To have all our sins forgiven, and our consciences sprinkled from guilt! To have all our diseases healed, and our souls restored to perfect soundness! To have our life redeemed from eternal destruction, and our heads crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercies! To have God's approbation on earth, and to hear him say in that day, "Well done?" O what equals this?

....."And shall the victor now  
Boast the proud laurels on his painted brow?  
Religion! Oh thou Cherub! heavenly bright,  
Oh joys unmix'd and fathomless delight!  
Thou, thou art all!".....

4. As to the way in which this holiness is obtained, I must beg leave to make that a distinct head of discourse, having enlarged so much on the points already treated. In the meantime, let us carefully consider what hath been advanced; let us mark, learn, and inwardly digest it; and let us lift up our hearts unto God in earnest prayer for his blessing upon it! Thus shall we become more and more acquainted with its excellency and necessity. Our desires after it will be maintained and increased, and we shall even "hunger and thirst after righteousness." And then we shall not only be prepared to receive benefit by what may hereafter be said, but shall be in the high-way to have our desires accomplished, for "blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."



## SERMON XIII.

ON

### THE WAY OF ATTAINING SANCTIFICATION.

*May the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24.*

1. **HAVING** considered the nature and extent of *sanctification*, I proceed now, secondly, as was proposed, to show how it may be obtained?

1. With regard to this, I must observe, 1st, We cannot produce this change in ourselves by any *wisdom* or *power* of our own. This will be readily allowed by all who attentively consider what has been already advanced on the nature of sanctification. For it appears by the account given above, that previous, at least to some measure of sanctification, and while in our natural state, we are devoid of all wisdom and power to do any manner of thing that is good. And this is confirmed by our Lord, who saith, "Without me ye can do nothing." Now if we can do *nothing* without him, how can we do this, so great, so wonderful a work? Can the blind restore himself to sight? Can the dead raise himself up? Can the dead in sin quicken his own soul? Alas! he does not even

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know that he is dead, but sleeps on still and takes his rest; and if he did know, he has no ability to perform what is so supernatural. What then must be done in this case? Where shall we find relief? St. Paul tells us, "Our sufficiency is of God;" and again, "God worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure." Hence it is, that in the words of our text, he directs his prayer unto God for this blessing, "May the very God of peace, *αυτος δε ο Θεος της ειρηνης*:" It should rather be rendered, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you." It is his peculiar work: Only "he who commanded light to shine out of darkness," can "shine into our hearts; only he who created the world, and brought order out of confusion, can new-create our souls. We must acknowledge "his workmanship," if we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

2. I observe, 2dly, God works this change in us, by communicating to us his holy Spirit in his various graces. As a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation*, he dispels the darkness of our minds, and makes us light in the Lord." As a Spirit of holiness, he subdues our *wills*, and raises our *affections* to God and heaven. As a *comforter*, he removes our guilty fears, scatters our doubts, and sprinkles our consciences from dead works, that we may serve the living God. He composes the tumult of our breasts, gives us "peace and joy through believing," and fills us with strong consolation. He is the "earnest of our future inheritance in our hearts," and it is by him we are "sealed to the day of redemption." Hence it is that we are said "to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost;" and *love, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering*, and every holy affection and temper is in scripture ascribed to the Spirit of God. Yea, sanctification itself, with all that it includes, is there said to be the work of the Spirit.\*

3. And as God *begins* this work by giving us his Spirit, so he *maintains* it by causing his Spirit to continue with us. For as the *beginning*, so the *continuance* of sanctification depends necessarily upon his *inspiration*. For "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine," and *the sap* of the vine abide in it; "no more can we, except we abide in Christ," and the Spirit of Christ abide in us. "If any man (do not observe this, and)

\* 2 Thess. ii. 13.

abide not in him, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." Hence Christ exhorts us, "Abide in me, and I in you;" and, for our encouragement, adds, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; and every branch in me that beareth fruit, my Father purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The sum of the matter is this: All our wisdom in spiritual things, holiness, and happiness, arise from the presence of the Spirit in us. While he continues to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort us, so long we *know, obey, and are happy*. But if he forsake us, (which it is not his will to do) all our good vanishes, and we are left the same *ignorant, unholy, miserable* creatures we were before.

4. It plainly follows from what has been advanced, that our sanctification can only be *increased* by an *increase* of the Spirit's influences. For if the *beginning* and *continuance* of our sanctification depend so entirely on the beginning and continuance of the operations of the Spirit, so must an increase of it, on an increase of those operations. The more *deep, constant, and universal* those influences are, the more *deep, constant, and universal* must our sanctification be. So that, in order to our *full, perfect, and entire* sanctification, we must "be filled with the Spirit," must receive all those measures of *grace* purchased for us, and promised to us; must "be filled with all the fulness of God," must "dwell in God, and God in us." Thus shall "all the good pleasure of his will be fulfilled in us, and the work of faith with power;" we shall be made perfect and entire, lacking nothing; shall stand complete in the whole will of God, being "holy, as he that hath called us is holy."

5. It appears, therefore, if ever we are sanctified, we must be indebted to God for our sanctification, must acknowledge him the author of it. Now none of us can doubt his power in this matter. "He is able," we know, "to do for us exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." But is he willing? "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And surely we have no more reason to doubt his *willingness* than his *power*; for he is a "God of peace," as the apostle informs us in our text. Had it been otherwise, we could have had little hope of being forgiven, and much less of

being renewed; we could have expected nothing but utter destruction, having been rebels against his government, and traitors to the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*. But here is our comfort, He is a "God of peace." He has "made peace for us by the blood of the cross." He is "in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them," and "Peace be unto you," is the language of his love. He sent his angels to bring tidings of *peace upon earth*, and has appointed his ministers to proclaim peace throughout all lands.

6. And now say, whether it is reasonable to call his *willingness* in question? "If he hath not withheld from us his only-begotten Son, but freely delivered him up for us all," to sufferings, to death, even the most ignominious and accursed death of the cross, "how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" Especially the blessings he *purposely* died to procure? Did Christ "suffer without the camp that he might sanctify the people by his blood," and will he deny them the sanctification he thus purchased? Surely he will not, "If while we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Oh! what consolation is here! That love which gave us Christ, can deny us nothing good.—We are his *offspring*, his children, and he is our Father: And will our heavenly Father refuse us what he knows to be necessary for us? I appeal to yourselves. "If a son ask bread of any of you who is a father, will he for bread give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Now, if ye, being evil," angry, peevish, unkind, if ye "know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your heavenly Father," who is pure, boundless, universal love, "give his Holy Spirit to those that ask him?" Sing we then,

"Away, my unbelieving fear,  
Fear shall in me no more take place:  
My Saviour doth not yet appear,  
He hides the brightness of his face.

But shall I, therefore, let him go,  
And basely to the tempter yield?  
No, in the strength of Jesus, no,  
I never will give up my shield,"

7. For consider further, he hath invited us to come to him for this blessing: "Faithful is he that hath called you."\* God hath, in a variety of ways, (by his providence, his word, his ministers, his Spirit,) *called us* to come to him for sanctification. And will he mock his helpless creatures? Will he deceive our confidence, and disappoint our expectations? Will he bid us come to him for sanctification, and when we are come, turn his back upon us, and refuse us the blessing? Far be the thought from us! Surely this would be a degree of cruelty rarely to be met with among men, abandoned as they are; and to ascribe this to *God*, would be highly derogatory to his glory, and little less than blasphemy. It would be to impeach his divine love, his darling attribute, and to make him altogether such a one as ourselves.

8. But that unbelief, as to this point, may be banished from among us, that it may make its appearance no more, I must add, we have not only the divine *wisdom*, and *power*, and *love*, all engaged to sanctify us, but his *faithfulness* also. "Faithful is he that hath called you." This intimates that God hath promised it, and this he certainly hath done in many places, and in various forms of expression. By Moses he says, "I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength." By Jeremiah he says, "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts;" a promise the apostle thought so precious, that he quotes it twice as a principal and distinguishing blessing of the new covenant. By Ezekiel God promises, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness and idols will I cleanse you. A new heart will I give unto you, and a right spirit will I renew within you." Christ himself assures us, "They that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled," and that his followers "shall be perfect, as their Father in heaven is perfect." And, to mention no more, St. Peter considers God's promises in general as made with a view to this one end, when he says, "There are given to us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these (by the accomplishment of these) we might be made partakers of the divine nature," even that image of God in which we were originally created, knowledge, holiness, and happiness, or, in one word, *sanctification*.

\* Ver. 24.



9. Plain it is, then, that this sanctification is promised, and that repeatedly, and in the most express terms. Now, observe who it is that hath made these promises; not a weak and helpless, false and perfidious, fickle and inconstant worm of the earth, whose malice and wickedness might prompt him to deceive us, if he were ever so *able*, or whose power might be insufficient, if he were ever so *willing*, to fulfil his promises. But it is God, our *Maker, Preserver, and Redeemer*, the Great I AM, the everlasting and unchangeable Jehovah, whose wisdom and power, holiness and justice, truth and love, are equally infinite; who is possessed of all possible perfections, and all whose perfections oblige him (so to speak) to fulfil his promises. That *love*, immense and unsearchable, which first induced him to promise, must as strongly incline him to perform; and this, considering his unerring *wisdom* and almighty *power*, he cannot want *ability* to do. Nay, this he *will* and *must* do, because he is holy, just, and true; because it cannot be, that the "Strength of Israel should lie," or deceive. So that it is, in fact, impossible God should neglect to fulfil his promises, for the fulfilment whereof all his attributes stand engaged; yea, as impossible as it is for him to be divested of those attributes, or cease to exist. And this we know is of all impossibilities the greatest. Well then might the apostle affirm "the promises of God in Christ Jesus to be Yea and Amen." The pillars of heaven may give way, the laws of nature be reversed, but no promise of God shall ever fail of its accomplishment.

"Should nature fail, and darkness hide the stars,  
And cover with a sable veil the sun,  
Unchang'd, and fixt, the truth of God remains,  
Nor knows the least decay. Here will I rest  
With full assurance and unshaken faith."

Conclude we then with St. Paul in our text,—“Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it.”

10. But for whom will he do it? For it is manifest these promises are not made without some restriction, in that they are not fulfilled in all men universally. I answer, not for *unbelieving, prayerless, careless* souls; not for those who *despise* or *neglect* these promises, who prefer to them, great and precious as they are, the toys and trifles of earth, the vain amusements and gratifications

of sense. Let not *these* feed themselves with delusive hopes of holiness on earth, or happiness in heaven. Let them not imagine that God will confer so great a treasure upon those who so lightly esteem it, or that he will force this sanctification upon any one against his will. Nor let any suppose that their own desire is to have no part in this work, or that they are not to be "workers together with God." But let them remember, that "as God worketh in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure," they are to use the grace he gives, and "to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling."

To explain this point a little. There is by nature no *merit* and no *strength* in us. We can do nothing but sin till his grace prevent and accompany us, and, of consequence, can do nothing to *deserve* his grace; nay, can do nothing but what deserves his wrath, and curse, and eternal punishment. But this, notwithstanding, without any regard to our merit, or rather, contrary to our demerit, his grace does in fact prevent and accompany us all. Yes, that "grace which is saving hath appeared unto all men," and "the true light enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." It quickens the dead soul, enlightens the dark mind, awakens the stupid conscience, excites in us good desires, and in various ways helps our infirmities. It is every way *sufficient for us*, and through it "strengthening us, we can do all things." Now, upon our receiving or rejecting, using or abusing this grace, our salvation turns. If we stop our ears to its calls, and shut our eyes against its light; if we stupify our conscience with the opiates of pleasure, and silence its clamours in the hurry of business and the distraction of care; or, to speak in scripture language, if we *grieve, quench*, and do *despite* to the Spirit of God, our sanctification is prevented, and our salvation precluded. But, on the contrary, if we "come to the light that our deeds may be reprov'd;" if we "incline our ear, and hear that our soul may live;" if we "consider our ways," and encourage, instead of stifling convictions; if we cherish the motions, follow the drawings, and obey the dictates of the Spirit of truth and love, our sanctification is promoted, and our eternal salvation secured. Thus only can we reconcile those two grand and fundamental truths, written in every page (almost) of the Bible, that "all our salvation is of God," and yet "all our damnation of ourselves;" that we must acknow-

ledge him the author of our sanctification from first to last, and yet blame ourselves if we are not sanctified. Thus only can we see the reason of those exhortations, promises, and threatenings contained in scripture, which can only affect intelligent beings, possessed of liberty of choice and action. And thus only, in fine, can we understand the suitableness and necessity of those means we are enjoined to use in order to our sanctification here, and our salvation hereafter.

12. For be it observed, God hath appointed certain means with a view to our sanctification, and hath on lypromised to sanctify those who are found in the use of them. Such especially are *faith*, and, in order thereto, *hearing the word, prayer, and watchfulness*. The necessity of *faith* in this view, is very apparent, particularly as it has for its object the promises of sanctification, and the Lord Jesus, "in whom these promises are Yea and Amen." By *faith* according to the apostle, the ancient worthies "obtained promises,"\* and we must, doubtless, obtain them in the same way. We, like them, "seeing the promises," though apparently *afar off*, must be "persuaded of them, and embrace them." We must believe, assuredly, that the Lord hath promised this holiness, and must rely firmly upon him for the accomplishment of his promise. And inasmuch as it will only be accomplished in and through Christ, who hath procured by his death, and received in consequence of his ascension into heaven, this and every other blessing for us, our eye must be unto him, and our expectation from him. Persuaded that "in him all fulness dwells," and that he hath invited us to come and "receive out of his fulness grace upon grace," we must, by faith, apply to, and depend upon him for grace to help in time of need, and for the fulness of that Spirit which is the one source of our sanctification; and which we receive not by the *works of the law*, but by *faith*.† Thus will "Christ dwell in our hearts by faith," and we shall be "a habitation of God through the Spirit." The Spirit of truth, holiness, and comfort, will take up his abode in us, and enlighten, sanctify, and save us. Our *understanding, once darkness*, shall become *light in the Lord*; our *will, naturally stubborn and refractory*, shall be subjected to the holy will of God; our *conscience* shall be sprinkled from evil by

\* Heb. xi. 33, † Gal. iii, 2, 5.

the blood of Christ; and all our *appetites* and *passions* be brought under the influence of love divine. Thus, as the Lord Jesus promised on the great day of the feast, "Believing in him, out of our belly (as it were) shall flow rivers of living water;" and, as he testified to his apostle from heaven, we shall obtain an inheritance among those that are sanctified by faith in him."

13. Now this *faith*, which thus purifieth the heart, *cometh by hearing*; that is, the word of God, whether read or heard, is the seed of it. Hence we are said to be "begotten by the word of truth," and to be "born of incorruptible seed by the word of God:" the truth is said to "make us free," and the "sanctification of the spirit" is closely connected with "the belief of the truth." But then as the seed, when lying uncovered upon the surface of the earth, will not spring up or bear fruit; so the word of God, if *merely* read and heard, if not received into the heart, and covered up (as it were) by frequent and deep consideration, will never produce true holiness, or that faith whereby holiness is obtained. We must therefore *mark, learn, and digest* the word; must think upon it, and ponder it in our hearts; must examine ourselves by it, and reduce it to practice. And thus only shall we "purify our souls by obeying the truth, unto that unfeigned love" of God and the brethren, in which our sanctification chiefly consists,—This is not all; as the seed sown in the earth will yield but a poor produce if not watered with the dew and rain of heaven, so the word of God, if not attended with the influence of the Holy Spirit, will neither bring forth *faith* nor holiness. Now this must be sought in prayer, which is the *third means* I have mentioned as necessary to be used in order to our sanctification.

14. "Ask," says the Lord Jesus, "and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened." This advice is applicable to every blessing we expect to receive at the hands of God! we must *ask* if we would *receive* them. It is particularly applicable to *sanctification*: for in that remarkable passage in the prophecy of Ezekiel, where this blessing is so largely and expressly promised, the Lord hath positively said, that "for this thing he will be inquired of that he may do it for us." So that it plainly appears, all who would enjoy the sanctification above described, must wait for it in the way of *prayer*: and as to those who do not possess it, we may affirm, "they have not because they

ask not;" or "they ask and receive not, because they ask amiss." They ask from wrong motives, or in a wrong manner. They are prompted, perhaps, merely by pride and self-love, and have no view to the glory of God; or they do not ask *earnestly, perseveringly, and in faith*. The apostle hath directed us to "continue instant in prayer;" but, alas! how few do so, resolved to take no denial in a matter where we have God's express promise! Instead of this, not being deeply convinced of the excellency and necessity of this sanctification, or not firmly believing that God will bestow it, the generality, even of serious people, "grow weary and faint in their minds," and desist from the tiresome exercise, before they have obtained the blessing.

15. Be it observed, therefore, if we would ask *successfully*, we must ask *perseveringly*; and if we would ask *perseveringly*, we must ask *in faith*. Accordingly St. James says,\* "if any man lack wisdom (or any other blessing, suppose sanctifying grace) let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering," (*μηδεν διακρινόμενος*, not disputing the divine veracity, or doubting the accomplishment of his promise) for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think he shall receive any thing at the hands of the Lord." All God's attributes stand engaged to fulfil his promises; and, therefore, after this to *doubt* their fulfilment, is to put the greatest affront upon God; it is to doubt his being so holy, just, and true; so wise, powerful, and gracious as he declares himself to be. We need not wonder, therefore, at the apostle's insisting so much on *faith* as necessary to that prayer which will be followed with an answer of peace. For hereby we give God the glory of his divine perfections, and set to our seals that he is true; whereas to pray in *unbelief*, is to give the lie to the God of truth, and rob him of his honour. Hence the Lord Jesus exhorts his disciples, (wondering how soon the fig-tree, which he cursed, was withered away,) "have faith in God; for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the midst of the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have

\* Chap. i. ver. 5.

whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, (precious words, worthy of our deepest attention!) what things soever ye ask when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them, and ye shall have them.\*

16. Only let it not be forgotten, that the prayer which, as it were, opens heaven, and brings down those refreshing influences of grace upon us, whereby "the wilderness becomes a pool, and the dry land springs of water," is always supposed in scripture to be attended with *watchfulness*: "watch ye and pray always," says the Lord Jesus. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit," says St. Paul, "and watching thereunto with perseverance." "Continue in prayer, (says he again) and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Now this *watchfulness* implies, that we keep all the powers of our souls awake to a sense of the danger we are in from our spiritual enemies, and that we stand on our guard against their attacks. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation," says our Lord. "Be sober, be vigilant," adds St. Peter, (or rather *ἠγρυπνεῖτε, γρηγοροῦσατε*, awake and be watchful) for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." If we would be sanctified by the operation of the Holy Spirit, (the only way we can be sanctified) it is absolutely necessary that we flee from all sin, as what opposes him in his work, grieves his love, and makes him withdraw from us. Now this we cannot do unless we shun temptation, or are prepared to meet it, and "withstand it in the evil day." In order to which we must be awake and active, deeply impressed with a sense of our danger, and ready to oppose the enemy in his first approaches. I might add too, that to watch against sin, and therefore against temptation, is necessary in order to our receiving the answer of our prayers; "for God heareth not sinners," continuing in sin, as the blind man, whose eyes Christ had opened, testified, and his testimony is confirmed by the Psalmist, where he says, "if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

17. These means of sanctification, *faith, the word of God, prayer, and watchfulness*, I particularly insist upon, because they are *directly* and *immediately* subservient to that end, and indeed necessary thereunto. But I do not intend hereby to disparage or set

\* Mark ii. 22, 25.

aside other means of grace, which are more remotely useful, as being helps to those above-mentioned, such as *christian conversation*, *fasting*, and the *Lord's supper*. All these every christian should be careful to use at all opportunities, and if he do not rest in them, but look through them to God, "his labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

To conclude this head. How pertinent in this view is the advice given by the apostle in the verses preceding our text. "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation." He exhorts further, "pray without ceasing" for sanctification, and if ye would not pray in vain, "quench not the Spirit," by committing any known sin, by omitting any known duty, or indulging any wrong temper; yea, "abstain from every appearance of evil; and proving all things, hold fast that which is good;" constantly and resolutely avoid whatever appears to your awakened conscience to be displeasing to God, and as constantly and resolutely pursue whatever appears agreeable to his will. Now, on a supposition that the Thessalonians complied with his advice, he with confidence prays for them in the words of our text, and declares, "Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it."

I come now, in the third place, to apply what hath been advanced upon the before-mentioned heads.

1. And, first, permit me to remind you of the necessity of this sanctification, and inquire whether you experience it in any degree? Permit me to ask, in reference to what has been advanced, is your *mind* enlightened to see the evil of sin, and your *conscience* awakened to pain you for it? Has God sealed upon your heart the pardon of it, and wrought in your soul an hatred to it? Has he given you power over it, and are you groaning for its entire destruction? Has the all-sufficient God so discovered himself to you, as to attract your desires and win your heart? Have you chosen the Lord for your portion, and do you submit your will to him? Can you bear with resignation what he lays upon you, and do with cheerfulness what he requires of you? Is he the centre of your desires, the foundation of your hopes, and the source of your comforts? Do you long for him, and delight yourself in him? Are your *appetites* under due restraint, and is your body but as a handmaid to the soul? "Being made free from sin, are you become a servant to

God; and have you your fruit unto holiness, that the end may be eternal life?" If not, I dare not assure you you are in a state of salvation, or that you possess even that measure of sanctification, which is consequent upon faith in Christ.

2. But is it not highly needful you should possess it? Yea, and that in as great a degree as is intended in our text? Can you be happy on earth, happy in heaven without it? Oh, settle it in your heart that you cannot. By the unalterable decree of God, *holiness* and *happiness* go hand in hand, and the latter can only be where the former hath prepared its way. Absolutely needful it is you should be sanctified, if you would enjoy comfort in *life*. For oh! consider, what comfort can there be while a guilty *conscience* reproaches you for past crimes, and disturbs you with fears of future misery? While your *will* is rebellious, and you fret and repine at his dispensations, who, notwithstanding, will do all his pleasure? While you are the sport of tumultuous *passions*, which hurry you hither and thither without control? While you are racked with doubt, and dismayed with fear, and oppressed with a load of care? What comfort, while you are the slave of vile lusts and insatiable desires? While you serve sin, and are under the dominion of that spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience? While this is the case, I ask thee, what hast thou to do with peace, with happiness? Oh, nothing! If thou think otherwise, it is because the "God of this world hath blinded thy mind," and thou art still "dead in trespasses and sins."

3. But supposing in this diseased state of soul, in which, "from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; and they have not been closed, they have not been bound up, nor mollified with ointment;" supposing amidst all this disorder and confusion, where *passion* and *appetite*, in league with the prince of darkness, are at war with *reason* and *conscience*, their lawful sovereigns, are engaged in a wicked attempt to dethrone them both, and assume the reins of government to themselves: supposing in this tumultuous anarchy and discord, where all is "chaos and wild uproar," you could enjoy calm peace and undisturbed tranquillity, which is impossible; supposing care and business, honour and preferment, wealth and pleasure, could so occupy and amuse you, that you should forget your present misery, and be unacquainted with distress, which, you know, neither is, nor can be



the case; yet remember the end of these things is at hand, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou must return." "It is appointed even for thee to die." And "what is thy life but a vapour," which may afford thee a dim and uncertain light for the present, but will very soon vanish and leave thee to eternal darkness.

4. Oh, remember these "days of darkness, for they are many," and *who* or *what* will entertain or amuse thee there? Alas! thou wilt there have time and leisure sufficient to reflect upon the happiness thou hast lost, and the misery thou hast incurred, without any interruption, any alleviation to thy wo, from either business, amusement, or pleasure! There thou wilt find no healing medicines to restore thy disordered mind, no lenient hand to assuage thy grief, no intoxicating liquors to drown thy distress, no stupifying potions to lay thy keen sensations asleep, or blunt the sharpest edge of pain. There thou wilt meet with no defence against those ravenous beasts of prey which walk in darkness, no place of refuge where thou mayest flee for protection against these diabolical furies, which even now too often rend, tear, and (as it were) mangle thy soul, but will then be let loose to torment thee. Thy *anger*, *malice*, and *envy*; thy *pride*, *self-will*, and *discontent*; thy *cares* and *desires*, *fears* and *sorrows*, irregular and inordinate, even now give thee so much disturbance, notwithstanding the hurry of business, dissipation of company, and gratifications of sense, that life is an intolerable burden: but then, all avocations being removed, they will be at liberty to do their utmost, yea, they will be assisted by all the powers of hell, and armed with the almighty wrath of God, to render thee an eternal spectacle of wretchedness and disgrace.

5. Oh! consider, thou poor, blinded, and unholy mortal, what fruit thou wilt then reap of thy darkened mind, rebellious will, guilty conscience, disorderly affections, insatiable appetites, and deformed loathsome members! Ah! think what harvest they are likely to produce! "Be not deceived, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. They that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. The end of these things is death," eternal death; for as the Lord liveth, "without holiness thou canst not see his face." If found destitute of this at a dying hour, (an hour which may arrive, alas! how soon!) thou shalt be shut out of the holy city, where nothing unclean can enter, excluded the presence,

and denied the blissful vision of God. Banished from the society of the blessed, and deprived of the pure and rapturous delights of Paradise, thou shalt be left a prey to thy own devilish nature, and constrained to take up thine abode in the dreary dwellings of lamentation and wo, where every foul spirit, unhappy and malicious, hath fixt its habitation! There thou shalt wait with fearful apprehensions and terrifying dread, the impending judgment of the great day, which will pour a whole deluge of extreme and endless misery upon thy guilty head.

6. Yes, thou shalt stand at the bar of that highly-exalted, though often-despised Saviour, whose dying agony and flowing blood, when he suffered without the camp to sanctify *thy* soul, to expiate *thy* sins melted the very rocks, fetched a sigh from the sympathizing earth, and caused the sun, the source of joy and gaiety, to put on sackcloth, but could not soften thy flinty heart, nor excite one spark of sympathy or love from thy frozen and icy breast. Thou shalt stand, I say, at *his* bar, whose amazing and unsearchable love to thee, brought him once from the regions of bliss and glory, into a world of pain and infamy, where he performed and suffered more than can be described for thy salvation; but whose justice is *now* incensed, whose wrath is now awakened, and whose omnipotence is now armed to punish thee without pity, to destroy thee beyond remedy! By this once compassionate and kind *Saviour*, (compassionate and kind, alas! in vain) but now inexorable and severe *Judge*, thou shalt be tried and condemned. Thou must, therefore, bear thy own curse, and suffer the just punishment of thy own sins, (since by his stripes thou wouldest not be healed,) together with a superadded condemnation for neglecting so great a salvation! Yes, thou shalt be adjudged to take thy portion "in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone;" and that will not be a place of purgation, but of torment, extreme and endless torment! No promises of sanctification there! No calls of divine love! No visitations from his gracious Spirit! No help! No hope! But he that is unholy shall be unholy still, and shall therefore be still miserable.

7. And now, what sayest thou, sinner? For what wilt thou neglect this sanctification, so indispensably necessary to thy present and eternal happiness? What hast thou discovered of so much more importance than this, that thou judgest it better deserving thy atten-

tion and desire, care, and pursuit? Surely thou wilt not be so mad as to sell thy title to yon fair inheritance above, with all the bliss and glory of it, and plunge thyself into endless and irretrievable ruin, for the momentary and unsatisfying pleasures of sense? For the glittering dust of this perishable world? Or for the empty breath of uncertain praise? Oh! my brother, consider what wilt thou be profited "if thou shouldest gain even the whole world," amass together all its wealth, possess all its honours, and enjoy all the pleasures it can afford in the greatest perfection, (which, alas! poor, feeble, dying worm, thou canst never do) and, by neglecting this sanctification, "lose thy own soul?"—Or, "What wilt thou receive in exchange for thy soul?" Or for this sanctification, which is indisputably its truest riches, greatest honour, and most exalted and lasting felicity? Destitute of which, it is poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked; but possessed of which, it is rich, and glorious, and happy beyond conception, and for ever! What recompense will the devil make thee for neglecting to regain this blissful and glorious image of God; for continuing contentedly under his power, his obedient slave, his faithful servant, and hereby renouncing joy and glory, God and heaven? For what price dost thou sell thy time and talents, thy liberty and life, thy body and soul to him? Alas, alas! poor creature, thy gains are but small! *Gains!* did I say! Thy *loss*, thou unhappy soul, is irrecoverable, and such as millions of ages cannot remedy, and ten thousand richer worlds than this cannot repay! For thou must "be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power; thou must depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

8. Awake then, thou that sleepest! Know thyself, thou fallen spirit, thou unholy soul! Know that thou hast lost the image of God, and art sunk into the image of Satan! Know that God hath sent thee into this tabernacle, that thou mightest "put off the old man, and put on the new;" mightest recover his image, "even righteousness and true holiness." If thou compliest with his design, he will take thee to dwell with himself in immortal bliss and glory; if not, he will consign thee over to everlasting pain and infamy. To help thee herein, he hath sent his only-begotten Son into our wretched world, to instruct thee by his doctrine and example, and to expiate thy sins by suffering a shameful and painful death. With

a view to the same end, his providence attends and watches over thee day by day, putting thee in the most favourable circumstances for thy restoration; and his Spirit of Grace visits thy soul, enlightening thy darkness, and helping thy infirmities. And all this God hath been doing for thee from thy youth up. And now the day of life is far spent, the night of death is at hand, and at such an hour as thou thinkest not, the messenger will be commissioned to fetch thee away, that thou mayest give an account of the use thou hast made of the time and talents allotted thee, in order to thy sanctification. And if not sanctified, a miserable account wilt thou give! How certain is thy death! How uncertain the time when! Perhaps even this night thy soul will be demanded! and dost thou trifle still?

9. Penetrated with a sense of these truths, let me exhort thee, *up and be doing*. Convinced of its great excellency, its absolute and immediate necessity, let thy whole heart long for sanctification! Let all that is within thee pant and gasp after this refreshing grace! Let thy famished and starving soul insatiably hunger and thirst for this righteousness, this bread and water of life! Let thy desires after it be fervent, constant, and increasing; and be not satisfied till thou "awake up after his likeness." Remembering that this holiness is the gift of God, that he alone can work it in thee, let thy desire be to *him*, and thy expectation from *him*. "Lift up thine eyes to the hills from whence thy help cometh; thy help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Only *he* can create thy soul anew; and he is both able and willing to do it. Nay, he hath infallibly promised this blessing to all who ask it. "By prayer and supplication, therefore, make thy request known unto God." And be in earnest; do not trifle with God. If sanctification be indeed so valuable and necessary, and if God be faithful to his word, and have indeed promised it; then let thy prayers for it be *fervent* and *persevering*; *ask, seek, knock*. Repeat and urge thy request again and again. Be importunate in prayer, take no denial, say,

"I will not let thee go without thy blessing;  
By thy great name, I enter my protest,  
Never to leave thee, till I see thy word  
Accomplished to my vows: Till thou with full

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And cloudless demonstration, to my soul,  
Confirm thy promised grace."

And "believe thou shalt have the petitions that thou askest;" and be assured "thou shalt have them."

10. In the meantime, consider to whom thou art indebted for this sanctification, who it is that hath purchased it for thee. Consider him who "gave himself for thee, that he might redeem thee from all iniquity, and purify thee from all pollution of flesh and spirit." Remember he is "made of God unto thee sanctification." If the Father sanctify thee, it is for his Son's sake, and in conformity to his Son's image; yea, and it is only by faith in his Son that thou canst obtain the blessing. Convinced of this, and of thy entire sinfulness, deep guilt, and utter helplessness, come to the Father for this grace, through the Son, confiding only in him for audience and success. Make what he hath done and suffered thy *only* plea; renounce all confidence in thy own wisdom, righteousness, and strength; trust in him alone; and be satisfied "he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." Absolutely rely upon his infallible word of promise: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son: If ye ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Perseveringly wait its accomplishment, and it shall be done unto thee according to thy faith.

11. Only observe, "If the blessing tarry, wait for it. It will surely come, and will not tarry long." Follow the Psalmist's example; "I waited patiently upon the Lord," (or rather, *קָוָה קִוִּיתִי*, In waiting I waited, that is, I waited earnestly and diligently,) and "he inclined unto me and heard my cry." Wait thou for the Lord. Expect the answer of thy prayers, as the watchman expecteth the morning light, and that at all times, and in all places. God has not confined himself to any time or place: expect him therefore continually: and with that earnestness which becometh a soul continually on the brink of death and judgment. "Watch thou, for thou neither knowest the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." Watch for sanctification; watch for Christ's coming; watch against sin. Remember where thou art, in the wilderness, not in Canaan; in an enemy's country, not in Paradise; in the field of battle, not reaping the spoils of victory. Wherefore, *be sober,*

*be vigilant.* Awake, and keep a good look-out: Stand on thy guard: Put on the whole armour of God: Resist the devil: Shun temptation, and “strive against sin though it be unto blood.” Conscientiously use all the means of grace, and look through all to the merits of Christ and the Spirit of God, on which alone thy hopes must be founded.

12. Once more. Amidst all this strife and agony, “possess thy soul in patience.” Endeavour after a calm, composed, and peaceful state of heart. Let thy mind be “stayed on the Lord,” and he will “keep thee in perfect peace,” and that peace thou wilt find wonderfully helpful in promoting thy sanctification. It was probably with a view to this composure and serenity of mind so friendly to divine inspiration, that the Prophets of old sometimes made use of music, when they expected any extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit\*. They seem to have intended hereby, the calming of their passions, and the introducing into their souls an heavenly peace and tranquillity, that the mild and gentle Spirit of the Holy One might delight to visit and dwell with them. And surely we are never better disposed for further visitations, discoveries, and operations from that same Spirit, for more intimate union with the Father and the Son through him, than when we are *calm, settled, and peaceful*. Then our souls wait for him as the thirsty land for the falling showers. Then, “as the eyes of a maiden are unto the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes unto the Lord, till he have mercy upon us.” Then the dew of heaven distils upon our branches, yea, he “sends a gracious rain upon his inheritance, and refreshes it when it is weary.” Thus “in quietness and in rest are we saved.” Let it be thy care, therefore, to resist every temptation to inquietude, care, and anxiety.

“What profit canst thou gain  
By self-consuming care?  
To him commend thy cause, his ear  
Attends the softest prayer.”

“Stand still, and see the salvation of God,” and yet, “agonize to enter in at the strait gate.” Join the agony of desire to the

\* 2 Kings iii. 15.

*peace* of dependence, and the *patience* of hope. May God help thee to reconcile *these*, and all will be well: "The God of peace himself will sanctify thee wholly, and the whole of thee, the spirit, and soul, and body, will be preserved blameless to his heavenly kingdom. Faithful is he that calleth thee, who also will do it."

"I rest upon thy word,  
 The promise is for me;  
 My succour and salvation, Lord,  
 Shall surely come from thee:  
 But let me still abide,  
 Nor from my hope remove,  
 'Till thou my patient spirit guide  
 Into thy perfect love."

13. I must not conclude these discourses without addressing a few words to those, who profess to have attained this sanctification.—1st, See that your profession be founded on truth: Take care that you do not deceive yourself. Remember, if you are indeed *sanctified* in the sense that has been explained, you think less of yourself than ever you did in all your life. Your understanding is so enlightened in the knowledge of God and of yourself; you have such clear views of God's incomprehensible greatness and your own exceeding littleness, of his infinite wisdom and your extreme folly, of his almighty power and your amazing weakness, of his unspotted purity and your great defilement, of his inflexible justice and your notorious guilt and desert of eternal misery;—and above all, you have such a discovery of the boundless mercy and love of God to lost sinners in general, and to yourself in particular, and of your utter unworthiness in all respects, and how far you come short of paying the debt of gratitude due to him for such goodness;—that you are ashamed, confounded, and as it were brought to nothing before his glorious Majesty, crying out from the bottom of your heart, "Who can stand before this holy Lord God?" As for me, "I am less than the least of all his mercies, less than the least of all saints," not worthy to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord!—And at the same time you have such an insight into the spirituality, extent, and obligation of the holy law of God, into the height and depth, length and breadth of the obedience it requires; and together therewith, have such a sense of your past sins, and of

your present failings, whereby you continually come short of the glory of God, that you never before relished so well, or found such sweetness in the confession of holy Job, "behold, I am vile! What shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."—Judge yourself, therefore, by this rule, and remember, if you indeed possess what you profess, you are "of a contrite and humble spirit," you even "abhor yourself, and repent as in dust and ashes."

14. Now that you may retain this spirit of humility, without which you cannot possibly retain that measure of sanctification you possess, much less obtain a still greater degree, and increase with all the increase of God;—settle these two things deeply in your heart, 1st, that what you are, you are by grace; and, 2dly, that you are not what you may, and, if you continue faithful, shall be.—Remember, 1st, that you are wholly indebted to the mere mercy of God, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and the powerful influence of the Spirit of Grace for all the good that is in you or about you. And remember that the holiness which is wrought in you, is not lodged as a stock in your own hands, but you are dependent daily upon God for it. The same mercy which first bestowed it, bestows it afresh every moment; the same merit of Christ which first interposed on your behalf, and purchased this blessing for you, interposes still; and the same Holy Spirit which first influenced your heart with the love of God, is still the one source of your wisdom and power, holiness and happiness.—If this were withdrawn, it might still be said, that "in you dwelleth no manner of thing that is good."

15. This is not all: It is not only necessary in order to your retaining an humble mind, that you should ascribe all the good that is in you to the grace of God alone, and no part of it to yourself; and that you should be sensible you are continually dependent upon God for it. But it is also needful, 2dly, that you should not overvalue the good that is in you, or think of your attainments, or of yourself on account of them, more highly than you ought to think. That you may not fall into this very *life* and *soul* of spiritual pride, which would undoubtedly grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and be as a worm at the root of your graces, settle it in your heart that you still come very short of your duty, and are deficient both in the inward exercise of love, and the outward acts of virtue. Place before your eyes the moral law as it is explained by Moses



and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles. Remember it is of indispensable obligation, and can no more be abrogated, than God can be unholy. Remember too, that it requires you not only to love God *with all your heart*, but also to serve him *with all your strength*, or to the uttermost of your power, and *to love your neighbour as yourself*, doing him all the good you can in soul and body, from day to day. In other words, the law of God requires you to employ all your powers and faculties, of whatever kind, at all times and in all places, as far as possible to the glory of God, and for the good of mankind. Now this you dare not say you have yet done for one single day in all your life; you dare not affirm, you have for one day loved and served either God or your neighbour as much as you might have done. You have therefore still need to pray, "Father, forgive us our trespasses," and to acknowledge it is of the Lord's mercies even *you* are not consumed.

