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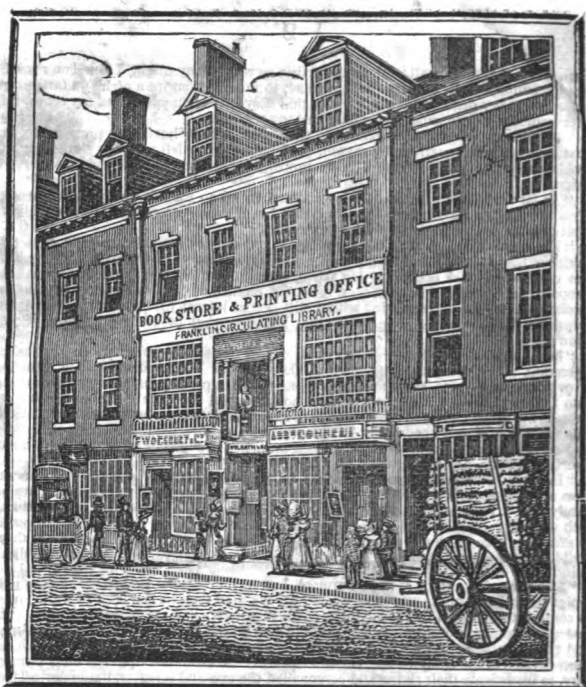












**M'ELRATH & BANGS,  
85 CHATHAM-STREET, NEW-YORK,**

**HAVE RECENTLY PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING VALUABLE WORKS:**

**DISCOURSES ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,** relative to the Being and Attributes of God, and his works in Creation, Providence, and Grace. By ADAM CLARKE, LL.D. F.A.S. &c. &c. 2 vols. 8vo.

"During my long ministerial life, I have written but very few Sermons, most of which have been already published; and, for want of time and health, they have been permitted to get out of print. I wished to have republished those, and to have added a few more, which I had prepared for the press; but the Editors having got my MSS., without properly consulting me, announced a volume of *original Sermons*; for which I was not prepared. Many were brought to me which were said to have been 'taken down by short-hand writers;' but when I came to peruse them, I found I could make no kind of use of them. They were neither in *language* or *mutter* any thing to which I could creditably or with a good conscience set my hand. I afterwards understood that my enunciation, though distinct, was too *rapid* to be caught by those Artists, in consequence of which, many *half sentences* appeared, and the *reasoning* was marred, unconnected, unfinished, and indeed, sometimes contradictory to itself. This was the case, particularly with several which had been taken down, some years ago, at the instance of *some gentlemen*, who, believing that I was near death, (for I was then in a bad state of health,) thought they could oblige the public and *themselves* by having my last discourses ready by the time I might be interred! Their good intentions have been hitherto frustrated—and I think it was well for all concerned, and who might have been concerned, that such *odds and ends* never appeared, and this imperfect taking down



was nearly the same in all: for, let the artists on whom they might, I found on examining the fruits of their labours, that they had, to a man, given me a *strange language*, worse by many degrees than my own; that they had often *perverted my sense*, misrepresented my criticisms, and confounded my reasoning."

"Should any Discourses be offered to the Public, said to have been preached by me, that have not been re-written by myself, (and published, or left with my signature to be published, should my Executors think proper,) I here certify that they are none of mine." \* \* \* \* \*

"As far as I have proceeded, I have aimed in all to exhibit the most momentous Truths of Divine Revelation:—and as far as I could, the deepest working of the Divine Spirit on the soul of man."—*Author's Preface.*

"The name of Dr. Adam Clarke prefixed to any publication will naturally attract the notice of his numerous and highly respectable acquaintances and friends. This will be the case on ordinary occasions, but when, on examination, it is found that the subject proposed for investigation, is at once recondite, momentous and universally interesting, excitement will be accompanied with a still deeper intensity from an expectation that inquiry will be prosecuted in a region that lies somewhat beyond the province of common research."

"In the volume now before us, all these causes unite their power in one mutual operation. The Being and Attributes of God, and his Works displayed in Creation, Providence, and Grace, stand foremost among all the important realities which can enter into the mind of man; and he who feels no interest in the issue of the discussion, can present but feeble claims to the character of rationality. To the subjects investigated in this volume, it is well known that Dr. Clarke has long directed the energies of his acute and capacious mind; and with the various branches of evidence on which the ultimate conclusion rests, he has long been familiar."

"In those Sermons that are now before us, there is a depth of penetration, an acuteness of research, and a vigorous range of thought, which, in modern discourses, we but rarely find. These are accompanied with such a warmth of devotional feeling, such a rich vein of piety, and such a strong regard to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, as greatly to enhance their value. All this, however, was expected from the author's well-known talents, and literary character; and few, we believe, will complain of disappointment."—*Imperial Magazine.*

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**MEMOIRS of the LIFE and MINISTRY of the Rev. JOHN SUMMERFIELD, A. M. late a preacher in connexion with the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. By JOHN HOLLAND. With an introductory Letter, by JAMES MONTGOMERY.**

"A fervent, fearless, self-sacrificing preacher, the delight of wondering, weeping, and admiring audiences, wherever he went."—*Montgomery.*

"I have read the life of the Rev. John Summerfield with great satisfaction. It is a very interesting record, and I trust will promote the interests of our common Christianity, of which Mr. S. was so bright an ornament; and so happy an example of the union of zeal with catholicism and of talent with humility. I have, however, to regret that those friends and coadjutors, who could, and ought to have influenced the course of the youthful evangelist, had not withheld him from those excessive exertions which prodigally wasted, in a few short years, the power possessed by him for the good of mankind, when it might have shed the lustre of genius and piety over half a century."—*Professor Silliman of Yale College.*

"*Life of Summerfield.*—We have been reading with much satisfaction the Memoirs of this popular and devoted young minister. The book exhibits a specimen of Biography as beautiful and finished as simplicity, purity, and force of style, united to richness and chasteness of ornament can well make it, and the materials are interesting and in-

structive—and what is no small praise, it is laudably purged of bigotry and sectarianism.”

—*Dutch Reformed Magazine.*

“*Memoirs of Summerfield.*—Mr. Holland has by this interesting biography of a most pious, eloquent and popular clergyman, conferred an invaluable benefit on the Christian community at large, and especially entitled himself to the grateful attention of the members of the very extensive church of which Mr. Summerfield was a distinguished and shining light. Recommended to the arduous task by so nice and able a judge as the poet Montgomery, imbued with an overflowing zeal in the cause of religion, and animated by a lively and devoted regard for the amiable virtues, the unobtrusive piety, and the impressive eloquence of his deceased friend, he has judiciously performed the charge entrusted to him in an unpretending but attractive form, calculated to make a favourable impression on all sorts of readers. No gloomy spirit of bigotry casts its dark shadows over the path traced by the steps of the illustrious preacher; no illiberal denunciations or exclusive partialities render his example forbidding, or an imitation of his passing excellencies a hopeless attempt to the humble seeker after holiness and virtue. Benevolence, active, and spreading its wide embrace from east to west, and north to south, wherever the human form offers an object for its regard and a stimulus for its exertion, characterises the tone and spirit in which this volume is written. We may safely recommend this biography as an instructive and interesting work.”—*New-York Mirror.*

“This is a work of rare excellence. We speak not now of its literary merit. We speak of a higher quality. It is the simple and touching story of one who, for a few brief years, lived and laboured and suffered among us in the cause of Christ, and *was not, for God took him.* It is another addet to that class of publications so delightful to all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and who love to trace his image in his disciples. It is one of those few books which we read with hearts full of thankfulness to God—and, when we have done, lift up our voice in

“Praise, for yet one more name with power endowed

To cheer, and guide us, onward as we press.”

We have received much advantage and much pleasure from this book, and recommend it to our readers. We wish that the story of Summerfield’s abundant labours may stimulate many to similar devotedness. We associate his name in our ascription of praise to God for all his servants departed this life, in his faith and fear; and we love to think that he will be to many as he is to us,

“Yet one more image on the heart bestowed

To dwell there—beautiful in holiness.”

*Theological Repertory*, for February, 1830.

“We have perused the *Memoirs of the Life of Summerfield* with close attention, and concur with the poet Montgomery in awarding praise to the biographer, and also in the opinion of the value of such records to the living. His biographer has introduced him to us as he was in his closet, and in his intercourse with his fellow men; and none can read his diary or his letters, without being convinced that he practised what he preached. The volume will be sought after with avidity, and read by thousands with pleasure, although they may not have seen him; but to those who knew him as he lived, and read how he died, it will be a treasure with which they will not readily part.”—*Mercantile Advertiser.*

**A DISSERTATION on the USE and ABUSE of TOBACCO;**  
wherein the advantages and disadvantages, attending the consumption of that entertaining weed, are particularly considered. Humbly addressed to all the Tobacco consumers; but especially to those among religious people. By ADAM CLARKE, LL.D. F.A.S. M.R.I.A. &c.

“To such a height with some has fashion grown,

They feed their very nostrils with a spoon.

One and but *one* degree is wanting yet,

To make our senseless luxury complete;

Some choice regale, useless as snuff and dear,

To feed the mazy windings of the ear.—*S. Wesley.*

Little children keep yourselves from IDOLS.—*St. John.*

“TO THE READER.—In writing on a subject which appeared to me of vast importance to the persons to whom the pamphlet is directed, I thought it necessary to mix historic instruction with serious admonition; and therefore have given a short description of the Plant in question, together with the history of its name and importation into these and other European countries. I have drawn my information from a variety of sources; and have endeavoured to detail what I have learned on this subject with the strictest fidelity, and with as much accuracy as possible.—I hope I have made no material mistakes: if I have, they were involuntary: for I have ever spoken according to the best of my knowledge. I am not so vain as to imagine that those who have been long attached to the *Pipe*, the *Snuff-box*, or the *Quid*, will pay much regard to what I have written on the subject. I know too much of human nature to expect that where

the passions are strongly influenced, and obstinate habits contracted, much attention will be paid to rational argumentation. I write not to convince these; I have laboured with many of them long, and almost in vain. *Demonstration to such* is mere cobweb:—but I write to prevent those from *continuing* in the practice, who have just *begun*; and those from *beginning*, who have not yet got under the power of this scandalous, bewitching, and destructive habit. What I have done, I have done in the fear of God, and with the simple desire to be useful to my brethren. I have sometimes spoken *fronically*, sometimes *satirically*, but always with deep *seriousness* and *concern*. In short, I have done what I could to render a custom odious and detestable, which I think every thing in heaven and earth discountenances. Whatever reception my pamphlet may meet with, all the reward I expect is secured; *a satisfactory consciousness of the purest motives, and the sincerest desire to do good*. Those who know me will give me credit for my good intentions: and those who *will not* profit by my advice, will have the candour to acknowledge that I have made a sincere attempt to deserve well of my countrymen.

London, May 15, 1797.

ADAM CLARKE."

**ZION SONGSTER**; a Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs, generally sung at Camp and Prayer meetings, and in revivals of religion. Compiled by PETER D. MYERS, with a copperplate frontispiece, and vignette title page.

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"I consider the Compendium of English Grammar, by Samuel Kirkham, a work deserving encouragement, and well calculated to facilitate the acquisition of this useful science.

"DE WITT CLINTON."

"New-York, July 29, 1829.

"S. Kirkham, Esq.—I have examined your Grammar with attention, and with a particular view to benefit the institution under my charge. I am fully satisfied that it is the *best form* in which Murray's principles have been given to the public. The lectures are ample, and given in so familiar and easy language, as to be readily understood, even by a *tyro* in grammar.

"I feel it due to say, that I commenced the examination of your work, under a *strong prejudice against it*, in consequence of the numerous 'improved systems' with which the public has been inundated of late, most of which are by no means improvements on Murray, but the productions of individuals whom a '*little grammar* has rendered grammatically insane.' My convictions, therefore, are the result of *investigation*.

"I wish you, Sir, success in your publication.

"Respectfully,

"EBER WHEATON.  
Pr. of Mechanic's Society School."

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by the same Author, is designed, as the name imports, to answer the purposes of a Spelling Book and an Expositor or Dictionary. It is composed of 215 pages, and contains about 8000 words, which are explained and pronounced according to the best authorities.

As a book to be committed to memory, it answers a much better purpose than a school dictionary, as it contains a less number of words, and such only as are in common use. The words being classed also according to their parts of speech, and arranged under different heads, according to the number of letters or syllables of which they are composed, can be committed to memory in less than half the time which is consumed in committing the same number, arranged on the common plan. The time usually devoted to a Spelling Book, will be abundantly sufficient to become well acquainted with "*The Symbolical Primer*," and "*The Speller and Definer*," so that the knowledge of the meaning of the words and other information which may be obtained, will be clear gain to the pupil.

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# DISCOURSES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS

RELATIVE TO THE

BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD,

AND HIS WORKS

IN

CREATION, PROVIDENCE, AND GRACE.

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

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VOL. I.

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THIRD EDITION.

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New-York :

MELRATH & BANGS, 85 CHATHAM-STREET.

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BT  
101  
C58  
v.1

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

Sermon	Page
I. On the Being and Attributes of God, . . . .	9
II. The Worship which God requires from Man, . . . .	39
III. The Plan of Human Redemption, . . . .	52
IV. God's Willingness to save All Men, . . . .	72
V. The Confidence of the Genuine Christian, . . . .	93
VI. Experimental Religion, and its Fruits, . . . .	102
VII. St. Paul's Glorifying; or, the Gospel of Christ the Power of God unto Salvation, . . . .	117
VIII. The Disease and Cure of Naaman, . . . .	133
IX. Life, the Gift of the Gospel: the Law, the Ministration of Death, . . . .	156
X. The Wisdom that is from Above, . . . .	173
XI. Genuine Happiness the Privilege of every real Chris- tian in this Life, . . . .	182
XII. Life, Death, and Immortality, . . . .	204
XIII. The Family of God and its Privileges, . . . .	219
XIV. The different Methods which God has used to bring Men to the Knowledge of Himself, . . . .	251
XV. The Hope of the Gospel, through the Resurrection of Christ, . . . .	279
XVI. Christian Moderation, . . . .	296



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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

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

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

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

Those who know me, and it is not likely that many others will read this Volume, will not be surprised to find that I shew no indifference to that religious Creed which I have long professed, and which I have, with much pains and conscientious assiduity collected from the Oracles of God. The doctrines it contains have been my support and comfort for half a century; and I believe

they will continue to be so till mortality is swallowed up of life.

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

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

As far as I have proceeded, I have aimed in all to exhibit the most momentous truths of Divine Revelation:—and as far as I could, the deepest workings of the Divine Spirit on the soul of man.

After all, it is with great diffidence that I permit this Volume to appear in public. I know it is easy to find faults, and it may be peculiarly so to find them here; yet I hope that these well-meant Discourses will be well received by all the people of God: and I trust the God of that people will grant them His blessing.

A. C.

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

# SERMONS.

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## SERMON I.

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### ON THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

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JEREMIAH, Chap. x. ver. 11.

כִּנְנָה חֲמִסְרוֹן לְהוֹם אֱלֹהִים דִּי־שְׁמַיָּא וְאֶרְקָא לֹא עֲבָדוּ יִמְכּוּ  
מֵאֶרְקָא וְכִן חֲחֹת שְׁמַיָּא אֱלֹהִי :

Kidena temerun lehomp; Elahaiya di-shemaiya ye-arka la abadu, yeabadu mearas, u-min techoth shemaiya elleh.

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

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As this message was to be sent to the Babylonians, the verse is written in the Chaldee tongue, and it is the only verse in the whole of this prophecy which is written in this language, the rest of the prophecy being in pure Hebrew. From this declaration we learn—

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

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

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





BT  
101  
.C58  
v.1

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

---

Sermon	Page
I. On the Being and Attributes of God, . . . .	9
II. The Worship which God requires from Man, . . . .	39
III. The Plan of Human Redemption, . . . .	52
IV. God's Willingness to save All Men, . . . .	72
V. The Confidence of the Genuine Christian, . . . .	93
VI. Experimental Religion, and its Fruits, . . . .	102
VII. St. Paul's Glorifying; or, the Gospel of Christ the Power of God unto Salvation, . . . .	117
VIII. The Disease and Cure of Naaman, . . . .	133
IX. Life, the Gift of the Gospel: the Law, the Ministration of Death, . . . .	156
X. The Wisdom that is from Above, . . . .	173
XI. Genuine Happiness the Privilege of every real Chris- tian in this Life, . . . .	182
XII. Life, Death, and Immortality, . . . .	204
XIII. The Family of God and its Privileges, . . . .	219
XIV. The different Methods which God has used to bring Men to the Knowledge of Himself, . . . .	251
XV. The Hope of the Gospel, through the Resurrection of Christ, . . . .	279
XVI. Christian Moderation, . . . .	296

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. If all other beings, be *derived* beings, (*i. e.* cannot be the cause of their own existence,) and this is the only *first* and unoriginated Cause, therefore all others must owe their being to it, and be dependent on it. This Being then is the

*Creator and Preserver* of all things: and this is the general notion entertained of God.

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

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

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

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

E. This essence is the *most perfect*.—*Perfection* signifies any thing *complete*, *consummate*; in every respect made and finished; so that nothing is *wanting*, nothing *redundant*: and in a moral sense, what is *entirely pure*, *unblameable*, and *immaculate*; or that which in every moral and spiritual respect has consummate excellence: so God, as being the cause of all that is *great*, *good*, *immaculate*, and *excellent*, is Himself the *most perfect* of all *Essences*; for we can conceive of nothing that can be *added* to His excellence, to make it *greater* or *more perfect* than it is; and we can conceive of no per-

fection that he does not possess in an absolute and unlimited manner.

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

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

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

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

4. From his nature it appears He is *unbounded* in His *understanding* and *wisdom*; *unlimited* in His *will* and *goodness*; and *uncontrollable* in His *faculty* of *working*. He has therefore these *three* perfections of a rational essence; and he has

them in an absolute manner; and, consequently, that *absolute sovereignty* that characterizes the SUPREME GOD.

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

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

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

The being of God, says this eminent schoolman and divine, may be proved in *five ways*; the *first* and most manifest is the proof deduced from *motion*; it is certain and agrees with the testimony of the senses, that there is *motion* in the universe; but what is moved, is moved by some agency, and nothing is moved except according to the power inherent in that which operates; for motion proceeds only so far as the power of the mover extends. Motion is nothing else than the bringing any thing from *the capability* of being moved into *the act*: but from *the capability* of motion nothing can be brought into the *act* unless by some active agent; as heat in act (*i. e.* fire) makes wood which is *capable* of heat become *actually* hot, and thus it is acted upon and altered. It is not possible that the same thing should be both *active* and *only capable* of action at the same time, but it must be either the one or the other: what is not *actually* hot cannot be at that same moment *potentially* hot, as it must then be *potentially* cold; it is therefore impossible that in the same moment and

in the same way any thing should be both the *mover* and the *moved*, or, which is the same thing, *self-motive* ; it is necessary therefore that every thing which moves should be moved by something else ; if too that by which it is moved be itself moved, it is necessary that it should be moved by another, and that by another ; yet this does not proceed *in infinitum*, because then there would be no *first mover*, and consequently nothing moving another ; because *secondary motions* only arise from the *first impelling cause*, as a stick moves not except according as it is moved by the hand : therefore it is necessary to arrive at some *first mover* which is itself moved by nothing ; and *this all understand as the Deity*.

The *second way* is from the necessity of an *efficient cause*, for we find in all sensible things that there is a series of *efficient causes* ; nor has it ever yet been found, nor is it at all possible, that any thing should be its own efficient cause, (*i. e.* the origin of its own being,) because thus it would be prior to itself, which is impossible : nor in *efficient causes* can we proceed *in infinitum*, because in all *efficient causes*, detailed according to order, the *first* is the cause of the *middle*, and the *middle* of the *last*, whether the *middle* be many or one only : the cause being removed, the effect is removed also, therefore if there had not been a *first efficient cause* there would neither have been a *last* nor a *middle* : but if we proceed *in infinitum* with *efficient causes*, there will be no *first efficient cause*, and thus there will be neither *ultimate effect* nor *medial efficient causes*, which is manifestly absurd : it is therefore necessary to suppose some *first efficient cause* ; which all call *God*.

The *third way* is deduced from *possibility* and *necessity*, thus :—we find in nature certain things which *may* exist or *may not* exist, as those which we see generated and again corrupted, and consequently *may* be or *may not* be ; it is impossible that all those things which are *thus* should always exist, because it is possible for them not to be, as is proved by their non-existence ; if therefore all things *might possibly not* have existed, then at some time nothing was in nature ; but if *this* be true, then nothing had *now* been, because what does *not exist* cannot begin to be, except through the agency of what does exist : if therefore nothing had existed, it would have been impossible that any thing could have begun to exist, and

thus now there would have been nothing, which is manifestly absurd: therefore all entities are not merely possible, but it is requisite there should be something necessary in nature; but every necessary existence either has the cause of its necessity from another, or it has not; but we cannot proceed in *infinitum* in necessary existences, which are the causes of their own necessity, any more than we can in *efficient causes*, as is proved above: it is requisite therefore to suppose something that necessarily exists by itself, not having the cause of its necessity from a foreign source, but being the cause of this necessity to others; which all call God.

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

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

Vide THOMÆ AQUINATIS, *Summa Totius Theologiæ. Artic. III. conclusio.* vol. I. p. 5. Ant. 1624. fol.

But we must not imagine that reason or good sense permit



us to suppose that there might, or might not have been such an essence as is called God, for God exists necessarily &c, see below.

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

Plato calls God  $\delta$  αγαθος, or το αγαθου, the *Good Being*, or the *Supreme Good*, because He dispenses good to His creatures.

He calls Him το καλλος, *Beauty*, because in His essence, He is ever equal, regular, and full of proportion and harmony.

He calls Him, η αληθεια, *Truth*, because He is the source whence all truth and right principles proceed.

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

He calls Him  $\delta$  αρητος, or  $\delta$  αλαητος, the *Ineffable*, because there is neither genus, nor species, nor difference, nor parallel which can be applied to Him. He is beyond our expressions and our thoughts, for He is a pure spirit, and we neither speak nor think of any thing that is not corporeal or an object of our senses, or analogical to some sensible forms.