16. It follows from hence, 3dly, that you have still room for growing in grace, and in a conformity to the Lord Jesus. This indeed you will readily allow; but you must allow *more*. You must allow not only that you *may*, but that you *must* go forward towards higher attainments in the divine life, if you would not grieve the holy Spirit of God, and lose what you have already gained. God, you must remember, "hath predestinated you to be conformed to the image of his Son;" to have that whole mind in you which was in Christ Jesus, and to walk as he walked; to have, like him, the law of God fully exemplified in your life; to be living images of him, as he is of the Father. This is the mark God hath set you, and if you would not deceive yourself, and sink into sloth and indolence, you must not set yourself a lower mark. You must not cease to desire and pray, strive and labour, watch, deny yourself, and take up your cross, till you have in you the humility, meekness, and resignation; the faith, hope, and charity; the zeal for God's glory, and the salvation of sinners; the bowels of mercy, tenderness, and compassion; the love to God and mankind, with the proper fruits flowing therefrom, which dwelt in the Son of God. In a word, till, as the Apostle says, you are even "filled with all the fulness of God."

17. Remembering you have dedicated all the faculties of your soul and members of your body, with all you have and are, to God, to be at his disposal, you must study to employ them from day to

day according to his will, and for the promotion of his honour and glory. Your understanding, conscience, and memory, your will and affections, your passions and appetites, your senses and members, your time and talents, your spirit, soul, and body, with all that belongs to you, must be *holiness to the Lord*, set apart for God, and used as he directs. This is what the moral law requires, and what the example of Christ holds out to your view ; and this you must never cease aiming at and striving after. "Not as though you had already attained this, either were already perfected ; but you must follow after, if by any means you may apprehend that or which you are apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, you must not count yourselves to have apprehended".all that God has to work in you, and perform by you : You live that you may still *know* more, *receive* more, *do* more, and *suffer* more : " But this one thing you must do, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are before ; you must press towards the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus," that at last you may "stand complete in the whole will of God, and be as Christ was in this world." I say, "Let as many of you as are perfect be thus minded ; and if any of you be otherwise minded, God," if you are sincere and watchful, "will reveal this unto you," and show you your mistake.

Once more. Having guarded you against *pride* and *sloth*, let me also guard you against *carnal security*. Remember you have a threefold enemy yet to encounter, not only the devil and the world, but also the *flesh*. Though "your old man is crucified with Christ," and you are even "dead to sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord ;" yet remember you have still an animal nature about you, the seat of various senses, appetites, and passions, and that this will infallibly lead you astray and betray you into sin, if not watched over and kept under continual restraint. You have, therefore, still daily need to "deny yourself, to keep the body under and bring it into subjection, lest" after all these attainments, "you should become a cast-away." And take care you do not rest in, or place any dependence upon any thing done for you at any particular time or place : but remembering you are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to the whole of your inward tempers and outward behaviour," giving daily proof, as of your *justification*, so

also of your *sanctification*, by your unblameable and edifying conduct and conversation. And how much soever you testify in *words* concerning the great things the Lord hath done for you, testify still more in *deeds*, persuaded that example speaks louder than any thing, and will be believed sooner than any other testimony you can bear. Thus be ye the "salt of the earth, and the light of the world." Yea, "let your light shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father, who is in heaven." Now, "may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever."

AMEN.

## SERMON XIV.

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

MR. ALEXANDER MATHER;

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 1800, AT THE CHAPEL IN GREAT  
QUEEN-STREET, AND AT THE NEW CHAPEL,  
CITY-ROAD, LONDON.

*Oh, that my words were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron-pen, and lead, in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. Job xix. 23—27.*

1. **SUCH** is the language in which a holy and eminently useful man of God of old professed his faith in the Redeemer, and his expectation of eternal life through him, at a time when his heart and flesh were failing, and his temporal life, to all appearance, was hastening to a final period! Such is the way in which he obtained comfort equal to his day, when all outward comforts failed, and he lay oppressed with a complication of external miseries, such as, perhaps, never exercised the faith or patience of any other man! And

knowing that mankind in general are exposed to troubles innumerable in the present world, and that there is no support under them equal to that which this faith and hope afford ; such is the earnest and forcible manner in which he expressed his desire, that this should be held forth to all nations and ages.

2. It is true, when he says, " Oh, that my words were now written ! Oh, that they were printed in a book ! That they were graven with an iron pen, and lead in the rock for ever ! " Some think that he speaks with a reference to all his foregoing discourses with his friends, which, they suppose, he was so far from disowning or being ashamed of, that he was desirous that all ages should know them, that they might judge between him and them. But inasmuch as he had certainly uttered in the dark hour of trial, some unadvised words, which would neither be to his own credit, nor the edification of others, and which had therefore better be forgotten ; it is much more probable that he spoke thus, not with a reference to his discourses in general, but to this famous confession of his faith in particular. As if he had said, " If I have heretofore, once and again, spoken rashly, I now speak deliberately, and that which I desire may be published to all the world, and preserved for generations to come, for the direction and comfort of millions ; and therefore that it may be written, and even printed, that is, drawn out in large and legible characters, *that he who runs may read*, (for what we call *printing*, is well known to be an invention of modern date,) and that it may not be left on loose papers, which might be scattered and lost ; but put into a *book* ; nay, and lest that also should perish, that it may be engraven, like an inscription on a monument, with an iron pen, in lead, or on the rock for ever. Let the engraver use all his art to make the writing durable as well as legible.

3. It is well observed by a judicious Annotator, that lead here may mean, first, the *writing-pen, tool, or instrument*, which might be either iron or lead. For though lead be of itself too soft, yet there was an art of tempering it with other metals to such a degree of hardness, that it would pierce into a rock ; as they also tempered brass, so as to make bows and swords of it. Or, secondly, it may mean the *writing-table*, for the ancients, as is well known, wrote divers things on lead ; or thirdly, it may be put for the *writing-ink*, so to speak ; for they were wont sometimes, after eugra-

ving the letters on stone with an iron tool, to fill up the cuts or furrows made in the stone, with lead, to make the letters or words more visible and legible.

4. "For I knew that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Well might Job desire that these words should be *written, printed, put into a book, and even engraven on the rock for ever!* For in all his conferences with his friends, we do not find any words so important.

5. They may be considered, *first*, as containing the reason of his great confidence in the goodness of his cause; and of his willingness to have the matter depending between him and his friends, published and submitted to any trial. He had a living and powerful Redeemer to plead his cause, and vindicate his person from all their censures, and to give sentence for him. *Secondly*, they contain a confession of his faith and hope. "His friends," says an eminent divine, "had reproached him as a hypocrite, and contemned him as a wicked man; but he appeals to his creed,"—and I add, to his experience of the contents of it, "to his hope, and to the testimony of his own conscience, which not only acquitted him from reigning sin, but comforted him with the expectation of a blessed resurrection." As if he had said, "Do you call me a *hypocrite*, and I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in my flesh I shall see God!" Surely, these are not the words of one that has a *devil*, or is a *hypocrite*. *Thirdly*, these words also signify what was his chief support and consolation under his most severe and unparalleled trials and afflictions. He knew that his Redeemer lived, and that in his flesh he should see God, and this supported him, and kept his head above water.

6. Inasmuch as he was, in all respects, a blameless character, and, as appears from divers parts of the book, and especially from chap. xxxi. most eminent for good works; inasmuch as God himself had pronounced him a perfect and upright man, and had declared, that there was *none like him in all the earth*. Some may wonder why he did not look to his *well-spent life* for comfort and support in this trying hour; why he speaks only of a *Redeemer*, and grounds his whole expectation of future felicity on an acquaintance with him. But you, my brethren, who know the depravity of human

nature, man's sinfulness and guilt, and the insufficiency of his own righteousness to recommend him to God, will not be surprised at this. Nor will you wonder when I tell you, that that eminent saint of God, and laborious servant of the Lord Jesus, on the occasion of whose death I now address you, when, in the awful period of nature's dissolution, he was passing through the watery flood, that divides this mortal from the immortal state, found no support for his confidence or hope, in his protracted life of unwearied labours, nor in the success wherewith God had crowned them, any more than in his holiness, but fixed his foot only on the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Of this redemption he spoke most feelingly and pathetically, the last time I was favoured with an interview with him, (which was a few days after his arrival at York, in the beginning of July last.) and expressed a wish that it should be held forth, more than ever, in our discourses to the people, as the one foundation of their confidence and hope. This circumstance, I trust, will plead my excuse for choosing to address you on so extraordinarily mournful an occasion from so common a subject.

7. But to return to the case of Job. When in the midst of the calamities that oppressed him, he expressed himself in the language of my text, it is as if he had said, "although I have no knowledge, confidence, or hope of being restored to health, or to prosperity in this life, (which, it is plain, from divers parts of this book he had not,) yet one thing I know, which is much more important and comfortable, and therein I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice: although I am now a dying man, and in a desperate condition as to this world, yet,—“I know that my Redeemer liveth;—and that in my flesh I shall see God;—whom I shall see for myself, and not for another, and mine eyes shall behold him, although my frail body is going to dust, and my reins are consumed within me.” Happy Job,—although stript of his earthly all, and reduced to the very last and lowest state of human misery! Although robbed of all his flocks and herds, and earthly possessions, and brought to entire beggary! although deprived of all his children, and cut off from all hope of a posterity; although forsaken, or rather persecuted by all his friends and even by his own wife; although reduced to a perfect skeleton, as to his body, and covered all over with sores and scabs, so that he takes a potsherd to scrape himself withal; although assaulted by Satan, and that by divine permission, and even by all the powers of

darkness, and, for a time, and for wise reasons, left in their hands: yet, in the midst of all, he is enabled to cast anchor within the veil, and is in a condition to be envied, rather than pitied :

“ You see the man ; you see his hold on heaven !  
 Heaven waits not the last moment ; owns her friends  
 On this side death ; and points them out to men :  
 A silent lecture, but of sovereign power !  
 To vice confusion ; and to virtue peace.”

8. My brethren, the time is approaching when we shall all need this support, and shall be most wretched if we have it not. If we should escape such troubles as came on Job for his trial ; if we should not live to see ourselves stript of all our earthly possessions, and reduced to beggary ; deprived of all our offspring, and written childless ; forsaken or persecuted by all our friends, and emaciated with sickness ; or tortured with pain in every part of our bodies ; yet dust we are, and unto dust we also must return.

“ Since our first parents’ fall,  
 Inevitable death descends on all ;  
 A portion none of human race can miss ;—  
 But that which makes it sweet or bitter, is,  
 The fear of misery, or certain hope of bliss.”

9. And the time, we must recollect, which will put a period to our life on earth, and to all the desires and delights, cares and pursuits of it, is at no great distance. Though appearing, perhaps, afar off, it will be upon us before we are well aware. Yes !

“ That hour, so late, is nimble in approach,  
 And, like a post, comes on in full career :  
 How swift the shuttle flies that weaves thy shroud !  
 Where is the fable of thy former years ?  
 Thrown down the gulf of time ; as far from thee  
 As they had ne’er been thine. The day in hand,  
 Like a bird struggling to get loose, is going ;—  
 ’Tis scarce possessed, so suddenly ’tis gone ;  
 And each swift moment fled, is death advanc’d  
 By strides as swift : eternity is all.  
 But whose eternity ? Who triumphs there ?  
 Bathing for ever in the font of bliss !  
 For ever basking in the deity !”



My brethren, who? Your conscience shall reply. Oh what would you give then for such confidence and hope as this of Job? Confidence and hope, which, blessed be God, our departed friend and brother, and your late pastor, had; and which you also may have. He, like Job, and in similar language, in the midst of much affliction and pain, his face pale, his body emaciated, and his strength gone, declared from time to time, in the presence of those about him, his faith in the Redeemer, and his confident expectation of future felicity through him. *While his way, like that of Job, was fenced up, and his hope, as to the present life, was removed like a tree; yet his spirit was kept from fainting, while he trusted, not in his protracted life of innocence, of labours, or of sufferings, but in his living Redeemer, and "looked for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."* Thus the great apostle of the Gentiles, *when the time of his departure was at hand, notwithstanding his immense labours and sufferings, and the success wherewith God had crowned his efforts to disciple nations, placed his whole confidence on the same foundation, and said, "I know in whom I have believed, and he will keep what I commit unto him safe unto that day. To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* May the Lord give us the like support in the like circumstances! But what is this support? What is implied in this confession and testimony?

I. What is meant here by a *Redeemer*, and how does it appear that we *need*, and that we *have* a Redeemer?

II. What is that *knowledge* that Job had, and which, as I shall show you, we may have of this Redeemer, and of a title to future felicity and glory with him.

III. Let us observe the *confidence* and *comfort* which this knowledge affords in a time of affliction and trial, and at a dying hour.

I. We are to inquire, What is meant by a *Redeemer* here, and how it appears that we *need* and that we *have* a Redeemer? .

1. On this point, I must observe that the Hebrew word *כֹּדֵם*, here rendered *Redeemer*, was primarily used of the nearest kinsman, to whom under the law of Moses, and according to ancient custom, the right of redemption belouged by virtue of kindred or relationship. If my hearers will be at the pains to read the 3d

and 4th chapters of the book of *Ruth*, they will be fully satisfied on this head. And they may learn partly from these chapters, and partly from sundry passages of the books of Moses; and of other books of the Old Testament, that this kinsman's office was four-fold. 1st. If his relation had sold or mortgaged his estate, and was now dead, it was his kinsman's office to redeem, if he were able, by a price paid, the sold or mortgaged inheritance of his deceased relative. "If thy brother be waxen poor, (says Moses, Lev. xxv. 25.) and have sold away his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem what his brother sold." 2. If his relation were not dead, but in a state of slavery or bondage, it was his duty to redeem him out of this state by price or by power, Psalm lxxiv. 2. and Isaiah xlvi. 20. 3. If his relation's adversary had waylaid and slain him, it belonged to him to avenge his death, whence he was called the *avenger of blood*, Numb. xxxv. 12. And, 4. If this kinsman's relative had died without issue, it was his place to preserve his name and honour, by marrying his widow, and raising him up seed, Deut. xxv. 5. Now, in divers respects similar to these, and admirably illustrated by them, we all need redemption.

2. Our inheritance, I mean that which God gave man at his first creation, has been forfeited, and lost. This was threefold; 1st. The inheritance of the soul, the favour of God, his image, and communion with him, an inheritance of inestimable value, and yielding the purest and most satisfying enjoyment. Now this, it is well known, our first parents forfeited and lost for themselves and for all their descendants. "By nature," as St. Paul assures us, "we are all children of wrath." We have been stripped of the image of God, and the image of the beast and of the devil appears upon us. And being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance which is in us, we are shut out from intercourse and fellowship with him, and left dead in trespasses and sins. 2. The inheritance of the body has been forfeited and lost also. When God created man, he gave him the garden of Eden, earth, and all the blessings of this temporal life, as his inheritance, considered as dwelling in an animal body. But man by the fall, having forfeited these, was turned out of paradise, the earth was cursed to him, and his short life upon it was rendered a scene of toil, vanity, and dissatisfaction; and, by and by, death was commissioned to

put him out of possession of all, and give him back to the dust out of which he was taken. 3. God, in all probability, had provided for his new-made and highly-favoured creature, man, a better world than this, even in its paradisiacal state. He had intended, had man continued in his innocency and allegiance to his Maker, after a proper time of trial, to have translated him, as he afterwards translated Enoch and Elijah, to the heavenly state, without obliging him to taste of death. In that case, man would not have been *unclothed*, as St. Paul's phrase is, but *clothed upon*, that the earthly and natural, might have been swallowed up of the heavenly and spiritual body. But this is also lost. So far from being entitled to eternal life by nature, as we have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, we deserve eternal death, and are, in fact, obnoxious to it. *For the wages*, the proper wages of sin, that which is strictly deserved by it, and due to it, is *death*, whereas eternal life is the gift, the unmerited gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So that our first parents forfeited all for themselves, and for their posterity, and we are reduced to such a state of poverty, as to have absolutely no inheritance left for soul or body, in this world or another.

3. This is not all. We ourselves are, by nature, in a state of *bondage and slavery*. Satan, whom St. Paul terms *the prince of the power of the air*, probably because he and his angels, by divine permission, range in the air, and fly from place to place, in pursuit of their pernicious purpose of corrupting and destroying mankind; he, I say, worketh, *every day*, worketh *with energy*, with uncontrolled power and force, *in the children of disobedience*, in all that disbelieve and disobey the gospel. He is also termed by the same apostle, *the god of this world*, and it is evident, makes daily use of the things as well as persons of this world, who are his children, to extend and establish his empire over mankind. Hence, we are by nature in *bondage to this present evil world*; and only they that are redeemed by Christ, and born of God, as we learn, Gal. i. 4. and 1 John v. 3. are enabled to overcome it, and shake off its yoke. And then the flesh is another of those lords which naturally tyrannize over us. For while we are unchanged, and till "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus set us free, the law in our members wars against the law of our minds, and leads us captive to the law of sin which is in our mem-

bers." The consequence of which is, that from day to day, we, more or less, *commit sin*; and, our Lord being witness, *he that committeth sin is the servant*, δουλος, the slave of *sin*, that is, he is in a state of bondage and slavery to it. Nor is there one child of fallen Adam, who is, by nature, exempt from this bondage. *The scripture*, says the Apostle, *hath concluded all*, that is, hath declared that all are concluded *under sin*, under its guilt, under its power, and under its awfully destructive consequences.

4. Our departed friend and brother, Mather, when he was enlightened a little by the grace of God, which was about the twentieth year of his age, and especially when he began in good earnest to seek salvation, was soon made deeply sensible of this spiritual bondage. And while, as he tells us in the short account he has given of his life, printed in the third volume of the Arminian Magazine, his convictions respecting it increased day by day, and he felt his bones, as it were filled with a sore disease; his distress became so great that his appetite was gone, sleep departed from him, and tears were his meat day and night. But blessed be God, he obtained deliverance, as we all may also do.

5. It will not be doubted, I think, by any here present, but that we need redemption in the two other respects also which I have mentioned. This, indeed, is implied in what I have already advanced. Our grand adversary, the devil, called for this very reason *Apollyon*, or the *Destroyer*, has way laid and slain us, and has even obtained the *power of death*, under which he hath contrived to bring all mankind, and it is meet and right, and necessary, in order to our final deliverance, that he should be destroyed in his turn, and that the murder of our souls should be avenged upon him. And as our *honour*, viz. the honour of our rational and immortal nature of resembling God, and being acknowledged as his sons and daughters, together with our very *persons* and *names*, are liable to be lost, and to perish for ever from the creation of God; it is certain, that in this respect also, we need redemption.

6. It appears, therefore, that man wants a Redeemer in every sense in which that word is taken in the holy scriptures. But is there any Redeemer provided for him? Many, it is intimated, (Luke, ii. 38.) *looked for redemption in Jerusalem*? Did they obtain what they looked for, or did they look in vain? This leads me to observe, that although it might be inferred from the goodness

of God, apparent in the works of creation, in the dispensations of providence, and in all the blessings of this life, that our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, would also be our Redeemer; and that He, whom we had made our enemy, would, perhaps, find out some way of reconciling us to himself, that he might become our friend; yet, that we really have a *Redeemer* can only be learned with certainty by supernatural revelation. Thus, it is evident, Job knew it. The promise made to Adam of a *seed from the woman that should bruise the serpent's head*; and that made to Abraham respecting all the *nations of the world being blessed in his seed*, had been handed down from father to son, and from age to age, and directed and supported by these promises; Job, like the rest of the patriarchs, conducted himself as a *stranger and pilgrim on earth*, and declared plainly that he sought a better country than any here, even an *heavenly one*. Therefore God was not ashamed to be called his God, having provided for him a city. Jacob spoke of this Redeemer when dying; I not only mean when he foretold that *Shiloh should come*, and that *to him the gathering of the people should be*; and when, stopping short in the midst of the paternal and patriarchal blessings, which he was divinely inspired to pronounce on the tribes that descended on him, he abruptly cried out, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!* But more especially when he blessed the sons of Joseph, and prayed to this Redeemer for them. God, (said he, Gen. xlviii. 15. 16.) *before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, did walk, the God who fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads*. Well might he thus address him, for he had seen him in a vision at Bethel, and, in a time of great trouble, had wrestled with him, and prevailed, for a great blessing. Hosea alludes to both these events, ch. xii. 3. when he says, "He took his brother by the heel, in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed: He wept and made supplication unto him:" viz. when in distress, through fear of his brother Esau. "He found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even Jehovah, God of Hosts; Jehovah is his memorial." Moses was commissioned to speak still more clearly of this Redeemer, under the character of a *prophet* that should arise *like unto him*, and indeed much superior to him, whom the people were to hear and obey, on peril of utter destruction. This is that Angel-Jehovah, that *Angel*

or messenger of the divine presence who was with the church in the wilderness, of whom Isaiah speaks thus, (ch. lxiii. 9.) "In all their affliction he was afflicted: The angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." Of him the Father says, (Exod. xxxiii. 20, 22.) "*Behold, I send mine angel—that is, my Word, or Son, who is my Messenger,—to keep thee in the way—provoke him not,—for my name is in him.*" And in Isaiah, lix. 20. his coming in the flesh is foretold. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to those that turn from transgression in Jacob:" as also Mal. iii. 1. where he is termed the *Angel or Messenger of the covenant*, and that *Lord* whom the pious Jews sought, and in the expectation of whose coming they greatly delighted.

7. I do not mean by this, but that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is originally and primarily our Redeemer. He is the Fountain of redemption, as he is also of creation and preservation: He, I know, is that *Lord God of Israel* spoken of, Luke i. 68, who hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for them in the house of his servant David." But the Son of God, the *Word made flesh*, is our immediate and actual Redeemer. He has the best right to that appellation, as all the laws of the  $\kappa\alpha\iota$ , or redeemer agree to, and are fulfilled in him. For 1st, he is our near kinsman. *Inasmuch as we were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same. He took on him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and was made in all things, sin excepted, like to us; whom he therefore* (Heb. ii. 12.) properly terms his brethren, saying to his Father, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." Now it is by virtue of this, I mean by his being our *near kinsman*, that he has the right of redemption, and redeems us by his blood, even by the blood of our nature which he assumed. "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not: But a body hast thou prepared me. Lo! I come to do thy will, O God!" "By the which *will* we are sanctified," that is, ransomed and consecrated to God "by the offering of the body of Christ, once for all." Hence, we are said to "have redemption in his blood," Eph. i. 7. Nor is there redemption or salvation in any other, "for there is no name (Acts iv. 12.) given under heaven among men whereby ye

can be saved, but his name. He alone had been able to find and lay down a sufficient ransom, or price of redemption, for the human race, because his life alone, which was perfectly innocent and holy, and of inconceivable dignity, through his miraculous conception, his astonishing powers, even as man, and the close and indissoluble union of the human nature with the divine, in his mysterious person; his life alone, I say, was worth the forfeited and eternal lives of all men.

8. But 2dly, he fulfils all the offices of a *kinsman* or *redeemer*. Have we forfeited and lost our inheritance, the whole of that patrimony, which was given to man at his first creation? He redeems it, procures again for us the favour and image of God, and communion with him, the inheritance of the soul, a restoration to life, a better life than we lost, the portion of the body, as also paradise, heaven, and everlasting life and glory, the inheritance of both soul and body, in an eternal state." The way into the holiest of all" was indeed not laid open, much less "made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present; but Christ being come, a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood; he entered in, once for all, into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant, they who are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance.

9. Were we ourselves in a state of bondage and slavery? He takes the prey from the mighty, and dispossesses the unjust possessor. He "redeems us from this present evil world," and causes us to know by experience, that he who "is born of God overcometh the world." "The law of the spirit of life," which is in him, "makes us free" from the dominion of the "law in our members," which warred against the law of our mind, and led us captive to the law of sin. Continuing in his word, and thereby becoming his disciples indeed, we "know the truth, and the truth makes us free," even free from the power of sin, "that being servants of God, we may bring forth fruit unto holiness, that the end may be eternal life." This is the end answered for which "in the fulness of time he was sent forth."

and for which he gave himself unto shame, pain, and death. We are redeemed so as to have the adoption of children, Gal. iv. 4; yea, "redeemed from all iniquity, from its power as well as from its guilt, and purified unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

10. Nay, he "delivers those, who through fear of death, were all their life long subject to bondage;" and redeeming us from death by dying, we have, at last, through him the public manifestation and display of our adoption, even the redemption of our body from the grave. Then he will show himself an *avenger of blood*, and will avenge our death on the grand adversary of our souls. For "through death," expiating sin, and obtaining for us eternal redemption, "he destroys him that has the power of death, that is, the devil." Even now, while Satan as a strong man armed, keeps his house, and his goods are in peace, the Redeemer of Israel comes upon him, and takes from him the armour of unbelief and sin, wherein he trusted, and divides the spoil; even now he holds him in chains of darkness, till the judgment of the great day!" and in that day will cause to return on his own head, all the mischief he has done to God's rational and immortal creation. For at that day,—

"Not man alone: the foe of God and man,  
From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain,  
And rears his brazen front, with thunder scar'd  
As meteors in a stormy sky, how roll  
His baleful eyes. He curses whom he dreads;  
And deems it the first moment of his fall."

And then also our *Kinsman Redeemer*, who had before restored our obliterated names, recording them in the book of life, restores also our persons, both in body and soul, and raises us to much greater dignity than that from which we fell.

11. Similar to this, I believe, were the views which our departed friend and brother, whose death we are now endeavouring to improve, had of this redeemer of lost mankind, during the whole course of his ministry, and such were the benefits he had received, or expected to receive, from his redemption. And during his last sickness, his views seemed to be greatly enlarged on this subject, and rendered much more clear and affecting, than at any former period of his life. "All I have done (said he to Mr. Pawson and me, in the beginning of July last) is nothing; it is not worth mentioning, I



have no foundation of hope or confidence whatever, but the mediation of the Son of God. O my dear friends, I never saw the blessed Redeemer of mankind in so amiable a light as I now do. Never did I see so clearly, or feel so deeply my need of him, and that I am wholly indebted to his sacrifice and intercession, for the acceptance of my person, and of my poor services. What would become of me were it not for this Redeemer.

II. This leads me to the *second* point, the *saving knowledge* of this Redeemer, of an interest in him, and of a title to eternal felicity through him.

1. This knowledge Job had, although under a comparatively dark and imperfect dispensation; *I know*, says he, *that my Redeemer liveth*. He knew by the revelation which God condescended to make to holy men, in those patriarchal ages, that he, who was to be the seed of the woman, and the seed of Abraham, and therefore his kinsman and Redeemer, *then* lived. He knew, therefore, his pre-existence and divinity, that he was then the *living one*, who had life in himself, and was able to communicate life to others. He knew that he should *stand at the latter day upon the earth or the dust*, as the Hebrew is. By the latter day, the patriarchs and prophets meant the days of the Messiah. Job here, therefore, professes his faith in the incarnation of the Messiah; that he should stand upon the earth or dust, viz. in a human body; that although he was God, he should be dust, "should lay his glory by,—should wrap him in our clay." He probably, too, spoke of his resurrection from the dead. Though dead and buried, he shall stand upon the dust, rising up out of it. His glorious coming may be also here foretold. Enoch, long before Job, had prophesied, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." And the expression, *in the latter day he shall stand upon the earth*, is pretty similar to that of Zech. chap. xiv. 1. 4. "the Lord, my God shall come, and all the saints with thee, and his feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives." This same Jesus," said the angels, "that is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him go into heaven." Some think too, that his final victory over all his and his people's enemies is foretold. He shall stand upon the dust, upon his enemies, who shall be prostrate before him, and as dust beneath his feet; like a mighty con-

querer on the field of battle, he shall keep the field when his enemies are all routed and slain, and he shall tread them down as the dust. "He shall put down all rule, and all authority, and all power. For he shall reign till he shall put all enemies under his feet;" even death itself, the last enemy that shall be destroyed, according to the prediction of the prophet. He will swallow up death in victory. O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction?" Our resurrection, therefore, is also here foretold. Some indeed render the Hebrew, the *latter man*, that is, the resurrection body shall rise up out of the dust and stand above it; although the former man, our present body is sown in corruption and falls into dust; that is, "as we have born the image of the earthly," and by various infirmities, afflictions, and pains, return to dust, with the first, "so shall we bear the image of the heavenly," shall rise up out of the dust, stand above it, and put on immortality with the second Adam.

2. But what kind of knowledge was this which Job had of the Redeemer? was it merely a historical or speculative knowledge? Did it imply no more than knowing that there is a Redeemer, who shall stand in the latter day upon the earth? Yes, my brethren, it implied much more. It was a supernatural, spiritual, and experimental knowledge of him; such a knowledge as the Lord Jesus spoke of, Matt. xi. 27. when he said, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father, and neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." It is such a knowledge as he promised, John xvi. 13, 14, saying. "The Spirit of truth shall glorify me: He shall receive of mine, and show them to you!" This knowledge St. Paul had received himself, for he assures us, that it had pleased God to reveal his Son in him, and this knowledge his fellow-apostles, and the first messengers of Christ had received, for "He that at first commanded light to shine out of darkness, had shined into their hearts, to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face, or person of Christ Jesus." Nay, and this knowledge all the true disciples of Jesus Christ had received in the first ages of christianity, and do still receive, in every age; for, "I know my sheep," says Jesus, "and am known of mine." This knowledge of the Redeemer, is no other than that acquaintance with him, which is recommended in this very book of Job, where it is said, "Acquaint now thyself

with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." And it differs, as widely from knowing that there is a Redeemer, as the being acquainted with the king, differs from knowing that there is a king. Accordingly, Job's words may be, and are rendered by many learned men, *I know my living Redeemer*, that is, I am acquainted with him. Now this knowledge is of such importance in religion, that there neither is nor can be any religion without it. By it we are *justified*, for it is the foundation and source of justifying faith, according to Isaiah liii. 11. *By his knowledge*, that is, by their being brought to know him, *shall my righteous servant justify many*. By it we are *sanctified*; for love to him, and obedience to his will, flow entirely from it, as St. John testifies, 1 epistle, chap. iv. 7, &c. And by it we are *glorified*; for "It is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." Now, when we have this knowledge, we can call him our Redeemer. We can say, each one for ourselves, *I know my living Redeemer*, or I know that *my Redeemer liveth*. It is true, he is in a sense, the Redeemer of all, having assumed our common nature, and given himself a ransom for all, and his salvation being free for all: but he must be known by the spiritual and supernatural revelation of the Holy Ghost; or, according to Jeremiah's words, "God must give us a heart to know him;" or, in St. John's language; "must give us an understanding to know him that is true, that we may be in him that is true, even in God's Son Jesus Christ," according to our Lord's promise, John xiv. 20. "In that day," when you receive the Spirit of truth, "ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you." Then, having believed in Christ with a faith of the operation of God, we can testify with the apostle, "that Christ liveth in us, and that the life we live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God, who hath loved us, and given himself for us."

4. This knowledge of the Redeemer, and of redemption in and through him, our departed friend received, the first time he ever saw or heard Mr. Wesley, which was April 14, 1754. Mr. Wesley had just recovered from a consumption which had threatened his life; and on the preceding day had returned from Bristol Hot-Wells. The next day, being Easter-day, he preached in the chapel in *West-Street, Seven Dials*, and under the sermon then delivered, God brought Mr. Mather to a saving acquaintance with the

Redeemer, and set his soul at liberty from all slavish and tormenting fear, removing his sins as far from him as the east is from the west. The change wrought in his soul was even manifest in his countenance. His load of guilt and distress was gone: he could praise a pardoning God; and instead of fear and anguish of spirit, he was put in possession of a *peace that passeth understanding*. But the knowledge which Job had of this Redeemer, inspired him with a lively and joyful hope of immortality, and that both for soul and body, a hope which afforded support and comfort when nothing else could.

III. This is the *third* and *last* particular to which I was to call your attention. "Although after my skin," says he, "worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

1. *After my skin*, which is already wasted and gone. *They destroy*, so it is in the Hebrew, (that is, *they* that are appointed to destroy it, the grave and the worms in it, chap. xvii. 14.) *this body*, the word *body* is not in the original:—*This*, this skeleton, this shadow, chap. xxvii. 7.—*This*, that I lay my hand upon; like our departed friend, the last time I saw him, putting his hand on his weak and withered limbs; and saying, you see how I am shrunk, and how my flesh is wasted and gone,—*this*, that you see, call it what you please, I expect that it will very shortly be a feast for worms, and will turn to dust in the grave. *Yet out of my flesh*, as the original may be rendered, or in the state of separate spirits, *I shall see God*. For the spirit of man, in a state of separation from the body, has eyes, wherewith to see God, although not eyes of flesh. It is pleasing to observe, that even the Old Testament saints in their twilight dispensation, before "*life and immortality* were brought to light (as they have been) by the gospel," expected after death, to see and be happy with God and their Redeemer in the separate state. "As for me," says the Psalmist, Psal. xvii. 15. "I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel," says Asaph, Psalm lxxiii. 24, 25. "and afterwards receive me to glory: My heart and my flesh faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." "The dust shall return to the earth as it was," says Solomon, Eccles. xvii. 7. "and the spirit to God who gave it." "He the righteous man

that perisheth, while no man layeth it to heart," says Isaiah, chap. lvii. 1, 2. "and who is taken away from the evil to come, shall enter into peace, even while his body rests on its bed, each one walking in his uprightness." Blessed be God, under the New Testament dispensation we have clearer light, and fuller assurance. We know, on the testimony of Jesus, that even "they that kill the body, cannot kill the soul:" that those disciples of his that can say, *To me to live is Christ*, will find that to them *to die will be gain*: that *when they are absent from the body, they shall be present with the Lord*: and as soon as they depart, *they shall be with Christ in paradise*, as sure as Jesus received the penitent thief thither.

2. But it is probable that Job also expected, that *in his flesh*, he should see God. He, with the other enlightened believers, under the Old Testament dispensation, looked for the resurrection of the body also, which expectation they might deduce from some particular revelation, made to them in those ages, or from some such general declarations as were delivered by God to Moses at the bush, when he styles himself *the God of Abraham*, and of other holy men that were now dead, implying, as our Lord teaches, that they were not so dead, even with respect to their bodies, but that they should live again. For God is not the God of the finally dead; but only of the living. But from whatever source they derived this hope of a resurrection of the body, it is plain they entertained it. "All the days of my appointed time," says Job, "will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee. Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." "Thy dead men shall live," says Isaiah to the church of God, "together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth," says Daniel, "shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." It is true, Daniel might speak this of those saints that should rise at, or immediately after, the time of Christ's resurrection. For his language is pretty similar to that of the evangelist when he relates that fact.\* Or he may refer to those martyrs who shall rise at the beginning of the millen-

\* See Matth. xxvi. 52, 53.

nism, or at the time of the restoration of the Jews. But our blessed Lord, *the Word made flesh*, hath given us more light and greater assurance on this subject, than they could have in that obscure dispensation; and we know, on his testimony, "That all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." For, "as in Adam all die, so in Christ," in this sense at least, "shall all," without exception, "be made alive."

3. But when the inspired penmen speak on this subject, they generally confine themselves to the resurrection of the righteous: they seldom notice that of the wicked. Therefore, when the question is, "How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come?" The answer is given in terms that are only applicable to the bodies of the saints. "The body is sown in corruption," hastening to dissolution and decay; "it is raised in incorruption," without any principle of dissolution or decay in it. "It is sown in weakness," sluggish and dead matter, absolutely helpless; "it is raised in power," possessed of activity and force to us quite inconceivable like that of lightning or of the electric fluid. "It is sown in dishonour," in the lowest disgrace to which human nature can be reduced, in a state shocking to behold, and loathsome to all the senses: "it is raised in glory," conformed to the glorious body of Christ, and in glory, like that in which Christ appeared, when, being transfigured on the mount, his *countenance shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light*; for "The righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." "It is sown a natural (or animal) body," advancing by imperceptible degrees, with the aid of food, air, exercise, and rest, to a state of maturity, and then gradually declining, and by various infirmities and afflictions, brought back to its first principles. "It is raised a spiritual body," mature and perfect at once, and of such refined matter as to need no aid from food or sleep, or any creature exterior to itself. O most glorious and blessed state, to which we may all be advanced! Who would not desire, and even pant after it! Who would not long for this immortality, this consummation of our bliss, when *we shall see God*, not in the glass of his works, or by faith, as we see him here; but intuitively, and face to face, as a man beholds his friend. "In my flesh," says

Job, "I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself and not for another, and mine eyes shall behold him."

4. It is justly observed by Archbishop Tillotson, that the knowledge which we shall have of God in a future world, is termed *vision* or *sight*, "because of its *excellency* and *dignity*, its *largeness* and *comprehension*, its *spirituality* and *quickness*. its *evidence* and *certainly*." Undoubtedly our sight is the most excellent and comprehensive of all our senses, and the information which we obtain through this medium, is in general more evident and certain, and received in a more quick and spiritual manner than that which is communicated by the other senses. And the knowledge which we shall then have of God, will as far exceed any that we can attain of him in this world, as the knowledge of an object which we receive by sight, exceeds that which we have by feeling, or by the exercise of any other inferior sense.

5. And certainly we need not wonder that this *knowledge* or *vision of God*, should be represented as the consummation of the happiness of the saints. For, 1st, in the very nature of things, such knowledge of a being infinitely perfect and amiable, must be infinitely charming to the rational and immortal mind. We never see perfection and beauty but we are delighted. What must we be then, when we contemplate *infinite* beauty and perfection? And then, 2dly, To see that the infinite Jehovah, who fills immensity, and inhabits eternity, and all whose attributes are boundless and everlasting, loves us infinitely, and will employ his unsearchable wisdom, power, and goodness, to all eternity, to render us as happy and as glorious as our nature and state can admit;—surely this must be a source of unspeakable and constant consolation to us indeed; yea, of rapture and ecstasy inexpressible! So that this account of the future happiness of the saints is, at once, perfectly rational and noble, and such as commends itself to every intelligent mind the moment it is apprehended. And sure I am it is as far above any thing expressed or conceived, even by the wisest heathen philosophers, when they speak of the happiness of a future life, as the heaven is above the earth, or the rational soul above the animal body. There will, indeed, be many other sources of felicity to the righteous in another world; but this is the chief, and is continually represented as such in the sacred scriptures. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "They shall see

his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads." "When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

6. Now the ground on which Job expected this honour and felicity, and on which we must also look for it, if we would not look in vain, has this day been laid before you, and must not be forgotten. You have heard that it is threefold. 1. The *Redeemer*; the *Word made flesh*; our kinsman and brother, who knows and loves his people, his brethren, and is able to save them to the uttermost, having assumed their nature, expiated their sins, and ever living to make intercession for them. 2. The *knowledge*, the *spiritual and experimental* knowledge of this Redeemer, and of an interest in him. 3. The being hereby redeemed, that is, not only purchased, but *rescued* out of the hands of our spiritual enemies, justified, adopted, regenerated, and constituted heirs of, and made meet for, this glory. This was the foundation on which our deceased friend, and your late minister, like Job, St. Paul, and all others of the Lord's people, of every nation and age, built his confidence towards God, and his hope of a blessed immortality; and in his greatest extremity, he found it sufficient to support his expectations, as I pray to God we may, when in similar circumstances.