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

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

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

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

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

5. It is strange that the doctrine of real absolute and external space, should have induced some philosophers to conclude, it was a *part* or attribute of *God*; or that *God Himself* was *space*; inasmuch as incommunicable attributes of the *Deity* appeared to agree to this; such as *infinity, immutability, indivisibility, and incorporeity*: it being also *uncreated, impassive, without beginning or ending*:—not considering that all these *negative* properties belong to *NOTHING*. For *nothing* has no limits:—cannot be moved, nor changed, nor divided: nor is it created, nor can it be destroyed. See *Siris*. § 270.

6. It is therefore His *presence* that constitutes this *space*, without which it could not exist; and since every particle of *space* is always, and in every indivisible moment, *every where*, the creator and *Lord* of all things cannot be *never* or *no where*.

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

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

8. We know God by His *properties* and by His attributes, by the most *wise* and *excellent structure* of things, and by *final causes*: but we *adore* and *worship* Him on account of His *dominion*; for God, setting aside dominion, providence,

and final causes, is nothing else but *fate* and *nature*. See Newton.

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

Hence we learn—

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

1. It appears to have been an universally received truth, that the *heavens* and the *earth*, could not have produced themselves: that so much *order* and *æconomy* could not have been produced by *accident* or *chance*; that every thing that was made must have a *maker*, and that this maker who was the cause of all, could have no *cause of his own being*; and that he who had *no beginning* could have *no end*; and that this being who is called God, or by some other name expressive of the same idea, should be *acknowledged* and *adored*.

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

3. Now as *creation*, or the production of beings that had no existence before, is properly the act of an unlimited power; the production of different *kinds of beings* out of *matter* totally dissimilar from those beings, is also properly called *creation*; because it requires the *same unlimited power* and *skill* to produce them, as it required to bring the *first matter*, or *materials* out of which they are formed, into being. To say, the earth and heavens, &c, have been *created out of nothing*, is

both *incantious* and *unphilosophic*; for this intimates that *nothing* produced the *substance*, or *first matter* out of which these things were formed; but the only proper definition is the production of some *thing or things, being or beings*, that had no antecedent existence. There was *ubi*, or *space*, but there was no being to occupy that space. Creation *peopled* this *ubi* or *space*. *Space* is not *being*, or *substance*, and consequently cannot produce substance of any kind. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, "out of nothing, comes nothing," is a true maxim: but where there was *nothing*, the power of God can cause *something* to exist, that had no previous existence. This is a maxim equally sound, and equally acceptable to the common sense and reason of man.

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

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

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

a. In computing the *magnitudes* of the Heavenly bodies, it is usual to take the *Earth* as the *radix* of comparison, and having ascertained *its bulk*, to show that such and such planets, &c. are so many times larger or less than it. Now, it is well known, that the *diameter* of the *Earth*, i. e. the length of a line passing through its centre, from the *Zenith* to the *Nadir*, or from the *South* to the *North Pole*, would be 7,954 miles.

The diameter of the *Moon* is found to be 2,172 miles, there-

fore the *Earth* being considered as one, the *Moon* is one forty-ninth of the Earth's bulk.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now all these points have been demonstrated in such a way by Astronomers, that not a doubt remains of their general accuracy; and yet the *largest* of these heavenly bodies, to common observers, does not appear as large as a *coach-wheel*; e. g. the *Sun*, though more than a *million* of times greater than the whole terrestrial globe! The next in *apparent largeness*, e. g. the *Moon*, no greater than a common-sized *plate*. *Venus* and *Jupiter* like luminous *patches*; and the rest of the Planets like *lucid points*. And yet the planet *Jupiter*, whom we sometimes call the Morning Star, is not less than *twelve hundred and eighty-one* times larger than the immense globe on which we live.

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

2. As to the Solar System, the number of *lumimous* and *illuminated* bodies can easily be ascertained, though the *quantity* of their *masses* is inconceivable to common minds.

Of this system the SUN is the *centre*, and around him, at different distances, what are called the *Planets*, *primary* and *secondary*, revolve.

MERCURY, the nearest, revolves round him in eighty-seven days, twenty-three hours, fourteen minutes, and thirty-three seconds.

VENUS, in about two hundred and twenty-four days, sixteen hours, forty-one minutes, and twenty-seven seconds.

The EARTH, in three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and forty-eight seconds, which we call one year.

The MOON in a little more than twenty-seven days; or twenty-seven days, seven hours, forty-three minutes, and five seconds.

MARS in nearly two years; or one year, three hundred and twenty-one days, twenty-two hours, eighteen minutes, and twenty-seven seconds.

JUPITER, in nearly twelve years; or eleven years, three hundred and fifteen days, fourteen hours, thirty-nine minutes, and two seconds.

SATURN, in twenty-nine years and a half; or twenty-nine years, one hundred and sixty-four days, seven hours, twenty-one minutes and fifty seconds.

And HERSCHEL in eighty-three years two hundred and ninety-four days, eight hours, thirty-nine minutes; or nearly eighty-four years.

Some of these Planets have *Satellites* or *secondary planets*, that revolve round *them* as *they* do about the SUN: the *Moon* is a *Satellite* to the *Earth*. Of such secondaries, *Jupiter* has *four*, which answer the same end to him as the *Moon* does to our *Earth*; *Saturn* has *seven*, and *Herschel* has *six*.

Besides these, there have lately been discovered *four* other planetary bodies which revolve in vast orbits in the space between *Mars* and *Jupiter*. These are called *Ceres*, *Pallas*, *Juno* and *Vesta*. These, with the *Sun*, the primary of all, make thirty planets; and together constitute the Solar System. But what are these thirty bodies, however immense in themselves, and in the system which they constitute, when

compared with those *other bodies* which we call *stars*; and to distinguish them from the *Planets*, call them *fixed*, as the former *change their places*, which the latter do not appear to do!

Though we have had different *catalogues* of these fixed stars made by very accurate astronomers, yet those catalogues depended on the *power* of the *glasses* by which the starry vault has been examined; but we find *more and more* discovered in proportion to the *power* and *accuracy* of the instruments employed; so that had we *higher powers*, and proportionate strength in our *optic nerves*, there would be *no end* to the *numbers* that would be there found out; and hence we may safely say that those heavenly bodies are *innumerable*. Again, as it is most probable that every star is a *Sun* like ours; and even, perhaps much greater, and each is the *Centre of a System* in which a multitude of primary and secondary planets may and do revolve; so that every part of what we call *infinite space* is occupied, and that that *space* is constituted by the *presence* of God, which presence fills eternity; and that on Him, all suns, planets, stars, and every kind of beings depend; how inconceivable then must the *Creator* be! and what argument can be better calculated to prove His *being* than the enormous magnitude and infinite multitude of these masses! Well then might the Prophet say, *The Gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.* He alone who is *before*, and has *made* all things, is *eternal*; all other beings must perish and be annihilated, if detached for a moment from His superintendence and energy.

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

		English Miles.
Mercury's mean distance from the Sun		36,973,282
Venus'	Do.	69,088,240
Earth's	Do.	95,513,794
Mars'	Do.	145,533,667
Jupiter's	Do.	496,765,289
Saturn's	Do.	911,141,442
Herschel's	Do.	1,822,575,228
Ceres'	Do.	250,000,000

		English Miles
Pallas'	Do.	270,000,000
Juno's	Do.	285,000,000
Vesta's	Do.	unknown.

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

		English Miles.
Earth's least distance from the Sun, is		93,908,984
Mercury's	Do. Earth, is	58,540,512
Venus'	Do.	26,425,554
Moon's	Do.	222,920
Mars'	Do.	50,019,873
Ceres'	Do.	155,000,000
Pallas'	Do.	175,000,000
Juno's	Do.	190,000,000
Vesta's	Do.	unknown.
Jupiter's	Do.	401,251,495
Saturn's	Do.	815,627,647
Saturn's Ring	Do.	815,525,205
Herschel's	Do.	1,727,061,434

Thus we find that the *Moon*, the *nearest* planet to our *Earth*, is no less than *two hundred and twenty-two thousand nine hundred and twenty English miles* distant from it.

And that *Saturn*, who may be easily discovered with the naked eye, is no less than *815 million 627 thousand 647 miles* from the earth.

But it is well known that the Planet *Herschel*, is still more *remote*, and yet may be seen without the aid of a glass; for he is at the prodigious distance of *1 billion 727 million 61 thousand 434 English miles!* And yet, take in this immense orbit, which includes those of all the other *planets*, and it is but a *speck* when compared to the incomprehensible *vortex of the fixed stars!* and they are altogether but as an *atom* or *indivisible point*, when compared with *illimitable space*. And what is this *space* in comparison of *HIM* who inhabits *eternity*, and constitutes *eternity*, by His eternal existence!

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

The *sun*, which is *1 million 384 thousand 462 times* larger



than the earth, though *fixed* in the *centre*, yet revolves round his own *axis*, in 25 days, 14 hours, and 8 minutes.

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

		English Miles.
Venus, revolves per HOUR, at the rate of		81,398
The Earth	Do.	75,222
The Moon	Do.	2,335
Mars	Do.	56,212
Jupiter	Do.	30,353
Saturn	Do.	22,351
Herschel	Do.	15,346

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

Were not its particles inconceivably small, their momentum, or the force with which they must fall on any body, on which they may impinge, in the rapidity of their motion, must tear such body to pieces; yet, says an accurate philosopher, Dr. *Murray*, it is doubtful whether the momentum they do possess, is capable of being ascertained by the most delicate mechanical contrivance; from an experiment of this kind, it has been calculated, that the quantity of matter in the rays of light, collected by a concave mirror of two feet in diameter, would not amount to more than *one twelve hundred millionth part of a grain!* and how many particles of light must be in these accumulated rays? *Light* is only one of the innumerable creatures which God has made, and yet this one exhibits such proofs of His eternal power and skill as cannot be successfully controverted. In making the *heavens* He has made

this light, this most subtle, useful, and astonishing of all the subjects with which we are acquainted: what limited power, what bounded skill could produce such a creation? Had nothing else been created, it would have required the omnipotence and omniscience of God to have produced even this one! well then may it be said with the Prophet, *the Gods who have not made the heavens, who have not created the light, shall perish from under these heavens.* The nature, properties, and especially the velocity of this one creature, are so demonstrative of the agency of a Being omnipotent and eternal!

5. In the skill of their arrangement. This must have particular reference to that principle by which they are influenced in reference to each other. This principle is termed *gravity* or *attraction*. *Gravity*, when it refers to a body *tending* to another; and *attraction* when it refers to the body to which the former *gravitates*. In the *first* case, the *weight* of the body seems to be the cause of its *gravitation* or *descending*: in the *second*, its descent seems to be the effect of an *attractive* power in that body to which it *gravitates*; but the *principle* is the same in both cases. Relative to this point, the five following positions, or laws, have been admitted among all philosophers:—

1. Gravitation takes place among the most minute particles of bodies.
2. It is in proportion to the *masses* of all bodies.
3. It varies *inversely* as the *square* of the distance.
4. It is *transmitted instantaneously* from one body to another.
5. It acts *equally* on bodies in a state of *rest*; and on those which, from their *motion* in the direction of its action, should seem to avoid a part of its influence.

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

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

about a common focus, to the cubes of the greater axes of their orbits.

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

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

As to the *fifth* position, it is universally evident; nor has any thing ever been observed to have taken place, to intimate that this is not an absolute law, invariable and without exception.—See *La Place*. All the parts of every body in the solar system gravitate to their centre: and while each body has its *own centre of gravity* to which all its particles *gravitate*, and by which they are *attracted*; the whole planetary system has a *common centre of gravity*, to which the planets, &c, all tend, and by which they are all as particularly attracted, as the particles of each body tend to, and are attracted, by its centre. It is by this that they are all kept in their proper places, so that in the tractless vortex of nature, they in their various revolutions never miss their way one hair's breadth. Nor have the *periods* of their revolutions been either *lengthened* or *shortened one moment*, since they were formed and projected by the hand of God. Here, as the wise man has said,

God has formed every thing in number, weight, and measure; —all is in due proportion, in proper magnitude and in measured distance,—and though their relative magnitudes are various, yet their arrangement is such, that they can never come in collision with each other, nor ever miss their orbit. Here then the skill of the Creator appears manifest: and thus we find, that the wisdom displayed in the solar system itself, is a proof of the being and perfections of Him who made the heavens and the earth, as the text intimates.

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

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

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

Bodies moving in *curve lines* have what are called *centrifugal* and *centripetal* forces. The *centrifugal* force is that by which a projected body flies off, or endeavours to fly off in a straight line, without respect to gravity, to any resisting medium, or to any centre. The *centripetal* force is that which acts upon a projected body, drawing it out of a straight line, and obliging it to take a curvilinear direction. All the planets are influenced by these two forces: and these forces must be equal that the planets may perform their respective revolutions. — The *centripetal* force which is the effect of the sun's attraction, (which constitutes the planet's gravitation,) is prevented from causing the planet to fall to the sun, as its centre, by the *centrifugal* force or the quantum of *projectile power* impressed upon the planet at its creation. These two forces by alternately overcoming each other, cause the planets to revolve in their orbits. The *centripetal* force will not permit the planet to fly off; the *centrifugal* force will not permit it to fall in. These forces God has proportioned to each,

in reference to the *distances* of the planets among *themselves*, and from the *sun*, their primary ; and to the *solid contents*, or quantity of matter in each planet. Physically speaking, to make the *projectile force* balance the gravitating power, so exactly as that the body may move in a *circle* ; the projectile velocity of the body must be such as it would have acquired by *gravity* alone, in *falling through half the radius of the circle*.

But when it is considered that all the planets and their *satellites* in the solar system revolve round the sun, what a prodigious attractive power must he have to draw them all towards himself.—And what an amazing power must it have required to put all these planets into such rapid motions at first ! Amazing indeed to *us*, says the enlightened Mr. *Ferguson*, because impossible to be effected by the strength of all the living creatures in an unlimited number of worlds : but no ways hard for the Almighty ; whose planetarium comprehends the universe.

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

Every intelligent artist, works in reference to some *end*. Such an exertion of skill and energy as appears in the works of creation, must have had for its object, what was sufficient to justify such exertion. It is not enough to say that He made all His works to shew forth His glory. He had no need to contemplate His own works to be satisfied with the exertion of His power and wisdom. This would suppose that His gratification depended on His own work. He needs not the exertions of His eternal powers and Godhead to minister to or augment His happiness ; for, although He cannot but be pleased with every work of His hand, as all that He has created is *very good*, yet it was not for this end, but it was in reference to a great design, that they were created and still subsist. This design was the *formation and eternal beatification of intelligent beings*. He therefore made MAN in His own image and in His own likeness ; He made him immortal, rational and holy. He endowed him with intellectual powers of the most astonishing compass. He made him capable of *knowing* the Author of his being in the *glory of His perfections*, and of deriving unutterable happiness from this knowledge. He rendered him capable of ascertaining the motions

of the planets, and the laws by which they are governed: capable of numbering the stars, and weighing the sun. He has given him an understanding by which he walks through the heavens, and analyses every part of the globe that is under his feet. In a word, He has set him over all the works of His hands, and put all things living under his authority. All sheep and oxen, with whatsoever walks through the paths of the deep. He has given him that *knowledge* which is *power*; by which both the animate and inanimate creation is brought under his dominion, and becomes obedient to his will. Such a being alone, is capable of contemplating the works of God, and deriving the highest pleasure from this contemplation. The formation of such a being, even for this purpose, sufficiently justifies the exertions of the divine power and wisdom in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

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

It is no solid objection to this argument, that man has *fallen*

from God and happiness, into sin and misery. This does not at all affect the *design* of God. The *fall* was no part of His *design*: He made not *death*, neither hath pleasure in the *destruction* of the *living*. But to remedy this evil, in His vast love to the world, God gave his only begotten Son, to the end that they who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. And although *sin* has entered into the world, and *death* by sin; in consequence of which, we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again; yet God hath devised means that His banished should not be expelled from Him. And to accomplish this end, Jesus Christ assumed human nature, and *by the grace of God, tasted death for every man*. He has sent His spirit and gospel into the world to convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and offers a free and full salvation from sin and all its consequences, to every soul of man. By this dispensation of mercy and goodness, millions of millions of immortal spirits have already been saved; millions more are now on their way to glory; and this work shall go on till the earth shall be no more: all may be saved; for God hath not doomed a single soul to eternal perdition, and the eternal restoration of even *one* of these immortal souls, is a sufficient justification of God's work in the creation, while even foreseeing the lapse of man. Thus the works of God give demonstration of the Being already described.

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

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

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

This reasoning will apply to all the *works of creation*, they continue to exist because the *same power* continues to act on them: their *order* and *harmony* continue also the same, because the producing cause gives the *same direction* to each part, that it may accomplish the purpose for which He gave it being.

But in so complicate a system as the universe, where a multitude of *particular* and *special*, as well as *general ends* must be accomplished, not only a *preserving*, but a *specially directing* power must be in continual activity. Hence the need of what is called *providence*, or in other words, God's *plan of governing the universe*, and influencing and directing all sub-



altern or secondary agents so, that they may accomplish His gracious designs ; and all violence and confusion be prevented. Again, as much *natural* evil has entered into the world, by means of *moral* evil ; it is necessary that there should be every where present, an almighty and over-ruling providence, to curb and restrain the moral evil that works in and by the passions of men : and to counteract, and in various cases suspend the operations of certain natural agents, which, being in a state of *violence* and *confusion*, would produce baneful effects if left merely to their own energies and results. For since the fall, the earth has been cursed on account of man's rebellion ; and in consequence, much confusion and disorder have been produced ; and, as that rebellion continues, these disorders continue ; for, nature itself seems to arise in opposition to the offender ; and were not the *principles* which produce storms, tempests, earthquakes, pestilence, and plague, counteracted, curbed, and often *suspended* in their operations ;—or, while permitted to exert themselves with all their natural violence and malignity, a particular direction given to them that their strength may be expended in such a *way*, and in such *points* as may be innocuous to man ;—what ruin and desolation would there not be in the world ! Thus, the *thunder-storm* that might slay thousands, has rarely human life for its victim : the tornado, and tempest, exhaust themselves on the waves of the sea, or the uninhabited forest ; and the pestilence that walketh in darkness, is generally confined to the arid desert. These destructive causes, which exist in millions, are seldom let loose against man ; and though it be perfectly right that vice should be punished, and the vicious corrected, to shew that the justice of God slumbereth not, yet, in all cases, we may say, judgment is God's strange work, and He delighteth in mercy.

Nothing is more frequently, and more impressively recommended in the oracles of God, than *prayer*. Now, prayer not only necessarily supposes the *being of a God*, (for he that cometh unto God, must know that HE IS,) but also the *providence* of God. For why should we pray to Him to avert evil, if we do not acknowledge that He exercises a universal providence in the world ? why should we pray to be preserved in and from dangers, if we be not convinced that He has *sway* every where, and that all things serve the purposes of His

gracious will? and why should men in *every place*, who pray and make supplication, expect to *be heard*, unless it be an incontrovertible truth, that God is omnipotent, and that *He can* and will so interfere with, and interpose in the matters that concern them. And should evil be coming against them in direct course, *He can divert* it from that course, so that it shall pass them by, or *averting* it, turn it entirely *back*, so that it shall have no operation near them; or if *He* permit it to *come on*, convert it to their great spiritual advantage, by counterworking the bad effects which it would otherwise produce, and thus by *His providence*, (in answer to their *prayers*) working together with *His grace*, cause all those things which would otherwise be *mischievous*, to work for their present good and future happiness.

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

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

I conclude therefore, that the conservation and government of all things by the power and providence of God, are proofs of *His* continual being, and most beneficent agency. And though the acts of providence, are not *creative* but *conservative* acts, and nothing *new* has been added since the creation of the world; yet so has this providence operated, that no-

thing has been lost of all that His power has produced ; and every thing continues by this gracious superintendence to answer the same design, which at the beginning was conceived in His own infinite mind.

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

Having already proved that there is an infinite and eternal Being, the first cause or creator of all things ; it follows necessarily that all animate and inanimate beings *derive their existence* from Him ; and are *dependent* upon Him. *Life* is His gift, and flows from Him, He is represented as inspiring the very *breath* of all animal beings, and endowing them with those principles by which, as means, those beings are *preserved*. He has adapted the *lungs* for respiration, and has given the *air* to inflate them. All *motion*, voluntary or involuntary, proceeds from Him ; and by His continued *energy*, the existence of every being is preserved? *In Him we live, move, and have our being*, is a truth which cannot be successfully disputed. Every *state* of being has its proper *attributes* ; and every *kind* of being, its peculiar privileges. Each, in proportion to the *powers* and *perfections* with which it is endowed, and the *necessities* of its state, shares the solicitude and attention of its Maker. MAN, who appears at the *head* of the creation, is distinguished by a variety of peculiar privileges. On him, the most affectionate regards of his God seem to be concentrated : the condescending goodness of the Divine Being towards man, has filled reflecting minds with astonishment and gratitude : *What is man that thou shouldest magnify him*, says Job, *that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him ? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment ?* chap. vii. 17, 18. *Thou hast*, says David, *made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour ; thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet ; the sheep, the oxen, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea*, Psal. viii. 5, 8. All this shews him to be God's *vicegerent* upon earth, which is the highest honour he can possibly possess previously to his being *raised incorruptible*, and *placed on the throne of his Lord and Saviour* ; " to him that overcometh will I grant to

sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in His throne," Rev. iii. 21.

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

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

1. By *adoration* we are to understand that *reverence* that is due to the *highest* and *best* of Beings. The original word, *adoratio*, signifies that act of religious worship which was expressed by *lifting the hand to the mouth*, and *kissing* it, in token of the *highest esteem*, and the most *profound reverence* and *subjection*. It implies a proper *contemplation* of His excellencies, so as to excite *wonder* and *admiration*—and of His *goodness* and *bounty*, so as to impress us with the liveliest *sense* of His ineffable *goodness* to us, and our deep *unworthiness*. It implies the *deepest awe* of His Divine Majesty while even approaching Him with the *strongest sensations* of *filial piety*—a *trembling* before Him, while *rejoicing* in Him—the greatest *circumspection* in every act of religious worship; the mind *wholly engrossed* with the object, while the *heart* is found in the deepest *prostration* at His feet. The *soul* abstracted from every outward thing—no *thought* indulged, but what relates to the act of worship in which we are engaged; nor a *word* uttered in prayer or praise, the meaning of which is not *felt* by the heart; no unworthy *conception* of such a Majesty permitted to arise in the mind, the same worshipping in spirit and in truth. No *carelessness* of *manner*, no *boldness* of *expression* permitted to appear—the *body* prostrated, while the *soul* in all its powers and faculties, adores. No *lip-service*, no *animal labour* allowed to take place. Nothing *felt*, nothing *seen*, but the *supreme God*; and the *soul* made by His hand, and redeemed by His blood.