7. As the account which he gave of himself twenty years ago, contained in the third volume of the Magazine, published in 1780, undoubtedly is in the hands of many of you, it will not be necessary that I should say much concerning the former part of his life. It will be sufficient to observe two or three particulars, for the information of such as have not seen that account. He was born, he tells us, at Brechin, in Scotland, in February, 1733. His parents making it their care to instruct him early in the principles of religion, and to bring him up in the fear of God, he was preserved, in a great measure, while young, from those follies and vices which children too generally fall into; and took pleasure in reading good books, and in other exercises of religion. And when about ten years of age, while the master of the school he attended was praying with his scholars, he received those good impressions, which, he says, he never entirely lost. A lesson this to all parents and schoolmasters, to use all diligence in endeavouring to sow those seeds of grace in the minds of their children and pupils, which through the divine blessing, may afterwards grow up, and produce a plenteous harvest.



8. Mr. Mather, in his youth, was sundry times exposed to great and imminent dangers, in which through the kind providence of God, he was most mercifully preserved. When about twenty years of age, he came to London, where, in February, 1753, he was married to a country-woman with whom he had been acquainted in his childhood; and, in September following, was hired to a gentleman who carried on the baking business. Here he found, what he says, he had long desired, a family in which God was worshipped. This excited him to great earnestness in seeking him, and to greater exactness in the use of prayer, and every other means of grace. And so much in earnest was he in this pursuit, that he sometimes continued on his knees, from the time he should have gone to rest, till *two* in the morning, when he was called to go to work.

9. Nevertheless, he did not for some time obtain either peace with God, or peace of mind, which he imputed to his being frequently employed in baking on the Lord's day. But in consequence of remonstrances on the subject, and proper steps being taken, this practice was soon given up by that family, and he, being induced to hear the word at the Foundery, was much edified, and soon made acquainted with, and enabled to embrace the way of salvation through faith in Christ. This, as I have observed, was under a sermon of Mr. Wesley on Easter-day, in 1754. His confidence, indeed, at first, was not established, for he was soon assaulted with unbelief; but being exhorted to look to Jesus, and to confide in him, as giving himself for him, as all should be who are in a similar situation, he soon recovered his peace, which, he says, by the mercy of God, he had not lost thirty years after; and I believe did not lose to his dying day.

It was not long before he began to find strong impressions upon his mind that he was called, to preach; which, after he had earnestly sought direction from God concerning it, in fasting and prayer, he ventured to mention to those that met in *band* with him.

They very properly joined with him in the same religious exercises, and afterwards urged him to consult Mr. Wesley on the subject; who advised him to continue to seek direction in a patient and persevering use of the same means of grace; and gave him reason to hope that God would soon make his way plain before him.

10. Soon after this, Mr. Wesley, to lead him on step by step, appointed him a *leader* of a *band*; and in a little time, a *leader* of a *class*; and God blessed him in both these offices. Nevertheless, his conviction that he must preach continued, nay, grew stronger and stronger, so that he was constrained to go to Mr. Wesley again, and open his mind to him. Mr. Wesley now thought proper to set before him the difficulties of the work, "that to be a *Methodist preacher*, was not the way to *ease, honour, pleasure, or emolument*; that it was a life of much labour and reproach; that they often fared hard, were often in want, were liable to be stoned, beaten, and abused in various manners." He advised him to consider this before he engaged in so uncomfortable a way of life. Mr. Mather replied, that "he had no desire to engage therein, unless it were the call of God, and that he did not regard what he suffered in doing the will of God." Would to God that all who take upon them the sacred office of speaking in the name of Christ, were of this spirit!

Mr. Wesley then appointed him to make trial a few times. Being approved of he was soon employed as a *local preacher*, more than his strength could well bear. It seems he laboured between two and three years in this way, following his business day by day, and taking from sleep the time employed in study and preaching; so that frequently, he says, he had not eight hours sleep in a week. By this means, together with constant abstemiousness and fasting, he was brought so low in body, as hardly to be able to follow his business, and his master was very apprehensive his weakness would terminate in death. However, God supported him, and in August 1757, which is forty-three years ago, he was received as a travelling preacher, and with Thomas Hauby, Thomas Tobias, and Thomas Lee, was sent into the Epworth circuit, which then included Gainsborough, Grimsby, Barrow, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, and divers other circuits. Here it pleased God to give him much of his presence in his own soul, and to let him see some fruit of his labour.

11. Since that time till last spring, when, by excessive weakness he was obliged to desist, he has been constantly employed as a travelling preacher in the *Methodist connexion*: has laboured in most circuits in the kingdom; has been peculiarly well received, and, I believe I may say, very useful in them all. In labours

you all know he has been abundant; and as he laboured in dependence on divine grace, and with a single eye to the glory of God, he who sent him did not suffer him to labour in vain, but gave him many seals to his ministry. Many I am persuaded, were awakened, many justified, and believers in general edified by his ministry, wherever he came. What sort of a preacher he was, you in general well know, having heard him frequently, not only during the last two years, in which he has had the care of this circuit, but many of you twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago, when also he laboured in London, as you have likewise, since that time, often heard him occasionally, so that it is not necessary I should give you any character of him in this respect. You will generally allow, I think, that he had very clear and just views of the truth as it is in Jesus, in all its branches, and that his preaching was peculiarly instructive and very forcible and impressive. He was never at a loss for abundance and variety of edifying matter; and, had he had the aid of a classical education, his discourses, through a better arrangement, would have appeared to much more advantage. His apprehension was peculiarly quick, his genius fertile, and his memory tenacious. Being naturally a man of strong passions, and divine grace having softened and humbled his heart, he generally felt *himself* the truth he delivered to others, and in consequence thereof his hearers felt them too.

12. Indeed he had a *feeling heart* in every sense, especially towards persons in want and affliction; with whom he always sympathized, whom he was always ready to relieve according to his ability; and for the relief of whom he was often entrusted with considerable sums of money by some friends who were rich and benevolent, and whose almoner he was. He was a man of strict integrity, of exemplary conduct, and of great zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. This made him instant in season and out of season, in his endeavours to spread the gospel of Christ, which he well knew to be the grand means God had made choice of, both to save mankind, and to advance his own glory. Nor did he confine his efforts for this purpose to the pulpit, but in private conversation, and in all companies where it could with propriety be done, he laboured to diffuse the odour of the knowledge of God, and of the truths of his precious word. I have known few persons more careful than he was to improve conversation to the edification

of these present: or more apt to *teach*, to *reprove*, to *rebuke*, and *exhort* with all *long-suffering* and *doctrine*. And as his life was consistent with his teaching, and he was "an example to believers in word, in behaviour, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity," what he advanced was generally well received, and attended with a blessing.

13. As the work of God in general was dear to him, so especially the welfare of the Methodist connexion. This, with the doctrine and discipline thereof, lay very near his heart indeed; and, when at any time or place, matters wore a gloomy aspect, and circumstances arose which seemed to militate against the safety or prosperity of our cause, it touched him to the quick, and he was very prone to yield to excessive grief. And this perhaps was his great failing, for that he had failings I do not deny, for I do not deny that he was *man*. His grief on these occasions sometimes wore the appearance of, and was mistaken for, *anger*; and perhaps I may allow that, in a sense, it was anger, even anger similar to that which He felt, who, we are informed, "looked round about on the multitude with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." During these thirty years that I have known him, I never knew any thing affect him so deeply, as what he thought touched the cause of God, and affected the welfare of the Methodist connexion.

14. But I shall tire out your patience. One thing more, it seems of importance I should observe, before I give you an account of his last sickness and death. When he was labouring at Rotherham, in the year 1757, he tells us the Lord greatly deepened his work in his soul. He was delivered from those wrong tempers and affections which he had long and sensibly groaned under. He felt an entire disengagedness from every creature, with an entire devotedness to God; and from that moment found unspeakable pleasure in doing the will of God in all things, having also power to do it. And as he had the approbation of his own conscience, so he believed also he had the approbation of God. His heart then was undivided, and his eye single to the glory of God, at all times, and in all places; and he was inspired with that fervent zeal for the glory of God, and the good of souls which swallowed up every other care and consideration. And above all, he had, he says, uninterrupted communion with God, sleeping and waking. He seems to have retained this close union with Christ, and conformity to him,

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for some time, but by no means till he wrote the account (which as I said was in the year 1780.) I suppose, however, he frequently enjoyed it, and that it was his chief support under the many trials he met with from affliction and pain, from mobs, by scoffs and insults, by dirt, stones, and brickbats, with which he was sometimes attacked when about his Master's work; from false brethren, and from seeing the work of God hindered, and the societies and congregations divided and scattered through strife and contention.

15. Speaking on this subject, he says, "I find abundant cause to praise God for the support he has given me, under various trials, and the wonderful deliverance he has granted me from them. I praise him, for so preserving me from impatience in them that the enemy has had no room to speak reproachfully. In all he has given me free access to the throne of grace; often with strong confidence of deliverance. I bless God that the trials I have met with, even from my brethren, have never given me an inclination to decline the work, nor for any time together to be less active in it. I always considered I had nothing which I had not received, and that the design of the giver was, that all should be used, with singleness of heart, to please God and not man. I praise him, that though some of the affairs I have been engaged in, being quite new to me, have so deeply employed my thoughts as sometimes to divert me from that degree of communion with God, in which is my only happiness, and without which my soul can never be at rest; yet he gives me always to see, that the fulness of the promise is every christian's privilege, and that this, and every other branch of salvation, is to be received now by faith."

16. Such were his views, desires, and resolutions twenty years ago, and I believe they were not materially altered after that time. What his spirit and conduct were of late, many of you know better than I. He has been your minister, and the superintendent of the societies in this city and neighbourhood, these two last years, and you have had frequent opportunities of observing how he conducted himself, and, which is the chief evidence of the power of grace, with what degree of *patience* and *resignation* he supported the tedious, complicated, and painful affliction wherewith it pleased God to exercise and perfect him. For it was necessary that he, like his Master, should be perfected through sufferings. His sufferings, indeed, for some years, have, occasionally, been great, but for six or eight

months nearly uninterrupted. At the time I last saw him, the time referred to before, his affliction was great indeed. And what I was then a witness to I shall never forget. The moment his dear friend, Mr. Pawson, and I entered the room, his pale face, his emaciated body, and his death-like appearance, struck and affected us exceedingly, and for some minutes we both remained silent and wept. At length he attempted to address us, and with a low whisper, not being able to speak above his breath, he said, "Through the mercy of God I have got hither, by a miracle; but why I am here I know not, for I seem to be of no use." I said, "You are here that you may be an example of *patience*, by suffering the will of God, as you have long been of diligence in doing it; and doubtless you will find this an harder duty than the other." "Indeed I do," said he, "but I find the grace of God sufficient for this also." He then expressed himself in a most clear, pertinent, and feeling manner, concerning our redemption by Christ, as I have mentioned above, and of his whole dependence being on this alone, and not on any thing he had done or suffered, for salvation. We were both much affected while he discoursed on this subject. After this he spoke concerning the Methodist connexion in a way which shewed how much his soul was wrapped up in the prosperity of it, and gave us many cautions and advices, urging us especially to attend, at the conference, to the state of the poor preachers, many of whom, he said, he knew to be in great want and distress. After he had quite spent himself with speaking to us, on these and some other subjects, we kneeled down to pray, as we had reason to believe for the last time, but we could not speak much. We could do little more than weep in silence, and gave vent to our tears and sighs. We then bid him farewell. Mr. Pawson, indeed, might intend to see him again the next day, but I took my leave of him, not expecting to see him again, as it has happened, till the resurrection of the just.

17. He continued to be patient and resigned, as he had been all along, from the first attack of his disorder, and retained his confidence in God, and his hope of everlasting life, to the very last; exemplifying, in a glorious manner, in his experience and behaviour, the following well known and striking description of a triumphant death:

"Thro' nature's wreck, thro' vanquished agonies,  
(Like the stars struggling thro' the midnight gloom,)"

What gleams of joy? What more than human peace?  
 Where the frail *mortal*—the poor abject worm?  
 No, not in *death*, the *mortal* to be found!  
 His conduct is a legacy for all,  
 Richer than Mammon's for his single heir.  
 His comforters he comforts: Great in ruin,  
 With unreluctant grandeur, *gives*, not *yields*,  
 His soul sublime, and closes with his fate."

On Saturday night, August 16, speaking to his much-esteemed friend, Mr. Robert Spence of York, he said, "What I told you upon your first visiting me after my arrival at York, I still feel to be a truth, viz. that I have no where to look, nor any thing else to depend upon for salvation, but Christ; and my confidence in Him is firm as a rock. My faith has frequently been assaulted, during my affliction, in an unusual manner, but it has never shrunk in the least degree: I feel a blessed evidence of my acceptance, and a sacred sense of God's presence being with me *always*. How comfortable are these words, *he that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out. God so loved us that he gave his only Son to be the propitiation for us.* There is no other name, no other Redeemer; on him my soul relies. Mine is a hope of more than forty years; it cannot easily be shaken." On Monday, the 18th, being in extreme anguish, he said, "I long to be gone; I long to be gone;" and desired me to pray for his dismissal. After rising from my knees, I said, that this could only be asked with submission; he sweetly and reverently answered, "With great submission; with great submission." After pausing a while, he said, "I am happy in Jesus, but my sufferings are *very great*;" and added,

"Rivers of life divine I see,  
 And trees of paradise:"

"O let me be there:—I'll be there, there, there: O that it might be *this* night; O hide me among these trees:—Here may I have an abiding place!

"'Tis there, with the lambs of thy flock;—  
 There only I covet to rest."

"But if I may not have the privilege, the happiness, the honour, of being with thee *this* night, may I be resigned to thy will. O

that exercise of praise and thanksgiving! It has been the delight of my soul—my chief exercise on earth. I have loved thy word, thy law, thy people, and I still love them.

“ Let it not my Lord displease,  
That I would die to be *his* guest.”

“ Jesus answers, thou art all fair, my love ; there is no spot in thee.—Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Jesus has made me all fair.” Again, when labouring under the most extreme pain, anguish, and anxiety, (for his complicated afflictions racked his body with the most torturing sufferings, and bowed down his formerly strong spirits with the heaviest depression) he most affectingly cried out, “ O God, my heart is broken within me. Why are thy chariot-wheels so long in coming? Lord, grant me patience;” and then, as though his prayers were immediately answered, he calmly said,

“ To patient faith the prize is sure,  
And they that to the end endure  
The cross, shall wear the crown.”

On Wednesday morning, the 20th, after a night of inexpressible suffering, he was composed and slumbered a little. When he awoke, he seemed surprised to find himself still in the body, and said, “ why did you call me back? I have been in paradise. As surely as I shall go there again, I have been in heaven this morning.” Then, after taking leave of, and giving his dying advice to the family, he turned to Mrs. Mather, and said, “ as for you, my dear, I can say nothing to you that I have not already said; but, (pointing to the bible) that book is yours, and the author of it.” On this night, amongst many other heavenly breathings, I observed him to say, “ O Jesus, whom I have loved, whom I do love, in whom I delight, I surrender myself unto thee.” This was a night of peculiar affliction, which he bore with the utmost degree of christian patience.

On Friday, the 22d, about two hours before his departure, and nearly the last words he uttered, he was heard to say, “ I now know that I have not sought thee in vain; I have not—I have not—I have not;” and then, “ O thou that caused light to shine out of dark-



ness, shine upon my soul with the light of the knowledge of the Son of God. That name, above every name, for ever dear; it dispels all my fears—O proclaim, proclaim Jesus. Tell me, shall I be with him *this night*?" On being answered, yes, there is no doubt of it, he cried out, "he that I have served for near fifty years will not forsake me now: Glory be to God and the Lamb for ever and ever; amen, amen, amen." Soon after this his voice failing, he spoke very little *audibly*; but, by the motion of his lips, appeared engaged in silent ejaculations, till seeming to fall into a sweet slumber, he silently, and, almost imperceptibly, breathed his soul into the arms of his loved and adored Redeemer, about four o'clock in the afternoon.

And now, my brethren, is not this most animating? Methinks had we been present at *such a close, of such a life, by such a man*, we should have felt a little of the ardour described in the lines immediately following those above quoted.

"How our hearts burnt within us at the scene!  
Whence, this brave bound o'er limits fixt to man!  
His God sustains him in his final hour!  
His final hour brings glory to his God!  
Man's glory heav'n vouchsafes to call her own,  
We gaze; we weep, mixt tears of grief and joy!  
Amazement strikes! Devotion bursts to flame!  
Christians adore, and infidels believe!"

Thus lived, and thus died, Alexander Mather. Than whom, perhaps, no person has been more universally respected among us, as an *intelligent and judicious man, a pious and exemplary christian, a sympathising and steady friend*; and a *faithful diligent labourer in the Lord's vineyard*. What was said of Demetrius, by St. John, (as some of you heard from Mr. Bradburn, this morning) was, indeed, very applicable to him,—“He had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself.” May we, whether preachers or people, follow him as he followed Christ! Considering the end of his conversation, and how the Lord supported him in his last moments; may we imitate his faith and patience, and persevere, in our endeavours, to aid the good cause which he so long laboured to support, and help forward in the earth; the cause which the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Saints, and the Martyrs of former

ages, had so much at heart; which the Son of God himself came from heaven to promote, and for which he did not think it too much to give his life. We ourselves, also, let us remember, are ready to be offered, and the time of our departure is likewise at hand. Let us, like our departed friend, make it our chief care to "fight the good fight, to finish our course, and keep the faith;" that for us, also, through the same Redeemer, and in consequence of redemption in him, there may be laid up "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, may give us in that day; and not to us only, but to all that love his appearing." Amen! Amen!



## SERMON XV.

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE

REV. PEARD DICKINSON;

ON SUNDAY, MAY 30, 1802, AT THE NEW CHAPEL,  
CITY-ROAD.

*The hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble.*  
Jeremiah xiv. 8.

1. **IT** is at the request of our departed friend, on the occasion of whose decease I am now to address you, that I call your attention to this striking and consolatory character of Jehovah, the only living and true God. It was our brother's wish that the Saviour of fallen and wretched man should be exalted, when his Funeral Discourse was delivered, and not the "poor worm," as his expression was to me the last time I saw him, "who was about to be committed to the dust. He therefore made choice of a portion of holy writ to be discoursed from on that occasion, the subject of which is the *virtues* of the Redeemer rather than the *endowments* of the redeemed; and he particularly requested me, whom he wished to perform this last office for him, to occupy your attention

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by the former rather than the latter of these subjects. And I shall make it my care so far to comply with his desire, as to dwell chiefly on those virtues of our Redeeming God, and to refer what I shall advance concerning the endowments of his servant, to the glory of his grace, whose free gifts these endowments were.

2. In desiring that God, or rather that God in Christ, should be exhibited to the view of your faith, as the *hope of Israel*, and the *Saviour thereof in time of trouble*, our deceased friend was influenced by his own experience, as well as by a regard to your spiritual profit. He had for many years made Jehovah his *hope*, and in the midst of great and long-continued trouble, arising from most severe and complicated affliction, had proved him to be his *Saviour*. And it was his sincere and fervent desire that the Redeemer of lost mankind might be to you what he had been to him. Well did he know that man is a fallen creature, that he is "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," that trials and afflictions await all the posterity of Adam, that "we have here no continuing city;" that while in the present world, we are only "saved by hope," that is, that our complete and final salvation is only *expected*, and not *fully enjoyed*, and that there is no solid ground of hope for any of the human race, as to another life, nor any firm support under the troubles of this, but the *power* and *love* of this Redeemer and Saviour; the *refuge* and *strength*, and *very present help* of his Israel in trouble. He regretted, therefore, that this "hope of Israel, and Saviour thereof in trouble," should, as the next words express it, be so much "a stranger in our land," and, to so many, even of the serious professors of christianity, as "a way-faring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night," and, he greatly desired that all ministers of the gospel would endeavour to publish and make him known, more and more, to the bewildered, lost, and miserable children of men, especially in these characters in which they so much want him. Permit me, therefore, in obedience to his last request, to engage your meditations on these subjects, while I inquire,

I. Who are the true Israel of God, and,

II. In what sense, and in what way, Jehovah is their *hope*, and their *Saviour in time of trouble*. I shall also make some applica-

tion of the doctrines advanced, and show you how they were verified in the experience and character of our departed brother, of whose life and death I shall give you a short account.

And, 1st. we are to inquire who are the true Israel of God ?

I. 1. The word *Israel*, as is well known, means a *prince of*, or a *prince with God*, and is the title which was given by God himself to the patriarch Jacob, in honour and commendation of his humiliation, his faith, and his importunity and perseverance in prayer, when, in a season of sore trouble, he wrestled with the Angel of the divine presence, that is, with the Son of God, and prevailed for a blessing. To this event, the prophet Hosea refers when he says, "He (i. e. Jacob) took his brother by the heel, in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God; yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel—even Jehovah, God of hosts;—Jehovah is his memorial," Hosea xii. 3, 5. In this passage, it is observable that the same person is styled, *Jehovah God*, and yet an *Angel or Messenger*, and therefore could only be the *Word or Son of God*, who, although he was "before Abraham," "before all things," and "from everlasting," was, nevertheless, frequently the Father's Messenger to mankind, whose nature he was afterwards to assume, and especially a Messenger to that family whose seed he was in a peculiar sense to be. From this time, as you will recollect, Jacob was frequently termed *Israel*, and from him, his descendants were generally called by that name, although most of them were very far from imitating him in genuine humility, lively faith, or fervent prayer.

2. The privileges of this people were very great. "To them," as St. Paul has observed, "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: theirs were the fathers, and of them, as concerning the flesh, the Messiah was to come, who is over all, God, blessed for ever." Rom. ix. 4, 5. They had been redeemed from Egyptian bondage with a mighty hand, had been taken visibly and externally into covenant with God, as his people, had his oracles and ordinances among them, and were, in a very peculiar sense, under his protection and care. "The eternal God," as Moses

observes, "was their refuge, and underneath them were the everlasting Arms:—He rode upon the heavens in their help, and in his excellency on the sky: He thrust out or destroyed their enemy from before them," so that they dwelt "in safety alone:" "The fountain of Jacob was upon a land of corn and wine, also his heavens dropped down dew." They inhabited a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that sprung out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates, a land of oil-olive, and honey; a land wherein they eat bread without scarceness, and lacked nothing; whose stones were iron, and out of whose hills they might dig brass," Deut. viii. 7—9. Here they "possessed great and goodly cities, which they builded not, and houses full of all good things which they filled not, wells which they digged not, and vineyards and olive-trees which they planted not." And "there was no nation so great who had God so nigh unto them, as the Lord their God was in all that they called upon him for;" and "there was no nation so great, that had statutes and judgments so righteous as all that law which God had set before them," Deut. iv. 7, 8. "Since the day that God created man upon earth, and from one side of heaven unto the other," never had there been such a thing as had been done for this people: Never had people heard the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as they had heard, and lived: And "never had God taken him a nation out of the midst of another nation," as he had taken this people out of the midst of the Egyptians, "by signs and wonders, by a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, and great terrors."

3. Still, however, this was only *Israel after the flesh*, as St. Paul's language is, 1. Cor. x. 13. And which demonstrates how little any externals, *signs, wonders, deliverances, ordinances, or privileges*, can do of themselves; they were, in general a very carnal, and even wicked people. In all ages of their commonwealth, till the Babylonish captivity, they were prone even to the sin of gross idolatry; and after that period were soon divided into two sects, that of the Sadducees, who were infidels, and had not so much as the *form* of religion; and that of the Pharisees, who were, in general, hypocrites, and had the form thereof only, without the *power*. So that we cannot but easily acknowledge the truth and importance of the apostle's declaration, when he affirms, "They are not all Israel that are of

Israel," Rom. ix. 6—8; and observes again, "He is not a Jew that is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision that is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew that is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God," Rom. ii. 28, 29.

4. This leads me to observe, that there is a *spiritual Israel*, and that among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, among those that are not of the posterity of Jacob, as well as among those that are. And it is of *this Israel* that my text, and many other passages both of the Old and New Testament are to be understood. Permit me to instance in two or three. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper;—he shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul," &c. Psal. cxxi. 4—6. Whom does he keep? Whom does he preserve from all evil? Surely the righteous, and them only. For "his eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers: but his face is set against them that do evil," even although they may be the descendants of Jacob, or members of the visible church. Again, "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is mercy, &c. and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities," Psal. cxxx. 7, 8. Who have a right to hope in him, and whom will he redeem from all their iniquities? Certainly his spiritual Israel, his true people. These are meant, especially by St. Paul, when speaking of the necessity of being made new creatures in Christ, he says, "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and on the *Israel of God*," Gal. vi. 16. and by our Lord, when he distinguishes "Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile" from the rest of Abraham's race.

5. But who are these? What is their real state and character? I answer, 1st, it is directly opposed to that of the unbelieving Israelites, who, when the true and long-expected Messiah came to them, "received him not." These, on the other hand, believingly and thankfully receive him, and that in all his offices and characters; in every one of which they see they absolutely need him, and with respect to every one of which they make application to him, and derive real blessings from him. As "a Teacher come from God," he instructs them by his word and Spirit, and makes them "wise unto salvation." As "a Mediator between God and man," he reconciles them to God by his death and intercession. And as



the lawgiver and governor of his people, he rules in their hearts by his grace, and directs their practice by his laws. Having "come to him as a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious;" that is, having "believed on him with their heart unto righteousness," they, "as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, that they may offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Being no longer "ignorant of God's righteousness," nor "going about to establish their own righteousness," they have submitted themselves to the righteousness of God, and being in Christ, there is now no condemnation to them.

6. This leads me to observe, 2dly, that all those who are the true Israel of God, are "justified, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Having been "translated out of darkness into marvellous light," they are become "a people who were not a people," and they have obtained mercy, who had not obtained mercy." This the apostle signifies in the passage above quoted: "Peace be on them," viz. on such as are new creatures, "and mercy, and on the Israel of God." The Israel of God, therefore have found mercy. As St. Paul expresses it in his Epistle to the Ephesians, they are "made accepted in the beloved, in whom they have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of their sins." Nay, as they have obeyed the heavenly call, and have "come out from among" the carnal and wicked, making it their care "not to touch the unclean thing," God "has received them, and is become a father unto them, and they are become the sons or daughters of the Lord Almighty." They are "all children of God. by faith in Christ Jesus," and "because they are children, God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father." They "have therefore received, not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but they have received the spirit of adoption," the fruits of which are love, joy, peace, with every grace and virtue.

7. For let it be observed, 3dly, that the spirit of adoption which is in them, is also a spirit of regeneration, and of this spirit they are now born. The kindness and love of God our Saviour having appeared towards them in justifying them freely, and adopting them for his children, "according to his mercy he has also saved them by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Having been "baptized into Christ, they have put on Christ."

They have "put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and have put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." They are, therefore, new creatures, according to the texts already referred to, *Jews inwardly*, who have experienced the "circumcision made without hands, in putting off the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ," viz. "the circumcision of the heart and spirit, the praise of which is not of man but of God," Rom. ii. 29. Col. ii. 11.

8. And, 4thly, their character is consistent with their experience. Being made the true and spiritual circumcision, and being possessed of the spirit of Christ, without which they could not be his, "they worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." They do not think it sufficient to attend the ordinances of God, or use the means of grace, whether private or public, and to have the complete form of external godliness, but they take care to have the power of it also. They *worship God in the Spirit*. They *pray in the Holy Ghost*, from a deep sense of their wants, from a view of the divine fulness, and with sincere and earnest desire after the spiritual and eternal blessings which they ask. They praise God from a principle of lively gratitude for his mercies, and from an affecting view of his glory and his grace. They mix faith with the word they read or hear, "receive with meekness the ingrafted word," "receive the truth in the love of it," and are "doers of the word, and not hearers only." In partaking of the Lord's supper, they "feed on Christ in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving," so that "the bread which they break is to them the communion of Christ's body, and the wine which they drink is to them the communion of his blood," and "their souls are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, as their bodies are by the bread and wine."

9. In the meantime they *glory*, as the original word is, or rejoice in Christ Jesus, viz. in the knowledge they have of him, in the love they have to him, in the interest they have in him, in the union they have with him, in the conformity they have to him, in the relations in which he stands to them, as their *Friend*, and *Brother*, and *Husband*, and in the expectations they entertain from him of glory and felicity, boundless and eternal: In one word, in *what he is*

in himself, and in what he is to them. These, and not things earthly or carnal, are the sources of their happiness, and objects of their exultation and delight.

10. Another branch of their character is that "they have no confidence in the flesh, that is, in themselves or in any creature. Whatever privileges they may have had by birth, education, church-fellowship, or in any other way; whatever knowledge in divine or human things, or moral righteousness they may have attained, or whatever works, externally and apparently good, they may have performed, they put no confidence in these for justification before God, now or at the day of judgment: Nor do they confide in any creature for rest or happiness. But they say with the apostle, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord—I count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." I am happy to have it in my power to say, we have every reason to believe that our departed brother Dickinson was one of these true Israelites, and that, as we shall by and by see, he was made such at an early period of life, I now come to consider, *secondly*, in what sense and in what respects Jehovah is the *Hope* and *Saviour* of such, *in time of trouble*.

1. That Jehovah, the one living and true God, is here meant, the context evidently shows: But it is to be observed, that he can only be the *hope* and *saviour* of us guilty sinners, as he is *in Christ*, reconciling us to himself, and not imputing our trespasses unto us. The Messiah, the Son of God, who "is given for a covenant of the people, and a light of the Gentiles," (Isa. xlii. 6.) is the *Desire of nations*, the *Saviour of sinners*, and the *Hope* set before us." "There shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious," (Isa. xi. 10.) or as the Apostle expresses it, following the Septuagint. "There shall be a Root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust, (Rom. xv. 12.) or hope; as it is in the original. God the Father is our *Hope*, in and through his Son, the one Mediator between him and us. And the Son of God is our *hope*, in and through the grace, and

to the glory of the Father. For he is the foundation laid in Zion, and "other foundation" than this "can no man lay:" for there is salvation in no other. There is no name given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved, but his name." (Acts iv. 12.)

2. Now Jehovah is said to be our hope by that figure of speech, termed a metonymy, which puts one thing for another that has some relation to it. He is the *object*, the *foundation*, and the *author*, of our hope. As *hope* has a reference to what is, or is conceived to be *good*, it always implies desire, and as it respects, not what is *present* and *possessed*, but only what is *future*, and is *looked for*, and it comprehends expectation. And God in Christ is the chief object of the *desire* and *expectation* of his true Israel. His *favour*, and a farther manifestation thereof, his *image* and a larger communication of that Spirit whereby it is stamped upon the human soul; *communion* with him, and the everlasting enjoyment of him in glory, are the blessings which all God's genuine children desire, look for, and pursue, in preference to all other things. "O God, thou art my God," is their language, "early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory; so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary: because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none on earth I desire in comparison of thee. My flesh and my heart fail, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul: therefore will I hope in him." "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Such were frequently the desires and hopes of our departed friend, as his papers make evident.

3. But he who is the *object*, is also the *ground* of his people's hope and confidence. The attributes of his nature, the relations in which he is pleased to stand to believers, the promises he has made them, the pledges he has given them of the accomplishment of these promises, and the covenant into which he has entered with them; all afford the most solid ground for confidence and hope, for time and for eternity. His self-existence, his independence, his supremacy, his eternity, his infinity, his unsearchable

wisdom, his boundless power, his unspeakable love; his everlasting mercy, his inviolable truth, and even his inflexible justice, in and through the blood of atonement stands engaged for them, and lays a most firm foundation for their expectation of future and eternal blessings. What may not creatures, who are his *offspring*, and bear his *image*, expect from such a Creator, subjects from such a king, servants from such a master, and especially children from such a father, and the spouse of the Lamb from such a husband! Will not his infinite goodness design, his infinite wisdom contrive, and his infinite power perform great things for them here and hereafter? Hath he not promised great things, and is he not as willing as he is able, to fulfil his promises? Is the strength of Israel a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent? Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him unto death for them all, how shall he not with him also freely give them all things," and make all things work for their good? He is *for* them, and who can be *against* them? or what can those that are against them do, that shall be to their real prejudice? Can they deceive or outwit his unsearchable wisdom, overcome his boundless power, or withstand the designs of his everlasting love. "The Lord is their helper, and they need not fear what men or devils can do unto them." He whose existence is in and of himself, who is independent of all his creatures, and supreme above them all, will constrain them all to serve the true, the immortal interests of those whom he delights to honour, exalt, and enrich with all his unsearchable riches.

4. But it will be asked, For *what* especially do they hope and confide in him? I answer, not to mention *temporal* blessings, such as all things *needful*, Matt. vi. 33. all things *useful*, Psal. lxxx. 11. and that things seemingly evil, "shall work for their good," Rom. viii. 28.—all which he hath promised them in his word; they expect a continuance and increase of spiritual blessings, especially of that justification and peace with God, which, as we have seen, they possess; of that sanctification, or holiness of heart and life, which is the never-failing consequence thereof, and of the happiness arising from both. They do not expect to be without trials, or to be exempted from those exercises of their faith and patience, whereby the Lord has seen fit to prove his

people in all ages. But they hope that the Lord's "grace will be sufficient for them," and that, "as their day is, their strength shall be." Thus our departed brother: "After so many instances of his faithfulness and truth," says he, in a slip of paper found among his MSS. "After I have experienced so much of his mercy, and goodness, and grace, it would be the vilest ingratitude in me to mistrust his faithfulness and truth, giving me the promised support and help, that is so needful for me in what may yet remain of the present state of trial. I will fight against these evil suggestions that may spring from my own fallen heart, or be obtruded by him whose ancient enmity against the seed of the woman continues to exert itself with the most malignant constancy. *I know in whom I have believed*, and though I am indeed weak, and must sink if left to myself, yet my Lord will not suffer his poor servant, whose only trust is in him, to be deserted in the hour of trial. "Who shall make a separation between me and my God? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" No: "I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," shall ever prevail so far over me. *I know in whom I have believed*. I am not ignorant whose precious blood was shed for me; I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power; unto him I commit myself; his own finger hath graven this sentence on the table of my heart. *Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat; but I have prayed that thy faith fail not*: therefore, the assurance of my hope I will labour to keep as a jewel unto the end."

5. Let it be observed, however, that the chief object of their hope is, eternal life. "In hope of eternal life," says Paul to Titus, "which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began, but hath in due time manifested in his word, by preaching." This St. Peter terms an "inheritance," (the true Israel of God, being his children, and therefore heirs of it,) and describes it as "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." This hope, it is well known, the heathen had not, as neither having been favoured with any satisfactory revelation of such a state, nor of the way leading to it, and therefore were said to be "without hope," (Eph. ii. 11.)

and to have "no hope," (1 Thess. iv. 13.) And considering that this "eternal life," or "heavenly inheritance," includes all that is meant by *paradise*, *heaven*, the *city of the living God*, the *heavenly Jerusalem*; and implies the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the utmost perfection and felicity of our whole nature, blessed with the most clear vision of God, and intimate society of the wisest, best, and most exalted of his rational creatures, we need not wonder that the saints are represented, in the sacred scriptures, as rejoicing in hope of it. But it must be observed, that they often rejoice, nay, and *glory* in tribulation also, finding that tribulation worketh patience, patience experience, and experience a still greater degree of hope," and that he who is *The hope of Israel*, is also *The Saviour thereof in time of trouble*.

6. The Israel of God, it must be observed, have their times of trouble. They are, indeed, on their way to glory, but their way lies through sufferings. "If so be," said St. Paul, "that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." "If we die with him," says he again, "we shall live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him, (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.) "Beloved, think it not strange," says St. Peter, "concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing," of which you had not been forewarned, "happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.) "In the world," said Jesus to all his disciples, "ye shall have tribulation," and the uniform testimony of these disciples, not only in the primitive times of Christianity, but in every future age, has been that "through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God." God's Israel, however, have a Saviour, who is their "refuge and strength, and very present help in trouble." On him they rely, if not for preservation from trouble in times of general calamity, which he often vouchsafes, yet for support under it, and for deliverance out of it at the proper season.

7. Afflictions and troubles are allotted by God to his people, for very important purposes, especially for their *correction*, for their *trial*, and for their *purification*. They are first to be considered as the chastisements of their heavenly Father, intended to correct and amend them. "When we are judged," that is, afflicted, as the context shows, "we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be

condemned with the world." 1 Cor. xi. 32. "If ye endure chastisement," says the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, "God dealth with you as with sons: For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all" the people of God "are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? for they verily, for a few days, chastened us after their pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." (Heb. xii. 7, 9.)

8. In the meantime, while affliction corrects the people of God for their faults, and amends them, it exercises and tries all their graces and virtues. Their faith in the truths and promises of God, and in him in whom all the promises are yea and amen; their *hope* of life eternal; their *love* to God, his people, his word, and his ways; their *resignation* to his will; their *patience* under the dispensations of his providence; their *contentment* in the state and circumstances in which he is pleased to place them, their *meekness*, *gentleness*, and *long-suffering*; their *forgiving spirit*, their *purity*, their *deadness to the world*, and *heavenly mind*, and, in short, every grace and virtue is tried and exercised hereby, and of consequence increased. By what we call trials, and what, indeed, are so named in scripture, both the *reality*, and the *degree* of our grace is manifested, and that both to ourselves and others. We learn ourselves, and we show to those that are round about us, whether we have saving grace, and also, what progress we have made therein.

9. There is yet another purpose for which the children of God are brought under trials and troubles, and another end to be answered by them, and that is their *purification*. Afflictions, of whatever kind, are intended to be a purifying furnace, in which all the dross of vanity and sin, of the earthly, sensual, and devilish mind, is to be purged away; "I will bring the third part through the fire," says God, "and I will refine them as silver is refined, I will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, this is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God." (Zech. xiii. 9.) And referring to the calamities he was about to bring upon his people, and the effect that would be produced by them, he observes, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin."



(Isa. i. 25.) And again, alluding to similar events that should succeed the coming of the Messiah, "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." (Mal. iii. 2, 3.) While the people of God live in the exercise of repentance, and of lively faith, the losses, reproaches, and persecutions they meet with, have a natural tendency to purify them more and more. By worldly losses which deprive them of their property, they are more and more weaned from the love of the world, and freed from that earthly mind which is so natural to them. Through *reproach* and *persecution* they die to all esteem for, and desire after, the praise of men, and human honour and applause. And through *affliction* and *pain* of body, they learn to conquer softness and effeminacy, the love of ease and pleasure, and obtain that courage, fortitude, and vigour of mind, which are so necessary to enable us to weather out the storms of life, to persevere in the ways of God, and to be "faithful unto death." These blessed ends, I doubt not, were graciously answered by the long and painful affliction which our deceased friend endured.

10. Now, under such troubles as these, troubles which answer such valuable ends, he who is the "hope of Israel," is, also, their *saviour* and supporter. He supports them in a variety of ways. First and principally by his presence: "fear not, for I have redeemed thee: I have called thee by name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour," Isa. xliii. 1, 2. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," says David, "I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me," Psa. xxiii. 4. He was with Daniel in the lions' den, with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the burning fiery furnace, with Paul and Silas, in the dungeon at Philippi, and with our departed brother in his long and painful affliction. "I have found," says he, "by experience, in passing through a long succession of painful and trying circumstances, and probably shall, till mortality is swallowed up of life, that the soul, in those seasons of severe conflict and suffering, stands in need of much support and consolation; which, however,

on some occasions, are withheld, for the trial of our faith and patience. But at length we find the Lord Jesus stretching forth his gracious hand to save us from sinking, as he did his disciple, whose unbelieving fears had well nigh overwhelmed him in the mighty waters.