2. *Worship* or *worshship*, implies, that *proper conception* we should have of God, as the *great Governor* of heaven and earth, of angels and men. How *worthy* He is in His *nature*, and in the *administration* of His *government*, of the

highest praises we can offer, and of the best services we can render.—Every act we perform should bear testimony to the sense we have of the *excellence* of His majesty, and the *worthiness* of His acts. “*Speak Lord! Thy servant heareth,*” is the language of the *true worshipper*;—he seeks to *know* the will of his Lord, that he may *do* that will. Every prayer is offered up in the spirit of subjection and obedience; and in the deepest *humility* he waits to receive the *commands* of his heavenly Master, and the *power* to fulfil them. He feels that he cannot choose:—he knows that his Lord cannot err. *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,* is not an *unmeaning* petition while proceeding from *his* mouth. His soul *feels* it: his heart desires it. *Obedience* is the element in which his soul lives, and in which it thrives, and encreases in happiness. In his sight God is *worthy* of all glory and praise, and dominion, and power, because He is not only the *fountain* of being, but also the *source* of *mercy*. He waits on his God; and he finds that this God waits to be gracious to him. He finds also that this God who is his *Friend*, condescends to be his *Companion* through life: therefore his heart is fixed; nor is he afraid of any evil tidings, for he trusts in the name of the Lord. He draws nigh to God in every act of worship, and has communion with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Ghost. He is kept in perfect peace, for his mind is stayed upon God, because he trusts in Him. All his powers are sensible of this truth; *Thou God seest me*; and his experience proves that God is the *Rewarder* of *them that diligently seek Him*. In such persons, Jesus sees the travail of His soul and is satisfied. But—Oh, how far are Christians in general, from this *adoration* and *worship*! All acknowledge that there is a God: all acknowledge that this God is, as before described:—but who worships Him aright? We have the *language* of *praise*, and the *language* of *prayer*, but who has the *spirit* of these duties? In most solemn assemblies how little of the spirit of this devotion is found? We are struck with any thing but God: and feel any thing but His presence. We do not worship Him aright, and therefore we know little of His power to save. Oh, when will it be that man shall live in *commerce* with his *Maker*, and in every act of adoration and worship, receive the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul! —However this may be, the conclusion is indisputable, that

“seeing life, breath, and all things come from, and depend on *Him*; every intelligent creature should give *Him* adoration and worship.”

### CONCLUSION.

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

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

VOL. I. D

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

**Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!**

*London, Sept. 6, 1826.*

## SERMON II.

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### THE WORSHIP WHICH GOD REQUIRES FROM MAN.

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JOHN, Chap. iv. ver. 24.

Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός' καὶ τοὺς προσκυνῶντας αὐτοῦ, ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ δεῖ προσκυνεῖν.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth."

To which may be added from the preceding verse:—

καὶ γὰρ ὁ Πατήρ τοιοῦτους ζητεῖ τοὺς προσκυνῶντας αὐτόν.

"For the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

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THIS is the first, the greatest, the most sublime, and the most necessary truth that can be presented to the human intellect. It is the *basis* of all correct theology, and the *foundation* on which true religion rests. It is properly the *first principle* of all science, the most interesting to angels and men, and the first to be studied by every intellectual being. Superior to this, *wisdom* has nothing to teach; and more important than this, *men* and *angels* have nothing to learn. It has no need of any formal *introduction*: and to compare its magnitude and importance with any other subject in the whole compass of knowledge, would be to lessen and degrade it. As the truth it contains could be taught only by *Him* who is its subject, so it can be seen only in its own light. The careless and the vicious cannot apprehend it; from such alone it is hidden, but the wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot err in it; for, though hidden from the wise and prudent, it is revealed even to babes.



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

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

II.—They who worship Him, must worship in spirit and in truth.

III.—The corollary ;—such worshippers God seeks and delights in.

I.—God is a Spirit.

The writer of this Gospel, in another place, says, *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Chap. i. 18.

The Evangelist seems to intimate, that, previously to the advent of Christ, the Supreme Being was not *fully known*, because not *fully revealed* ; and that Jesus gave that *plenary Revelation* which was necessary to *complete* and *perfect* whatever had gone before. Now, simple and obvious as it may seem, have we in the whole oracles of God besides, a *parrallel text* to this ? Where, except in our text, is this saying, or one substantially the same ?—God is a SPIRIT. It is not in the *Law*, it is not in the *Prophets*, it is not in the *Jewish Commentators*, and it has no parrallel among the *wise men of Greece or Rome*. It is a *declaration of God* that was never made before ; and contains an application or practical use of that *declaration*, which till now, was not fully understood ; either by Jew or Gentile. On this saying, the pure spiritual fabric of the Church of Christ has been built : and it has been, continues, and will be, the *touchstone* by which *true* from *spurious* Christianity, *pure* from *corrupt* worship shall be distinguished, to the end of time. It has distinguished the simple worship of God as instituted by Jesus Christ, from that *compound and superstitious service* which has been *invented* by fallen and apostate Churches ; and *practiced* by worldly and carnally-minded men. It is the *hedge* of the Evangelical *law*, and the true model, according to which, all right conceptions of God, and all ordinances and acts of Divine worship are to be regulated. This is one of those sayings of Jesus Christ, of which it may be asserted, *Never man spake like this man.*

When our Lord says, *God is a SPIRIT*, the term *God* is the *first* that presents itself to the mind, not the term *Spirit*.

The *first* is considered as an *axiom*, there is a Being who is termed  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ , God; the *second* designates His nature. This God is a *Spirit*. The term God, of which the other is spoken, is that which necessarily comes first under consideration.

1. Every being, person, or thing, has some peculiar *name* by which it is known and distinguished, and which is therefore essential to that being, person, or thing. The term God, which is the same as *good*, or the *good Being*, is not the name by which this Being can be essentially known and distinguished: nor does the Greek term  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  *Theos*, the Latin *Deus*, or the Hebrew אל *El*, אלוה *Eloah*, or אלהים *Elohim*, convey this essentially distinguishing *Name*: but we have it in what has usually been termed the *Tetragrammaton* among the Greeks, the name of *four letters*; and *Shem hamphorash*, the *unutterable name*, among the Jews: viz. the name יהוה YEH-VEH, or YEVE, or JEHOVAH. This is the name which the supreme Being has taken to Himself—the name by which He will be known, and which only is *proper* to Him; all others being only *attributes* or *designations* of some *qualities* or *perfections* in the Divine nature.

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

3. This Being, by whatsoever *name* called or known, is usually defined "An immaterial, intelligent, and free Being, of perfect goodness, wisdom, and power; who made the Universe, and continues to support it, as well as to govern and

direct it, by His providence." By His *immateriality, intelligence, and freedom*, He is distinguished from *fate, nature, destiny, necessity, chance, soul-of-the-world*; and from other fictitious Beings acknowledged by the *Stoics, Polytheists, and Spinosists*, as well as by all other sorts of *Atheists, Idolaters, bad Jews and spurious Christians*. See the preceding Discourse.

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

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

6. This self-existing Being is usually considered either *absolutely or relatively*; *absolutely*, as He is in His *own nature*; *relatively*, as he stands *related to his creatures*, and as He is considered by His *worshippers*. To define the essence of

this Being, is wholly impossible. All definitions of God, are *nominal* not *real*: not what the *nature* of that self-existing Being is, which we call *God*, but what *we mean*, by the word *God*.

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

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

9. *Spirit* is defined, "an un compounded, immaterial substance." Let us not be alarmed at the word *substance*, which many compound with *matter*. Substance is *subsistence*, whether *material* or *immaterial*; but *spirit* is *immaterial substance*, and consequently un compounded and indivisible. And from the ineffable spirituality of the divine nature, we can at once conceive that He has *no parts*: He is *unlimited*, *infinite*, and *eternal*. He cannot be *seen* by the *eye*; but he may be *perceived* by the *mind*. He is not *palpable* to the *hand*; but He may be *felt* by the *soul*. By His *mighty working*, the most powerful and salutary *changes* may be wrought in the mind, which it at once *perceives* to be supernatural; and which, from the holiness of the effects, it *knows* to be the word of God. This *mental feeling* or *perception* of the divine working, our Lord compares to the action of the *wind*: "The wind bloweth where it listeth,—ye hear the sound thereof,

but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John, iii. 9. Thus *the mind*, which is a spirit, is *sensible* of the operations of the divine spirit upon it ; but it is the *effect* of the divine influence, and not the divine nature, that the soul *feels*. God is never known *per se*, but is perceived only by His *operations*.

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

11. But though our Lord might intend by this declaration to wean off the Jews from their superstitious attachment to rites and ceremonies, in the performance of which they placed all their hopes of God's favour, both in time and eternity ; yet, it is probable, that the principal idea which He wished to implant, and which He wished to convey by the term *spirit*, as applied to God, was that of *inspiring energy* ; and it is in reference to this that He uses the similitude taken from the *wind*, referred to above. And it is worthy of remark, that the word as expressed in *three* of the principal languages of the world, *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, implies and includes in it, the idea of *inspiration breathing in*, or communicating a divine *afflatus*. I call these the principal languages of the universe, as the *first* contains the *Revelations of God to the Jews* : the *second*, the Revelation of God to the *Gentiles* : and in the *third*, the *Doctrines of Divine Revelation* were most generally diffused, especially through *Europe* and the *isles of the sea*.

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

In *Greek*, it is πνευμα from πναιω to breathe.

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

And it is not less remarkable, that, where God is asserting His own *eternity*, Rev. i, 8, He says, "I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *beginning* and the *ending*; which is, and which was, and is to come the Almighty." And this he repeats, verse 11, and in chap. xxi, 6, and xxii. 13. As these letters  $\alpha$  and  $\omega$ , *alpha* and *omega*, form the *first* and *last* of the *Greek alphabet*: so God is the *first* and *last*, from *eternity* to *eternity*; and is an *infinite spirit*, inspiring and giving life to all things; for these two letters conjoined, from the Greek verb  $\alpha\omega$ , *I breathe*, and are used by the Supreme Being, as if He had said, "I am the universal spirit, speaking all things into existence, and by my *all-inspiring energy*, preserving every thing in being." And when these observations are collated with the account given in Gen. ii. 7. of the *Creation of Man*, "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and *breathed* into his nostrils the *breath of lives*, and man became a living soul;" we shall be convinced yet more of their propriety. The first *life* was produced by an *inspiration* of God: the first human soul was the *effect* of this *inspiration*: and the *inspiring energy* of God, which produced this immortal spirit, continues to sustain its existence. And that *new life* which is promised in the Gospel, is the *effect* also of *Divine Inspiration*; for, "if a man be not born of water and the *spirit*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying *Abba, Father*." Of the nature and necessity of such a *change*, this most important saying of Jesus Christ puts us continually in mind; "God is a *spirit*, in Him, ye live, move, and have your being; by his *spirit* ye are quickened; and, the *inspiration* of the Almighty giveth understanding!" God therefore assumes this character, not only to shew His *simple, uncompounded* nature, and His *all-pervading energy*; but especially to manifest himself to man, as the *inspirer* and *maintainer* of *life*, that men might know they must live in continual commerce with their Maker; and that without him they can do nothing. Well may the truly devout say:—

'O, may I BREATHE no longer than I BREATHE  
MY SOUL to HIM, who gave my SOUL to BE;  
With all its infinite of prospect fair."