11. As the Lord is present with his people and by his Spirit, so that Spirit supports them by inspiring them with fortitude, peace, joy, and by infusing into their souls consolation, abounding in proportion as their afflictions abound. So it was with our brother. "The Spirit of God," says he, in one of his MSS, "has often been pleased to relieve my soul in different ways, sometimes by suddenly, infusing divine life and joy within me; at others, by bringing many of the precious truths contained in the word of God to my remembrance; and at other seasons, by powerfully applying the promises." On this point our deceased friend enlarges as follows; "there are few sources of consolation to be compared to the scriptures. The animating and glorious views of the gospel, and its divine author, which we meet with in different parts of the word of God, have frequently afforded me much strength. After I had been much oppressed in spirit, the following words were, for a considerable while, particularly blessed to me. 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my loving-kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee,' Isaiah liv. 10. At another season, after several days of extreme pain and languor, my soul was revived by these precious words, 'but thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend: fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness,' Isa. xli. 8, 10. At another time, when being oppressed with pain, I, for a moment was tempted to think the present dispensation hard, my soul was silenced by these words, which I met with on opening the scriptures, 'that no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto. For verily, when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know,' 1 Thess. iii. 3, 4. In the midst of a bitter and trying night, my soul was relieved by the triumphant language of the 36th Psalm, 'O give

thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious: his mercy endureth for ever." There are no sources of consolation indeed to be compared to the scriptures. Here to a believer, all the promises of God are 'yea and amen in Christ Jesus:' the apostolical epistles have afforded much encouragement to my faith, and have often enlivened my hope, those especially of that disciple whom Jesus loved; those by Simon Peter, who was an eye-witness of his majesty, when he heard a voice from the excellent glory, 'this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And those animating and glorious views of the gospel, and its divine author, contained in the epistle to the Hebrews, have also been made to administer to me consolation and steadfastness in the faith. So much has this precious part of the word of life been blessed to my soul, that I could wish my brethren in Christ, into whose hands these lines may fall, might partake of the same consolation. Indeed it has refreshed and delighted my soul, at a time when almost every other source of consolation failed."

12. It appears from what has been advanced in the preceding part of the discourse, that the words of our text were remarkably exemplified in the experience of our brother departed. He had his times of severe trial and trouble, but Jehovah was his hope and his Saviour in them all, and that to the very last. Nay, and the Lord was never more manifestly with him than in the concluding scene of his afflicted life: thus verifying our poet's words;

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate  
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven."

You doubtless expect me to give you some account of this, and I shall not disappoint your expectation. I shall inform you *how he died*; when I have first given you some better idea *how he lived*, that you may "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright," and then observe that "the end of that man is peace;" and be hereby excited to greater zeal and diligence in your endeavours to follow him and others "who through faith and patience inherit the promises." For, as our esteemed brother observed in a letter to an intimate friend in January last, "when the church militant mourns the loss of her members, and adores the Redeemer's power and grace in bringing them through sufferings to glory; she should

be careful, at the same time, to instruct the survivors in some important duties of the christian life, and to animate them, with increasing vigour to press towards the mark for the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Were these things properly kept in view, our funeral sermons might answer the most valuable ends." I pray that mine may answer such an end this evening.

1. The Rev. Peard Dickinson was born at Topsham, a small sea-port town near Exeter, on the 16th of November, 1758. His parents, he informs us, had not only a sincere regard for vital religion, but the deepest veneration for the inspired writings, and constantly endeavoured to impress the minds of their children, of whom they had several, with the same. The care of his heavenly Father was repeatedly manifested towards Mr. Dickinson in his childhood, in preserving him amidst many and great dangers, which must, otherwise, have proved fatal to him. This he notices with gratitude in the memoirs which he has left of his life, quoting the following verse:

"Through every period of my life,  
Thy goodness I'll pursue;  
And after death in distant worlds,  
The pleasing theme renew."

2. When very young he manifested a solemn and constant regard to truth, and a great abhorrence of all dissimulation and falsehood. He also discovered a merciful disposition, and a detestation of every species of cruelty, together with an inclination to speak and act towards others, in all respects, as he would wish them to speak and act towards him. These, with some general leading principles of religion, were frequently inculcated upon him and the other children, by his parents; and it appears were not inculcated in vain. Through the divine blessing they had great influence upon his heart and life: he also increased in knowledge; for his father, who was then in the excise, and had leisure for it, devoted a great deal of time to the instruction of his children in various branches of learning; and his conversation abounding with allusions to history; and being attended with an air of piety and goodness, was a daily source of pleasure to Mr. Dickinson's mind. And while it was a mean of opening and invigorating the powers of his intellect, it was

attached his heart and affections to his father, that he was ready to consider him as one of the wisest and best of men.

3. He was initiated into the knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages at Taunton, by the Rev. Joshua Toulman, A. M. under whom he made considerable proficiency in the knowledge of the *Classics*, and began greatly to relish their beauties. He was also indebted to this master, of whose method of education he speaks in the highest terms, for some acquaintance with the principles of the Hebrew tongue, and, what was of still greater moment, for watching over his morals with a paternal regard. He acknowledges, however, that he was, at this time, an entire stranger to himself, and that his spirit within him was alienated from GOD, the sovereign good. Nevertheless, he says, he was often made to feel the force of keen reflection: for some transient beams of divine light occasionally broke in upon his mind, and discovered the darkness that reigned within. Hence, from a consciousness of the depravity of his nature, and the sinfulness of his life, his soul was often filled with terrible apprehensions of the divine displeasure. For young and unblameable as he might appear in the sight of those that did not know him, he was sensible that his inward parts were "very wickedness," and that he had frequently acted contrary to the clearest dictates of reason, and to the warning voice of God's word and Spirit. The consequence of which was, that, at sometimes, he was a prey to inward remorse, and, at others, was overwhelmed with guilty dread.

4. But although he says the divine Spirit strove with him from a child, so that, when only about four years of age, he repeatedly had an awful and solemn sense of the presence and power of God, and of the certainty and eternal duration of a future state, whereby his infant mind was often drawn to pray; yet it was not till he was about fifteen years of age, that a work of genuine repentance took place in his soul. Of this he speaks in the following terms: this dreadful dispensation forms one of the most memorable eras of my life, and was attended with circumstances that can never be effaced from my memory. God, the *searcher of hearts*, and the recorder of past offences, at this time brought all my sins to my remembrance, and gave me such a conviction of their aggravated guilt and demerit, that my soul fainted within me. He, whose mercy and grace I

had abused from my infant years, now appeared inexorable, and regardless of my cries and groans, which I poured out before him in secret. He was represented to my awakened conscience as a righteous judge, armed with vindictive justice and irresistible power, terrible as a lion that is ready to seize the prey, while no possibility of escape remained for my sinful soul.

“In my distress I made a thousand vows and resolutions that I would instantly break off my sins and reform my life. But alas ! when I had the least intermission of my anguish, my corruptions again overpowered me. The arrows of the Almighty, therefore, continued to stick fast in me, in consequence of which I could take no rest night or day. In vain did I strive to relieve or amuse my troubled mind, by various pursuits and inventions: wherever I turned I met the anger of a righteous God, and sunk beneath the terrors of his justice.”

5. His health, in a short time, was deeply affected by these things. The anguish of his mind, through a sense of the guilt and power of his sins, and of the displeasure of God, was followed by a severe intermitting fever. Death began to stare him in the face, and the great gulf yawned, as it were, ready to swallow him up, while Satan and his angels were permitted, in various ways, to buffet and torment him.

“Sometimes,” says he, “I wished I had never been born. I would have given ten thousand worlds, had my existence been as short in its duration as that of the fowls of the air, and as perishable as the flowers of the field. Again I trembled at the thought of the extinction of my being; and the annihilation of my immortal spirit seemed insupportable. Often did I cast an anxious glance at the days in which the Son of God dwelt on earth, and thought, had I lived then, surely I would have cast myself at his feet, and perhaps he would have had compassion on my sorrows. But God, who intended to make me an unworthy witness of his justice and of his grace to others, and was giving me repentance unto life, continued to wound me yet deeper, for the time of my deliverance was not yet come.”

6. The disorder, after continuing some weeks, having abated, he endeavoured to resume his usual attention to, and delight in study; but in vain. *Horace* and *Homer* had lost their charms. To

relieve his distress he walked into the fields; but they were stripped of their verdure, and,

.....“darken'd down  
To naked waste,—a dreary vale of tears.”

If he said “my bed shall comfort me, and my couch shall ease my complaint, then he was scared by dreams, and terrified by visions.” In short, he was for a long time without any hope of mercy, and proved the propriety and importance of the inquiry made by the wise man, “The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?”

7. He continued, however, to cry unto God with his voice, and poured out his groans incessantly before him. Yet his heart, he says, seemed as hard as adamant. He now began to see that if ever he were saved it must be an act of almighty power, and through the riches of divine grace. It is to be observed, that these convictions thus *salutary*, thus *deep*, were effected by the *Spirit of God alone*, without the agency of any mortal man whatever. Although he was still a stranger to the peace of God, yet his life was now actually reformed, and there was a sedateness in his conduct, and a seriousness in his whole deportment, which were noticed by all who saw him.

8. It was a happy circumstance that Mr. D. had been accustomed to hear the scriptures read daily in his father's family, with some of the most excellent writings of the Puritan divines. These had frequently conveyed important instruction to his mind, and “The Saints' Everlasting Rest,” and the Accounts of the Martyrs, had particularly struck him. And although the truths contained in them had often been regarded with too much indifferency, God now brought them to his remembrance, and they appeared peculiarly precious to him. He had, also, frequently heard of the apostolical lives and labours of those great men Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield, and had read some of their journals. And the reproaches cast upon them by an evil world, notwithstanding their exemplary lives, and unparalleled labours, convinced him that they were the messengers of the Most High, and the witnesses of Jesus. He had also met with two or three of their followers, and was struck with

the calmness and benevolence of their tempers, and with the piety that appeared in their whole deportment, so that he was secretly charmed with them, and could have cast himself at their feet.

9. Through these means he got a great accession of light and strength. He began to see that there was mercy even for him, and that he might be made a new creature. Hope began to take place in his mind, and peace dawned with increasing brightness upon his soul. This gracious dispensation took place when he was about sixteen years of age, and it was now time to determine what line of life he was to follow. His father's first intention, it seems, was to place him with a surgeon at Taunton, who was a distant relation, and a man of grave deportment, and excellent morals, although destitute of vital religion. This plan, however, was frustrated through a design the gentleman had formed of gradually retiring from business. For *this*, Mr. Dickinson, in the account of his life above-mentioned, expresses much thankfulness to God, observing, that had he been placed there, it probably would have been very injurious to the work of grace now beginning to take place in his soul; as the number of gay and thoughtless acquaintance with which he would have been surrounded at Taunton, would have poured on him such a torrent of ridicule and persecution, as probably would have been more than his young and inexperienced soul could have borne. His father's next thoughts were to send him to Christ's Church College at Oxford; and this design would, probably, have been carried into execution, had not the account which Dr. Kennicott gave his father of the expense that would attend it, dissuaded him from it, conceiving that, as his circumstances then were, he could not do it without injuring his other children.

At this Mr. D. was then much grieved, having a great desire to make progress in learning, and to be employed in the ministry. However, afterwards he saw cause to thank God for this disappointment also, having reason to believe, that Oxford was a place but ill suited to his then state of mind; and that had he gone there at that age, he would have been exposed to connexions which would have been a snare to his piety and virtue. "Let my God, therefore," says he, "be glorified for this also: doubtless he thus preserved my soul from the fowler's snare, and the subtle designs of the old serpent."



10. Soon after this, his father placed him in a family at Bristol, to learn the business of a Jeweller and Watch-Maker. He had not been above a day or two in this family, before he perceived that the good lady was a Methodist, and he was soon asked to accompany her to a place of worship belonging to Mr. Wesley's connexion. "The service," says he, "was solemn: my soul was refreshed in waiting upon God, and I renewed my engagements to love and serve him, and returned with much serenity and joy." He now soon became a member of Mr. Wesley's society, and by a diligent and solemn attendance on all the means of grace, his soul was gradually brought into a state of union with God, and the work of the Holy Spirit was deepened in his heart. Of this he speaks in the following manner: "In the course of a few months I began earnestly to seek the Spirit of adoption, by offering strong cries and tears unto God; and the coming of the Lord was now drawing nigh. One morning, after I had continued in prayer till near fainting, the Spirit of God descended like lightning from heaven, and bore witness with my spirit, that I was his adopted child. I looked up to heaven with confidence, and from that moment I had a *clear* and *divine* evidence of the pardoning love of God; whom I was now emboldened to consider as *my Father*, in Jesus reconciled. The heavenly *joy* and *peace* which flowed in upon my believing soul, was so strong for some weeks, and my communion with God was so uninterrupted, that I could scarce keep my eyes from looking up to heaven incessantly. I seemed *surrounded*, *penetrated*, and *filled* with God. So great was the consolation afforded me, after the bitter distress which I had known during the time of my convictions, and the pangs of the new-birth. My soul flew with ardour to the ordinances of my God. The name of Jesus was as ointment poured forth: his *titles*, his *characters*, his *offices*, appeared unspeakably lovely and glorious.

"My Lord and my God! my Jesus and my all!" was the language of my heart continually. He appeared most adorable, most lovely on account of his infinite holiness, as he is, 'The Lord our Righteousness.' Little did I then suppose, that the strength of my faith, the ardour of my soul, the lively emotions of my joy, would ever subside, or suffer any abatement. It pleased God however, in due time, to instruct me in the doctrines of the cross,

and to convince me of the necessity of being conformed to a crucified Jesus. Those words of the apostle, *Ye are called, not only to believe on his name, but to suffer for his sake*, were often painfully brought to my remembrance by the Spirit of God."

11. The following spring he was visited by a malignant putrid fever, in which his life was long despaired of. "During this affliction," says he, "my soul was sometimes inwardly and powerfully visited by a heart-searching God. While my spirit was hovering over the eternal world, God was searching and proving it, and I had a solemn conviction, that through Christ my Redeemer, I was acquitted before God. Yet I could not cease pondering in my heart these words of the apostle, 'The righteous are scarcely saved.'" This dreadful and long-continued affliction so shook his constitution, which had been always weak, that he never afterwards, (as he says,) recovered either his former health or spirits.

12. As he was now effectually separated from the world, he had fellowship with the true disciples of Christ only, many of whom, he testifies, were dearer to him than his own life. He admired their gifts, he was edified and delighted with their heavenly conversation, and revered the image of God, which he saw brightly impressed upon them. Some, indeed, he saw, who seemed to move at a vast distance from the Sun of Righteousness, and he pitied them, although he had reason to think they were secretly attracted by him. "The bare remembrance," says he, "of the blessings which I received among the people of God, during my stay at Bristol, fills my soul with gratitude and joy. I am refreshed at this hour with reviewing the many days of the Son of man, and the various out-pourings of the Holy Spirit that I witnessed among them. My heart is and will be inseparably united to my dear brethren, who often strengthened my hands by their faith, their sympathy, and their prayers; and I hope to spend a blessed eternity among them, for many of their names are, doubtless, in the Book of Life."

13. It appears by all this, that the providence of God had brought him to Bristol for a wise design. Nevertheless, the business of a Watch-Maker, it seems, was not the employment designed him of God. The bent of his mind lay another way, and the attempt that was made for the space of four years, which was the term of his residence in Bristol, to force it to acquiesce therein

was utterly in vain. His heart was set upon the pursuits of literature, and the sacred work of the ministry of the gospel; and he was sometimes grieved to think that all his time, in his present situation, was thrown away. This, however, was not the case. During these four tedious years, which, he says, appeared the longest of any in his whole life, he learned many important lessons, which probably he could not have learned so well any other way. He had many opportunities of considering the work of God in the human soul; in hearing from time to time the accounts which the people of God gave of their experience in divine things; got a deeper insight into the corruptions of his own nature, and, what he always considered one of the greatest blessings of his life, became acquainted with some of the excellent of the earth. He was also, as he acknowledges, mercifully screened, during the most dangerous period of his life, from the snares of an evil world, and the lusts of his own heart; whereas, had he been sent too soon to the University, it might have cost him many sorrows, and deprived him of all that he all along considered as most valuable in life. Add to this, that the many opportunities which he had of exercising his gift in prayer, of visiting the sick, and of being engaged in other spiritual duties, not only tended to increase his grace, but also to prepare him for the ministry, and were surely as important, in this view, as the knowledge of the languages or sciences.

14. Mr. Dickinson had frequently signified to his father his dislike of business, and his desire of returning to his studies, and of devoting himself to the sacred ministry, to which he believed himself called. But, as his father wished him to follow the business to which he had been bound apprentice, it is likely he would not have obtained his desire, had it not been for the interference of a lady of large fortune, who was a relation of his father, who had great influence with him, and from whom he had great expectations. This lady was the sister of the late Oliver Peard, Esq. of Tiverton, who, dying intestate, left her in the full possession of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds. To this lady, by whose express desire, the name of Peard was given to Mr. Dickinson in baptism, he made a representation of his situation, and requested her interposition on his behalf. In the most prompt and obliging manner she complied with his request. She informed his father of his son's views and inclinations, and at the same time signified

that it was her wish he should go immediately to the University. Mr. Dickinson's father knew that too much depended on his acquiescence to make any objections. A plan, therefore, was soon arranged for his leaving his place at Bristol, and going to Oxford, where he was entered a Commoner at Edmund-Hall, in 1779.

15. Mr. Dickinson, while at the University, was diligent in his studies, for assistance and success in which he failed not to look up to God in prayer. To strengthen his resolutions, and aid his endeavours in the pursuit of piety and learning, he formed an acquaintance with a select number of studious and religious persons of different Colleges. They frequently met at each other's rooms, and spent an hour or two agreeably, and in a way that was calculated to promote each other's usefulness. They conversed together on subjects of a spiritual nature, as well as on those of literature, read the scriptures, and other books, and frequently joined in prayer for the divine blessing on their studies and undertakings. "It was in conversation with one of these gentlemen," says Mr. Dickinson, "that I first saw the advantage of attempting to unite precision and accuracy of thought, and elegance of sentiment, with the ease and freedom of common conversation; a practice of unspeakable importance to those who are called to public stations in life." In the vacations, during the two first years, Mr. Dickinson spent much of his time with the Rev. Mr. Browne, Vicar of Kingston, near Taunton, in Somersetshire, whose conversation and advice seem to have been of very singular use to him; and of whose piety, learning, affability, and courteousness, he speaks in the most affectionate and grateful terms.

16. In 1781, after a residence of about two years, he was removed from Edmund-Hall to Hertford College, and soon after, upon an application to the principal, obtained one of the two vacant studentships. His friend, Mr. Roquette, Commoner of Magdalen College, (son of the Rev. James Roquette, of Bristol,) by Mr. D.'s advice, applied for, and obtained, the other. Thus it pleased God, to give him a friend to sojourn with him in that new College, from whose presence and conversation he received much additional strength and comfort. He soon found, however, that he should not be exempt from persecution for righteousness sake, and that he must maintain a continual warfare. But the

Lord's promise was fulfilled, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be."

17. As the time of his examination for a Bachelor's degree drew near, he began to be anxious to pass it in a manner that would satisfy his own conscience, while it did honour to religion. He, therefore, not only studied diligently, but made it a matter of solemn and continual prayer to God, that he would be pleased to assist his endeavours, and enable him to discharge his duty in such a manner that he might bring no reproach upon his profession. And, he says, that but few instances have occurred in his whole life, in which he ever witnessed a more clear and express answer to prayer. He went through his examination in the Classics with perfect recollection and precision, and answered the various questions asked him, in the Liberal Arts, with promptitude and clearness, to the entire satisfaction of his examiners; while a gentleman of talents and application, and also of piety, who was examined with him, and was, previous to his examination, full of confidence, was exceedingly embarrassed and confounded. In this he piously acknowledges the hand of God.

18. Mr. Dickinson's future vacations, during his continuing in the University, were spent in London, where, by Mr. Wesley's recommendation, he lodged in the house of that most eminent servant and saint of God, G. Clark. In this family he saw nothing but that order, harmony, and happiness which the religion of Jesus inspires, and was led forward to a deeper acquaintance with the things of God.

Mr. Wesley also, frequently took him with him when he went to visit the sick, and introduced him to some of the most excellent persons in his Society. At the same time he gave him much excellent advice respecting his studies, and his preparation for the ministry.

19. In the summer of 1782, he took his Bachelor's degree, and afterwards began to think seriously concerning the *nature* and *various duties* of the pastoral office, and to inquire into the evidences of his call to undertake it. These, he states with great clearness in the above-mentioned memoirs, and then observes, "After much self-examination and prayer before the heart-searching God, it appeared that he had wrought a willingness in my

soul to subscribe to every condition that could be suggested by *reason, conscience, or revelation*, and I felt no reluctance whatever, to live under the habitual influence of those solemn obligations, whenever it might please God, in his providence, to call me to the work."

20. In the fall of the year 1782, the prospect of returning to his friends in London, filled his soul with joy and comfort. "The winter," says he, "was crowned with a profusion of spiritual blessings. Never did I enjoy a more habitual sense of the divine presence and blessing, and, perhaps, never was enabled to walk more circumspectly in my whole life, being continually employed in watchfulness and prayer. My soul pressed with vigour towards the mark for the prize of my high calling, and I sought incessantly, and at length obtained, a larger baptism of the Holy Spirit. My days and nights passed swiftly and pleasantly in communion with God. I found that even sleep is no impediment to the operation of the divine Spirit; who can, with infinite ease, communicate his gracious influences to the souls of men in the time of rest, and suspended sensation; and with no less power and sovereign efficacy than when the organs of sense are impressed with outward objects, and the body, as well as soul, is engaged in a state of exertion and activity."

21. Early in the year 1783, he received a providential call to labour among a people, who, for above half a century, had enjoyed the light of the gospel, and been favoured with the ministry of that venerable saint of God, and faithful labourer in his Lord's vineyard, the Rev. Mr. Perronet, the aged vicar of Shoreham, in Kent, a man as remarkable for his piety, benevolence, wisdom, and simplicity, as almost any that have appeared in the church of Christ during the present century. But, as the clergyman that then officiated as curate in this parish stood engaged to Mr. Perronet for some months longer, Mr. Dickinson thought it most advisable to return to Oxford, and spend the interval in forwarding his business for the degree of Master of Arts, to which he succeeded about two years after, at the time fixed by the statutes of the University.

22. As the time approached when he was to appear as a candidate for the sacred office, before the Archbishop of Canterbury, in

whose jurisdiction Shoreham lay, he was occasionally harassed with painful apprehensions, having heard much of the difficulties which some excellent men had met with in similar circumstances. The providence of God, however, dealt tenderly with him in this respect, and his fears were groundless. He found the Primate much more gentle and unassuming than persons of far inferior stations often are. He was treated with kindness, and as the Archbishop, who was but just come to the see of Canterbury, did not hold an Ordination this season, he very readily and obligingly furnished him with "Letters Dimissory," to the bishop of Lincoln, by whom, on Sunday, June 16, 1783, he was admitted to Deacon's orders, and, as he expressed it, "took the vows of his God upon him." His ordination was not considered by him in the light in which many candidates for holy orders consider it, viz. as a mere ceremony. He viewed it in a very important light indeed, and judged, that by this "one voluntary, deliberate, and irrevocable act," as he terms it, "he was laying himself under an indispensable obligation to devote himself and his all to the service of his Redeemer, during the residue of his days, in the work of the ministry. His mind was recollected, and his heart fixed, during the solemn service, for such he accounted it; and, immediately after it was over, he hastened to Spitalfields Chapel to assist at the sacrament, and in the afternoon read prayers at Mr. Romaine's church, St. Ann's, Blackfriars. A few days afterwards, taking leave of his London friends, he removed to Shoreham, that he might fulfil his engagements, and labour in the place to which Providence had now called him. Here, in the Parish church, he preached twice next Lord's day, and in the evening attended Mr. Perronet's ministry in the vicarage-house. He had but few opportunities, after this, of hearing Mr. Perronet, as from his great age, and increasing infirmities, soon after Mr. Dickinson's coming, he was obliged to desist from preaching. The whole labour, therefore, of reading prayers, preaching, administering the sacrament, &c. fell on Mr. D. whose custom it was, on the Lord's day, to preach in the morning in the church, and in the evening in the house, and in the afternoon service to expound the lessons.

23. He continued to be the curate at Shoreham till Mr. Perronet's death, which happened at last rather suddenly and unexpect-

edly, about two years after, viz. May 9, 1785. It is true his weakness for a considerable time had been increasing, but a little before his death he appeared better than usual. His cheerfulness was remarkable, and his communion with God seemed to be uninterrupted. On the close of Sunday, May the 8th, a day on which the divine Spirit had been poured out in a remarkable manner upon the people under the word, before they returned to their own houses, Mr. Perronet conversed with some of them and blessed them in the usual manner. This was the last time, for before the sun arose next morning, his spirit had taken its everlasting flight.

24. The parishioners, soon after Mr. P.'s death, presented a petition to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, in whom the right of presentation was vested, with a view to obtain the living for Mr. Dickinson. But it was thought proper to give it to the son of one of the prebends, a person of a very different character from Mr. Perronet. Mr. Dickinson, however, continued to officiate for some time after the induction of the new incumbent, determined not to quit his charge, till the providence of God evidently authorized him so to do. This was the case near the close of the year, when the new vicar met with a curate more after his own heart. Mr. D. therefore, now took leave of the people of Shoreham, although not without considerable reluctance, as they were much endeared to him. He spent two or three months after this, in assisting the Rev. Mr. Davenport, vicar of Ratcliff-upon-Trent, near Nottingham, and early in the following spring, 1786, accepted an invitation to be curate to the Rev. Mr. Dodwell, a pious clergyman, rector of Welby, in Lincolnshire, who had the care of two large parishes. Here Mr. Dickinson remained, and laboured diligently, till, at Mr. Wesley's request, he came to reside in London, which, I think, was in the middle of July, in the year 1786.

25. April 30, 1788, he was married to Miss Elizabeth Briggs, daughter of the late Mr. William Briggs, of London, and granddaughter to the Rev. Mr. Perronet above-mentioned. "That venerable man," says he, "had often prayed that God would bless our union. It is now (in 1799,) between eleven and twelve years since our hands were joined together, and during this whole time we have enjoyed an uninterrupted state of happiness. So hath God dealt with us even in this state of trial. We have had four



children, three sons, and one daughter, but as we were in no small danger of placing our affections too much upon them, it pleased God to take them to himself. One of them was permitted to stay with us about eight months. His stay, though short, was sufficient to fill our hearts with anguish at parting with him. But though good children (adds he) afford much comfort to their parents, they are certainly strong ties to earth, and afford no small anxiety to those who are so deeply interested in their welfare."

26. Mr. Dickinson always accounted it one of the greatest blessings of his life, that he was made acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Wesley and his preachers, and brought into connexion with his societies. "In reviewing," says he, "the mercies of my God, during the period of the last forty years, I could not but be sensibly affected with the goodness of God towards me, in that I was born in Britain, at a time when the last great revival of religion was flourishing in full vigour; that I was not only permitted to have a personal knowledge of the chief instruments who were employed in carrying on this great work, but what is still more important, that I should have been permitted to share its blessings. And though the first instruments, chosen by God to begin the work, are all taken to their eternal rest, yet such has been the goodness and compassion of him with whom is the residue of the Spirit, that many have since been raised up, who follow the *faith, simplicity, and zeal* of their great predecessors."

27. How faithfully and diligently he laboured among you, all these years, I need not say, nor how holily, and justly, and unblameably, he behaved himself. Ye are witnesses, and God also, that his conversation was, at all times, and in all respects, as becometh the gospel. He was serious, watchful, and circumspect; humble, meek, and gentle; benevolent and kind, temperate and devout. Above all, his patience, and resignation, under a very long, painful, and most complicated affliction, has been most exemplary and almost unparalleled. Never, I believe, was a murmuring or unkind word heard to fall from his lips, or an impatient or fretful look observed in his countenance; but confidence in God, tranquillity of mind, resignation of will, meekness of spirit, with gentleness and long-suffering, were the habitual tempers of his soul.

"I should not think myself worthy," says he, (on a slip of paper which I found among his MSS.) "to bear the name of a disciple of Jesus, if I had not learned to be kind to all men; nor shall I think that any man has attained much of his Lord's spirit, who has not universal benevolence to all mankind, and who cannot act the part, wherever prudence permits, of a brother towards his friends and towards his enemies. This may seem a high attainment, and so it is; yet all this, and more, is required by the gospel of the Son of God. May my future life be spent at my Redeemer's feet, in learning this and every other lesson of his grace, till, having fully put on the Lord Jesus Christ, I may with joy be finally received into his everlasting kingdom!"

28. During his long and severe affliction, many of you were in the habit of calling occasionally upon him, and can attest the truth of my testimony concerning him. I appeal to you, whether you did not always find him resigned, composed, and possessed of a hope full of immortality, and frequently rejoicing in that hope with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Many were the instructive and edifying remarks which he made, and many the comfortable and encouraging words which dropped from his lips, although frequently in the midst of pain and anguish, that might have exhausted the patience of an apostle. But

"His God sustain'd him in his final hour,  
His final hour brought glory to his God."

According to the words of our text, "the hope of Israel in whom he trusted," and who never left nor forsook him, was "his Saviour in the time of trouble," and he was enabled to acquiesce fully in whatever appeared to be the divine will concerning him.

The following fine lines of the poet, which I find inscribed with his own hand, on the title page of the memoirs of his life, were fully exemplified in him: With the patriarch's joy,

"Thy call I follow to the land unknown:  
I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust:  
Or life or death is equal; neither weighs,  
All weight in this—O let me live to thee!"

29. But you shall hear the testimony of one who attended him all along, and was with him night and day. The dear partner of his joys and sorrows, now left to mourn the loss of him who was accustomed to soothe her distresses, and help her to bear her burdens, writes as follows :

“ May 19, 1802.

“ Dear Sir,

“ My mind has been so deeply and continually afflicted during this suffering season, that it is not easy to collect my thoughts sufficiently to give you the account you desire of my beloved husband.

“ For many months God was sensibly preparing him for the last trying scene, and he was particularly led to consider, and thirst after, the faith which Abraham possessed, ‘ when he staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God :’ he also frequently expressed earnest desires after more of the spirit of praise and thanksgiving, often repeating those lines of our hymn,

‘ I cannot praise thee as I would,  
But thou art merciful and good.’

And considering the length and severity of his sufferings, I never saw any one who appeared to be so ‘ strengthened according to the glorious power of the Lord, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness.’

“ On Wednesday, April 28, he was seized with a violent shivering fit, which was followed by a strong fever. Many fits rapidly succeeded the first, till he was reduced to a state of the most extreme weakness, which prevented his conversing much with any one, yet what he did say at different times, could we recollect it, would fill many pages.

“ On Sunday, May 2, when he was supposed to be very near death, I asked him if he had any particular advice to give me, he replied, ‘ Only live near to God, live looking unto Jesus, live much in the spirit of prayer, and beware of carnal Corinthians,’ meaning, as I well understood, half-hearted professors, those who are neither cold nor hot.

“ May 5, waking out of a slumber after a fit, he said, ‘ I see a great multitude engaged in the worship of God, and I shall be with

them.' Once, on my saying, 'perhaps you may revive again, and be able to come into the dining-room,' he replied, 'I shall go to the upper courts above.' At another time he spake nearly as follows, 'I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.' And then, addressing himself to me, he added, 'The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy shade on thy right hand, the Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, he shall preserve thy soul; I speak this to you, my dear.'

"On May 9, he repeated with much earnestness, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. 'Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, (if need be,) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: and then added, 'Unto you who believe he is precious.' He frequently said, 'To me to live is Christ, to die is gain.' At one time he repeated these lines:

'My God! the spring of all my joys,  
The life of my delights,  
The glory of my brightest days,  
And comfort of my nights!

'In darkest shades if thou appear,  
My dawning is begun:  
Thou art my soul's bright morning-star,  
And thou my rising sun!

"On Tuesday, May 11, in the midst of a violent fit, I heard him whisper, 'We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,' I said, 'But are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,' he immediately replied, in broken words, with great energy, 'It was all of grace, free mercy in Christ Jesus.' After the fever abated that evening, and he began a little to revive, his soul was abundantly filled with divine consolation; he seemed at a loss to express the joy he felt, his love to Christ, or his views of God's boundless mercy and infinite compassion: he said, 'I seem all happiness.' Notwithstanding, the fever frequently con-

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fused his thoughts, and affected his recollection, a strength of intellect appeared almost to the last that was amazing.

“During one of the following nights, he cried out, ‘O happy, happy spirits, I see you, I see you all, and I am coming to you. They are waiting for me, and I must go,’ and clapping his hands, he shouted, ‘Victory, victory, my Jesus, and my all!’ To one of his nurses, he said, ‘For Christ’s sake, make sure of an interest in him; it is neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any other creature, but Jesus Christ, the corner-stone; build upon him as the sure foundation.’ While taking a little refreshment, I perceived him deeply engaged in prayer, and distinctly heard the following words: ‘That an abundant entrance may be administered unto us into the eternal kingdom.’ Soon after he said to me, ‘The Lord give you the bread of life.’ I answered, ‘I am sure he will give it you, and I trust I shall partake of it;’ he replied, ‘I doubt not but you will,’ and spoke with sweet confidence of our being mutual partakers of the blessings of the kingdom.

“He several times bore testimony to the strength and spirituality of our union; that it was not a common union, or a union that would be dissolved by death: on the contrary, that it would only be strengthened and refined, and that in the heavenly world we should meet to be eternally reunited.

“To one of the nurses that attended him, he said, ‘I have not a shadow of doubt, my evidence is as clear as the noon-day sun!’ At another time, ‘I have nothing but glory and heaven in my view; my heart is full of God; my cup runneth over!’ He told her he should ‘be glad to leave some further dying testimony, that his friends might be satisfied, but that he was so low he could not converse with them;’ she replied, ‘You have given us proof enough;’ ‘then,’ said he, ‘tell them God is love: I know and feel him so!’ Having had a very severe fit, and being extremely weak after it, he said, ‘What a mercy it is that the Lord careth for the righteous!’ a person present replied, ‘He does, and it shall be well with them;’ ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘well, for ever and ever, glory be to God!’ The nurse giving him a little drink, with his hands clasped, and his eyes lifted up to heaven, he entreated her to love the Lord Jesus with her whole heart: ‘O,’ said he, ‘the sinner’s friend! never forget the sinners friend!’

“May the 14th, in the evening, he appeared very earnestly engaged in prayer, but I could only hear these words, ‘Lord, make

us wise unto salvation !' On my going to him, he said, (with peculiar tenderness taking my hand,) 'My dear love, sweet is thy voice to me : God bless you.' These were the last words he spoke to me, for a fit presently came on, which was followed by a very painful and restless night.

" On May the 15th, after being in extreme pain, when we thought him past speaking, about two o'clock in the afternoon he opened his eyes ; and as the nurse was giving him a little wine with a teaspoon, he suddenly stopped her, and pointing with his finger upwards, he said, ' Hark, do you not hear ? they are come for me : I am ready, quite ready.' A few minutes after, she spoke to him again, he said, ' Stop, say nothing but glory, glory !' These were the last words he ever spoke. After a very painful struggle, which lasted more than four hours, his happy spirit took its flight, about 25 minutes past 7 o'clock in the evening."



## SERMON XVI.

### ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

*Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah ix. 6.*

1. **T**HE close connexion which these words have with the preceding will be easily perceived by those who advert to the history of the times to which the prophet refers. The country of Zebulun, Naphtali, and Galilee, had been the first, and greatly afflicted and debased, by the Assyrian invasion under Tiglath-pileser; and it is foretold, in the foregoing verses, that it should be first, and peculiarly blessed and exalted, by the light of the gospel, in consequence of the coming of the long-expected Messiah. I shall give you the sense of the passage according to the elegant and just translation of the prophet's words, by bishop Lowth, a translation sufficiently defended in the instructive notes which he hath annexed to that admirable work. "There shall not hereafter (chap. ix.



1, 2.) be darkness in the land which was distressed," viz. by the invasion of the enemy. "In the former time he debased the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he hath made it glorious: even the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light:" that is, the light of the gospel, termed by Zacharias, the inspired father of John the Baptist, "The day-spring from on high, giving light to them that sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death," evidently alluding to this passage in Isaiah, for the prophet's next words are, "They that dwelled in the shadow of death, unto them hath the light shined."

2. The prophet proceeds, "Thou hast multiplied the nation," viz. the inhabitants of that country which the Assyrians had depopulated. It appears from Josephus, that Galilee was very populous in his time, and, it is probable, that it began to flourish and exceed the rest of Judea in number of inhabitants, soon after the return from the Babylonish captivity. But perhaps, "by multiplying the nation" here, may be rather meant, increasing the number of the true people of God, by the many converts that should be made in those parts to the faith of the gospel, through the ministry and miracles of Christ, who spent much of his time, and had many disciples there. The next words, according to the Bishop's translation, who follows the reading of the margin, instead of that in the text of the Hebrew Bible, are, "Thou hast increased their joy," for the gospel was glad tidings of great joy to them: "They rejoice before thee as with the joy of harvest; as they rejoice who divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, the staff laid on his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, hast thou broken, as in the day of Midian." A staff or rod, being an emblem of authority, is frequently put for a *stroke* or *blow*, inflicted by a superior, and therefore, for the oppressions of a tyrannical power. Here it signifies, the oppressions of those conquerors whom God made the instruments of his vengeance against the Jews for their sins. But it is foretold in these words, that God's people should be delivered from these oppressions, which they accordingly were on their return from captivity. And as may, perhaps, be also intended, those of their posterity who embraced the gospel, were thereby delivered from the bondage they had been under to their spiritual enemies, and from the miseries they had suffered in con-

sequence thereof. Now this deliverance, it is here signified, was to be effected, as the victory of Gideon over the Midianites, by the immediate hand of God. "For," adds the prophet, "the greaves of the armed warrior, in the conflict, and the garment rolled in much blood, shall be for a burning, even fuel for the fire." In other words, the instruments of war and slaughter shall be totally destroyed, and peace and harmony shall take place, and be established. Then follow the words of my text, "For unto us a child is born," &c. So that the prophet having predicted the great and extraordinary blessings of light and joy, victory and deliverance, that should be conferred on Galilee and other parts of Judea, proceeds in these words, in a sort of ecstasy and transport, to describe the cause of these inestimable benefits. And he signifies that they should be conferred in consequence of "the appearance of a very singular person, that should be born among them, endued with very extraordinary qualities,—qualities that would not only exalt him above all the kings of Judah that had ever appeared, but would show him to be more than *man*."

3. It is with great propriety that our church appoints this passage of scripture to be read in the service fixed for this day, a day kept in commemoration of the birth of Christ. For that the Messiah, and the Messiah only, is here meant, is agreed among interpreters of note, whether Jewish or Christian. The ancient Hebrew Doctors, and particularly the Chaldee Paraphrast, the most noted of them all, understood the words in this light. Although it must be acknowledged, that some later Jewish teachers out of their enmity to Jesus of Nazareth, whom they will not acknowledge to be the Messiah, wrest them from their true and obvious meaning, and endeavour, though vainly, to apply them to Hezekiah. It is a happy circumstance, however, that their extravagant interpretation, which, indeed, has no foundation whatever in this or any other passage of scripture, is fully confuted by the glorious titles here enumerated, which, as a learned divine observes, are such "as cannot, without blasphemy and nonsense, be applied to Hezekiah, or any other mere mortal."

4. Indeed it is absurd to suppose that the prophet should form such ideas of any future king of Judah, or of any mere man, as to describe him in such lofty language, and attribute to him such divine properties. The best of their kings, even David and Solo-

mon, had their failings, and were far from deserving any such appellations as are here given to this extraordinary person. And whom could he hope to arise with greater virtue and endowments than David and Solomon, especially at a time when the whole nation was so corrupt, that, as he himself had expressed it, "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint, and from the sole of the foot even to the head," from the lowest to the highest, "there was no soundness." He could not possibly have any other in his view, but the great Messiah, *Him that was to come*; HIM for whom the kingdom was designed from the beginning, not only over the people of the Jews, but over the whole of the human race; who was to restore all things; who was to be head over all things, to be *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords*; who was to "establish judgment and righteousness in the earth, and for whose law the isles were to wait;" and who was not only to govern men as inhabitants of the earth; but was to exalt them to be inhabitants of heaven. To him, and to no other, does the inspired prophet's description accord, and to him only do these glorious epithets, and the qualities they express, belong. We shall consider the words in the order in which they lie, and observe,

I. The person of the Messiah: he is the *child born*, the *son given*.

II. One of his important offices, the government shall be upon his shoulders.

III. His qualifications for sustaining this important office, signified in the titles here given him, *his name shall be called wonderful, &c.*

And, I. We are to consider the person of the Messiah.

1. It is here foretold, that he was to be, not an *angel*, but a *man*, a *real man*, conceived and born of a woman, and that he should thus become the *offspring*, as he was the Root of David. He took not on him the nature of angels, says the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, but he took on him the seed of Abraham, "Inasmuch as we were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same." "The word was made flesh and dwelt among

us;" "emptied himself;" put off the form of God, in which he had subsisted before all worlds, and in which he had appeared in days of old, and took "the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

2. Nor was it merely the *likeness* of men that he assumed; but though more than man, yet he became very man, "of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting." Though the Ancient of Days, he became an *infant*, a *child*. "He grew in stature, yea, and in wisdom, and even in favour with God and man." "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." He was subject to all the innocent infirmities of human nature. He felt hunger, thirst, weariness, pain. He ate, drank, slept. He was sensible of mere human affections, such as sorrow,\* joy,† love,‡ anger,§ or grief, as it is explained, on account of the hardness of their hearts. He is represented as weak and ignorant of some things, not being able to do any thing of himself, that is, in his mere human nature, and not knowing the day of judgment. He loved God, obeyed his commandments, and sought his glory. He frequently prayed to him, as to one that was able to save him, and once, in particular, "offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, and was heard in that he feared."¶ At that time, "he was sorrowful and very heavy," yea, his soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and having entreated his disciples to watch with him, he fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: not as I will, but as thou wilt." Again, "the second time he prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." And yet again, the third time, he prayed in the same words; and when on the cross, he complained that he was forsaken of his Father.¶¶ These, and such like passages, certainly demonstrate that he was *very man*, having the *soul* as well as the *body* of a man, and that his divine nature was neither converted into flesh, nor supplied the place of a human soul in his body. As certainly as his being sensible of hun-

\* Matt. xxvi. 28. † Luke x. 21. ‡ John xi. 5. § Mark iii. 4. ¶ Heb. v. 7.

¶¶ For further satisfaction on this subject, the reader is referred to my *Vindication of the Catholic Faith*, page 167, from which a part of this paragraph is taken.

ger, thirst, weariness, and pain; with his eating, drinking, and sleeping, proved that he had a *real, animal body*; so certainly, his gradually *increasing in wisdom*, in proportion as the faculties of his mind opened, and the eternal Word communicated its light to him, his *waxing strong in spirit*, his having a *will of his own*, distinct from the will of his Father, his *sorrowing, rejoicing, hoping, fearing, loving, desiring, grieving*, or being *angry*, demonstrate that he had a human soul or spirit, like unto ours in all things, *sia* excepted. This soul or spirit, he committed when he was dying, into the hands of his heavenly Father, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," just as Stephen committed his to Christ, when he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Now,

3. *Unto us this child is born*, a declaration like that of the angel to the shepherds, "*Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour.*" Well might it be said, *unto us*, for the advantages which we derive herefrom, are, indeed, many and great. Some of these I shall here name. 1st. Partaking thus of our common human nature, he became, not the relation of angels, but our relation, our brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; which is a blessing particularly noticed by the apostle, where he says, "both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one," of one father Adam, as well as of one Father God, and therefore of one common nature; "for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: In the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee."\* Now, by this event, our common nature is at once unspeakably honoured and advantaged. For hereby, 2dly, he was made acquainted by experience with our infirmities, learned to sympathize with us under them, and became as willing as able to succour and support us in all our trials and troubles. "It behoved him," says the apostle, "to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest:" and again, "We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Thus, 3dly, He was qualified to appear among us, as one of ourselves, and to instruct us, in a free and familiar man-

\* Heb. ii, 12.

ber, so as neither to overawe and alarm our minds, nor astonish and overpower our faculties, which would have prevented all just discernment of, and rational information concerning the important truths he was sent to communicate. Thus, 4thly, His example became adapted to our weakness, and proper for our imitation, which the example of a spiritual and heavenly Being that had never dwelt in flesh, could not have been. And I need not say how much such an example was wanted, to direct mankind in their pursuit of spiritual and moral excellence. It is, however, of more importance that I should observe,

5thly, That, being thus clothed with flesh, and made man in our nature, he was qualified to atone for sin, by suffering the penalty due to it, a penalty, which was necessary to be suffered by one that was very man, that sin might be condemned in the nature that had offended. "It behoved him to be made like unto his brethren in all things," says the apostle, "that, as a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, he might make reconciliation for the sins of the people." And in what way he made this reconciliation, is not a subject of conjecture: It was by offering up on the cross his whole human nature, soul and body, as a sacrifice for sin. For he himself, in the whole human nature, the man Christ Jesus, "gave himself a ransom for all,\* and was offered to bear the sins of many.†" And, as he was thus qualified to expiate sin, and to procure for us redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of it; so thus it was, 6thly, that he overcame death and the grave. For in him we see our very human nature raised from the dead, and invested with immortality. Hence, we are said to be begotten again to a lively hope of a heavenly inheritance, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, he being raised from the dead, as "the first-fruits of them that sleep," and his resurrection being a pledge of ours. Now, if he had not been truly man, but a being of an entirely different nature, his resurrection could have been no earnest of ours, nor could it, in the nature of things, have afforded us any just ground for hoping that we should rise also. But when we see one of ourselves, one that was as truly man as we are, rising from the dead, we have good reason for believing that we shall rise also; especially considering that

\* 1 Tim. ii. 6. † Heb. ix. 28.

he rose as a public person and representative of all his people, and for this very purpose among others, to give us assurance of our resurrection and immortality. Thus the author of the Night Thoughts, in just and expressive language,

.....“ Whose nature then  
Took wing, and mounted with him from the tomb!  
Then, then I rose; then first *humanity*  
Triumphant pass'd the crystal ports of light,  
(Stupendous guest!) and seiz'd eternal youth:  
Seiz'd in our name!”

Now, the resurrection of the Messiah, and our resurrection through him, are continually represented in scripture as the *consequence* and *evidence* of his being the *Son of God* in a peculiar sense, “Declared to be the Son of God with power,” that is, powerfully or evidently, says the apostle,\* “by the resurrection from the dead:” “The promise made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled, in that he raised up Jesus again,” as it is also written in the second Psalm, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,” that is, revived or restored thee from the dead. As the Son of God, he was *the Prince of life*, and, therefore, as St. Peter observes,† could not be held under the power of death. Accordingly, the prophet here informs us, that the *Child born, is the Son given*.

5. This appellation of Son, it must be here observed, not only determines the sex of the Child, but refers, 1st, To his *miraculous conception*, foretold in the 7th chapter of this prophecy: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and call his name Immanuel.” In consequence of this, even as man, he is termed, and is *the Son of God*. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.” How important, and indeed necessary it was, that the Messiah should be the Son of God in this sense: I mean, that he should be of miraculous conception, I need not say. You all know, I presume, that it was as necessary, as that he should be without sin. Had he not been without sin himself, his sufferings

\* Rom. i. 4.    † Acts ii. 24.

and death could not have been an expiation of our sins, as he would have deserved to suffer and die for his own sins. And that he should have been without sin, would have been impossible, if he had been of ordinary generation, conceived and born as all the other children of fallen Adam are. Add here, that this his miraculous conception of itself, independent of all other circumstances, gave a dignity and worth to his person, which evidently rendered it of more estimation than the persons of all men.

6. It does not appear, however, that this is the chief reason why he is termed the Son here. It is evident, I think, from the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, that he is termed the Son of God, chiefly in another respect, that is, with regard to his *pre-existent* and *divine* nature. In this light several of the most judicious of the ancient Fathers, as Tertullian and Ambrose, and of the most learned and accurate commentators among the moderns, as Beza, Pool, Henry, and others, have considered, Rom. i. 3, 4. "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," that is, evidently, the *human nature*; and "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness," that is, they suppose, according to his pre-existent and divine nature, termed a "quickenng Spirit," and "the Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. xv. 45, and 47. and "the eternal Spirit," Heb. ix. 14. Thus the antithesis, which seems to have been intended by the apostle, between the two natures of Christ, viz. that whereby he was the *offspring*, and that whereby he was the *root* of David, is preserved, which it is not, and cannot be, on any other interpretation whatever. Be this as it will, when, Rom. viii. 3. God is said to have "sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, Gal. iv. 4. to have "sent forth his Son," the manner of speaking seems evidently to imply, that he was *God's Son* before he was so sent. Add to this, that "the Word," which is said, John i. 1. to have been "in the beginning with God," and afterwards to have been "made flesh," is, verse 14. expressly termed, the *only-begotten of the Father*. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt (*σκηνοῶν*, literally, tabernacled) among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." But the most clear and decisive proof which we have from scripture, of his being the Son of God before his incarnation, is found Heb. i. 1. "God hath in these last days spo-



ken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds:" which words certainly signify that he was the Son of God, when the worlds were made by him, and though perfectly and indissolubly united to, and one with his Father, yet to be distinguished from him, for he is immediately described to be "the brightness," *απαυγασμα*, the effulgence of his glory, and the express image of his person," as a son is the image of his father.

7. And that this divine person, was the Son of God, in a peculiar sense, a sense in which no other being, whether man or angel, is or can be his son, is evident from this consideration, that the apostle argues and proves his superiority to the highest creatures, on this one ground of his sonship. "Being so much better than the angels," says he, "as he hath by inheritance," or birthright, "obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son: And again, when he bringeth his first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." The apostle does not mean that no other beings have ever been termed in the sacred writings, the sons of God. We know that angels are so called in the book of Job,\* and that the appellation of *son of God* is given to Adam, by the evangelist St. Luke: angels and Adam being, in a peculiar sense, God's offspring, created by his immediate power. Nay, and *fallen men*, when adopted into God's family, and regenerated by his grace, are, by virtue of that adoption and regeneration, termed *sons of God*.† Magistrates also, who are God's deputies and representatives, and bear the image of his authority and power, are called "children of the Most High,"‡ as all the people of God shall be, in a more exalted sense, when they shall be raised from the dead, and invested with new and immortal bodies, conformed to Christ's glorious body.§ They shall be peculiarly "children of God, being children of the resurrection." But none of them are, nor can be, termed *sons* or *children* of God, in that proper sense in which Christ has this appellation given him.

\* Job xxxviii. 7. † John i. 12. Gal. iv. 4—7. ‡ Psalms.

§ Luke xx. 36.

9. He, and only he, is the *Word*, the *essential, living, and creating* Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God: which was with and in the Father from eternity, and issued forth, as the ancient fathers often speak, in a substantial form, to give birth to the universe, "all things," as St. John assures us, "being made by him, and without him nothing being made that was made." Thus Athenagoras, "being always in him, (the Father,) but coming forth before all things, to be the *idea*, and *active power* of all material beings;" that is, to plan and execute, to contrive and produce the nature and form of every creature. "The Word, whom the Father begat," says Theophilus, "sending him forth before all things, who was always in God, and became λογος τροφορικος (the Word brought forth,) when he would create the world." "Whom he made προπηδαν, to leap from him, says Justin Martyr and Tatian, he being in him before all things. Clemens Alexandrianus speaks in similar terms, when he calls him προελθου ο λογος δημιουργιας, "The Word, which is the cause of the creation, coming forth, by which all things were made." As also Tertullian, who describes him as "the Word brought forth by the Father, and by that prolation generated, and therefore the Son of God." Such are the terms in which the apostles, and those eminently learned and pious men, that were their immediate successors in the ministry of the Word, have thought proper to express their ideas of this *Only-begotten of the Father*, before his incarnation, and, perhaps, we cannot do better than speak of him in similar language, only laying our account with this, that after all we can utter or conceive, his person and generation will remain an unsearchable mystery. For, as my text says, and as we shall have occasion to observe hereafter, his name is *Wonderful*.

9. Now, this Son of God is said, in our text, to be *given unto us*; and our Lord himself speaks in similar language, John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son*. Of him, also, is St Paul to be understood, when he thanks God for his *unspeakable gift*. He is given to us, so that he becomes ours, with all that he is and has, if we are prevailed on to accept of him. The Word, the divine and eternal Word, which spake every thing into existence, being made flesh, is given to be our kind and condescending teacher, in matters of infinite and everlasting moment, to instruct, advise, command, reprove, exhort, and comfort all, who,

in obedience to the Father's voice, speaking from heaven, are inclined to hearken to him. The Son, the eternal Son of the glorious and everlasting Father, who had glory with, and was beloved by him before the foundation of the world, is given, not only to assume our nature, and partake of flesh and blood, because we were partakers of the same, but, in consequence thereof, becomes our near kinsman, our brother, and our friend; is interested in our happiness, sympathizes with us, and succours and supports us. His life is given to be the rule of our conduct, and his death the expiation of our offences. For having assumed our nature, he hath also "borne our sins in his own body on the tree;" hath been "made sin," or a sin-offering for us, "though he knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him:" he is given to be our Redeemer and Saviour, our head and husband, our way back to the Father, from whom we had wandered, our truth to direct, and our life, to quicken us in the way. Are we ignorant and foolish? He is given to be our Wisdom. Are we sinful and guilty? He is made our Righteousness. Are we unholy and depraved? He becomes our Sanctification. Are we condemned and sold, the bond-slaves of sin, and adjudged to death and hell? He is given to be our full, perfect, and eternal Redemption. His soul and body, his Godhead and manhood, his person and offices, his humiliation and exaltation, his cross and crown, are all offered to us, and bestowed upon us, if we accept them at his hands, and at the hands of him that sent him.

10. It appears, therefore, that the benefits which we receive by him, are as great as they are necessary, and all exactly adapted to the case of fallen man. Did "darkness cover the earth, and gross darkness the people," as to divine things, and did mankind "sit in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death?" He is "given for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes;" and they that believe in him "do not abide in darkness, but have the light of life." Have "all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and are the whole world guilty before God?" He is given "for a covenant of the people," that is, to be the mediator of a better covenant than that formerly made; a covenant founded on better promises, and is set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his (the Father's) righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.\* Were we "children of wrath even as others," as all are

by nature, and "of our father the devil, because we did his works?" and, even when awakened to a sense of this our misery, were we in bondage, not only under the elements of this world, but under slavish fears of God, and tormenting fears of death and hell? "The fulness of time being come, God hath sent forth his Son," to become the Son of man, "that we might receive the adoption of sons, and be made children of God; and being made sons, might have "the Spirit of God's Son sent into our hearts, crying, Abba Father." And they who receive this incarnate Son of God, or believe aright in his name, obtain this great privilege, and are no longer servants of sin, or mere servants of God, but, *sons*, and "if sons, heirs of God, through Christ." Are we by nature as "an unclean thing, and is our righteousness as filthy rags?" "From the crown of our head to the sole of our foot, is there no soundness in us, but only wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores?" He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people:" "Gave himself for his church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, that it might be holy, and without blemish." And all that believe in him, with their heart unto righteousness, receive "an inheritance among those that are thus sanctified." Is *death* the wages of sin, and in *Adam* do all die? die a spiritual death here, and, if divine mercy prevent not, an eternal death hereafter? The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for God hath "sent his Son into the world, that we should live through him;" and, through the free and unmerited grace of God he becomes "the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him."

II. "The government is upon his shoulder." 1. In these words there is a manifest allusion to the ancient custom, of carrying the ensigns of authority and government before the magistrate, upon the shoulders of his officers, as the sceptre, sword, or key. Thus, in the 22d chapter of this prophecy, the Lord addressing Shebna, who was over the house of the reigning king of Judah, says, concerning Eliakim, "I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hands; and the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, and he shall open and none shall shut; and shall shut and

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none shall open." It is justly observed by bishop Lowth here, that "as the robe and girdle," or Baldrick, as he translates it, "were the ensigns of power and authority, so likewise was the key the mark of office, either sacred or civil;" and that it may be comprehended how this could be borne on the shoulder, he observes, that according to Homer, and other early writers, one sort of keys used by the ancients, was of considerable magnitude, and as to the shape, very much bent and crooked.—"The curved part was introduced into the key-hole, and, being properly directed by the handle, took hold of the bolts within, and moved them from their places. We may easily collect that such a key would lie very well upon the shoulder; that it must be of some considerable size and weight, and could hardly be commodiously carried any other way." Now, "in allusion to this image of the key," says the bishop, "as the ensign of power, the unlimited extent of that power is explained with great clearness, as well as force, by the sole and exclusive authority to open and shut." In this, Eliakim was a type of Christ, who in my text, is said to have the government upon his shoulder; who gives even his ministers "the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that whatsoever they may bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; and whatsoever they may loose on earth may be loosed in heaven,"\* and who says of himself,† in allusion to these words about Eliakim, that he "hath the key of David, that he openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth."

2. But it seems probable, that, in the words of my text, there may also be an allusion to what was appointed concerning the Jewish high priest,‡ who certainly was intended to be an eminent type of the Messiah. He was to have the names of the twelve tribes, whose representative he was, and for whom he officiated, inscribed upon the shoulder-pieces of his ephod, and, upon his breastplate, that he might bear them continually on his *shoulders*, and on his *heart*. They wrought onyx-stones, inclosed in ouches of gold, graven as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel, and put them on the shoulders of the ephod, that they should be stones for a memorial to the children of Israel." "The breastplate, also, was made like the work of the ephod; and the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve,—every one

\* Matt. xvi. 9. † Rev. iii. 7. ‡ Exod. xxxix. 6, 7.

With its name, according to the twelve tribes.\* Now, all this was emblematical and typical: Emblematical of the duty of Aaron, every Jewish high priest, and typical of the office of Christ. Aaron, and his successors in office, were to be at once faithful and merciful high priests, supporting as far as in them lay, the minds of the people, for whom they ministered, and bearing their cares and burdens, so to speak, upon their shoulders, and having their welfare continually at heart. Now, in this, they were types of Christ, who, 1st. has the names, the persons, the states, and cases of his people upon his heart; and can neither forget nor neglect them: and who, 2dly, carries their burdens and cares, as it were, upon his shoulders, and manages their affairs for them. They "cast their burden upon him, and he sustains it:" they "cast all their care upon him, for he careth for them." They commit the management of their affairs to him, and he neither fails nor forsakes them, but makes his grace sufficient for them; perfects his strength in their weakness, and makes all things work for their good. He performs really what Aaron and his successors did in type and figure, and not only wears the badge of affectionate love and supporting power, but bears the burden of both. To be a little more particular:

3. In his divine nature, and as the *Son* and *Heir* of his eternal Father, he upholds and governs the universe which he made. *By him*, says the apostle,\* *all things consist, covines*, are upheld, or supported: *Upholding all things*, says the author of the epistle to the Hebrews,† *by the Word of his Power*. The inanimate, the animate, the rational, the spiritual creation, is all preserved and governed by him. The kingdom of *nature*, as it is called, whether mineral, vegetable, animal, or intellectual; the kingdom of *providence*, whether extended over empires or cities, families or individuals; and the kingdom of *grace*, in all its various gradations, is equally under his superintending care, and righteous administration. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands: They shall perish, but thou remainest: They all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years fail not:"‡

\* Exod. xxxix. 9, 14. † Col. i. 16. ‡ Heb. i. 3. § Heb. i. 10.

And, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."\* Both these passages quoted from the Psalms, are applied to Christ by this inspired author, and represented as primarily intended of him.

4. Considered as man, in the human nature, though not separated from, but united to the divine, the government is devolved upon him by the Father, as the end and reward of his obedience unto death. "He died, and rose, and liveth, that he might be the Lord of the dead and of the living."† And because, when he was "in the form of God, and thought it not an act of robbery,"‡ being his very Word and Wisdom, "to be equal with God, he emptied himself, and took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself still more, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; therefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at his name every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those in earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess him Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This exaltation, power, and dominion of the Messiah, was foreseen and foretold by the Psalmist, "The Lord (in the Hebrew, Jehovah) said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Similar to this is the language of Jeremiah,‡ "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: And this is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." The prophet Daniel also, foresaw and predicted this exaltation and glory of the Lord Christ: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be

\* Heb. i. 8.

† Rom. xiv. 9.

‡ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

destroyed.”\* Isaiah likewise, who has so minutely described the Messiah’s humiliation and sufferings, and represented him with “a visage more marred than any man’s, and his form more than the sons of men,” has not failed to prophesy of his power and glory. “Behold my servant, says Jehovah, by him shall deal prudently,” or, rather, shall prosper: “He shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high.” *Very high* indeed! for, as our Lord himself bears witness after his resurrection, “All power is given unto him in heaven, and on earth,† and “all judgment is committed to him,‡ and he is constituted Lord over all,” there being nothing which is “not put under him,”§ that is, no being in the universe, except the Father, who has “put all things under him.”|| So that he has an undoubted right to govern, and it is certain does and will exercise that right; for it cannot be that he should betray his trust, or fail in the execution of the office assigned him.

5. But according to the sacred scriptures, whether of the Old or the New Testament, he is especially the *King of saints*, and “the head of his body the church.” “I have set my King,” says the Lord by David, “upon my holy hill of Zion.”¶ He hath set Christ,” says St. Paul, “at his own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” And again, “he is the head of his body, the church, the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.” Thus is the Lord’s promise, by his servant Zechariah fulfilled, “behold, the man whose name is the Branch, he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and shall be a priest upon his throne.”\*\* And again, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee? He is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass:—and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of

\* Ch. 7. Psal. cx. 1. † Matt. xxviii. 18. ‡ John v. § Heb. ii. 8

¶ Gen. xv. 27, 28. ¶ Psal. li. 6. \*\* Zech. vi. 12.



the earth;”\* a glorious prediction this, of the universal reign of righteousness. This is evidently foretold, also, in Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of the image, where it is observed, that the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands,” which smites the image upon its feet of iron and clay, and breaks them to pieces, together with its head of gold, its breast and arms of silver, and its belly and thighs of brass, and makes them “like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, so that the wind carries them away, and no place is found for them;”—that this stone, I say, becomes itself “a great mountain, and fills the whole earth.”† It is foretold likewise by Micah and Isaiah. “They shall smite the judge of Israel,” says the former,‡ “with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me, one that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she that travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel;” a clear prediction of the conversion of the Gentiles, and of their union with the Jews in the christian church. It follows, “And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And the remnant of Jacob,” the true people of God, and members of his church, “shall be in the midst of many people, as dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarry not for man, nor wait for the sons of men.”

6. That this kingdom of the Messiah shall be as peaceful as it is righteous and extensive, is evident from the prediction of the same prophet. “In the last days,” (says he in the preceding chapter,) viz. the days of the Messiah, and towards the close of his reign on earth, when, as Zechariah testifies, “at even-time it shall be light,” and “the Lord shall be king over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and his name one;” “the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains,” that is, the true religion shall swallow up all others, “and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it; and many nations shall come and say, “come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

\* Zech. ix. 9.

† Dan. ii. 35-44.

‡ Micah v.—4.

and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and he shall judge amongst the people: and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."\* A prophecy this, agreeing so exactly with that contained in the beginning of the 2d chapter of Isaiah, that one cannot but suppose, that the two prophets, as they flourished at the same time, and among the same people, must have communicated their divinely-imparted discoveries to each other. Micah adds, ver. 7. "And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion, from henceforth, even for ever," which is perfectly agreeable to Isaiah's prediction, in the verse following my text, "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this;" a declaration confirmed by the words of the angel to Mary, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, of his kingdom there shall be no end." But it would be an endless task, to collect all the testimonies of the prophets concerning the extent, and peace, and duration, of the Messiah's kingdom. Their books abound with predictions on this subject, and the reader can hardly open amiss to find them.

7. I should now proceed to speak of the qualifications of the Messiah, for sustaining this important office of universal governor, signified by the titles here given him; but having already enlarged so much, and the subjects that remain to be treated being of that nature that they cannot possibly be discussed in a few words, it will be more proper to defer the consideration of them to another opportunity; and now to conclude with two or three inferences from what has been advanced.

\* Micah. 1, 4.

And, 1st. May we not learn from what we have heard, the amazing condescension and love of God towards us, in causing this wonderful *child* to be *born*, and this exalted *Son* to be *given* for us? Surely, my brethren, love, unparalleled and unbounded love, was the spring and motive of this astonishing transaction! *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,—for our redemption and salvation.* “In this,” says St. John, “was manifested the love of God towards us, is that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we should live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and made his Son a propitiation for our sins.” Not but that he has manifested his love to us in many other ways, as in forming us rational and immortal creatures, endowed with faculties that qualify us to know, love, and enjoy him for ever; in giving us bodies “fearfully and wonderfully made,” as David observes, furnished with members most suitable and proper for us in our present state, and with senses which are all inlets to instruction and pleasure; in placing us in a world stored with all conveniencies and delights, and inhabited by creatures formed for our use, and subservient to our happiness. But never did he, and, may I not say, never could he give such another display of his love, as he gave in the incarnation, life, and death, of his only-begotten Son, for sinners, enemies, and rebels of mankind. Well may we exclaim with the author of the Night Thoughts,

“Father of angels! But the friend of man!  
 Thou hast saved him! snatch'd the smoking brand  
 From out the flames, and quench'd it in thy blood!  
 How art thou pleas'd by bounty to distress!  
 To make us groan beneath our gratitude!  
 Of lavish love stupendous heights to soar,  
 And leave praise panting in the distant vale!”

2. Now, if we “know and believe this love which God hath towards us,” shall we not “love him who hath thus loved us?” And loving him, shall we not obey him and live to his glory? And shall we not love his people? Shall they not be in our eyes the excellent of the earth, and shall not our delight be in them? Let us hear St. John upon this subject, “Beloved, let us love one

another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Again,\* "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." But what are the effects which this love should produce? And what are the proofs we must give that we possess it? The same apostle informs us,† "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Now, if we ought to do even *this*, should we be called to it, in the course of divine providence, shall we not feel the force of the apostle's question: "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" I hope, my brethren, this inquiry of the apostle will be remembered by you, and will have its proper influence upon your minds when your charity is solicited, as it will be at the conclusion of the service, according to custom on Christmas-day, in behalf of the hungry and naked members of Christ's mystical body.

3. Let it be observed, however, as a second inference from what has been advanced, that this is professed, and even attempted in vain, unless we truly receive this *Child born*, and *Son given*, and be subject to his government. For, as our love to the people of God, if genuine, must proceed from a principle of love to God himself, and as this can only arise, according to St. John,‡ from a knowledge and consideration of his love to us, manifested in our redemption and justification; so it is certain we cannot love him for these astonishing acts of his grace and goodness to us, till they have taken place. We cannot, I mean, "behold," as St. John speaks, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God," till we are called his children; which it is certain we are not, till we receive the Lord Jesus. For it is only "to those that receive him," or that "believe on his name," that God grants this great and inestimable

\* 1 John iii. 13, 14. † 1 John iii. 16, 17. ‡ 1 John iii. 1. and iv. 16, 19.

privilege.\* As to those that receive him not, so far are they from being justified, or from being made God's children, that they are "condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on them."† And let us not imagine that we receive him, or believe in his name aright, merely because we acknowledge him, however sincerely, to be the Messiah, and having his name named upon us, profess his religion. Let us remember that it is *with the heart unto righteousness*,‡ that we must believe on him; that our faith in him must *work by love*,§ must *overcome the world*,|| and *purify the heart*;¶ that, "to those who believe in him he is precious," and, that whatever faith in him any man may profess, if he *love him not*, he is *anathema*; and that only those that "have his commandments, and keep them, truly love him." Let us consider also, that "he was manifested to take away our sins," to "save us from our sins," and "to destroy the works of the devil;" and that "whosoever sinneth," or committeth known sin, and persisteth to do the devil's works, "hath not seen, neither known him," is not born of God, nor accounted his child, but is "of his father the devil, whose works he does."\*\* We must recollect that to believe in, or to receive him aright, is to embrace him in every office and character he sustains, as a Teacher, a Mediator, a Saviour, a Governor, and, as made of God unto us, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. As he is a teacher come from God, we must attentively hear him, submit our reason to his guidance, and not only diligently consider his word, but earnestly pray for the illumination of his Spirit, that we may know the truth he hath revealed, and that "truth may make us free." We must renounce our own righteousness, and rely on his mediation, as he is the High Priest of our profession, for justification and reconciliation with God. We must renounce our sins, and sinful passions and inclinations, must expect and desire to be redeemed from the *power* and *nature*, as well as *guilt* of iniquity, and become his obedient subjects and servants. We must not only rely on him as *given for us*, but must receive him to *live in us*; not resting in "a name to live, when we are dead," nor in "a form of godliness without the power," any more than in the pleasures of the world, or in the commission

\* John i. 12. † John iii. 18, 36. ‡ Rom. x. § Gal. v. 6. || 1 John v. 4. ¶ Acts xv. 9. \*\* 1 John iii. 4—10.

of known and avowed iniquity. But at the same time that we are subject to him, as the *Lord from heaven*, we must be regenerated by him as a *quickening Spirit*. And inasmuch as he brings "life and immortality to light by his gospel," and reveals and promises to his people an heavenly inheritance, if we would receive him we must set our affections on this immortal state, and die to this world with all it contains: we must conduct ourselves as pilgrims and strangers on earth," and casting "the anchor of our hope within the vail, where Jesus, the forerunner for us, hath entered," we must "seek a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." If we overlook, or neglect any of these particulars, we can, with no propriety, be said to receive him whom we this day view as the *Child born* and *Son given*.

4. I shall only call your attention to *one inference* more upon the subject, and that respects the destruction and misery awaiting all those, who, like the Jews, when "he comes to his own," comes to them as *members of his visible church*, and comes "that they may have life," will not receive him, nor make application to him, for the life he came to impart. Has God indeed given us this wonderful, this unspeakable gift? Has he indeed "sent forth his Son to be made of a woman," sent him "in the likeness of sinful flesh, that we "may live through him," and receive the adoption of sons here, and the inheritance of sons hereafter? Then surely he will not connive at, nor overlook the indignity, the insult we offer him, if we reject, or neglect to receive such an inestimable blessing. On this point the inspired writings are sufficiently explicit. Those lively oracles, which have recorded the declaration and injunction of the eternal Father, given forth from the excellent glory when his Son was transfigured upon the holy mount, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him:"—the scriptures, I say, give us clear and full information, what the end of those will be, who refuse obedience to the divine mandate. "The Lord thy God, says Moses,\* will raise up unto thee a prophet— of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken.—And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, says Jehovah, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." "Kiss the Son," says the patriarch David, whose seed as well as Lord he was,† "lest he be angry,

\* Deut. xviii. 15, 20. † Psal. ii. 12. & ex. 6. & cxviii. 22.

and ye perish from the way, if his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little." "He shall judge among the heathen: He shall fill the places with dead bodies: He shall wound the heads over divers countries," \* The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner." And, "Whoever shall fall on this stone," said this Messiah himself,\* "shall be broken: But on whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to powder." Let us hear the apostle on this awful subject. "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression, or act of disobedience to the law of Moses, received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which was at first spoken by the Lord, and was afterwards confirmed unto us by those that heard him; God also bearing witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." Again, "He that despised the law of Moses, died without mercy under two or three witnesses," that is, if two or three witnesses attested his guilt, "of how much sorer punishment," argues the same divinely-inspired Author, "shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace." Let me entreat you, my brethren, to consider, and lay to heart these awful declarations of the divine oracles. They are matters of no trivial moment: They concern you all, and that infinitely. Do not overlook them. Do not forget them. "Bind them, as it were, about your neck, write them on the table of your heart." Take care that you do not slight or disregard that divine person, who is the great subject of my text. Remember, though a *Saviour*, he is also a *Judge*; and though "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world," he is also "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." If his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, (as David expresses it,) and he seize on the prey, who can deliver it out of his hands. O hearken to him as a Teacher and Lawgiver, Rely on him as a Mediator and Saviour, and be subject to him as a King and Governor. Follow him as a Master and Leader, and be his true and genuine disciples, and his faithful servants and soldiers. Confess him before men, what

\* Matt. xxi. 44

ever shame or reproach, or loss, or suffering it may cost you, and be faithful unto death; and when he cometh in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, to take vengeance on those that know not God, and obey not his gospel, he shall be glorified in you, as his saints, and admired, as in all that believe, and shall confess you before his Father, and the holy angels.





## SERMON XVII.

### ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

(CONTINUED.)

*His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God,  
The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah ix. 7.*

1. **T**HE Messiah, expected from age to age by the Jews, and acknowledged to be already come in the flesh, by Christians, holds a most distinguished place in both Testaments, in the *old* as well as in the *new*. He has, in every period of the world, been the chief object of the attention and knowledge, the confidence and hope, the esteem and love, and may I not also add, of the reverence and fear of the true people of God. Although rejected by the carnal and worldly builders of the church of God, whether of the Pharisical or Antinomian stamp, in every age and under every dispensation, yet being placed in Zion by Jehovah himself, as the true and only foundation of that divine edifice, and being also exalted, and made the head-stone of the corner thereof: its truly enlightened and

spiritual members build their religion and their hopes only on him. To him they "come as to a *living stone*, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, and as lively stones," in consequence of their union with him, "are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by him." "To them," inasmuch as they believe in him, "he is precious," he is, *τῆς τιμῆς, an honour*. They are not ashamed of him. They do not deny, or reject, or neglect him. But, on the contrary, glory in, and live to, him; and "though they have not seen, yet they love him; yea, although now they see him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." While they have "no confidence in the flesh," and "worship God in the Spirit," it is an important branch of their character that they "rejoice," or glory, (as the original word rather means,) "in Christ Jesus," who is, in their eyes, "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Nay, and they see him to be so worthy of all love and gratitude, that they are ready to assume the language of the apostle, and say, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be *Anathema, Maranatha*."

2. And is it any wonder they should entertain these sentiments of, and be so disposed towards him, considering the *titles* and *characters* he justly bears; considering what he is in himself, what he is to them, and what they are authorized by God himself to expect from him: that the "*Child born, the Son given, who has the government upon his shoulders,*" is named, and that truly, "*Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*. This brings me to

III. Particular proposed to be considered, The Messiah's qualifications for sustaining and discharging the important office already spoken of. These are implied in the titles here ascribed to him.

1. His name shall be called *Wonderful*." This the Jews apply to Hezekiah, who, they say, is called *Wonderful*, because of the miracles which God wrought for him, 1st. in suddenly smiting by the angel, in the camp of the Assyrians, a hundred fourscore and five thousand; 2dly, in bringing the shadow ten degrees back upon the dial; and 3dly, in restoring him from sickness. They say, also, that he is termed *Counsellor*, because he consulted with his

princes about God's worship. But this interpretation is so ridiculous, as not to need any arguments of mine to overthrow it. This title or epithet of *Wonderful*, like all the others here mentioned, is applicable to Christ, and to him only.

The word *name*, it must be observed, is here put for *person*, or nature, as in many other parts of the holy scriptures. Thus, Acts i. 15. "the number of the names," that is, of the *persons*, "was about an hundred and twenty." Rev. iii. 4. "thou hast a few names," that is, a *few persons*, "in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments." And, Rev. xi. 13. in the original, "in the earthquake were slain of the names of men," that is, again, *persons*, "seven thousand." And when \* Jehovah is said to proclaim his *name* before Moses, "the Lord God, merciful, and gracious," &c. it is evident that his *name* is put for his *nature*. Just so here, "his name shall be called Wonderful," signifies that his *person* and *nature* is such. The Hebrew word מְלֵפִי, here used, and rendered *Wonderful*, means *mysterious*, *secret*, or *unsearchable*. We find the same word used, Judges xiii. 18. where it is applied to the angel that appeared to Manoah and his wife, and is translated *secret*. "Why askest thou thus after my name?" said the angel, "seeing it is *secret*," or *wonderful*, as we read in the margin. Now this angel was evidently a type of Christ, or rather was Christ himself, in his pre-existent state. He, as the Word, or Son of God, appeared on mount Sinai, and gave the law, and was with the church in the wilderness, concerning whom the Father says, † "Behold, I send an angel, or messenger, before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for my name is in him." Of him Isaiah speaks, when he says ‡ "The angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them, all the days of old." This is the person, whose name is said to be *secret*, *mysterious*, or *wonderful*; and if it were such when he was only *God*, or the *Word*, or *Son of God*, in his pre-existent state, how much more must it be such, after he was "God manifest in the flesh," "the Word made flesh," and had two different natures united in one person.

\* Exod. xxxiii. 19. and xxxiv. 5, 6. † Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. ‡ Isa. lxi. 9.

3. Indeed man himself, composed of body and soul, of flesh and spirit, is a mysterious being, and Dr. Young's sublime description of him, is as just as it is striking.

How poor! how rich! how abject! how august!

How complicate! how wonderful is man!

.....

Of different natures, marvellously mixt!

Connexion exquisite of distant worlds!

Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!

Midway from nothing to the Deity!

A beam ethereal, sullied and absorpt,

Though sullied and dishonoured, still divine!

Dim miniature of greatness absolute!

An heir of glory! A frail child of dust!

Helpless! Immortal! Insect! Infinite!

A Worm! A God!