II.—The *SECOND proposition* is, *they who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

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

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

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

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

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

2. The word *προσκυβειν* *proskunein*, used by our Lord, signifies to *crouch down as a dog* before his master. This creature beyond all other domestic animals, feels his *dependence* on his master for support; and *gratitude* to him for food and maintenance. When called by his owner he runs to and *prostrates himself* before him; and with eyes full of inexpressible earnestness, affection, and submission, waits to receive and execute the orders of his master. This is, so far,

a true pattern of the *worship* we owe to God:—It should be *humble, submissive, affectionate, prompt, and obedient*. A consciousness of *dependence—gratitude*, for favours received—*love*, in return for love—and *obedience* as expressive of that *love and obligation*,—are essential to *true worship*. But these are *feelings and dispositions* which cannot be acquired by any without the *divine inspiration*.

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

4. *In spirit*, must necessarily be opposed to that shameless farago of senseless *rites and ceremonies*, by which some apostate or fallen churches have encumbered and disgraced the church of Christ. The *Greek and Roman* churches, have each contributed their mortal share to the contamination of the pure worship of God.—*Saints and angels*,—in the numerous hosts of which, are many *names of saints* never sanctified and of *angels* never created,—have engrossed the affections, while they have distracted the attention of millions of silly men and women, who leaving the *word of God*, have taken for divine revelations, the *commandments of men*: and thus, have made the *word of God* of no effect by their *traditions*. There is scarcely a place of worship on the whole continent of Europe, where a person who has properly contemplated the divine nature and is acquainted with his Bible, can witness an act of worship worthy the majesty of God; or any religious acts that can be termed *reasonable service*. The *Church of Rome* especially, in every country where it either prevails or exists, has so blended a pretended Christian devotion, with heathenish and Jewish rites and ceremonies: *two*



parts of which are borrowed from *pagan Rome*, the *third*, from the *Jewish Ritual* ill understood, and grossly misrepresented, and the *fourth part* from other corruptions of the Christian system. Nor is the *Protestant Church* yet fully freed from a variety of matters in public worship which savour little of that *simplicity* and *spirituality* which should ever designate the worship of that infinitely pure Spirit who cannot be pleased with any thing incorporated with His worship, that has not been prescribed by Himself, and has not a direct tendency to lead the *heart* from *earth* and *sensual* things to *heaven*, and that *holiness* without which, none shall see the Lord. The *singing* as it is practiced in several places, and the heathenish accompaniments of *ORGANS* and *musical instruments* of various sorts, are as contrary to the simplicity of the gospel, and the spirituality of that worship which God requires, as darkness is contrary to light. And if these abuses are not corrected, I believe the time is not far distant, when *singing* will cease to be a part of the divine worship. It is now, in many places, such as cannot be said to be any part of that worship which is *in spirit* and *according to truth*. May God mend it!

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

We have already seen that this may be considered as *partly* applying to the *cessation of Mosaic rites and ceremonies*, which were *shadowy* representations of the *Truth* that was to be fully revealed under the gospel dispensation. But *truth* here, must have a farther meaning.—It is not merely *sincerity*, in opposition to *show* and *hypocrisy*; *meaning* what we *say*, and *doing* what we *promise*; but it implies also the *directions* received from God's *truth*, *Divine revelation*:—which on this most important subject, tells us *there is no name given under heaven among men, whereby they can be saved, but Jesus Christ*: and the voice from heaven says, *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, HEAR HIM!* Now, when we *hear Him*, we hear,—no *man cometh unto the Father but by me*: and, *whatsoever ye ask of the Father in my name, he will give it unto you*. Hence we learn, that all worship must be directed to God *through Christ*. It is through His *worthiness*, and *sacrificial merit* alone that we can come to God, or be heard by Him. It is through his blood that we have ~~an~~

entrance to the holiest: for *in*, or through that *blood*, we have *redemption*: and to be *redeemed* from *death*, and *saved* from our *sins*, is the grand *end* of all acts of religious worship. Never were words better calculated to express this sentiment than those in the following collect, "Blessed Lord, who has caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of thy holy word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen." Without *prayer* there can be no *worship*: as no man can expect to receive spiritual help, unless he *pray* for it; and if he receive not spiritual help, he cannot worship God in the spirit. And we may add, unless he *acquaint* himself well with the *truth*, the holy scriptures, he cannot *pray* as he ought; as without their direction, he cannot *know his wants*, nor those *promises* which ensure the blessings which he needs; he must therefore at all opportunities, *hear them* read, preached and expounded:—*read* them himself with the deepest attention and seriousness:—*mark* every portion that is suited to his state, whether it be a threatening or a promise:—*learn*, to know himself, his God, and his Redeemer; his interest and his duty by all such *hearing, reading, and marking*: and he must *inwardly digest* the whole, so that they shall become a species of nourishment to his soul, that he may *grow in grace*, and in the *knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*; and feeling a growing meetness for that eternal life promised in the scriptures, he may *embrace* it and ever *hold it fast*, that he may never be moved away from the hope of the gospel. Being thus always prepared, he may wait upon the Lord without distraction, and under the influence of the *Spirit*, and the direction of the *Truth*, worship the Lord in the *beauty of holiness*.

III.—COROLLARY. These alone, can worship God acceptably; and our Lord adds, *for the Father seeketh such to worship Him*:—strange words! This unoriginated, infinite, self-sufficient, all perfect and independent Spirit, calls himself our FATHER, teaches us to pray to Him under this character, with the most gracious assurances that we shall not pray in vain. He calls Himself our *Father*, to encourage us to come to Him for all the good we need. *Prayer* is a part of the worship

which God expects from his human creatures. ASK, says he, and you shall receive; SEEK, says he, and you shall find: KNOCK, he adds, and it shall be opened unto you. This is the voice of a Father: now, would any man that had the heart of a parent, give his hungry dying child a stone, when he asked for bread? would he give him a serpent, when he asked for fish? or would he give him a scorpion, when he entreated for an egg? surely NO! And would God, the Father of the spirits of all flesh do otherwise? His word says NO: His spirit says NO: His Church says NO: and His own eternal and loving nature says NO. God the Father, will for Christ's sake, for his own name's sake, and for His truth's sake, give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Have not the fathers of our flesh cared for us, laboured for us, fed us, clothed us, instructed us, and defended us? Have they not even risked their lives for us? And what will not our heavenly Father do? Is it, not from Him, that all love, all bounty, all affection, all parental tenderness proceed? And when the streamlets are so abundant, what may not be expected from the fountain,—rather from the shoreless bottomless inexhaustible OCEAN—of eternal LOVE! He is seeking for those who pray and adore, seeking for an opportunity to do them good, seeking to save them, to pardon, sanctify, and seal them heirs of eternal life. He is seeking to save them, to pardon, sanctify, and seal them heirs of eternal life. He is seeking for those who pray and adore, but where does he find them! Are you who hear, such? Does God who searches and knows the heart, see in you, the ardent sigh, the humble importunate petition, the flowing tear, the penitential pang, the hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Does he hear from each of you, the expression of the whole of these indiscrible feelings, "Save Lord, or I perish!" "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee!" "Lord be merciful to me a sinner!" Then, he that was seeking, has found you, you are the worshippers whom he has sought; and He is now come to save you with all the power of an eternal life. Let us adore Him for His past long-suffering; let us ever implore Him for His mercy; let us thank Him for His past favours; and let us live a life of loving obedience to Him here, that we may live with and praise Him for ever and ever! Amen.

Let us for a few moments review the whole.

1. There is a God, the cause of all things, the Fountain of all perfection, and the source of all being: without parts or dimensions, for He is ETERNAL: filling the heavens and the earth, pervading, governing, and upholding all things, for He is an infinite spirit.

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

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

4. A man worships God, when he conceives aright of His majesty and of His mercy. He worships Him in Spirit, when under the influences of the Holy Ghost, he brings his understanding to be illuminated, his judgment to be informed and corrected: his will to be influenced, all the purposes and passions of his heart to be refined and purified: and he worships Him in Truth when every act of his religious life is guided and regulated by His word. They who thus worship God, are pleasing to Him, live holily and happily, die triumphantly, and shall rise and reign with Him gloriously to all eternity. Reader, This is the portion which God in Christ has intended for THEE!

## SERMON III.

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### THE PLAN OF HUMAN REDEMPTION.

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GALATIANS, CHAP. iv. ver. 4—7.

4. Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικὸς, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον·
5. Ἴνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν.
6. Ὅτι δὲ ἔστε υἱοὶ, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Ἰοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, κράζον, Ἀββᾶ, ὁ Πατήρ.
7. Ὅστε οὐκ ἔτι εἶ δοῦλος, ἀλλ' ὕψο· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος Θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ.

4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law;
5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.
7. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant; but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

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

I. God is too *wise* to err.

II. He is too *holy* to do wrong.

III. He is too *good* to be unkind.

I. His *wisdom* is seen in the order and arrangement of His plans. *Confusion* is the offspring of *folly*: order belongs to *wisdom*, and invariably proceeds from it. Hence, every work of wisdom must be properly planned, and have

proper *time* for its commencement, and proper *place* for its establishment. Previously to creation there were neither *time* nor *space*; for *time* signifies measured and limited duration, and *space* signifies that, in which *time* has its admeasurement and limitation, and the *place* in which created beings exist.

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

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

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

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

When it is considered between the extremities of matter, which fills the *capacity* of nature with something solid, tangible, and moveable, it is the same as *extension*.

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

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

When God by creation had struck *time* out of *eternity*, He appears to have divided it into *certain portions* or *periods*, each being what the Apostle calls here a *πλήρωμα pleroma*, a full round, or complete revolution in itself. So there was 1. A *pleroma* for the *patriarchal* state, the duration of which was about 2,000 years, commencing with the *creation*, and extending to the giving of the law. 2. This was followed by the *legal* or *Jewish pleroma*, which commenced with the Exodus from Egypt, and passed down to the incarnation of Christ, embracing about the same period. And 3. The *Christian pleroma*, which, commencing with the birth of our Lord, probably will include the remainder of time, to the end of the world. It is to this last that the Apostle here alludes, ὅτι δὲ ἦλθε τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου. *But when the fulness of the time was come*, when that point arose, in which God had determined to manifest His great designs in the redemption of the world, *he sent forth his Son made γενομενον*, (rather γεννημενον, born) *of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, &c.* Thus when the *pleroma* was completed, when the purposed revolution that was to usher in the Messiah arrived,—before which it would have been improper to have introduced Him, and after which it would have been equally improper to have delayed His manifestation,—God's wisdom that cannot err, having laid the *plan*, brought it to existence by His power and providence.

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

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

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

3. But the question is in itself *absurd*, because it involves subjects that concern the infinite free agency of God alone, and are consequently beyond the comprehension of man. For, as well might it be asked, Why did God delay the *creation* of the world and man so late, that it took place, according to the best reckonings, only between five and six thousand years ago? To this I answer, it was all eternity before; that eternity is an infinite now before God. In whatever point creation had commenced, eternity must have *preceded*; and were it only to commence now, an indivisible eternity must have preceded, being neither less nor more than what it then was. Existence must *begin somewhere*, and it is equal where that existence commences. There must be an equal eternity before, and an equal eternity after. It is, therefore, absurd to ask when we have to do with eternity, Why did not God begin the work of creation ten thousand, a hundred thousand, or millions of millions of years before? there must be a *now* of commencement, and that *now* must be the same, neither sooner nor later, in any point of eternity.

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

II. *He can do nothing wrong*. This rests on *His holiness*



and *justice*. What He plans must be as *holy* as it is *wise*, and as *necessary* as it is *holy*; for He can do nothing that is *useless*. These three points meet in the incarnation of Christ, — *Wisdom*, *holiness*, and what is indispensably *necessary*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. In order to this, Jesus Christ is born of a woman, and thus assumes the nature of man; that this nature might be *ennobled* and *dignified* by a union with His own.

5. The incarnation of Christ is a mystery that cannot be comprehended by the human mind: how, in the *man* Christ

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

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

II. But why should Christ suffer?

1. He suffered for man, in consequence of His *purpose* to redeem man. 2. For this very purpose He became *incarnate*. 3. He put Himself in *the place of the whole human race*, for the very purpose of suffering in their stead. 4. We have already seen that God can do nothing that is either *wrong* or *useless*. 5. As God, He had a *right* to assume man's nature,—and as *Sovereign*, to expiate the offences of man by his sufferings in that nature. 6. It was *right* that He should do so—else He had not done it. 7. It was *necessary*—for he can do nothing that is *useless*. 8. By His incarnation and suffering He made an atonement for their sins. 9. It is a maxim in law and justice, that the goods of the *spoiler* shall recompence the *spoiled*—and that the nature that transgresses, shall either suffer or compensate. On this principle, Christ acted as the *representative* of, and *substitute* for man: and thus, not only made an atonement for iniquity, but by His merit, acquired a *right* for man to be restored to his forfeited privileges, and to be brought back by *adoption* into the heavenly family. 10. Nothing can be clearer from the Scriptures than, that God *willed* all this: He had a *right* to do so—it was *just* to do so—for, His *will* is ever holy, just and good.

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

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

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

(1) He was *out of the family*—Having lost the Divine Image, he could no longer be in the favour of God: and could no longer be considered as a part of that family. And he

must be restored to it, in order to regain its rights and privileges. We have already seen that the recovery of his *natural filiation* was utterly impossible; and the only way of being restored to the family, was by *adoption*, and this is so important a point, that it requires a particular consideration.

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

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

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

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

Lib. I. Pandectar, Tit. vii. art. 1. vol. 1. p. 24.

“The learned suppose this to have been the origin of *adoption* among the *Romans*: That each family should possess its

own private sacred things, (or household gods) its hearth, and altars, concerning which in the laws of the Twelve tables it was ordered, *Let the private sacred things remain for ever* :— The Romans strove by all means to preserve those sacred things from perishing; and therefore in the failure of natural offspring, they took care that some one should be adopted into the race and family, and the possession of the religious rites of the family, that so these privileges might be perpetuated.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. This adoption supposes that he is entirely cut off from the *old family*, having no longer any legal relation to, nor connexion with it.

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

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

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

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

To apply these more particularly.

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

2. To restore him, the way of *adoption* only was left; and that could not have taken place, had not a previous adoption taken place, *viz.* the adoption of human nature by Jesus Christ: therefore says the Apostle, *in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, born of a woman*: thus He adopted human nature, our flesh and blood—that He might make proper way for the adopting of our whole nature, flesh and spirit—into the family of God.

3. This adoption, therefore, supposes, and absolutely requires that he be cut off from the old stock, and grafted into the new: leaving behind him all his sins, sinful habits, sinful companions, and sinful dispositions: being no longer of his *old father* the devil, nor in any respect doing his lusts, performing his will, or associating with his followers; and that, as the *old consanguinity* is changed, he now stands in

relation only to God, holy angels, and holy men : and that he is bound to maintain in every respect, the honour, dignity, and respect of the Divine Family into which he is adopted.

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

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

6. That, as by this adoption he acquires a new nature, so he has a *new name*—he is called *after God* ; a *son of God*, a *child of God*, an *heir of God*.—But, properly, the family name is *Saint*, all the adopted children are *called to be SAINTS* : for *holiness* becomes God's house and family for ever. Where there is no *sainthood*, there is no *adoption*, and consequently no *heirship*, and no *inheritance*. To this most important part of the *adoption* the Apostle alludes, Rom. viii. 14, *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*—and they receive the *spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father*, ver. 15. And in consequence of this adoption, they are to be *conformed to the image of God's Son*, ver. 29, who will at last *change their vile body, and make even it, like unto His glorious body, according to the energy whereby He is able to subdue even all things to himself*. Phil. iii. 21. Thus they have the *family name*, the *family nature*, and the *family privileges*—and these are inseparable from each other : for as one of our nervous writers said, *Every man is either a SAINT or a BRUTE*.

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

The Law here, though generally understood to signify the *Mosaic law*, both moral and ritual, more properly means the *moral law* itself, by which every human being is bound “to love God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbour as himself :”—where this law is written in the heart, universal obedience will be secured. He that loves God, will

keep His commandments—he that thus loves his neighbour, will do him no hurt, but on the contrary every kind office. On every human soul this law is binding, even naturally considered: for it was the law under which man was made. But the law, as given by the ministry of Moses, explained, enforced, and sanctioned this law: and all its sanctions are summed up in these fearful words: *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* To be made under the law, is to be made under the obligation to keep this law; and if broken, the being made under it, signifies to be liable to its curse. As all therefore have broken this law—have sinned against God, and against their neighbour,—they are *cursed of the Lord*, are exposed to His wrath and to everlasting perdition.

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

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

In order to accomplish man's salvation, *God sent forth His Son*, *εξαπιστειλεν ο Θεος τον υιον αυτου*—He sent Him from Himself—He who was the *Eternal Logos*, that lay in His bosom, He sent Him forth to be incarnated by the energy of His own Spirit, in the womb of the Virgin: and when He had said, *done*, and *suffered* all that became Him as the Messiah and the Redeemer of man, and had purchased eternal redemption for us, and appointed His apostles and their successors to proclaim repentance and remission of sins in His name; and had sent forth His Spirit to give energy to their words; then, to as many as turned from their sins by repentance, and laid hold on the sacrificial offering of Christ by faith, that same Spirit He hath sent forth (*εξαπιστειλεν*—sent it from his Son Jesus, as Jesus was sent forth from Himself) attests their redemption, to every penitent and believing soul which He had purchased by His blood.

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

This adoption is manifested to believers two ways:—I. NEGATIVELY; and II. POSITIVELY.

#### I. NEGATIVELY.

1. By the removal of their guilt,—giving them ease and peace of conscience.
2. By taking away their darkness, and diffusing throughout their souls His heavenly light.
3. By removing their burthensome miserable sense of guilt, so that they no longer feel self-condemnation, beyond which, the soul cannot suffer an evil more distressing on this side eternity. Hence they feel no longer that dreadful apprehen-



sion of God's wrath; that fearful looking for a fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries.

## II. POSITIVELY.

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

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

3. Wherever this Spirit comes, it bears a testimony to *itself*. It shews that it is the Divine Spirit by its own light; and he who receives it is perfectly satisfied of this. It brings a light, a power, and conviction, more full, more clear, and more convincing to the understanding and judgment, than they ever had, or even can have, of any circumstance or fact brought before the intellect. The man knows that it is the Divine Spirit, and he knows and feels that it bears testimony to the state of grace in which he stands.

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

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

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

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

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

2. It cannot be acquired by *gift*, for the persons of whom we speak, have sinned, and are under the curse of the law: and God being infinitely one, and all His attributes in absolute

harmony, He can do nothing by *mercy* and *bounty*, that has not the full approbation of His *holiness* and *justice*.

3. The inheritance by natural or adoptive right is that alone which can be intended here ; hence the Apostle says in a parallel text, Rom. viii. 17, *If children then heirs*. And in the Text, the Apostle reasoning on their *adoption*, says *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, (δουλος, a slave) but a son*. The slavery and disgrace of the sinful state were now ended ; and, being received into the heavenly family, they were *ennobled* by the *admission* ; and *enriched* by the *inheritance*. The children of the family alone have the right to the paternal inheritance :—none can inherit that have not this family right—hence no soul can ever obtain heaven, that is not *born of God*. Vain, therefore, is the expectation of heaven when we come to die, if we have not formed a part of the family of God while in life.

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

his head—and at last prostrated by death, and mingled with the dust of the earth—but now how changed! The *soul* is renewed in glory—the *body* fashioned after the glorious human nature of Jesus Christ, and both joined together in an indestructible bond, clearer than the moon, brighter than the sun, and more resplendent than all the heavenly spheres; for having conquered and triumphed in the church militant, it is now sat down with Jesus on His throne, as He, having overcome, is sat down with the Father on the Father's throne! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! And His children, His followers, and confessors, shall reign with Him for ever and ever! Amen.

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

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

Add to this, the glory that shall redound to the name of God and the Lamb throughout eternity on this account: the wonderful, and to us now, ineffable displays that shall be made of the holiness, justice, goodness, mercy, and long-suffering of God, all exercised in the work of redemption;—the astonishing *mystery of Providence*, which has conducted the whole scheme of salvation, through the *Patriarchal*, *Mosaic*, and *Christian dispensations*, to the end of the world, which shall then be unravelled; all seeming contradictions reconciled; all apparently insulated operations *connected* in the one Great Whole. The discovery in what degrees and manners the Divine energy counter-worked the spirit of evil that was in the

world, and preserved man in a salvable state; and how, for the accomplishment of His most gracious purposes in the salvation of a lost world, He raised one and depressed another, turning the nations upside down; ever causing all things to work together for good to them that loved Him. The wonders of *Creation*, the wonders of *Providence*, and the wonders of *Grace*, all produced, guided, governed, and directed by this *Sovereign CHRIST*—and notwithstanding the *malevolence of Satan* and his angels, the opposition and gainsaying of *wicked men*, and the evil produced by the *unfaithfulness* of those who professed to be his friends; they shall see all resulting *here*, in glory to God in the highest, peace and good will to men, and in the other world, issuing in the eternal honour of Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father: to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. That of such solemn importance is this testimony, that *all the Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity join in it.*—for the text says, *Because ye are sons* (i. e. by this gracious adoption) **GOD**, (the Father) *hath sent forth the SPIRIT* (the HOLY GHOST) *of his SON* (the LORD JESUS CHRIST) *into your heart crying Abba, Father* : so that in the mouth of these three heavenly Witnesses, every word may be established.