But how much more applicable is the greater part of this description to the *God Man* Christ Jesus, than it is to man in general! Surely He, our Immanuel, The Root and Offspring of David, the Son of God, and Son of Man, was poor and rich, abject and august, complicate and wonderful: marvellously mixed of natures infinitely different, connecting in his person most distant worlds and states, was

Helpless! Immortal! Insect! Infinite!

A Worm! A God!

No wonder, therefore, that his person should be represented as an unsearchable mystery, and that Jesus himself should teach, that "no man knoweth the Son but the Father." An important declaration, and a full proof of his being more than man, and more than any mere creature.

4. His whole process in accomplishing the work of our redemption, was equally wonderful with his person. His *incarnation*, whereby he put off the *form of God*, and emptied himself, relinquished or concealed his glories, and took "*the form of a servant*," being made in the likeness of men," was an astonishing mystery. This indeed the apostle signifies it to be, when he says, "great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." His *life* was wonderful. Its innocence, its usefulness, its holiness, were such as had never been observed among men, or witnessed in mortal flesh before. His *doctrine* was wonderful. The *simplicity* of it, for it was intelligible to the meanest capacity; its *sublimity*, for it

was elevated beyond the common ideas of mankind, its *purity*, for it was unstained with error or sin, in principle or tendency; and its *authority*, for "his word was with power," were all extraordinary and marvellous. Well might his hearers be, as we often find they were, astonished at it, and well might they exclaim, "never man spake like this man." His *miracles* were wonderful. "Whence hath this man," exclaimed they, "these mighty works?" "Go and show John," said he,\* "the things ye hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." Thus did he fulfil the ancient prediction,† "Behold, your God will come with vengeance," or with zeal, rather, "even God with a recompense, he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." His miracles were so many, so great, so beneficent, and done with such majesty, through the indwelling deity, of which he was full, that it is astonishing the whole multitude of his disciples, who had been spectators of them so long, did not sooner break forth in joy and praise to God, for such mighty works. His *love*, and the manifestations of it in his sufferings and death, were wonderful. "That ye may be able to comprehend," says the apostle, "with all saints, the breadth and length, and depth and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

5. That he who was so rich as to be "Lord of all," should become so poor, as "not to have where to lay his head!" That he who was so high as to be "above all," should be made so low, as to be among poor fishermen, "as one that serveth!" That he who was so glorious as to exist in the form of God, and be acknowledged as "the Lord of glory," should be so emptied, and so reduced, as to "have no form or comeliness, that men should desire him;" should be "despised and rejected of men," made a "worm," as David speaks, "and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people!" "That he who was so mighty as to speak the universe into being," and "uphold all things by the word of his power," should appear so weak as "to be able to do nothing of himself," and be at

\* Matt. iv. 4, 5. † Isa. xxxv. 4, 5.

last, "crucified in weakness!" That he who was unspeakably happy, and lay in the bosom of infinite felicity, should be heard to complain that "his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," while the anguish that oppressed his mind, caused a sweat, like great drops of blood falling to the ground to distil from the pores of his body. That one so innocent and holy, who "had done no sin," and "in whose mouth," or heart, "no guile had been found," and who "had life in himself," nay, "was the Prince of life," the "Lord and giver of life;" and had healed the disorders, and remedied the sufferings of so many others, and had raised so many others from the dead, should be exposed to the pangs of that death, and to those dreadful sufferings which entered into the world by sin, and are the appropriate fruits and chastisements of it! All this, I say, was surely matter of wonder and astonishment!

6. His *resurrection, ascension, and exaltation*, were wonderful: That a frail and mortal man should not only have power "to lay down his life," but also to "take it again!" That he who, when in full life, and health, and strength, had been brought under the power of death, should not, even when a dead corpse, be detained under its power! That he who was condemned to death, at the tribunal of a weak and mortal man, and was hanged on a tree in ignominy and torture, between two thieves, as the vilest slave and malefactor, should be exalted to the right hand of God," invested with "all power in heaven and on earth," should have a name given him above every name," and should be constituted the final judge of men and angels, and all creatures in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, should be obliged, whether willingly or reluctantly, "to confess him Lord," and bow before him! I shall only add, that a series of wonders attended his *birth*, his *childhood*, his *youth*, his *manhood*, nay, and every period of his life, and was especially conspicuous at his death; so that the very time of his greatest humiliation, was the period of his greatest glory; and when he showed the greatest marks of being a weak and mortal son of man, he gave the greatest proofs of being the only-begotten, and the best-beloved Son of God.

A second title given here to the Messiah is, that of Counsellor. He is that Wisdom and Word which the Father of the universe "possessed in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; which was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the

earth was :—Which was with him when he prepared the heavens, and when he set a compass upon the face of the depth : When he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep : When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment : When he appointed the foundations of the earth.” He was therefore, perfectly acquainted with all the Father’s counsels from the beginning, and as far as was necessary or expedient, he hath revealed them to men. “ To this end was I born, says he, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” He “ came a light unto the world, that they who see not might see,” and was full of *wisdom* and *truth*, as well as of *power* and *grace*. In him were “ hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” and out of his fulness, his disciples have, from age to age, received all the communications thereof, which were needful for, or would be useful to them. “ I call you not servants,” says he, “ for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth : But I have called you friends : For all things that I have heard or learned of the Father, I have made known unto you.” He not only instructs his disciples by his word and by his messengers, and brings “ life and immortality to light by his gospel ;” but he gives them “ an unction from himself, the Holy One to teach them all things,” the Spirit of truth to guide them into all that truth which it is of importance for them to know.

But it may be observed here also, that these two particulars are found united together, Isa. xxviii. 29. and, thus united, are both ascribed to Jehovah, who is said to be “ Wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” Probably, therefore, they ought to be thus understood here. To say merely that Christ is a Counsellor, may seem too mean a character for the Wisdom and Word of the Father : But to say that he is a “ Wonderful Counsellor,” is a great commendation. He hath been the Counsellor of his church in all ages, and the author and giver of all those excellent counsels which have been preserved to us in the writings of the prophets and apostles. For it was by the Spirit of Christ inspiring them, that they were enabled to prophesy and discourse so admirably concerning the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, and the other infinitely momentous matters of his kingdom of grace and glory. All the important doctrines, holy precepts, precious promises, and awful threatenings contained in the sacred



oracles of Eternal Truth, have been derived from this source. And by his admirable counsels, and the unsearchable plans and schemes of his most wise and adorable providence, the world hath been governed, and the church gathered, enlarged, and preserved from the beginning hitherto. In the meantime, his *power* is equal to his *wisdom*. For he is,

3dly. *The Mighty God*. This title, certainly, can agree to none but Christ. The Hebrew word *Eel* in the singular number, here rendered God, is never used of any creature. It is peculiar to the Almighty God, as will be evident to any who will be at the pains to peruse all the texts in the Hebrew Bible, where it occurs. And although, as an eminent divine observes, the title of *Elohim*, which is in the plural number, be twice or thrice ascribed to certain men, as to magistrates, yet there is constantly added some diminishing expression, as when they are said to be "afraid,"\* and "to die:"† whereas here, the epithet of *Mighty*, is added, as it frequently is, to the name of the True God, by the inspired writers, and is characteristic of his majesty and divine power: As Deut. x. 17. "The Lord your God is God of gods, and LORD of Lords, a great God, a mighty and terrible."

To be more particular. How do we learn to know the True God, and to distinguish him from all other beings? Is it not by those divine *names, titles, attributes, and works*, which we find ascribed to him in the holy scriptures, and in the writings and discourses of wise and holy men, and which cannot, with propriety, be ascribed to any other being in the universe; and by that religious worship which we are authorized to address to him, and which, if addressed to any other, would be manifest idolatry? Now, all these are ascribed to Christ by the inspired writers, and are represented as of right belonging to him.

1. *Divine names* are given to Christ. That the name *LORD* is continually applied to Christ, by the apostles and evangelists, will not be doubted by any that have read their writings. And although this appellation, as applied to him, may sometimes mean no more than the word *master, or governor, or proprietor*; yet, methinks, when he is termed *The LORD OF ALL*,‡ and *the LORD FROM HEAVEN*,§ the word is evidently used in that absolute sense which

\* Job xli. 25. † Psa. lxxxii. 7. ‡ Acts x. 36. § 1 Cor. xv. 47.

is not applicable to any creature. It is well known, also, that he is frequently called **GOD**, in the New Testament. "The **WORD WAS GOD**," says St. John.\* "God over all," observes St. Paul.† "GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH," testifies he again.‡ "They shall call his name *Immanuel*," predicts Isaiah, "which, being interpreted," St. Matthew informs us, "is **GOD WITH US**." "MY LORD and MY GOD," was Thomas's address to him, which address would evidently have been an act of idolatry, if Christ had been a mere creature, and Thomas, instead of being commended by his Master for making such a confession of his faith, would certainly have been censured by him for a manifest breach of the first commandment.

The name **Jehovah** is acknowledged by all to be peculiar to the Deity, and not communicable to any creature, as is signified by the Psalmist, when he says, "Thou whose name alone is **JEHOVAH**, art most high above all the earth." Now this appellation also is repeatedly given to Christ by the inspired writers. This is the name," says Jeremiah,§ "whereby he shall be called, **JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**." "Sanctify **JEHOVAH**, *God of Hosts himself*," says Isaiah,|| "and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; and many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken: Bind up the testimony, and seal the law among my disciples," &c. Now as this passage was evidently meant of the Messiah, so we find it repeatedly and expressly applied to him in the New Testament. Old Simcon, with the child Jesus in his arms, refers to it when he says,¶ "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." St. Peter refers to it,\*\* when having quoted Isaiah's words, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone," and those of David, "The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is the head of the corner," he proceeds to quote these words also as intended of him, and terms him "a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence to those who stumble at the word." St. Paul is still more express,†† "Israel hath not attained to the law of righteousness: Wherefore? Because they

\* John i. 1. † Rom. ix. 5. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 16. § Jer. xxiii. 6. || Isa. vii. 13, 14. ¶ Luke ii. 34. \*\* 1 Pet. ii. 6—8. †† Rom. ix. 31—33.

sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law, for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone, as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence." It is of *Jehovah* that the Psalmist speaks, when he says,\* "Confounded be all they that serve graven images. Worship him, all ye gods;" and "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands." Now, both these passages are applied to Christ, in the first chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, and are represented as being intended of him. It is of *Jehovah* David speaks in the 18th verse of the 68th Psalm, "Thou hast ascended up on high," &c. yet these words also, St. Paul applies to Christ, Eph. iv. 8. Isaiah's vision of *Jehovah*, chap. vi. 1. is said by St. John,† to have been a vision of Christ; and the person before whom John the Baptist went in the power and spirit of Elias to prepare his way, and who was certainly Christ, is termed *Jehovah*, both by Isaiah and Malachi. So that *divine names*, even the *incommunicable name* *Jehovah*, is certainly given to him, and that frequently.

2dly, *Divine titles* are also ascribed to him. St. John terms him, at the close of his 1st epistle, "THE TRUE GOD and ETERNAL LIFE," and that in the very place where he cautions his readers against idolatry, saying, in the next verse, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." St. Paul calls him, "our GREAT GOD and SAVIOUR,"‡ as the original words are, and "GOD BLESSED FOR EVER."§ He also,|| as well as St. James,¶ terms him, "THE LORD OF GLORY," a title of the same import with "*King of glory*," which is an appellation whereby the TRUE GOD is distinguished by David.\*\* The title, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS, which is appropriated to the Supreme God in the holy scriptures, is also repeatedly ascribed to Christ by the apostle John: "The Lamb shall overcome them, for he is KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS."†† "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS."‡‡ And what is, perhaps, still more striking, and will carry still fuller conviction to every mind, he is again and again said to be THE FIRST and the LAST. That this is a title peculiarly claimed by

\* Psa. xcvi. 7. and cii. 25. † John xii. 41. ‡ Titus ii. 12. § Rom.

ix. 5. || 1 Cor. ii. 8. ¶ James ii. 1. \*\* Psa. xxiv. 7, 8. †† Rev.

xiv. 17. ‡‡ Rev. xix. 6.

the one Living and True God, appears evidently from sundry parts of Isaiah's prophecy, as from chap. xli. 4. "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I JEHOVAH, THE FIRST AND WITH THE LAST." Again, chap. xliv. 6. "Thus saith Jehovah the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts, I AM THE FIRST AND I AM THE LAST, and besides me there is no God." Now, Rev. i. 10. we find the Son of God laying claim to, and using these titles as his own. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," says St. John, "and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, and what thou seest write; and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son (or rather a son) of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breast with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire: And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: And his countenance was as when the sun shineth in his strength: And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST: I am he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; And have the keys of hades and of death." The force of this argument, I think, is completely irresistible. It surely must carry conviction to every mind.

Some of you may, probably, wonder why I do not quote the 8th verse of this chapter, in proof of the point in hand. But the reason is, that it is doubtful whether it was intended of the Father or of the Son. The words I refer to are, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord; who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." The context, indeed, seems to favour the application of these words to the Lord Jesus: and, I believe, it will be difficult to prove that they are not spoken of him. But as I wish to allege no arguments that are not evidently conclusive, I waive this, observing, however, in the words of Dr. Doddridge's note on the verse, that, "if the words should be understood as spoken of the Father, our Lord's applying so many

of these titles afterwards to himself, plainly proves his partaking with the Father, in the glory peculiar to the divine nature, and incommunicable to any creature." "For, otherwise," as I have remarked in my Vindication of the Catholic Faith, "would it not seem strange, not to say impious and blasphemous, after the Father had characterized his person by his peculiar titles, saying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending*, for a mere creature immediately to echo back the same words, and say, *I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last*? and to do this a second time, and that after displaying glories surely above any thing conceivable in man or angel, saying, *I am the First and the Last*? nay, and to do it a third time, in the same words, within a few sentences, as is recorded in the 8th verse of the next chapter, *these things saith the First and the Last, who was dead and is alive*." "If then," as I have remarked further in that work, "we were in any doubt in what sense to understand the prophets and apostles, when they call *Christ God*, (as we have seen they frequently do,) we can be in doubt no longer, when we see epithets descriptive of true and proper Deity, joined with these names and the highest titles of the supreme God, frequently claimed by him, and given to him."

3. I come next to show that the *incommunicable attributes* of the godhead are also ascribed to Christ. If any attributes of Deity are more incommunicable than others, they are those of *omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, eternity, and immutability*. And we find all these expressly ascribed to Christ in the scriptures of truth. To know the heart of man belongs only to omniscience, and it is claimed by Jehovah as his peculiar prerogative. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins."\* "Thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men."† But the Son of God is represented in the divine oracles, as possessed of this perfection of Deity. "Lord, thou knowest all things," says the apostle Peter,‡ "thou knowest that I love thee." "Jesus knew their thoughts," says Matthew,§ "Jesus knew all men," says St. John,|| "and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." And Christ himself confirms the testimony of his three apostles, when he speaks from heaven, and says, "*all the churches*

\* Jer. xvii. 9, 10. † 1 Kings viii. 39. ‡ John xxi. 17.

§ Matt. xiii. 25. || John ii. 24, 25.

shall know that I AM HE THAT SEARCHETH THE REINS AND THE HEART." To this may be added the testimony of St. Paul above quoted, which assures us that, "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Omnipresence is another peculiar attribute of the Deity. "Am I a God at hand," says he,\* "and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?"† And yet this divine perfection is claimed by Christ, when he says, "where two or three are met together in my name, I am there in the midst of them;"‡ and, "to, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."‡ Or, when he declares, "behold, I stand at the door and knock:" and promises, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."§ Now, if Jesus be able to fulfil, and if he really do fulfil such promises as these, must he not be omnipresent? For who but an Omnipresent, and, may I not say, an *infinite being*, can be present in thousands, yea, hundreds of thousands of congregations, assembled in different parts of the earth, at one and the same time? and present at the door of, and even in the heart of every true believer in all those congregations? Does not this show that his presence is as universal through our world, as the presence of the light or air? But we find it is not confined to this globe of ours, but is extended through universal nature, for, says the apostle,|| "By (or rather *in*) him all things consist," *consistunt*, all upheld or supported, viz. by his universally diffused and all-pervading presence. For, he upholdeth all things by the word of his power,"¶ and "fillet all things,"\*\* especially his church, to which, and to every member of which, he is a head of vital influence, and which he so enriches with gifts and graces, that it is termed by St. Paul, "the fulness of Him that FILLETH ALL IN ALL."

Almighty power is another property of the godhead, and when the apostle says that, "He is able to subdue all things to himself,"†† he evidently ascribes this perfection to Christ. Indeed, when Jesus himself speaks such language as the following, "My Father

\* Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. † Matt. xviii. 20. ‡ Matt. xxviii. 20. § Rev. iii. 20.  
|| Col. i. 17. ¶ Heb. i. 3. \*\* Eph. iv. 10. †† Phil. iii. 21.

worketh hitherto, and I work. What things soever the Father doth, these doth the Son likewise. As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom he will," he evidently lays claim to this property. Hence, the god-like works which he performed, prove the same; works that he continually appealed to in proof of his mission and deity, saying, "If I do not the works of my Father, (such works as only the Supreme God can do,) believe me not: But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know that the Father is in me, and I in him."\*

I mentioned also *eternity*, as an attribute belonging to the Son of God. Does Moses describe the *eternity* of Jehovah, when he says, † "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth or the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God!" St. John testifies of the *Word*, that he was *in the beginning with God*; Jesus says of himself, that he had *glory with the Father before the world was*, and that the Father *loved him before the foundation of the world*, and that he is "*Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last*," and the prophet Micah affirms, ‡ that "his goings forth have been of old, from everlasting;" מִימֵי עוֹלָם *from of old, from the days of eternity*; for the Hebrew word is the same with that whereby Moses expresses the eternity of the Father in the verse just quoted. Hence the apostle, speaking of his type Melchisedec, king of righteousness, and king of peace, describes him as *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*; but *made like unto the Son of God*, § or a proper type of him who is *eternal*.

I shall only name one more attribute of the godhead, as ascribed to Christ in the sacred scriptures, and that is *immutability*. If the immutability of the Father is described by himself, when he says, "I change not," || and by St. James, when he affirms, that with him "is no variableness nor shadow of turning;" the same divine perfection is ascribed by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, to the Son of God, when it is affirmed that "HE IS

\* John x. 37. † Psa. xc. 2. ‡ Micah v. 2. § Heb. vii. 3.

|| Mal. iii. 6.

THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER," and when the words of David concerning Jehovah, quoted above, are ascribed to him, "They (the heavens and the earth) shall perish: But thou remainest: And they all shall wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS FAIL NOT;" than which, I apprehend, no words can possibly more strongly express *immutability*. But it is not necessary to dwell so long upon particulars: He himself declares,\* "*All things that the Father hath are mine.*" All the *names, titles, and attributes* of the Father are his. Indeed, the Father himself is his, and dwells in him in all his fulness; so that the Son is never without the Father, any more than the Father is without the Son.

4. Another argument in proof of the proper deity of Christ, is taken from the *divine works*, which are all repeatedly ascribed to him in the holy scriptures, and especially those of *creation and preservation*, to which I shall now confine myself. By that Word which was in the beginning with God, according to St. John, "all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made," "He was in the world," says he again, "and the world was *made by him.*" "By him," testifies St. Paul, "were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were created by him." "Thou, Lord, in the beginning," says the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, addressing Christ, as we have seen, in the language of David, "hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands."†

\* John xvi. 15.

† It is not denied, observe, that the Father, who is the fountain of Deity and of divine power, is also the primary cause of all the divine works. Certainly, he is continually represented in scripture in this light. But the passages which have been quoted, with others, that, if need were, might be adduced, make it evident, that the apostles considered "the *Word* that was in the beginning with God," as the *immediate*, and if I may so express myself, as the *operative* Creator of them. St. Paul seems to make the proper distinction between the office of the Father, in the creation and preservation of all things, and that of the Son, when he says, "*God, viz. the Father, created all things by Jesus Christ,*" and characterizes the Father as the



It seems hardly necessary that I should add, that the divine oracles ascribe the preservation and government of all things to Christ, in the same sense in which they attribute to him their creation, in the verse above quoted. When, therefore, we read that all animate creatures live, and move, and have their being in the Father, and that he is *above all, and through all, and in all*, it is to be understood, that this is in and through his Son and Spirit, who

Being of whom are all things, and the Lord Jesus as the person, BY whom are all things.\* In short, they consider the Son of God as the *Creating Wisdom, and Word, and Power* of the Father, who both devised the plan of the universe, and executed what he had designed. In this light, it is evident, those ancient Fathers of the christian church, who lived nearest to the apostolic age, considered the doctrine of the apostles on this subject. Bishop Bull, in his "Defence of the Nicene Faith," quotes the following passage from Justin's epistle to Diognetus. "He, the Almighty, the Creator of all things, the invisible God, hath implanted among men, the heavenly Truth, the Word, holy and incomprehensible; not sending a servant, an angel;—but the Artificer and Maker of all things, by whom he formed the heavens, and shut in the sea in its proper bounds: Whose mysteries all the elements faithfully observe," &c. He quotes Athenagoras to the same purpose. "The Son of God is the Word of the Father in Idea and Energy. All things were made by him and for him. *The Son of God, is the Mind and Word of the Father.*" From Irenæus he produces some passages equally explicit. "Nor shall any thing made and in subjection, be compared with the Word of God, by whom all things were made, who is our Lord Jesus Christ." Again, "The Son, who is the Word of God, laid out these things from the beginning, the Father not standing in need of *angels* for the creation of the world, and the making of man, for whom the world was created, nor wanting a ministerial power for making these things that are made. For his own *Offspring* and *Impress* ministers to him in all things,—to whom angels are subject and minister." And yet again, "*All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made.* Here is no exception: But the Father made all things by him, whether visible or invisible; sensible or intellectual; temporal, for a certain purpose, or eternal. He made all things, not by angels or powers, *different from his own mind.* For the God of all things wants nothing: but by his Word and Spirit, makes, disposes, and governs all things." To these testimonies of Justin, Athenagoras, and Irenæus, I shall only add the following passage of Origen. "The Word, the Son of God, is the *immediate*, and, as it were, the very framer of the world: The Father of the Word, in that he ordered the Word, his Son, to make the world, is primary Creator."

\* 1 Cor. viii. 6.

are in and with him, and never separated from him. Add to this, that all things are expressly said to have been created FOR, as well as BY the Son of God, and HE, as the only-begotten of the Father, is represented as HEIR and LORD of all.

5. One, and only one more argument shall I now produce, to prove, that "the Child born," and "the Son given," who has "the government upon his shoulder," and whose "name is Wonderful," is the *Mighty God*, possessed of *true* and *proper* deity: And, that is, that *true* and *proper divine worship* is due to him, and has been, is, and must be paid to him. And here I shall not refer to the various instances recorded in the gospel, of persons *worshipping him*, because there may be some reasons to doubt whether such persons did really mean to pay him proper religious and divine worship, as a person whom they believed to be truly God, or only some civil, although extraordinary honour and respect. It appears to me, however, that had not our Lord been *God*, and had not proper religious and divine worship been his due, he would not have permitted those persons to have prostrated themselves before him in the manner they did. For we find, that neither the angel that communicated to St. John the mysteries contained in the Apocalypse, nor the apostles, would permit such respect to be paid them." "I fell down at his feet to worship him," says St. John, "and he said to me, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant." And again, "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, and he said, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, *worship God*." As Peter was entering Cornelius's house, "Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him: But Peter took him up, saying, *Stand up: I myself also am a man*." Now, is it not very remarkable, that Jesus Christ, who certainly had not less, but unspeakably more concern for the glory of the only-living and true God, than either this angel or St. Peter, should never forbid such respect to be paid to himself, nor check those who actually paid it? Does not this show to a demonstration, that he knew himself to have that right to the worship of mankind, which the angels and apostles, who were but his creatures, had not?

And, indeed, well might he know this. For the Father, when he brought his First-begotten into the world, had said, "Let all the angels of God worship him." An injunction confirmed by

Christ himself, who assures us that, "the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men might honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," and that, "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father." Accordingly we find both *prayer* and *praise* frequently addressed to Christ, by those who, of all others, were most likely to know the mind and will of God in this matter; I mean the apostles, whom the Spirit of truth had guided into all needful truth. In the days of his flesh they prayed to him to *increase their faith*. After his ascension, Stephen, when dying, in the most solemn and earnest manner, invoked him and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." St. Paul besought him thrice, that the thorn in his flesh, the messenger of Satan, that buffeted him, might depart from him," and received for answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee: My strength, (*δυναμις*, my power, is made perfect in weakness.") which answer to his request induced the apostle to exclaim, "Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power, (the same word in the original,) of Christ may rest upon me." He begins almost all his epistles with a prayer, for "Grace and peace," as "from God the Father," so also "from our Lord Jesus Christ;" and concludes several of them with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all."—or, "with you,"—or, "with thy Spirit." And sometimes we find him presenting us with set, solemn, and formal prayers, addressed to the Lord Jesus, together with the Father. Thus, "Now God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you: and the Lord, (*viz.* Christ,) make you to increase in love one towards another, and towards all men, to the end that he, (Christ,) may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God, even our Father."\* And again, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work." Add to this, that the first Christians in general, are described in the inspired writings, as calling on the name of Jesus Christ. Thus, Ananias, speaking of Saul, says,† "He hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that *call on thy name*," and St. Paul directs one of his principal epistles to all that, in

\* 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.

† Acts ix. 14.

every place, "*call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs, says he, and ours.*"\*

That praise, and honour, and glory, are ascribed to Christ, as well as to the Father, I need not say. You all recollect, I presume, that divers instances of this occur in the New Testament. One, and that not a little remarkable, occurs at the close of St. Peter's second epistle. He had concluded his former epistle, with ascribing honour, in the following words, to the Father the God of all grace, who hath called us to his own eternal glory by Christ Jesus, "To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen." And at the close of the second, speaking of the Son, in whose grace, and in the knowledge of whom he exhorts us to grow, he ascribes similar honour to him, saying, in almost the same words, "To him be glory, now and for ever! Amen." Of a similar kind is the language of St. John,† "Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!" And this language, you well know, has had, and still has the sanction of all the angelic armies, and shall have that of every creature in one form or another. For, "I beheld," says St. John,‡ "and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Now, you well know, that prayer and praise imply all other acts of worship, even such as are *internal*. *Prayer*, if sincere, implies desire, confidence and hope; and *praise* implies *gratitude* and *love*. If, therefore, it be proper to address *prayer* and *praise* to the Lord Jesus, it is proper that our desire should be unto him, our *confidence* in him, and our expectation from him, for such blessings as we want, and that he should be the object of our *love* and *gratitude*.

\* 2 Cor. i. 2.

† Rev. i. 5, 6.

‡ Rev. v. 11—14.

Accordingly, this we find was actually the case with the apostles and first christians. Their desire was directed to the Lord Jesus, and their hope and confidence were placed in him for the greatest of all blessings, even for eternal salvation; and He, in union with the Father, was the great object of their unlimited gratitude and love. Hence it is, that we meet with such passages as the following in the apostolic writings, "whosoever BELIEVETH in him shall not be ashamed." "He that BELIEVETH in him shall not be confounded." "Ye BELIEVE in God, BELIEVE also in ME," "There shall arise a ROOT of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust." "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first TRUSTED in Christ, in whom ye also TRUSTED." "Jesus Christ our HOPE." "Christ in you the HOPE OF GLORY." "I THANK Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry." "Simon, son of Jonas, LOVEST thou me? Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I LOVE thee." "Grace be with all those that LOVE our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." "If any man LOVE not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha."

Now, as I have observed in the Vindication above referred to, "these, and such like passages, show, that the Lord Jesus was worshipped, and that in the highest sense, viz. *in spirit* and in *truth*, and with the best and purest worship, the worship of the heart." They show that he was the object of the religious *confidence* and *hope*, *gratitude* and *love* of his ancient servants, and that in an unlimited degree, which surely no mere creature was or could be. And as a fruit of this, their whole lives were dedicated to him.

"The love of Christ constrained them, so that they lived not unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." Yea, "none of them lived unto himself, or died unto himself: but whether they lived they lived unto the Lord, or whether they died they died unto the Lord: living or dying therefore they were the Lord's." Considering themselves as his servants, they were wholly devoted to, and employed in doing his will, and promoting his glory, "not accounting even their lives dear to themselves, so that they might finish their course with joy, and that Christ might be magnified by their bodies, whether by life or death."

Let us now compare all this with those precepts of the law, which prohibit, in the most express terms, our worshipping any being but Jehovah, the living and true God, and we shall no longer entertain any doubt concerning the true and proper deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need not wonder, therefore, that he is entitled,

4thly. *The Everlasting Father.* As I have enlarged so much on the last particular, I shall be very short on this and the following. "They who apply this to Hezekiah, render it, *The Father of an age*, and expound it of his *long life*, and *numerous posterity*, which shows to what absurd shifts they are driven, who interpret this text of any other but Christ. For Hezekiah did not live very long, nor had he, that we read of, more than one son, viz. Manasseh. And if both these things had been true of him, they were much more eminently true of many others. But the Messiah, the Word that was in the beginning with God, was, in union with his Father, the *Father of all things*: the creation and preservation of the universe being, as we have seen, ascribed to him by the inspired writers. And he is the Father of all believers, who are called his children in the scriptures,\* as being begotten by his gospel; and his tenderness towards them, and fatherly care of them, is *everlasting*. He is also the Author of *everlasting life and happiness*: in other words, he is the Father of a blessed eternity to them: for says the apostle, he is "the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him." Add to this, that he is the *Father of the world to come*, as the Septuagint version of the Old Testament renders the words, that is, the Father of the gospel state, which, according to the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, is put in subjection to him, and not to angels.† He was from eternity the Father of the great work of redemption and salvation. His heart was set upon it, and it was the product of his *wisdom*, as the Counsellor, and of his *love*, as the Everlasting Father.

5. We have now only to notice one title more. He is the *Prince of Peace*. It is certain that this character does not suit Hezekiah, whose reign was far from being free from wars; but it agrees perfectly to Christ, who is repeatedly‡ termed *our Peace*, in scripture. He, as you are well informed, hath made peace between God and man, "the chastisement of our peace," that is, the condemnation and

\* Isa. viii. 18. and Heb. ii. 13. † Heb. ii. 5. ‡ Micah v. 5. Eph. ii. 14.

punishment of our sins, which was necessary to procure our peace, being laid on him: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." "For, it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things," or persons, "to himself, whether those" still alive "on earth, or those" who have died in the faith, and are now "in heaven." For "God is in him, reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them." True believers, therefore, who accept the blessing in genuine repentance, although formerly "alienated, and enemies in their minds by wicked works, are now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, and "being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." For peace of conscience and tranquillity of mind, are the effect of his merits, and the fruit of his Spirit, and are obtained by faith in him. He is also said to be the *Peace*, because he hath made "both Jews and Gentiles one, having broken down the middle wall of partition between them;" and wherever the influence of his grace is truly experienced, man, being reconciled to God, is also reconciled to man, and peace and mutual love take place.

" His kingdom from above, He doth to us impart,  
And pure benevolence and love, O'erflow the faithful heart.  
Chang'd in a moment, we, The sweet attraction find,  
With open arms of charity, Embracing all mankind."

I shall only add that, as a *Prince* he is *peaceable*, commanding, making, and preserving peace in his kingdom: that he leaves peace as a legacy to his disciples, and is the author of it and of all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal to them.

Let me now only beg your patience a moment longer, till, with a much brevity as possible, I draw some inferences from what has been advanced.

And, 1st. Is the name or person of the Messiah *wonderful, mysterious, or secret*? Then, while we frequently and seriously meditate thereon, and determine, with St. Paul, to know nothing in comparison of him, let us not be surprised if we cannot fully comprehend the awful, although delightful subject: and if, after all our reading and hearing, study and contemplation, his person and nature remain still an unsearchable mystery. While, with the same apostle, we

“count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord ;” while we seek eagerly and with unwearied diligence,” to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings :” and as St. Peter exhorts, labour “to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ;” let us not fail to check all idle and extravagant curiosity respecting both his person and government. And believing in simplicity, as far as we understand them, the declarations of the inspired penman concerning him, let us adore where we cannot comprehend, remembering that, at the best, we see through a glass darkly, while on earth, and that *genuine love and true holiness*, rather than profound investigation and perfect knowledge, must be our principal objects of attention and pursuit.

2. Does the Messiah also bear the name of *Counsellor*, or *Wonderful Counsellor*? And is his nature in reality what his name imports? Then let us make application to him for direction in all our straits and difficulties, with humility of mind and confidence of hope, fully persuaded that he will not deny us the blessing which his very name authorizes us to expect. Let us “trust in him,” as the wise man advises, “with all our heart, and not lean to our own understanding; let us acknowledge him in all our ways, and he will direct our steps.” We shall not be suffered greatly to err, either as to truth or duty: but “our light shall rise in obscurity, and our darkness be as the noon-day.” He will lead us, though “blind, by a way that we know not, and guide us in paths that we have not known: he will make darkness light before us, and crooked things straight: these things will he do unto us, and not forsake us;” and we shall evidently be those “children of God that are led by the Spirit of God.”

4. Is this same Messiah the *Mighty God*? Then let us reverence and fear him, worship and serve him as such. Let us not dare to neglect, disobey, or reject him. Although he is our *Redeemer* and *Saviour*, yet we must recollect, he is also our *Lawgiver* and our *Judge*, and it is a “fearful thing to fall into the hands” of his righteous indignation and wrath. Let us take care, then, that “we refuse not him that speaketh. For, if they escaped not that turned away from Moses, that spake on earth, much less shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice” on Sinai, “shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, yet



once more I shake not the earth only, but heaven also. Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom" from this King of saints, whom the Father hath set upon his holy hill of Sion: "let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire."

4. Is this Mighty God, also, the *Everlasting Father*, and the *Prince of Peace*? Then let us take care that while we are his children, being begotten by his gospel, and while we confide in him with filial love and affection, we also manifest that we are in all proper and orderly subjection to him as our sovereign Lord and King. And as he is King of Peace, as well as Righteousness, while through him being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and peace of conscience, let us demonstrate also by our peaceable disposition, by our living in love and harmony with the people of God, and as much as in us lieth, by our "following peace with all men," that we are, indeed, his genuine subjects, that his kingdom of righteousness and peace is in our hearts, and that we are in the highway to his kingdom of everlasting peace and felicity.

AMEN.

## SERMON XVIII.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF THE SECT EVERY WHERE  
SPOKEN AGAINST, IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED, IN A DIS-  
COURSE DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE METHOD-  
IST CHAPEL AT TWICKENHAM, DEC. 14, 1800.

*We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: For as concerning  
this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. Acts  
xxviii. 22.*

1. **SUCH** was the just and reasonable language of some of the inhabitants of the greatest city in the world, to a poor, despised, and persecuted disciple of Jesus Christ, who appeared among them with every disadvantage, having been sent to Rome a prisoner, and being, at this very time, bound with a chain. It is true, they were not native Romans, as it appears, but Jews, who spake thus. But this very circumstance, one would have supposed, might have increased their prejudices against him, as he was known to be an abettor of the cause which their countrymen and the chiefs of their nation in Judea had condemned; and a disciple of the man whom

the rulers of their people had lately executed as a malefactor upon a cross. Nevertheless, although appearances were so much against him, and although there were so many reasons why they should give him no countenance, but despise and persecute him, as their friends in Jerusalem had done; they had so far imbibed the fair and equitable principles of the imperial city where they resided, that they determined to check every rising prejudice, and give him a patient hearing, judging it unjust to condemn a man or a party, or a cause, unheard. "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest, for, as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."

2. Methinks, my brethren, their conduct in this matter reflects censure and disgrace upon many in our day, who readily believe and propagate every idle tale that they happen to hear to the disadvantage of others, and make no scruple to condemn and revile whole communities of people, whose principles and conduct they neither understand, nor will be at the pains to examine. This, however, I trust, is not your practice. You, who call yourselves, and who, many of you, I hope, are christians, will surely have as much justice as the Jews or Heathens at Rome. You will patiently hear a cause before you judge it, and will not condemn what you have not considered.

And, persuaded that spiritual things differ in this from natural, that they cannot be rightly understood, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, according to the clear and forcible reasoning of this apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 11. "What man knoweth the things of a man," or the things that belong to human nature, "save the spirit of a man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but by the Spirit of God:"—persuaded of this, I say, you will see the propriety of applying to God in prayer for the illumination of his Holy Spirit, that, as our Church observes, in her Collect for Whitsunday, being taught hereby, you may "have a right judgment in all things," especially in things of such vast moment. Now this is all we desire. Grant us this, and we ask no more. If, at any time, after you have heard our message, and endeavouring to divest your minds of prejudice, have sincerely and earnestly asked of God to enable you to form a right judgment concerning it, you think proper to reject it, we can do no more. We leave you to God and your own consciences, only observing for your

greater caution, and to prevent your coming to too hasty a conclusion, that these Jews at Rome rejected even the message of St. Paul; not, however, because they had deusted their minds of prejudice, and sincerely addressed themselves to God in prayer, for supernatural light; but because they had not previously taken these necessary steps.

3. I am glad, my brethren, for the *truth's* sake, that you may believe and be saved, that I do not appear before you, in this place, to-day, under such disadvantageous circumstances as those under which St. Paul appeared at Rome. I was not brought to this town a prisoner, nor do I appear before you in chains. I am *free*, and have the same right to the privileges of an Englishman which any of you have, and to the protection of the good government under which we live; nor does the law allow any man to molest me, were any minded to do it, in the exercise of my office in this licensed house. Add to this, that the circumstance of my professing to be a disciple of Him that was crucified in Judea can excite no prejudice in your minds against me, for you profess to do the same. In these respects, therefore, I address you with advantages very superior to those which this apostle had in addressing the Jews at Rome. But then, I must acknowledge on the other hand, that he was a much more able advocate for the truth than I can pretend to be. However, as he did not go to any people confiding in "excellency of speech, or of wisdom," but "in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power," which, from time to time, accompanied his word; and as even he allowed, that he was not sufficient of himself for the important office of preaching the gospel, but acknowledged that his sufficiency was of God; so the same Spirit and power are free for us: God can still aid the weakness of his servants, and cause us to know by our own experience, that his grace is sufficient for us. Relying, then, on the help of this, let us,

1st. Inquire what the *Sect* was which is spoken of in my text, and what were the *principles* and *conduct* of its members.

2dly. What we may suppose were the reasons why it was every where *spoken* against, and whether they who thus reviled it, acted *wisely*, and were *justified* in so doing.

I shall then, 3dly, make some application of what has been advanced.

And, 1st. We are to inquire what the *Sect* was which is spoken of in my text, and what were the *principles* and *conduct* of its members.

1. This sect, you will recollect, was no other than that, termed by Tertullus,\* the sect of the Nazarenes," that is, of the Christians, founded by Jesus of Nazareth, "a ringleader of which, as Tertullus expresses it, was this same Paul of Tarsus. And, first,

2. As to the principles of this sect, it must be confessed that they differed widely from those, both of the Heathen and the Jews. In opposition to the heathen who were polytheists and idolaters; who believed in a plurality of gods, and those gods either the *work of men's hands*, wood and stone, or *mere imaginary beings*, that had no existence, or *corrupt and evil beings*, that were in reality, *devils*; the Christians held that there is only *one God*, and that he is self-existent and possessed of all possible perfections. They believed him to be infinite and eternal in all his attributes: in *wisdom* unsearchable, in *power* almighty, in *love* unbounded, in *truth* inviolable, in *justice* impartial, in *mercy* unfathomable, and in *holiness* unspotted: that he is present every where, acquainted with every thing, even with the secrets of men's hearts, and can do whatever he will, whether "in heaven, or among the inhabitants of the earth, no creature being able to stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou? They viewed him as the original *creator*, and continual *preserver* of the universe of creatures, as the bountiful *benefactor*, and righteous *governor* of the human race, and as the final *judge* of men and angels, whom, as being formed intelligent, free, and immortal, or, as the scriptures speak, "after his image," they believed to be accountable to him, and dependent on him for their final doom. They acknowledged of course, that a future state of rewards and punishments await mankind, and that a future and general judgment will take place, the consequences of which will be everlasting.

3. Herein they differed from many among the Jews also, even from the whole sect of the *Sadducees*, whose doctrine it was, "that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit" of man, that sur-

\* Acts xxiv. 5.

vives the death of the body ; nor, indeed, any future state whatever ; but that this life is the whole of our existence, and carnal pleasure our chief good. In opposition to another part of the Jews, the *Pharisees*, the professors of the day, the christians believed that man is a fallen creature, "very far gone from original righteousness," from the image of God, in which he was made, and that he is by nature a child of wrath, and, therefore, incapable of justifying himself by his own works before God : that "there is none righteous" (by nature, or according to the holy and spiritual law of God,) "no, not one ; that all are gone out of the way, are together become unprofitable, and that there is none that doeth good," viz. from a right principle, and in the manner and degree required, "no, not one ;" that man's "throat is an open sepulchre ; that with his tongue he uses deceit ; that the poison of asps is under," even when honey is upon, "his lips ;" that his "mouth is," too often, "full of cursing and bitterness, his feet swift to shed blood, that destruction" to others, "and misery" to himself, "are in his ways, and the way of peace he has not known."

4. But did they, therefore, leave mankind without hope, and abandon them to destruction and despair ? By no means. As they taught that God has a Son, an only Son, his eternal *Word* or *Wisdom*, who was in the beginning with him, by whom all things were made ; and without whom was not any thing made that was made ;" so they taught, also, that God had "so loved the world as to give this his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life : " that although he was his *own* and *only Son*, the Father had "not withheld him, but freely delivered him up to become incarnate, to live and die for us all ;" "had wounded him for our transgressions, bruised him for our iniquities, and laid on him the chastisement of our peace : " had "made him to be sin," or a sin-offering for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," or might be justified and accounted, nay, and even constituted righteous, in and through faith in him.

5. Hence they preached *justification* and *salvation*, present and eternal in his name, and through his mediation. "God," declared they, "is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing men's trespasses to them, and hath committed unto" his servants "the word of reconciliation. Now, then," added they, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you

by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.\* For,\* through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe, (that believe in, and rely on him, with a faith that "worketh by love,"† that overcometh the world,‡ and purifieth the heart,§) are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

In the same way, through the same atonement and grace of Christ, they preached *regeneration* and entire *sanctification*, declaring, that "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us: by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which God sheds on believers abundantly, that being justified by grace, they may be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." For,

6. They taught that God, who has a Son, has also a Spirit, often termed the *Holy Ghost*, as being infinitely holy in himself, and the one source of holiness to us: termed also the Spirit of *truth*, of *life*, and of *grace*, because it is his office to guide us into all necessary truth, to quicken our souls, which, by nature, are dead in trespasses and sins, to open the life of God within us, to create us anew in Christ Jesus, and, (from day to day) to help our infirmities. He convinces, they assure us, of *sin*, of *righteousness*, and of *judgment*; and as a Spirit of adoption, "sent into the hearts of believers, crying, Abba, Father," "bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God." He is, therefore, also a *comforter*, being a never-failing source of consolation, as well as of purity to God's people, and producing *love*, *joy*, and *peace* in their souls, as well as all other fruits of righteousness. This Spirit, they bore testimony, must not only be believed in and acknowledged, but *received*, and when received, makes mankind the *temples of God*, or "an habitation of God through the Spirit" here, and prepares them to dwell with him hereafter. On the other hand, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," they uniformly declared that such an one "is *none of his*," but is still *in the flesh*, that is, in a carnal and unregenerate state, and incapable of being admitted into the Kingdom of heaven.

7. One thing more let me observe here. As they represented these blessings of justification, regeneration, and sanctification, with

\* Acts xiii. 38. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ 1 John v. 4, 5. § Acts xv. 9.

the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in his gifts and graces, as *free for all*, without exception, Christ having, as they testified, "given himself a ransom" absolutely "for all," and "tasted death for every man," without the exception of one; so they required nothing of mankind, in order to their partaking of this salvation in all these branches of it, but "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," both which blessings, however, they represented as the *gifts of God*, which would certainly be conferred on all that sincerely, earnestly, and perseveringly sought them. "The kingdom of God is at hand," was their language, even that kingdom which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,"\* "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," as the way leading infallibly to it: "Repent, and be baptized, in the name of the Lord Jesus," which certainly implied believing in his name, "for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to those that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."† "Testifying," says St. Paul, "both to Jews and Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."‡ They assured their hearers, however, that all genuine repentance would certainly be productive of fruits worthy of repentance, such as, "ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well," in all known instances; and that true faith in Christ and his gospel would infallibly produce love to God and man, and all those good works which they had ability and opportunity to perform, it being their avowed and constant doctrine, that "faith without works is dead."

Such, then, were the leading principles of the Sect which was every where spoken against: These were its chief doctrines. But,

2dly. What was the practice of its members? This, perhaps, is of more consequence even than the former.

1st. Then, they were in general, an *innocent* and *harmless* people. They injured no man in his character, property, or person. And no wonder, for it was their constant care, as they were taught and commanded both by Christ, and by his apostles and evangelists, to imitate their Master, whom none could ever convince of sin, "who did," nay, "who *knew* no sin, neither was guile found

\* Rom. xiv. 17. † Acts ii. 38, 39.



in his mouth:" "who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," and whom his enemies, even Pilate, who condemned him, owned to be "an innocent and just man." Indeed, if they had not been innocent and harmless, at least in outward things, as they were continually and earnestly exhorted by the apostles and their other teachers, to be,\* they could not have been continued in the society of christians, but must have been expelled from it. This appears from sundry passages of the New Testament, in which the christians are exhorted and required to "look diligently lest any of them should fall of," or fall from "the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness should spring up, and trouble them, and thereby others should be defiled; lest there should be among them any fornicator or profane person, such as Esau." They are required to "purge out the old leaven, that they might be a new lump," and to deliver the offending brother, that would not be reprov'd and reformed, by a solemn act of excommunication to Satan, "for the destruction of the flesh; that," being brought to repentance by the grace of God sanctifying the afflictions wherewith he was visited, "his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Nay, they were required to have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works" or workers "of darkness, but rather to reprove them:" "I wrote to you," says St. Paul, "not to keep company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world:" As if he had said; They surround you in such a manner on all hands, and are to be found in such numbers in all places, that, unless you were absolutely to go out of the world, or to decline transacting any business, or having any intercourse with society in it, you cannot entirely avoid sometimes intermixing with, and being in the company of evil doers: "But now," adds he, "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no, not to eat." These are sufficient evidences that evil-doers were not suffered to enter in, or, if through stealth they gained admittance, at least, not to remain in the society of the christians; and, therefore, that the members of that society

\* Phil. ii. 15.

were an innocent and harmless people. Indeed, it appears they were such, even by the testimony of the heathen who persecuted them, and sought most diligently for accusations against them, to justify the persecution. Pliny's letter to the emperor Trajan, to say nothing of other documents, is a full proof of this. This letter, at the same time that it testifies that the christians were put to death, acknowledges also, "that they bound themselves by an oath (or mutual covenant) to allow themselves in no crime or immoral conduct whatever." But,

2dly, They were a *useful sect*. Their Master had been continually employed in "going about doing good," and had exhorted and enjoined all his disciples to follow his example in this particular, as far as they had ability and opportunity. "Let your light so shine before men," were his words, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." "Be ye merciful, as your Father in heaven is merciful;" "bless even those that curse you, do good to those that hate you, and pray for those that despitefully use and persecute you." "Love even your enemies, do good and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: For he is kind unto the unthankful and the evil." These, and such like precepts of their divine Master, rightly understood, they were careful to observe; for it was only in the way of observing them that they could expect to be acknowledged and received as his disciples in the day of final accounts. Hence it was that the apostles and evangelists, and all the other pastors and teachers of the christian church, which then was, ceased not to exhort all the members thereof, even all "that had believed in God" aright, and thereby had laid a proper foundation for such a practice, "to be careful to maintain" every kind of "good works," to "be ready for every good work," and "as they had opportunity, to do good unto all men, especially to those that were of the household of faith:" and "never to be weary of well doing," but to persevere, and "by patient continuance therein, to seek for glory, honour, and immortality." And as the generality of those that then professed Christianity were in low circumstances as to this world, and, therefore, could not distribute, "out of their *abundance*" to the relief of the necessities of their fellow-christians, or fellow-creatures; in order, that nevertheless, even *they* might be able, in this way, to comply

with the commands of their Lord and his apostles, and do good to the bodies, as well as souls of men, they were directed and exhorted to "labour diligently, working with their hands the thing that was good, that they might have to give to those that needed: of which conduct St. Paul set them a bright example, his hands "ministering to his own necessities," and to those of them that were with him. In which way he "showed them how, so labouring they ought to support the weak:" and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Nor was this advice given, or this example set them in vain. The members of this sect, although every where spoken against, yet, "the multitude of them that believed," were, in that early age of the church, "of one heart and of one soul," and went to such lengths in their disinterestedness and liberality to others, that "they said not that any of the things which they possessed were their own; but they had all things in common, and as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things sold, that distribution might be made unto every man according as he had need." But,

3dly. As they were *harmless*, and eminently *useful*; so they were a remarkably *pious* sect, living not only *soberly* and *righteously*, but *godly* in the present world; influenced continually by the fear and love of Jehovah, and "walking in his ordinances and commandments blameless." They spent much of their time in prayer and praise, in hearing and reading the word of God, in meditating thereon, in attending the supper of the Lord, and in other acts of private, social, and public worship. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer;" and not only assembled frequently in each other's houses, but "were daily in the temple, with one accord praising God:" and, "whatever they did, in word or deed," it was at least their endeavour to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, even the Father, through him."

Nor, 4thly. Was their piety separate from *holiness*, but they were consecrated, and conformed to the God they worshipped. They no longer "walked as the" unconverted "Gentiles" or Jews, "walked in the vanity of their minds," attached to, and seeking happiness in the earth, and in earthly things, "having the understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God, through the

ignorance that was in them;”—but they had learned Christ, so as to “put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, were renewed in the spirit of their minds, and had put on the new man, which, after” a resemblance of “God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Thus, being in Christ, they were new creatures: old things” with them “were passed away, and all things were become new.” They were, therefore, become “followers (*μιμηται*, imitators) of God, as his dear children, and walked in love, as Christ had loved them.” Knowing that, when they were “all dead, Christ died for them all, and thereby had bought them with a price, and that they were not their own, it was their continual care and endeavour to “live to him that had died for them,” and to “glorify God in their bodies and spirits,” which they knew were his, and which they dedicated to, and employed for him from day to day.

But, 5thly, Were they not a gloomy, morose, ill-natured, and melancholy sect? No: but quite the reverse. They were a kind, loving, friendly, affectionate, and happy people; disinterestedly and unweariedly pursuing, as we have seen, the good of others, and that, in many respects, even to the neglect of themselves; and benevolently and kindly sacrificing their own interest, and honour, and ease, and health, nay, and also their liberty and lives for the temporal and spiritual profit of their fellow-creatures. All the accounts which have reached us concerning them, conspire to prove that this was the fact. Like their great Master and Leader, they “pleased not themselves,” but rather denied themselves for the sake of others; and like St. Paul, one of their principal teachers, “sought not their own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved.” As they were continually advised and directed, they had “put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with, and forgiving others, if any man had a complaint against any;—and above all, they had put on love, the bond of perfectness, and the peace of God ruled in their hearts,” while their life was a life of continual thankfulness. Yea, while they “rejoiced evermore, and prayed without ceasing,” they “in, and even for every thing, gave thanks,” knowing perfectly, that “every thing would work for their good.” Hence, they feared not death itself, with any slavish or tormenting fear. And why should they?

“For them to live was Christ, and to die was gain.” They were, therefore, “confident and willing rather to be absent,” by death, “from the body; and present with the Lord;” or, as the apostle elsewhere expresses it, “to depart and be with Christ,” than to continue here. Such were the principles, and such the disposition and conduct of the members of the sect, which was “every where spoken against.”

II. We come now to consider the reasons why they were “every where spoken against;” and whether they who spoke against them, acted wisely, and were justified in so doing?

1. On this head I observe, 1st. Christ, whose prescience was infallible, had repeatedly and clearly foretold that his followers would be reproached, reviled, and persecuted; and therefore it was with certainty to be expected. “Remember,” says he,\* “the word that I said unto you: the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my saying, they will also keep yours. But these things will they do unto you, for my name’s sake; because they know not him that sent me. If they call the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household? They will put you out of their synagogues: yea, the time cometh, when *whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service*. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father nor me.” Again,† “They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.” At the same time, however, that the Lord Jesus forewarned them that they should meet with such usage, he failed not to fortify their minds against it, by such declarations and promises as were well adapted to support and comfort them under it.

2. But why were they to be persecuted? for what cause? For I hardly need to observe, that the predictions uttered by our Lord, however infallible, were not the cause why they were persecuted: Nor would they have been less persecuted, if no such predictions had been uttered. In other words, they were not persecuted because these predictions were delivered, but these predic-

\* John xv. 20. † John xxiv. 9.

tions were delivered because the Lord Jesus foreknew that they would be persecuted; and that it was proper and necessary that they should be forewarned of these trials of their faith and patience, and thereby prepared to meet them. I observe, therefore,

2dly. The heathen persecuted, because they testified, and that wherever they came, by word and writing, in private and public, boldly and resolutely, that the gods which they worshipped were *no gods*, but either devils, or "the work of men's hands, wood and stone," or *mere* imaginary beings, that had no existence, save in the fancies of their worshippers. Another reason why they persecuted them was, they knew that the christian doctrine, in all its branches, had a direct tendency to overthrow, and, as far as it prevailed, must overthrow their superstition, polytheism, and idolatry: for it revealed and proclaimed *one only living and true God*, and *one Mediator between God and man*; it called mankind to the worship of this one God, in and through this one Mediator, by one Holy Spirit, and, in the most clear and express terms, prohibited the worship of any other being, real or imaginary, good or evil. Add to this, that inasmuch as their false and corrupt theology was interwoven with their *constitution of government*, in their several countries, and with their *maxims of policy* on the one hand, and with all their *vices* and *pleasures* on the other, while it was a *source of gain* to many; it is natural to suppose, that the religion of Jesus, to be erected on the ruins of this superstition and idolatry, would meet with the most determined opposition from all ranks and conditions of men. All that, like Demetrius and his silver-smiths, by that idolatry and image-worship, or by those festivals and pleasures which it supported, had their wealth or maintenance, with all the votaries of *Bacchus*, of *Venus*, or of *Mars*, or of their other drunken, lewd, or cruel deities, would certainly oppose and persecute the abettors of a religion, which, if it should prevail, would infallibly dry up all the sources of their wealth and pleasure, and leave them, perhaps, in declining years, destitute of a maintenance.

3. The Jews opposed and persecuted them, because they preached a Messiah very different from him whom their nation looked for. The expectations of their countrymen were full of a temporal Messiah, who, they hoped, would appear in a state of splendour, power, and glory, and exalt their nation to honour and dignity

among the kingdoms of the earth, and raise it to a widely-extended, if not to universal empire. But this weak and despicable sect of christians proclaimed a Messiah that was spiritual, who professed to confer only spiritual blessings, and who acknowledged that "his kingdom was not of this world," a poor, mean, despised, and persecuted man, and one who had been executed as a malefactor on a cross. This so contradicted all their preconceived ideas and carnal prejudices, and was in such direct opposition to all their worldly views and prospects, that it cannot appear strange that they should reproach and persecute the persons who thus robbed them of their hopes.

4. The Jews, in general, were either Sadducees or Pharisees. The Sadducees, whose avowed sentiment it was, as we have seen, that there is no life after this, and who were strenuous to propagate that doctrine, hated and persecuted the christians, because they testified that there is an invisible, spiritual, and eternal world; that the souls of men survive the death of their bodies, that even their bodies shall be raised again, and made incorruptible and immortal; and that all mankind must appear and take their trial before the judgment-seat of Christ. Concerning this point, the sacred historian gives us clear as well as authentic information. Acts iv. 1. we read, "As they (viz. the apostles) spake unto the people, the priests and captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, *being grieved* that they taught the people, and *preached* through Jesus, the *resurrection of the dead*, and they laid hands on them, and put them in hold until the next day." Again, Acts v. 12—17. "By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, and believers were added to the Lord:—Then the high priest rose up, and all that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."

5. In the meantime the Pharisees opposed and reproached them on very different grounds. According to St. Luke, (Acts xxiii.) their principles differed widely from those of the Sadducees. They confessed both that there will be a resurrection of the body, and that there are in existence angels and human spirits departed. They, therefore, did not persecute the christians for entertaining and propagating these sentiments: but the *doctrines of grace* were

those which they chiefly hated and opposed. "Being ignorant of the spirituality, extent, and obligation of the law of God; they were also unacquainted with their own sinfulness and guilt, their depravity and weakness, in consequence of which they "went about," and took infinite pains "to establish their own righteousness, and would not submit themselves to the righteousness of God; nor could bear to hear that men must be saved, if saved at all, "by grace through faith." Hence arose their murmurings against Christ, in the days of his flesh, that he received sinners and ate with them;† and their continual efforts to prevent the apostles from speaking to the sinners of the heathen, in order to their salvation;\* and their violent and outrageous exclamation against St. Paul, when he mentioned the commission given him to preach to the Gentiles, recorded Acts xxii. 21. "They gave him audience unto that word," says the historian, "and then lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." The doctrine of the apostles, therefore, "That every mouth must be stopped, and all the world be acknowledged guilty before God:—that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in God's sight;—that as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, we can only be justified freely (*δωρεαν*) by a free gift through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ:"—This doctrine, I say, was an abomination to the ears of the self-righteous Pharisees. The consequence was, that while the abandoned sinners of the Gentiles, who formerly "had not followed after righteousness," having had neither thought nor care about it, "attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;" these Pharisees, "who had followed after the law of righteousness, did not attain to the law of righteousness;" and that for the evident reason the apostle assigns; "they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law, stumbling at that stumbling-stone, as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

6. It must be acknowledged, however, that it was not any matter of doctrine which was the *sole*, if even the *principal* cause of the enmity of the Pharisees and Sadducees among the Jews, or of

\* 1 Thess. ii. 14—16.



the Gentiles against this sect. There was another, and (perhaps I may say) yet more powerful cause of this opposition, and that was, the lives of these christians differed much from, and were a continual reproach to their lives. The christians were temperate and chaste; but their persecutors were generally drunken and debauched: the christians were true and just in all their dealings; the Jews and the Heathen were, in general, false, perfidious, and fraudulent. The christians, as they had opportunity, did good unto all men; but their enemies did evil to many. The christians lived in the fear and love of the only-living and true God, regarded his all-seeing eye, revered his majesty, confided in his mercy, praised him for his benefits, submitted to his dispensations, obeyed his commands, and lived to his glory: but those that reviled them, on the other hand, either denied his very being, and were, in every sense, without God (*αθεοι*, *atheists*) in the world, which was the case with the heathen; or, if *Jews*, their faith in him was dead, and did not produce any good fruit. They profaned his sabbaths, slighted his ordinances, disobeyed his laws, and trampled under foot his authority. Nay, as the apostle testifies, "The name of God was blasphemed" through their ungodly, unrighteous, and wicked conduct, "among the Gentiles." On this account, neither Jews nor Gentiles could bear these christians, because their lives were a continual reproof of their ungodliness, unrighteousness, and intemperance. Add to this, that the christians went still further. They not only, like Noah of old, "condemned the world," by their conduct; but like him, they were also all, more or less, "preachers of righteousness," in their generation. They bore testimony against the evil deeds of all among whom they lived, or with whom they conversed, and therefore ceased not to disturb the peace and quiet of every family, village, town, city, or country, in which they resided or sojourned. And in doing this, they feared the face of no man, "neither counted they their lives dear unto themselves." They braved all reproach, persecution, and affliction, which they might meet with in the execution of this office: They proclaimed war against all the world, and were only anxious about the word of their testimony, that they might be faithful to him that had called them, and to the souls of their fellow-creatures.

7. This brings me to the chief cause of this enmity and opposition, and that is, the *carnal mind*, which is in every man by nature, and is enmity against God," and his work; against his nature, his attributes, his word, his ways. In consequence of this, "they that are born only after the flesh," will most assuredly "persecute those that are born after the Spirit." And they that lie in wickedness," or as the Greek, *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*, means the wicked one," and are under his influence, will, in this, as in every thing else, do his will and perform his work. "If the world hate you, (said Jesus,†) ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: But, because ye are not of the world, but, I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." All this is still but too applicable to the carnal part of mankind, and to the opposition they still make to the genuine followers of Jesus, even to all that, like him, are *not of the world*. Observe this well, my brethren, and see that none of you be influenced by their spirit, or imitate their example in this particular. For if, as was also proposed,

8. We inquire, whether those persons who spoke against, and persecuted this sect of the Nazarenes, at the head of which was Jesus of Nazareth, and a "ringleader" in which was St. Paul, acted wisely, and were justified in so doing, we shall be compelled to acknowledge, that they did not act wisely, and cannot be justified in such a conduct. For they either spoke against these Christians *ignorantly*, as probably many of the heathen did, not being acquainted with their principles and conduct; or, which was certainly the case with many of the Jews, whether Pharisees or Sadducees, they reproached them notwithstanding, and in spite of their *better knowledge*. Now, in either case, they were highly to blame, and, indeed, without excuse. If they persecuted the Christians *ignorantly*, they were inexcusable, because they might easily have obtained true and full information concerning them, if they would have endeavoured to obtain it, which it was certainly their duty to do. The Christians were become a numerous body of people. Many of them were persons of learning and influence, and were in offices of civil trust in the countries where they resided. They openly professed to believe in, and ground their faith upon

† John xv. 18.

very extraordinary facts, on wonderful miracles wrought by a very extraordinary person, who, they affirmed, had risen from the dead, and had ascended into heaven, in the sight of many of them. They boldly and continually bore testimony to these things; and taught publicly in places of concourse. They published books in different languages, and these books were open to the inspection of mankind. They themselves confirmed, or professed to confirm their testimony, by divers extraordinary operations, giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, health to the sick, and even life to the dead. They suddenly spoke, or professed to speak languages which they had never learned, and predicted events which, they testified, afterwards came exactly to pass. None of these things were done in a corner. They were open to the examination of mankind; and surely they were of such importance as to merit, and even demand, examination. They, therefore, that spoke against them *ignorantly*, were without excuse. Every circumstance shows, that it was the indispensable duty of mankind, in every country which the Christians visited, or in which they were found, to inquire diligently into the principles and conduct of this extraordinary and rapidly increasing sect.

9. But, there is reason to believe, that many, if not the greater part of those among the Jews, at least who spake against this people, did it in contradiction to their better knowledge. The doctrine, life, and miracles of Jesus had been so public; such prodigies had attended his death, there had been such accumulated evidence of his resurrection: and his disciples were persons of such unblemished lives, and were endowed with such extraordinary powers, that many of the Jews, especially those who had been spectators of these things, could not be ignorant of the doctrine or practice of the christians, nor that they had the countenance of heaven. They, therefore, in speaking against, and persecuting them, must have been influenced by a high degree of malice against God and his people, and therefore, must have been more guilty, than if, like St. Paul in his unconverted state, they had done these things "ignorantly in unbelief." Their sin, it seems, must have, at least, bordered upon that charged by Christ himself upon the Pharisees. I mean the *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*. For that sin, according to the evangelists, consisted in their ascribing, contrary, it seems, to their better knowledge, the miracles wrought by the

Holy Ghost, to the devil, and, on that ground, rejecting Jesus, as one possessed of, and assisted by, the devil. Now, as miracles were commonly wrought in the apostolic age, and that in the face of multitudes, and as the operations and fruits of the Holy Spirit were very apparent in the doctrine and lives of the first christians in general, they who, contrary to the conviction of their own minds, maligned and reproached them, certainly did, more or less, malign and reproach that Spirit, which, at that time, "wrought so mightily in those that believed."

III. 1. But, (which will bring me, 3dly, to an application of what I have advanced,) it will be inquired here, "What is all this to us? What concern have we in these things? We do not speak against, nor are we opposed to christians, nor do we disapprove of their principles or practice." In answer to this, I observe, I sincerely hope, my brethren, that you do not; but on the contrary, that you cordially approve of christianity itself, and desire it may be exemplified in yourselves, and in every inhabitant of your village. If so, you and we, who this day open this chapel, and who together worship *the one living and true God* therein, *through the mediation of his Son, and by the aid of his Spirit*, shall be quite agreed, and shall act in perfect harmony. For we open it for the *one sole* end of promoting the progress of this christianity; of spreading the knowledge of, and faith in, such doctrines, as, it has this day been shown, the first christians held and propagated! and of inculcating such a practice as that for which they were so conspicuous.

2. It is allowed, my brethren, that, in places like this, where the people called Methodists are but little known, and where few that are connected with us reside, a very different idea may be entertained of us, in consequence of the idle reports, which, however void of foundation, and destitute of truth, are but too generally and industriously propagated concerning us. You may, perhaps, have heard, and some of you may have believed, that we are *Heretics*, or *Schismatics*; that we hold very erroneous opinions, which we industriously propagate, and that we have nothing in view but to draw people away from the established church, or from other communities of christians, and to raise a sect or party for ourselves: that we have sinister and unworthy ends in view, such as gaining money, and enriching ourselves at the expense of those whom we

can draw over to our party. Perhaps you have even heard it insinuated, that we are enemies to our king and country, and are employed in secretly undermining that excellent constitution of government under which we live. In answer to all this, I shall now content myself with observing, that none can possibly form any such judgment of us, who have, although but occasionally, heard us preach, or have read, with any attention, although but a part of the various writings which are continually circulated among us, and which certainly manifest what kind of principles we wish to propagate. These writings, it is well known, are chiefly those of the late Rev. John and Charles Wesley, and John Fletcher, than whom his majesty never had, nor, perhaps, will have, more loyal subjects, nor the real church of England truer friends. Nor do I think we can be viewed in that light, by any that have seen and considered the minutes of our yearly conferences, which conferences have been held, and the minutes of them published annually since the year 1744, that is, during a period of almost sixty years; or who have attended, were it only to the rules of our societies, the observance of which, especially in all their great and leading points, is the term of communion with us.

3. You will easily see, my brethren, that it would not be possible, at this time, to enter upon the proof of what I advance respecting our *doctrine* and *practice*. After having already detained you, perhaps, much too long, it would be, indeed, quite unseasonable to enter upon so large a field. Suffice it to say, that, in delineating the doctrine and practice of the first christians, in the former part of this discourse, I did no more than describe the doctrine which we firmly believe, and the practice which we wish daily to copy in our conversation and behaviour, with the exception of *one single* point, in which we are not convinced that we are called to imitate them, and that is, respecting the having *all things in common*. As to all other points, such as their *harmlessness*, their *usefulness*, their *piety*, their *holiness*, it is our continual study and endeavour to follow them as far as we conceive they followed Christ. But, if you will be at the pains of reading our writings, particularly the Sermons and Journals of the late Rev. John Wesley, or his "Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion," or some of his smaller tracts, such as "The Principles of a Methodist," "The Character of a Methodist," "The Nature and Design of Christianity," or a

book I have lately compiled and published, termed, "An Apology for the people called Methodists," in which you will see clearly stated, "the Origin and Progress, Doctrine, Discipline, and Design" of this people, (for I will not call them a *sect*,) so generally spoken against, you will gain sufficient information to enable you to form a true judgment concerning us.

4. Or, if this should be too much trouble, if you will be pleased to attend here, or at any of our other chapels in town or country, a few times, you will easily learn the *nature and tendency* of the doctrine which we preach. And if you will observe, with an unprejudiced mind, the *evident change* wrought in the *spirit and conduct* of those that receive our doctrine, and become members of our society, you will receive still further satisfaction: for I hope that the same effects will be produced here, as have been produced elsewhere, by the divine blessing, upon our preaching and labours. I trust that, in many instances, the drunkards will become sober; the lewd, chaste: the false and perfidious, true and just in all their dealings; the covetous and hard-hearted, liberal, compassionate, and kind: the idle and slothful, the lukewarm and negligent, diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; that the profaners of the day and name of the Lord, and the neglecters of divine worship, will be rendered devout and pious, "fearing an oath," and "remembering the sabbath-day to keep it holy," and "not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of too many is." If you will then be pleased to pursue such a method as this, and, methinks, I am not unreasonable in requesting you to pursue it, I doubt not but you will see sufficient reason, if not to unite with us in christian fellowship, and assist us in our endeavours to reform the nation, and spread genuine, scriptural christianity through the land; yet, at least, to entertain a favourable opinion both of our principles and designs, and to wish us good luck in the name of the Lord. This, we certainly think, we are entitled to, conceiving our doctrine to be, in every point, the very doctrine of the New Testament, and of our church, and that whoever objects to it, must also object to that of the scriptures and of the church of England.

If we are mistaken in these views, we shall be exceedingly obliged to any individual, or number of individuals, that will be at the trouble of showing us our mistake. For if we were convinced that our doctrine is unscriptural in any point, we certainly should

alter it. And as to our *practice*, suffice it to say, that it is a first principle in our discipline, to admit into, and retain, in our societies, only such as attend to, at least, the three leading points contained in our Rules, 1st. To shun all known sin, especially the sins most commonly practised in the neighbourhood where they live; 2dly. To endeavour to do good to men's souls and bodies according to their abilities: and, 3dly. To attend upon all the ordinances of God, or means of grace, both public and private. If you say, "But this is your own account of yourselves. Would you have us to take all you are pleased to affirm for granted?" I answer, No: I would not have you take any thing for granted. Only take the steps I have recommended, and you will see with your own eyes, and have all the evidence you can reasonably expect or desire, as to these points.

5. But, perhaps, you will say, Why do you come hither? Why do you intrude into our village? I answer, with the same views, and on the same design wherewith we go to other places, and wherewith our blessed Lord, his apostles, evangelists, and first disciples, went to different towns and villages, and that is, *simply and only*, to spread *true and genuine christianity*:—to promote, as far as we are able, the kingdom of God on earth, that kingdom, that vital and genuine religion, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; or love, the end of the commandment, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned." This, and only this is our object. Lesser matters, such as those which respect points of unessential doctrine, modes of worship, forms of church-government, and other circumstantialia of religion, are, with us, of little importance. But the christianity described above appears to us of infinite moment, and therefore, we labour to diffuse it far and wide; and we doubt not but we shall be justified in so doing, and even commended by all that understand its nature, and are apprised of what infinite consequence it is to mankind. As to those in whose eyes it appears as a *trivial* and unimportant matter, and who, therefore, must consider our *zeal* in its service as enthusiasm, and our *labours* and *sufferings* to promote it, as *folly* and *madness*, we would recommend them to weigh well the following inquiry of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews: "If the word spoken by angels," the law delivered from Sinai, by their ministry, "was steadfast, and every transgression" of that

law, and act of "disobedience" to it, "received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard him; God also bearing witness with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will."

As for us, when we consider how much superior the Son of God, the immediate Author of the gospel, was to Moses, the giver of the law, and with how much greater apparatus of grace and mercy, and more illustrious displays of love and power, the christian covenant was introduced, than those wherewith the Jewish was attended: When we reflect on the *incarnation, life, and death*; the *doctrine and miracles, the resurrection and ascension* of the Lord Jesus, and the astonishing effusion of his Spirit, in gifts and graces, on the first christians, with the amazing displays of divine power for the propagation and defence of this religion in early ages, and the signal vengeance that came on the Jews and other nations that rejected or slighted it, we cannot but see that christianity is infinitely dear to God, and that, speaking after the manner of men, he has its progress infinitely at heart. Whatever others do, therefore, we dare not think lightly of, or neglect it; we dare not prefer other things to it. We consider it as our indispensable and principal duty, and chief interest in life, to attend to it, and that above every thing else in the world, and to take care both that we be christians ourselves, and that not in name only, but in deed and in truth, and also that we be "workers together with God," in endeavouring to make as many other christians as possible. May the Lord grant that in this, as well as in every thing else that is excellent and praiseworthy, you may be like-minded with us, that when Christ "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," and shall recompense tribulation to such as trouble his people, he may impart to you, with us, and as many as are spoken against and troubled, rest in his eternal presence and kingdom!





## SERMON XIX.

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE METHODIST CHAPEL,  
AT NEWBURY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1804.

*We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.*

1. **IT** is generally known, that both Jews and Gentiles were involved in a most deplorable state of ignorance and depravity, when the apostles and other messengers of the Lord Jesus, were first sent to publish to them the glad tidings of salvation. And it is acknowledged, that an amazing change took place among them, in consequence of the preaching of these divinely-commissioned servants of the Most High: that in a little time, the knowledge of the true God, and of his will, was diffused through the whole Roman empire, and even far beyond its utmost limits; so that the minds of thousands and myriads of the lost race of Adam were effectually enlightened, their manners reformed, nay, and their souls renewed after the divine image. Now, when these things

are considered, and when it is observed, withal, that human nature is the same in every age, and that it is probable the doctrine which is instrumental in enlightening, reforming, and renewing mankind in one age, must, if clearly and fully declared, and attended with the divine blessing, have a similar influence in every other; it surely must appear to be of the greatest importance to know the nature of that doctrine which was productive of such happy effects in ancient times. For that, undoubtedly, is the doctrine which ought still to be preached in preference to all others.

2. Again: As it does not appear probable, considering that man is a free agent, endowed with liberty of choice and action, and capable of disobeying the heavenly call, that this doctrine would be received with equal credit and affection by all individuals, to whom it was proposed; and as it is true, in fact, that it was not; but was opposed and ridiculed by many, while the abettors and propagators of it were persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death; it must appear to be of some moment to know the *character* of the persons who thus rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and ill-treated his servants; and *on what ground, and under what pretence* they pursued such a line of conduct. This, on the one hand, may operate as a caution and preservative to us, that we may not imitate their unbelief and sin, and so share in their punishment; and, on the other, may prevent the preachers and friends of the truth from being surprised, discouraged, or offended, when they find that their doctrine does not meet with the welcome reception they expected, but that, instead of being acknowledged and embraced as the truth of God, it is denied and persecuted as error and delusion.

3. Now, concerning all these things, my text, considered in connexion with the context, gives us sufficient information. *Christ sent me not to baptize*, says the apostle, verse 17. that is, not *chiefly and primarily, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words*, "those philosophical niceties of expression," says Dr. Doddridge,\* "or that laboured rhetoric, which many are so ready to esteem," *lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect*, should be "deprived of its just honours, and so be enervated." *For the preaching of the cross, is to them that perish foolishness*: "they

\* See his Family Expositor.

think it a ridiculous and mean thing to expect salvation from one who seemed unable to save himself, and glory from one that expired in ignominy :” *but unto us who are saved*, who are delivered “from the contagion of so wicked an age, and are in the way to everlasting salvation,” *it is the power of God*, is accompanied with a most illustrious display of his power, for “the noblest purposes our minds can conceive.” *For*, (verse 21.) *after that, in the wisdom, of God*, discernible in his works of creation and providence, *the world by wisdom knew not God*, so as to *glorify him as God*, but “run into the wildest, and most absurd sentiments that can be imagined concerning him,” *it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching*, as they think fit to style it, and “which is, indeed, destitute of that kind of wisdom of which they boast,” *to save them that*, with honest simplicity of heart, *believe* what is credibly testified to them, and taught by a superior authority. *For the Jews require a sign*, some token from heaven, to introduce a Messiah to appear with external pomp, and to establish a temporal kingdom, *and the Greeks seek after wisdom*, a depth of philosophy, or the ornaments of eloquence, as inducements to believe. “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

In these words, we have,

I. The doctrine which the apostles preached, and which their successors in the ministry, in every age, must preach, if they wish to be instrumental in reforming and saving mankind. *We preach Christ crucified.*

II. The reception which this doctrine met with, and which, in every age will attend it, from certain descriptions of mankind, whether professors of the true religion, or profane: *To the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.*

III. The light in which this doctrine is viewed by all that obey the call of God, and are made his people, of whatever name or nation, and the effect it has upon them: *But unto them that are*

*called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

I. We must consider the doctrine of the apostles, as here set forth.

1. *We preach Christ.* Christ was the great subject of their preaching: and not Socrates, nor Plato, nor Aristotle, nor Tully, nor Seneca, nor Epictetus, nor any other of the heathen Philosophers and Moralists. It was not the practice of the apostles, nor of the other first messengers of Christ, as it is of many teachers of christianity in our day, to extol the wisdom or virtue of these ancient heathens; to retail their opinions, inculcate their precepts, or hold them forth as patterns for imitation. Much less did they ground the doctrine which they preached on their fallible authority, or draw their information and knowledge from the scanty sources of unenlightened reason: but they preached *Christ*. It was their desire and endeavour to extol *Him*, to expound *His* doctrine, enforce *His* precepts, and hold *Him* forth as an example to be imitated. To *His* authority they appealed for the truth of their doctrine, and from *His* divine wisdom, as from an exuberant and pure fountain, they derived those streams of truth and grace wherewith they watered and refreshed the dry, disconsolate, and barren earth, and rendered it fruitful to his praise and glory. And herein, my brethren, I trust, they will be constantly imitated by all who, from time to time, shall hereafter address you from this pulpit.

2. Nay, the apostles not only made Christ the chief subject of their *preaching*, but even of their *study and conversation*. "I am determined," says Paul, to these very Corinthians, "to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." As if he had said, "Famed as your city is for *Arts and Sciences, Politeness and Learning*; for Philosophers, Logicians, Historians, Poets, Musicians, Painters, Statuaries, and learned men of every description; I waive all admiration of them, all attention to them, and acquaintance with them: nay, I will not so much as be at the trouble to inspect their works; I will know nothing comparatively, even among *you*, renowned as you are for knowledge of every kind, but *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. In this also, my brethren, I trust your ministers do, and will follow his example.

3. To be more particular. This declaration of the apostle, "We preach Christ crucified," must not be construed to mean, that they did *not* preach him in any office or character, save in that of a *suffering* and *dying Saviour*. They preached him in all his offices: and, 1st, as a *Teacher come from God*, and that with an extraordinary commission, and with *qualifications* and *attestations* such as no other messenger of God to man ever had or will have. They proclaimed him to be, "The seed of the woman," that "bruises the serpent's head:" "The seed of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth shall be blessed:" The Shiloh of Jacob, "to whom the gathering of the people shall be," and the Prophet like unto Moses, concerning whom it is announced,\* "Unto him shall ye hearken:—and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." They preached him as the "Servant and Elect of Jehovah, in whom his soul delighteth," and "on whom he put his Spirit; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," or of true and genuine religion: who, being filled with that Spirit, "brought forth judgment to the Gentiles," yea, "set judgment in the earth," and for "whose law the isles wait:" commissioned by Jehovah himself as his own Messiah or Anointed One: "Thus saith God, the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that dwell therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." So qualified was he, according to their testimony, even as *man*, that he had the Spirit of God without measure, as indeed had been foretold by divine inspiration: "God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows:" a prediction, the accomplishment of which was witnessed by his fore-runner John, when he said, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." Nay, they proclaimed him as the *Wisdom* and *Word* of God incarnate, the *Wisdom of God*, and *Power of God*,

\* Deut. xviii. 15—19.

as *God manifest in the flesh*, and *Immanuel, God with us*. I hope all who shall here address you in his Name, will be careful to speak of him in the same scriptural and important language.

4. Again, they preached him as so *attested*, that by him, and even through the instrumentality of his messengers, the blind received their sight, the dumb their speech, the deaf their hearing, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, and the dead raised: yea, they bore witness, that his own body was brought back from the dead, and that the divine seal was so set to the truth of his word, that many of the predictions which he uttered, were punctually fulfilled before the eyes of those that heard him utter them. They, therefore, represented his doctrine as no way doubtful, but *infallibly certain*, sealed with the blood of *Christ crucified*, confirmed by his resurrection, and attested by prophecies fulfilled, and miracles many and mighty. They exhibited it also, as *deeply important*, giving us information in subjects of the utmost consequence to us; as concerning *ourselves*, what we are, whence we came, and whither we are going: our state by nature, and the state we are or may be brought into by grace: respecting *God*, his being and attributes; his nature, word, and works; what he is in himself, and what he is to mankind in general, and to his own people in particular; the Mediator between God and man; his person and offices, his incarnation, life, and death; his resurrection, ascension, and intercession at God's right hand; his humiliation and exaltation, his cross and crown, his *grace* and *glory*. This doctrine, they testified, gives us information also concerning the way of salvation through this Mediator, and that *will of God* to which we must be conformed here, if we would reign with him hereafter: concerning earth, heaven; this world, the next; time, eternity; the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body; the conflagration and dissolution of this whole visible system of things; the future judgment, and the eternal state! No wonder Christ was crucified to sanction such doctrine as this! And the very same doctrine, I doubt not, will frequently be sounding in your ears in this place, which we this day dedicate to this important purpose.

5. Further: This declaration, *We preach Christ crucified*, does not imply, that they omitted to preach him as a *pattern* whom we are to imitate. It is certain, 2dly, they bore witness to what he

*did*, as well as to what he *taught*, as St. Luke speaks;\* to his life as well as to his doctrine, yea, and to the *Spirit* in which he acted, "setting us an example, that we should follow his steps."† "Let that mind be in you," they cried, "which was also in Christ Jesus."‡ "He that saith he abideth in him," they testified, "ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

"Brethren, be ye followers of us," they exhorted, "as we also are of Christ."§ And in what degree they were followers or imitators of him we are sufficiently informed, when we hear them declare, "As he was, so are we in this world;" and when we attend to their solemn and important testimony, that all those who would "see him as he is," and resemble him in glory, must here "purify themselves as he is pure." Holding him forth, therefore, as an *harmless, useful, holy, perfect, and familiar* example, and setting this mark before their hearers, they exhorted and urged them all to aspire after it, declaring, "God hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son;" and that an expectation of dwelling with him after we die, without being conformed to him while we live, is a vain expectation. This, my brethren, is another branch of that doctrine, which you may expect frequently to hear in this Chapel.

6. Add to this, 3dly, The Apostles preached Christ as the Governor and Judge of his people. They proclaimed him as the "King God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion," to whom all must be subject on earth, that would reign with him in heaven: who "died, and rose, and liveth, that he might be *Lord* of the dead and of the living;" who, "when all were dead, died for all, that they who live," who are quickened by his death, and made alive to God, yea, and that all mankind, universally, being thus quickened, "might not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again." They preached him as the "one lawgiver able to save and to destroy," and as "the author of eternal salvation only to those that obey him." And they announced him as the universal Judge, who, when he is "revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, will take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;" while, to "those who do his commandments, he grants a right to the tree of

\* Acts i. 1. † 1 Pet. ii. 21. ‡ Phil. ii. 5. § 1 Cor. xi. 1. and Phil. iii. 17.



life : so that they enter in through the gates into the city." I am persuaded, my brethren, that in these offices and characters also, the Lord Jesus will be exhibited to such as attend here on the ministry of the word.

7. But, 4thly, the apostles considered mankind as lost sinners, immersed in guilt and wretchedness, and, therefore, especially preached Christ as a Saviour, crucified for our sins. They preached a *suffering Messiah*, "growing up before Jehovah as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; having no form nor comeliness, and no beauty "externally, "that men," who generally judge only by outward appearance, "should desire him:" "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" as "a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." He gave his back," they said, "to the smiters, and his cheeks to those that plucked off the hair; and hid not his face from shame and spitting." He was "stricken," they testified, "smitten of God, and afflicted;" "bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows; with a visage more marred than that of any man, and a form more than the" form of any of the "sons of men." He was "led," they declared, "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb; so opened he not his mouth:" He was "bruised, put to grief, and cut off out of the land of the living, although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth;" "cut off, but not for himself," "numbered with transgressors, and poured out his soul unto death," in company with the wicked. These, and such like things, were predicted concerning him, and these things the apostles bore witness that he endured. And testimony will be given, I am well assured, very frequently to these, and all the sufferings of the Messiah, as a very important branch of christian doctrine, by such as are appointed to preach the gospel to you in this place.

8. Again : They testified that he endured these sufferings for us ; to atone for, and expiate our sins. "He was wounded," they affirmed, "for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "All we, like sheep," they declared, "have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." Yea, "it pleased the Lord," they said, "to bruise him," to put "him to grief," to

strike him "for the transgression of his people," and "make his soul an offering for sin." They delivered unto their hearers "first of all," as a leading and most important truth, "that which they also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures:"\* that "he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, † that he might bring us to God:" that "he was delivered for our offences," that he might atone for them. "and raised again for our justification," in proof that his atoning sacrifice was accepted: was made sin, (or a sin-offering, as the word in the original frequently means,) for us, though he knew no sin; that he might be made the righteousness of God," or might be justified and accounted righteous by God, "in or through him."

9. Nay, the apostles not only asserted the doctrine of the atonement, and, like the ancient prophets, bore testimony to the truth and importance of it, but also explained the reason and foundation of it. "God," said St. Paul, † "hath set him forth to be a propitiation." *ιλαστηριον*, a *propitiatory*, or *mercy-seat*, where *mercy* may be found in a way consistent with *justice*, (alluding to the mercy-seat of old,) "through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." A more exact translation of the Greek of this passage, renders the Apostle's meaning still more clear: His words are, *εις ενδειξις της δικαιοσυνης αυτης, δια την παρσιον των προηγουστων αμαρτηματων εν τη ανοχη της θεου*, which words are thus literally translated, *For a demonstration of his righteousness, because (or on account) of the passing by of sins, committed aforetime, through the forbearance of God.* God, it must be observed, in his great forbearance had, as it were, *overlooked* and *passed by* the sins committed in former ages of the world, not having punished them in such a manner as to give a full and perfect display of his *righteousness*, or of his holiness and justice, and of the equity of his moral government. It is true, he had brought a flood of waters upon the old world: had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, with fire from heaven, had caused the earth to open her mouth and swallow up Korah and his company, had executed most strange and terrible judgments upon the sinners of his people, in the wilderness, upon Pharaoh and his host in Egypt, and at the Red

1 Cor. xv. 1,—4.

† 1 Pet. iii. 18.

‡ Rom. iii. 25, 26.

Sea, and upon the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan, of Babylon, and of other countries. Still, however, his hatred to, and his indignation against sin, had not been fully and clearly manifested: nor was it thus manifested till his *sword awoke against his Shepherd, and against the man that was his fellow*; till the Shepherd was smitten for the iniquities of the sheep, and his soul was made an offering for sin. *Then*, and not before, by such a sacrifice for sin, was sin fully and *adequately* "condemned in the flesh," even in the very human nature that had sinned, and God demonstrated himself to be as *just* as he is merciful. "For a demonstration," adds the Apostle, "of his righteousness, *ἢ τῷ νῦν καιρῷ*, in the *present time*," here set in opposition to the *past time*, in which God had forbore to give such a demonstration, "that he might be," and appear to his whole intelligent creation, to be "*just*," that is, *holy* and *righteous*, while, in his mercy, he is "the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." So that, according to the Apostle, the grand end of the crucifixion of Christ, was to demonstrate the *Righteousness of God*, and to provide for the justification and salvation of guilty sinners, upon their repentance, in a way that is consistent with the divine attributes. This most awful, and yet encouraging doctrine, is set in a clear and forcible light, by our truly evangelical Poet, in the following most sublime passage.

"Thou most indulgent, most tremendous Power!  
 "Still more tremendous for thy wondrous Love,  
 "That arms, with awe more awful, thy command,  
 "And foul transgression dips in seven-fold guilt!  
 "How our hearts tremble at thy Love immense!  
 "In Love immense, inviolably just!  
 "Thou, rather than thy Justice should be stain'd,  
 "Didst stain the cross, and work of wonders far  
 "The greatest, that thy Dearest far might bleed!"

10. Now, it is only through this sacrifice, atonement, and expiation, that we have or can have redemption and justification. For "as all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," as "every mouth is stopped, and all the world are guilty before God," *κατάδικος τῷ Θεῷ*, subject to condemnation from the justice of God, or as Dr. Doddridge renders the words, *stand convicted before God*, none can, in the nature of things, be justified in any other way than *by grace through faith*; or, as it is here expressed, *freely by his*

grace, δωρεαν τη αληθι χαριτι gratuitously, by his unmerited favour, through the redemption, (της απολυτρωσεως, the word means a price paid for such as are to be set at liberty) that is in Jesus Christ. Such was the uniform testimony of the apostles, and such the principal use they made of the important doctrine of Christ's crucifixion. Through this mysterious transaction they offered *free* and *full* remission to the sinful and guilty race of Adam, together with the favour of God, adoption into his family, and every blessing of the New Covenant. And they required nothing of mankind, whether Jews or Gentiles, in order to their partaking of these blessings, but "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," both which endowments they represented as the gifts of God. For, while they proclaimed Jesus as the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*, and testified that he hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, they bore witness also that he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and faith, as well as remission of sins; that "he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy;" "that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and even to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "Be it known unto you," they cried, "men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe," viz. with a faith *working by love, overcoming the world, and purifying the heart*, "are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." I trust that this capital doctrine of justification, which Luther so properly termed, "Articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesie," *the pillar on which the church (of Christ) stands, or with which it falls*, will never be forgotten, or neglected to be inculcated, by any that address you from this pulpit.

11. Another thing to be observed here is, that the apostles and first teachers of christianity preached *Christ crucified*, as laying us under an indispensable obligation, through his crucifixion and death, of dying to sin, to the world, and to ourselves, and "through the Spirit, of mortifying the deeds of the body, that we may live," and of "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts." "Our old man," according to their doctrine, must "be crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed; that henceforth we may not serve sin." "Know ye not," they inquired, "that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ," in consequence of our believing on

him, "were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory," or glorious power, "of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life; and being dead unto sin might live unto righteousness." "Let not sin, therefore," urged they, "reign in your mortal body, that you should fulfil it in the lusts thereof: neither yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Such was the holiness of heart and life which they considered the crucifixion of Christ, and justification through his blood, as laying us under an obligation of experiencing in ourselves, through that holy Spirit which is the fruit of Christ's death and passion, and of manifesting to others. And this grand, essential, and distinguishing doctrine of the gospel, I am fully persuaded, will be faithfully and frequently enforced here from time to time.

12. One thing more I must beg leave to notice under this head. They preached *Christ crucified*, as our leader in the way of the *cross*, showing us by his sufferings, that we must suffer if we would reign. "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh," says one of them,\* "arm yourselves likewise with the same mind," the same self-denying, courageous, and determined mind: expect sufferings, and be armed with fortitude and patience to meet and endure them. "For this is thankworthy, if a man, for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully, for even hereunto are ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps:" should, like him, give no cause for our sufferings, being innocent of the things laid to our charge by our enemies; should nevertheless suffer, in some measure, as he did, and that in the same spirit of patience, meekness, and love: "who did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."† St. Peter enlarges much on the same subject in the two next chapters of his short epistle, in passages which you will do

\* 1 Pet. iv. 1.

† 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

well to consult at your leisure, as they set this very important doctrine in a most clear and convincing point of view. And it is well known, that this apostle was not singular in his ideas on this head. St. Paul speaks exactly the same language. "If children," says he to the Romans,\* "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: *if so be that we suffer with him*, that we may be also glorified together;" and again to Timothy,† "It is a faithful saying," a saying as true as it is important, but a saying which many will be slow of heart to believe, "if we die with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him;" "if," to avoid suffering, "we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe not" this doctrine, and are regardless of the consequences of our cowardice, effeminacy, and love of ease and pleasure, "he abideth faithful," and will fulfil his threatenings as well as his promises, for "he cannot deny himself."

13. Such was the doctrine of the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, who, in the days of their flesh, were all *witnesses of the sufferings of Christ*, as they now are, and shall hereafter more especially be, "partakers of the glory that shall be revealed." This was that cross of Christ in which they gloried: their divine Master had suffered death on a cross to expiate their sins, and while they relied on his sacrifice for justification before God, they were not unwilling to have "fellowship with him in his sufferings," or even to be "conformed to his death." "I am ready," said St. Paul, "not only to suffer, but to die at Jerusalem for the sake of the Lord Jesus." And certainly all manner of sufferings, and, at last, death itself, fell to the lot of most of them. "We are troubled on every side," said they, "yet not distressed." (*or utterly over-pressed*, as *επινοχουμενοι* means, the word properly signifying crushed in a strait passage,) "we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about with us, in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus;" the cruelties which were exercised in putting him to death, being acted over again upon them by the rage of their persecutors. But "none of these things moved them, neither counted they their lives dear unto themselves; so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus

\* Rom. viii. 17.

† 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Nay, they "took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." Hear how St. Paul speaks on this subject,\* "Are they ministers of Christ? (alluding to those whom, verse 13, he terms "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ,") I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeyings often; in perils of waters;—of robbers,—by my own countrymen,—by the heathen,—in the city,—in the wilderness,—in the sea,—among false brethren: in weariness and painfulness; in watchings often: in hunger and thirst; in fastings often; in cold and nakedness.—If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern my infirmities: The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not." Thus these men of God were so far from being ashamed of the cross of Christ, that they gloried in it, and found it an happy mean of "crucifying them to the world, and the world to them."

14. In the meantime, their care was to prove themselves to be his genuine disciples, not only by what they suffered, but also and especially by the spirit in which they suffered. Accordingly, while they "hungered and thirsted, were naked and buffeted, had no certain dwelling-place, and laboured, working with their hands; being reviled, they blessed; being persecuted, they meekly suffered it; being defamed, they entreated:" and though made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things continually, they took it patiently. They were only concerned to "give no offence in any thing, that the ministry might not be blamed: but that they might in all things approve themselves the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost," enabling them to heal the sick and raise the dead, and inspiring them with gifts and graces, "by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on

\* 2 Cor. xi. 23—31.

the right hand and on the left; by honour and dishonour; by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, they lived; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Such were the ancient servants and followers of *Christ crucified*: and although it is probable we shall not be called to endure such sufferings as fell to their lot; yet, in every age, especially while "the whole world thus lieth in wickedness," such as are only "born after the flesh will persecute those who are born after the Spirit," and, "they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." Let us, my brethren, who speak in the name of God, and preach Christ crucified, not fail to give our hearers faithful warning on this head, that being forewarned, they may be forearmed, and, with fortitude and resolution, may be prepared to meet all those trials of their faith and patience, with which God may see fit to exercise them.

II. We proceed now to the consideration of the second principal branch of our subject, The reception which this doctrine met with, and which in every age it will meet with, from certain descriptions of mankind, whether professors of the true religion or profane: "To the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness."

The *Jews* were the professing people of God, and for ages, had been the members of his visible Church: The *Greeks*, who here stand for the Gentiles in general, at least for the more polished and learned of them, were, and had long been heathens and idolaters. These two appellations may be here considered as comprehending the whole civilized world except the christians.

1. The Jews, although the posterity of Abraham, and the other ancient patriarchs, who had conducted themselves "as strangers and pilgrims on earth, seeking a better country, that is, a heavenly;" although desirous of being thought their genuine children, and the inheritors of their faith; and although favoured with the oracles of God, which bear a clear and convincing testimony to the vanity, uncertainty, and short duration of every earthly object, and call men to a spiritual and heavenly mind;—yet, I say, the Jews were a worldly people, attached to, and eager in the pursuit of riches, honour, power, and pleasure. In correspondence with their



views, and to gratify their wishes, they were encouraged by teachers as worldly as themselves, to expect a mere temporal Messiah, who was to deliver them from the Roman yoke, and lead them to conquest, wealth, and dominion. To them, therefore, the testimony borne by the apostles, to a poor, despised, persecuted, and suffering Messiah, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, whose reputed father, mother, and brethren, they knew to be of mean rank in life, was a stumbling-block, and an insuperable obstacle in the way of their embracing christianity. And yet all the descriptions given in the Old Testament, of the first coming of the Messiah, accorded perfectly with this testimony of the apostles. And, what is still more remarkable, these very same divine oracles, in which they were "confident they had eternal life," proceeded so far as even to foretell that the Messiah, when he came, should be *a stumbling-block* to that people, and be despised and rejected by them. "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself," said Isaiah, "and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared and taken." A prediction thus confirmed by old Simeon, when he blessed Joseph and Mary, and the child Jesus, and said, "Behold, this child is set for the fall, and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against."\* And the accomplishment of it is attested both by St. Peter and St. Paul, who equally apply it to Christ.† The Jews, therefore, in their stumbling at, and rejecting their true Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, because of his poverty and mean appearance, exactly fulfilled the predictions of their own prophets. Their carnal hearts being enmity against God, would not suffer them to acknowledge one so poor and despised for the Christ, which, indeed, would have blasted all their worldly views and expectations. They persevered, therefore, in their plan of opposition to, and enmity against him, till they had succeeded in cutting him off. After which they persisted to reproach his name and memory, and to persecute his followers; terming him, in derision, תלוי, *The Man that was hanged*, that is, on the cross, and his disciples תלמי תלוי, *The disciples of the Crucified*. And,

\* Luke ii. 34. † 1 Pet. ii. 4—9. Rom. ix. 32, 33.

by a malignant playing on words, called the Gospel, און גלג, *A revelation of vanity*, alluding to *ευαγγελιον*, the Greek word for Gospel.\*

2. The Jews were divided into two great sects, *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*.† The Pharisees were very exact in their observation of all the precepts of the ritual law, and of the traditions of the elders. They paid tithes of mint, anise, and cummin: kept the Sabbath rigorously, were careful not to eat with unwashed hands, “made clean the outside of the cup and platter,” and had the whole form of godliness. But being utterly ignorant of the spirituality and extent of the moral law, and of their own sinfulness and guilt; their depravity, weakness, and misery; they were only righteous in their own estimation, and not in reality. They “went about,” and took infinite pains “to establish their own righteousness,” not “submitting themselves to the righteousness of God.” They would not yield to accept of justification in the way which God had appointed, the way of faith in Jesus of Nazareth, as the only Saviour. They were, therefore, still in their sins, under guilt, condemnation, and wrath; and before God, who searcheth the heart, and observes the *principle* from which, and the *spirit* in which every one acts, were but as “whited walls” and “painted sepulchres.” To them the doctrine of the apostles respecting Christ being *crucified for our sins, atoning* for them, *putting them away*, and justifying us by his blood, with their whole testimony concerning justification and salvation *by grace through faith*, was a *stumbling-block*, and an obstruction in the way of their becoming Christ’s disciples. Thus Paul, referring chiefly to this class of Jews, and contrasting their conduct in rejecting Jesus and his gospel, with that of the believing Gentiles, who received him, expresses himself as follows. “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness,” having lived from age to age in utter neglect of it, and in all manner of vice and wickedness, “have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith?” They believed in that Jesus, as a *Saviour*, when he was offered to them, whom the Jews rejected, and thus were *justified, or accounted righteous, by faith*. “But Israel,” adds he, “who followed after the law of righteousness,

\* See Leigh’s *Critica Sacra*, and Doddridge’s *Family Expositor*.

† The Sect of the *Essenes* was so inconsiderable that it is hardly worth noticing.

hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone: as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." And have we not many among us, in the present day, who are of the same spirit? many who, like these Jews, "have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge? who, being ignorant of God's righteousness," both of the holiness of his nature, and of his method of justifying sinners, are only intent on "establishing their own righteousness," as the ground of their acceptance with God? These, instead of approaching God with the publican's petition, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" are rather disposed to thank him, with the Pharisee, "that they are not as other men," and to glory in *themselves*, and not in the *Lord*. Take care, my brethren, that none of you be of this number.

3. The Sadducees were *Infidels* and *Libertines*. They neither acknowledged the immortality of the soul, nor the resurrection of the body. Of course, disbelieving a future state altogether, and supposing this life to be the whole of man's existence, they considered sensual pleasure as his chief good. Jesus of Nazareth, the *Wisdom* and *Word of God incarnate*, bringing "life and immortality to light;" declaring, that even they who kill the body, cannot kill the soul: That the moment men's bodies die, their souls are in torment, or in happiness: That He is "the resurrection and the life:" And that those "who believe in him, although they die, yet shall live;" shall "hear his voice, and come forth" out of their graves: That when "he shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, seated on the throne of his glory, before him shall be gathered all nations, and that he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:"—This teacher, I say, and this testimony, so directly opposed to all their preconceived ideas and opinions, were stumbling-blocks to them, and bars in the way of their faith in the gospel. They had assured themselves so fully, that "there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit," nor judgment to come, that they were determined to receive no one for the Messiah, who should propagate any such enthusiastical doctrine; nor countenance any teacher, who gave intimation of any such fanciful notions; for fanciful they esteemed them.

Hence their avowed enmity, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, to those witnesses of Jesus, who bore testimony to his resurrection, and a future state of rewards and punishments. "As they (the Apostles,) spake to the people," says the historian,\* "The priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached, through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead." And again,† "Then the high-priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."

4. Further: It was another and still greater stumbling-block to these Sadducees, to understand that the doctrine of *Christ crucified* included a testimony to the indispensable obligation which mankind, redeemed by his blood, are under to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; to die to sin, to the world, and to themselves, and to become holy, spiritual, and divine. These were hard sayings indeed, and insuperable obstacles in the way of their embracing the new religion. And are they not hard sayings still to all infidels and freethinkers? nay, and to all the unawakened and unregenerate; to "the earthly and sensual," and even to as many as are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God?" Add to this, that the testimony of the apostles respecting the necessity of having "fellowship with Christ in his sufferings," and "being conformed to his death;" or, in other words, that all his true and genuine disciples must *deny themselves, and take up their cross*, and follow him through sufferings to glory, being prepared, if called to it, to seal his truth with their blood, and not only to suffer, but even to die for his sake.—This doctrine, I say, was in a higher sense still a stumbling-block to both Pharisees and Sadducees. Even those of them who partly believed the gospel, made this, as we find from the epistle to the Galatians, an objection to their relinquishing Judaism, and embracing pure and genuine christianity; they were afraid of "suffering persecution for the cross of Christ." And is not the fear of reproach and persecution, in our time, one very principal reason why many disown the truth, and stand aloof from its steady and consistent professors? Let us all be on our

\* Acts iv. 1. † Acts v. 17.

guard, my brethren, lest we should be found among those *fearful ones*, spoken of in the Revelation by St. John, those *timid and cowardly* disciples of Jesus, if such can be termed his disciples, who prefer their *property*, or *character*, or *liberty*, or *life*, to the Lord Jesus, and that truth which he sealed with his blood, and who, therefore, "shall have their portion in the lake, that burneth with fire and brimstone." Let us remember, and lay to heart, the awful and important declaration of our suffering and crucified Master: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth not after me," that does not prepare, if the will of God be so, even to die like me upon a cross, "is not worthy of me:" for "except a man forsake even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

5. To proceed: That doctrine concerning *Christ crucified*, which was to the Jews a *stumbling-block*, was to the Greeks *foolishness*. The Greeks, in general, were great admirers of *wisdom*, of the depths of philosophy, and the charms of eloquence. By them the simple unadorned preaching of the apostles, was viewed as foolishness. The apostles, in their doctrine, attended only to *truth* and *facts*, waiving all the studied forms and ornaments of speech. Their preaching, as appears from the context, from other parts of their epistles, and from these abridgments of their discourses contained in "The Acts of the Apostles," was chiefly *historical*: It consisted of a plain relation of certain important matters of fact, to which they bore testimony, and of obvious inferences drawn from them. They affirmed: That a poor, despised, and persecuted man, who had lived and taught publicly in Judea, confirming his doctrine by an holy life, and by great miracles, had been crucified for men's sins, to procure pardon for them, had risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and was now at the right-hand of God making intercession. This story, told without "wisdom of words," and recommended by no elegance of language, nor embellishments of diction, was *foolishness* to these vain, and self-conceited Greeks, as containing nothing they admired neither depth of reasoning, nor subtilty of argument, nor flowers of rhetoric. And on the same ground many of the admirers of philosophical knowledge, of the refinements of science, and ornaments of discourse, now object to and despise the simple, plain, and practi-

qual preaching of those ministers of the Lord Jesus, who bear an *unadorned*, but *true* testimony to the genuine and infinitely momentous doctrines of his gospel.

6. Again. To worship "a crucified malefactor" or impostor, (as they deemed Christ,) and to depend for salvation on one that was hanged on a tree, and who, as they thought, could not save himself, seemed foolishness to them. "They account us mad, saith Justine Martyr, that after the immutable and eternal God, the Father of all things, we give the second place to a man that was crucified." "It is wicked and abominable," saith Celsus. "The wise men of the world insult over us," saith St. Austin; (and is it not the practice of such still?) "and ask, 'Where is your understanding, who worship for a God him that was crucified.'"\* Lucian also, it is well known, profanely insults the Christians on this account;† and many of the ancient Fathers of the Christian church speak of the same reproach as being cast upon them by the heathen. It has been said, and according to Archbishop Tillotson,‡ not without foundation, that the Jesuits who were sent as missionaries into China, when preaching to the Chinese, concealed this branch of christian doctrine, that they might avoid giving offence; denied that Christ was crucified, and represented it as an invention of the Jews to asperse Christianity. No wonder they had not success! For it is the cross of Christ that subdues the nations, according to the vision which Constantine is said to have had, (when marching towards Rome, to attack Maxentius,) of a cross in the air, with this inscription: *Hac vince: i. e. in this conquer.*§ Let us, my brethren, who speak in the name of the Lord, not forget this. Let us not expect to conquer either the

\* Dr. Whitby on the passage. † See Doddridge's Note here.

‡ See Tillotson's Works, Vol. II. p. 284.

§ "The doubts concerning the MIRACULOUS CROSS, that Constantine solemnly declared he had seen in the air, are many and considerable. It is easy, indeed, to refute the opinion of those, who look upon this prodigy as a fiction invented by the emperor to animate his troops, or who consider the narration as wholly fabulous. The sentiment, also, of those who imagine that this cross was no more than a natural phenomenon, is more ingenious than solid. Yet it is not certain, that the divine power interposed to confirm the wavering faith of Constantine. Most probably, it was presented to the emperor in a dream."

MOSHEIM, Abridged by Mr. Wesley, p. 152.

world or sin, whether in ourselves or others; but in and by the *cross of Christ*.

7. Again: The doctrine of justification and salvation by the merit of another, and merely by believing in him, was deemed foolishness by these vain and self-sufficient philosophers of Greece, who entertained an high opinion of their own moral virtue, and imagined that their goodness could, strictly speaking, merit, and would ensure the favour and approbation of their gods, and an high degree of future felicity. And, in this particular, they are but too closely followed, in the present day, by all the self-dependent and self-righteous professors of Christianity. Equally foolish did some sects among them, especially the *Epicureans*, judge that branch of gospel doctrine which inculcates the necessity of denying our appetites, passions, and carnal desires. For these, they contended, are implanted in our nature by its *Author*, in order to their being gratified, and that to refuse to indulge them, 'is, in fact, to oppose God and nature. And have not the libertines and votaries of pleasure, of every age and nation, always been of their mind? I shall only add on this head, that the apostolic testimony respecting the *reproach* and *persecution* which, in all ages, accompany genuine piety and virtue, was also foolishness to these wise and honourable men of the world, whose good name and reputation were their idols, and whose opinion was, that religion and virtue are the sure way to worldly honour and prosperity. And in this point, also, they are imitated by all who are of the same worldly spirit, in whatever country, even although they may profess Christianity.

III. Very different, however, (and this is the *third* and *last* topic we have to discuss,) is the light in which this doctrine is viewed by all that obey the call of God, and are made his people; and very different is the effect which it has upon them. But "unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the *Power* of God, and the *Wisdom* of God."

1. Those that believed and obeyed the gospel were frequently termed *The Called*, by the Evangelists and Apostles. Thus, Romans i. 6. speaking of "obedience to the faith among all nations for the name of Christ," St. Paul adds, "Among whom are ye also (at Rome,) *the called* of Jesus Christ." In the 8th chapter he observes, "All things shall work for good to them that love God, to

them that are, *οι κλητοι*, *the called* according to his purpose." He speaks of the Corinthians, in this chapter, as "*called to be saints*," and of the Thessalonians, as "*called by the gospel*." In this last-mentioned passage,\* the Apostle explains this matter. "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." Mankind are called to repentance, to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and to new obedience by the gospel: or, as it is here expressed, to "the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." That they may attend to, and obey this call of the gospel, God adds the call of his *Providence* and of his *Spirit*. His kind, superintending, and watchful Providence, dispenses sickness or health, honour or dishonour, prosperity or adversity, according as he knows any of these things is most adapted to bring men to the knowledge of his truth, and the experience of his love. His Spirit, also, co-operates with his Providence and his Word; opens the eyes of our understanding, gives spiritual discernment, inclines the will, draws the affections, regenerates the soul, and produces "a death to sin, and a new-birth to righteousness." Thus are we made obedient to the heavenly call, and answer the character which the Apostles give of *the called*, in their Epistles.

2. Now, to these, that same doctrine concerning Christ crucified, which was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness," is *the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*." They esteem it as an infinitely wise contrivance of God for the salvation of a lost world, and calculated to display his divine *Wisdom*, as well as *Goodness*, beyond any system of philosophy that was ever invented. In this scheme of redemption and salvation, they see that all the divine attributes are glorified, and act in sweet harmony to accomplish man's restoration to the divine favour and likeness: That *Mercy* and *Truth* meet together; *Righteousness* and *Peace* kiss each other:" That, while the guilty, weak, and wretched posterity of fallen Adam are saved, God's holy law is magnified, and the rights of his moral government asserted.

\* 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.



Thus Dr. Young,—

“O'er guilt, how mountainous! with out-stretch'd arms,  
 Stern justice, and soft smiling love embrace,  
 Supporting in full majesty thy throne,  
 When seem'd its majesty to need support!  
 Or *That*, or *Man* inevitably lost:  
 What but the fathomless of thought divine,  
 Could labour such expedient from despair,  
 And rescue both? Both rescue! Both exalt!  
 O how are both exalted by the deed!  
 The wondrous deed! or, shall I call it more?  
 A wonder in omnipotence itself!  
 A mystery no less to gods\* than men!”

3. But not only is the redemption of mankind, by the crucifixion of Christ, an astonishing contrivance and display of divine Wisdom, but it is also a source from which knowledge and wisdom are derived to us. Hereby we are made acquainted with the great evil of sin, its odious nature and destructive consequences, together with our own extreme sinfulness and guilt, which were so great as absolutely to preclude our salvation, unless our sins were expiated by the sacrifice of the Son of God. Here we learn, on the one hand, the holiness and justice of God, and are taught to stand in awe, and not sin, and on the other his mercy and grace, in order that, notwithstanding all our past transgressions, and present infirmities, we may “trust” in him for pardon and peace, being reconciled in Christ, “and not be afraid.” And, above all, here we are enlightened to know the great love that he hath to us, and are enabled to “love him who hath first loved us,” and to cast our care on him for all we want for time and for eternity; arguing, with the Apostle, “He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?” Words these, which are well paraphrased by the author of the *Night Thoughts*, where he observes:

“To Man the bleeding Cross hath promis'd all!  
 The bleeding Cross hath sworn eternal grace:  
 Who gave his Son, what gift shall he deny?”

Thus, by the doctrine of the Cross, we are instructed in matters of the greatest possible importance to us; and become “children of the

\* Angels.

light and of the day." We are no longer "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, and living in malice and envy:" but are made wise unto salvation, present and eternal: We answer the end of our creation, and glorify God on earth, and at last are brought to enjoy him in heaven. For,

4. That same doctrine, which is to "them that are called, whether Jews or Greeks," whether ignorant or learned, "the wisdom of God," is also unto them, *the power of God*. "They view the mission of Christ," says Dr. Doddridge. "and the great truths of his gospel, confirmed by miraculous evidence, and the accomplishment of prophecy, as far more important than any event which their carnal brethren expect." Indeed, every thing relating to the Messiah, his incarnation, life, miracles, death, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, with his dominion over all nature, and the universe of creatures;—all display the infinite *Power* as well as *Wisdom* of God. But, perhaps, the apostle spoke here partly, at least, with a reference to the Power of God exerted, to make the Jews and Gentiles obedient to the faith, "in word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the influence of the Spirit of God."\* Indeed, not only the Apostles who preached Christ crucified, witnessed the confirmation of their doctrine by the divine power in sundry miracles; but even those who believed in him, through their testimony, found their own faith confirmed by a similar seal. These signs, according to the prediction of Christ, "followed them that believed. In the name of Christ they cast out devils; they spake with new tongues, they took up serpents: If they drank any deadly thing, it did not hurt them, and when they laid their hands on the sick, they recovered."† These were illustrious displays of that power of God which sanctioned the preaching of *Christ crucified*, and the faith of such as were called thereby. For while "they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord wrought with them, and confirmed the word by signs following."

5. Nor was it only by external signs and wonders that the Lord confirmed this blessed doctrine; but also and especially by miracles of mercy wrought for and upon the souls of men. In this respect also *the Lord wrought with them*: He gave efficacy to the *Word of his Grace*, and made the gospel which they preached, the

\* Rom. xv. 18, 19.

† Mark xvi. 17, 18.

powerful mean of salvation to every one that believed and obeyed it. It "came unto them, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." It opened the blind eyes, unstopped the deaf ears, and loosed the dumb tongue, It "proclaimed liberty to the captives" of sin, "the opening of the prison to them that were bound" by their lusts and vices, and was instrumental in "binding up such as were bruised." By means of it the sick in sin were healed, and the dead in sin made alive. Yea, they "were quickened, and raised up, and made to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus." They were assured of the favour of God, stamped with his image, and introduced into a state of friendship and communion with him. Being "begotten by this Word of Truth; being "born again of this incorruptible seed," they were constituted the children of God, not only by adoption, but also by regeneration, and "made a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," dedicated to, and employed in his service, and conformed, in all things, to his holy will.

6. It was "the power of God unto their salvation from sin and its consequences. By faith in the doctrine of Christ crucified, they were "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, and in heavenly places." They had "redemption through his blood the forgiveness of their sins; were made accepted through him the Beloved," and were rendered "holy and without blame before him in love." Nay, "his exceeding great power towards them that believed," so renewed them in the spirit of their minds, and transformed them from an earthly and sensual, to an heavenly and divine temper, that their "conversation was in heaven, and their "life hid with Christ in God." They were "filled with joy and peace in believing, abounded in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost," and "dwelling in love, dwelt in God and God in them." They enjoyed, therefore, an heaven on earth. They anticipated their future felicity. For having received a title to it in their justification, and a *meetness* for it in their regeneration and sanctification, they also enjoyed a *pledge, earnest, and foretaste* of it in the experimental knowledge and love of God, and in fellowship with him; it being "life eternal to know" and have communion with "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." This knowledge and privilege, through faith in a crucified Redeemer, they possessed, and thereby had within them that

“well of water, which is to spring up to life eternal,” when the grace of the saints shall issue in glory.

7. And now, my brethren, as the very same are the spiritual effects of the gospel in every age and nation, in which it is truly and properly received; as it always has been, and still is, “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; I should surely be guilty of a great omission of duty, if I were not to add, protracted as my discourse has already been, a few words by way of application of what has been advanced. I call upon you therefore, to examine yourselves touching your experience in these important matters. In what light do you view, and in what spirit do you receive this doctrine of “Christ crucified?” And what effect has it upon you? Is it a stumbling-block to you, as it was to the Jews? or do you, with the Greeks, consider it as foolishness? Notwithstanding that you have, it may be, often attentively heard it, does it not leave you in ignorance and sin, in guilt and wretchedness? Or, being truly and effectually called, and brought to experience repentance unto life, and saving faith through it, is it to you the *wisdom of God* and the *power of God*? Do you discern and acknowledge the most manifest traces of divine, yea, of infinite wisdom and power, in this wonderful dispensation? And are you enlightened and renewed by it? Are you, who “were once darkness, made hereby light in the Lord?” Are you “made a people who were not a people? and have you obtained mercy who had not obtained mercy?”\* Although you were formerly “dead in sin, and in the uncircumcision of your hearts,” has he “quickened you, and raised you up, through faith of his divine operation, having forgiven you all trespasses?” Are you “washed, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God?” “washed in the laver of regeneration; renewed by the renewing (power) of the Holy Ghost, and being justified by grace, made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life?”† These, my brethren, are questions infinitely momentous, and it concerns you all, more than I can describe, to be able to answer them in the affirmative. In the affirmative you will soon be able to answer them, if you receive in faith and love, the testimony that is and will be borne here, concerning *Christ crucified*, and “obey from the heart the form of doctrine which,” from this

Eph. v. 8. and 1 Pet. ii. 10. † 1 Cor. vi. 11. and Tit. iii. 5—7.

pulpit, will be "delivered unto you." Now may he "who was crucified in weakness, but who liveth by the power of God," even our Lord Jesus Christ himself, give efficacy to the word now spoken, "and may God our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you unblameable in holiness, and fruitful in every good word and work."

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