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

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

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

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

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

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

18. That he who turns from his sins, deplores them with a penitent heart, and believes on Jesus as having been incarnated

for *him*, and as having suffered and died in his stead, trusting only in the *infinite merit of his blood*; shall, as surely as Christ hath suffered for sinners, receive the remission of his sins, and a right to the tree of life, and to that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

Wherefore, as the SPIRIT and the BRIDE say, COME:

Let him that *heareth*, say COME!

And let him that is *thirst*, Come.

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

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



## SERMON IV.

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

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A DISCOURSE IN BEHALF OF  
**THE WESLEYAN MISSIONS,**  
*Preached at Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London,*  
MAY, 2, 1824.

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1 TIMOTHY, Chap. ii. ver. 3—6.

3. Τοῦτο γὰρ καλὸν καὶ ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ,
  4. \*Ὁς πάντα ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι, καὶ εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἰλθεῖν.
  5. Εἷς γὰρ Θεὸς, εἷς καὶ Μεσίτης Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, Ἀνθρώπος Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς.
  6. Ὁ δὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, τὸ μαρτύριον καιροῖς ἰδίους.\*
3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour,
  4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.
  5. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
  6. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

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IN these and the preceding verses, the Apostle enjoins a most important *duty*,—PRAYER for all sorts, states, and conditions of men; and this he recommends by *motives* and *arguments* the strongest that can be conceived. "I will therefore that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men—that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth."

*Prayer* for the pardon of sin, and for the obtaining the

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

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

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

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

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

3. These institutions are formed to promote or accomplish a particular *end*; and such an end as justifies the *motives*, and sanctions the means and energies which are required to be brought into action for their accomplishment.

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

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

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

The Divine *purpose* is first summarily declared :

I. God wills that all men should be saved.

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

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

(1) There is *one* GOD.

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

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

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

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

I. The purpose of God declared: *He wills that all men should be saved*. This will or decree, is founded on the following principles. 1. He is the *Creator* of all. 2. He made of one flesh and blood all the nations of men, to dwell on the face of the whole earth. 3. He made man in His own image and likeness, that he might be happy. 4. In this original purpose and creating act, He had in view all the *posterities* of that *one human pair* which He created. None were created but Adam and Eve: all the rest came by *natural generation* from those *two*. There was no distinction of original families, created at different times, or for different purposes: *two persons* only were created, and whatever was designed for *them*, was necessarily designed for the whole of their posterity, all of whom were *seminally included* in this first and *only created pair*; being properly and *physically* a part of themselves, and continued partakers of their being. And as God intended that *man should spring from man* after this creation; so He considered them as *one stock, one family*, of which Himself was the *Father* and the *Head*; and however He might in His Providence, scatter them over the earth, assign them different habitations, and different bounds to those habitations; yet, in reference to their immortal spirits, and their eternal states, He made no distinction; but as declared here *willed*

*the salvation of all*: for *all men*, necessarily takes in the *whole posterity* of the *first pair*: and that posterity is a continuation and extension of the being of the human stock. It cannot appear strange therefore, that God should *will all men to be saved*; for this necessarily follows from his willing the salvation of *any*: for that nature has not been divided, and every portion of it falls equally under the merciful regards of the Father of the spirits of all flesh.

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

II. But, in order that this design might be accomplished, it was necessary that it should be *revealed*: and that God its Author should be glorified, it was necessary that He should be made known; and that MAN its object should be duly affected by it, it was requisite that his state, danger, and obligation should be fully declared: and this has been done by the Spirit

of God in Moses, in the Prophets, and in the writers of the New Testament. In these, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; God is made known to man; and man is brought to an acquaintance with himself. This revelation contains the only system of pure theology,—the only rational account of the Being and Perfections of God—of good and evil—of justice and injustice—of the immortality of the soul—of a future state—of the general resurrection—of what worship God requires—and of the way in which he may be restored to the favour and image of God. The *outlines* of these important doctrines were revealed in the *Old Testament*: the particulars and fulness are brought to light by the *New*. This revelation is termed the *TRUTH*; and the *New Testament* particularly; the *truth of God*, and the *truth of the Gospel*.

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

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

The revelation of God is the *mind* of God made known to men; and the mind is not truer to itself, than the Inspired Writings are to the mind and purpose of God.

*Truth* is sometimes put in opposition to what is *imperfect*, *emblematical*, and *representative*; so, in these words of the Evangelist, "The *LAW* was given by Moses, but *grace* and *TRUTH* came by Jesus Christ," John i. 17. The Mosaic law was a *representative* system; it was the *shadow of good things to come*, and *not the very image*, Heb. x. 1. The Gospel was the *substance*: in it all the *outlines* are *filled up*—the *representations* and *types* of the Law *fulfilled*, by the exhibition of their realities. The law made nothing perfect: it pointed out by *shadows* and *similitudes* those *better things* which were

yet to come ; and thus it was the *truth*, the fulfilment of the sacrificial system, which offered only representative victims : but the gospel brought in and exhibited the *true Scripture*, that Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Now this truth contains especially the following grand fundamental principles.

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

“ No EVIL can from HIM proceed ;  
 ’Tis only SUFFERED, not DECREED :  
 AS DARKNESS is not from the SUN,  
 Nor mount the SHADES till he is gone.”

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

This most august and most perfect of all Beings, and the Source whence all existence is derived, is here termed Σωτηρ ἡμῶν Θεός, *our Saviour God*—the God who saves man—and the only Being who *can save* ; for the salvation of a lost world is a work which an all-powerful and infinitely good God alone can effect. And such is His goodness, such His love to man, that he assumes this character, and will be known by this name. In this character, fallen man needs Him most : and in this character He is most prominently exhibited in His own Word. He that cometh to Him, professeth to worship Him, *must know that HE IS* :—that He is the sole author of existence : and because He is good, and the *saving God* ; He is *the Redeemer of them that diligently seek Him*. They seek

Him in order to be saved : and they have salvation in consequence of seeking Him—which is a reward or recompense, not of *debt* but of *grace* ; for God the Saviour does all things for His own name's sake.

There are attributes which now belong to God that are not essential to His nature. He is *merciful* ; but before the fall of man, this could not have been one of his attributes—in like manner, He is *long-suffering*—He is the *Forgiver* of iniquity, transgression, and sin ; in a word, He is God our SAVIOUR. But though all these spring from his infinite *goodness*, which ever was, and must be, an essential attribute of His nature, yet it was only in consequence of *sin* entering into the world, that His innate essential goodness became necessary to be expressed by these *manifestations*, and their concomitant acts. Man is a sinner ; and therefore he needs a Saviour :—man has destroyed himself ; but in God is his help. Man cannot give a ransom for his own soul ; but this saving God has found out a ransom.

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

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

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

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

2. GOD, their Creator, and Sovereign, from whom they received their being, and to whom their allegiance was invariably due, but against whom they had sinned, and from whom they had deeply revolted. These fallen spirits God willed to save, and redeem from impending ruin. Such was the nature of their

*sin*, and of His *holiness*, that the original union in which man's happiness consisted, could not possibly be restored, unless God could become such a one as man; or man be restored to the Divine image; and thus be brought into that state of *union* with Him, which he had in the beginning. Man, who was a rebel, and not even a *penitent*, could not expect to be restored to favour: and man, who was a *sinner* and *full of impurity*, could not expect to be brought into this union; which could not take place without a moral change, that it was utterly impossible he should work in himself.

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

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

But we are not to suppose that the *mediatorial* office of Christ did not begin till after His *ascension* to heaven, which is the general opinion. Those appearances under the Patriarchal dispensation, and also under the Mosaic, of a glorious Personage, sometimes called the *Angel of the Lord*,—the *Angel of the Covenant*,—and the *Captain of the Lord's Hosts*,—who assumes the name *Jehovah*,—and performs acts practicable only by Him whose power is unlimited, and whose judgments are just; have been supposed by the wisest of men, to have been appearances of Him *in the likeness of man*, who in the fulness of time took upon Him the form of a man, by being *incarnated* of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Had man been left just as he was when he fell from God, he in all probability, had been utterly *unsalvageable*: as he appeared to be, he lost all his *spiritual*



*light and understanding*, and even his *moral feeling*. We have no mean proof of this, in his endeavouring to *hide himself* among the trees of the garden, from the presence and eye of Him whom, previously to his transgression, he knew to be *every where present*; to whose eye the darkness and the light are both alike; and who discerns the most secret thoughts of the heart of man. Add to this, it appears as if he had neither *self-abasement* nor *contrition*; and therefore he charged his crime upon the *woman*, and indirectly upon *God*; while the woman, on her side, charged her delinquency upon the *serpent*. As they were, so would have been all their posterity, had not some gracious principle been supernaturally restored to enlighten their minds, to give them some knowledge of good and evil—of right and wrong—of virtue and vice—and thus bring them into a salvable state. Now, the gracious *Mediator* is expressly said to be, that *true Light which lightens every man that cometh into the world*, John i. 9; and it is from this Light that we have *conscience*, for conscience is neither a *principle of light* nor a *power of discernment*; but a *recipient subject*, which is capable of receiving light, and transmitting it to the judgement, in order to enable it to form a proper estimate of the moral conduct of its owner. It is precisely the same to the *soul* what the *eye* is to the *body*. The *eye* is not *light*, nor a *principle of light*, nor can it of itself discern any thing; it is a proper recipient of light, without which there is no *vision*. As the sun, or in his absence, *borrowed* or *artificial light*, shines upon and through the different humours of the eye, so objects within the range of vision are discerned; and as Jesus, the *true Light*, by His Spirit, shines upon conscience, so a man is capable of forming a just estimate of his spiritual state. This light is both *directive* and *convicting*; and affords to every fallen soul a grand antagonist power, by which it may resist evil; by the proper use of which, those who are brought to God receive *more grace*; and for the *abuse* of which every man shall be judged in the great day. This light, Jesus, as *Mediator*, has imparted to all men, in all ages, and in all countries. It is this saving principle that has ever remonstrated against evil, shewed man his transgressions, shone upon his guilt, and convinced him of his own helplessness.

After His ascension, this Mediator appeared, and ever ap-

pears in the presence of God for us. And thus *before* and *after* His incarnation, He was the *one Mediator between God and man*.

As there can be but *ONE God*, so there can be but *ONE Mediator*; for He who must be Mediator between God and man must partake of both natures. Who else could appear in the presence of God to negotiate the concerns of a whole world! We have already seen that Jesus the Mediator has all the essential attributes of that God, of whose glory He is the brightness; and of whose person He is the express image: and His incarnation proves that He was made *man*: and His manner of life, passion, and death, manifest, that His *human nature* was precisely the same as that of all *other men*. Thus we find *two distinct persons* in one being; for, in the *Man Christ Jesus dwelt* all the fulness of the *Godhead* bodily. This subject is considered by many pious men, to be one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion: and should be adored and implicitly received; but is no subject for rational investigation. On such subjects as these, we perhaps concede too much to those, who, pretending to believe nothing but what they can rationally account for, in fact believe nothing at all. Every attribute of God may be a subject for reason: and by reasoning upon His attributes, His Being and Perfections have been demonstrated.

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

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

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

He who can believe that Isaiah, or any of the prophets,

spoke by *inspiration*, i. e. as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*, must believe the possibility of the *incarnation of Christ*. And he who can believe it possible, that Christ can dwell in the hearts of His followers, can as easily believe that the *Messiah* or *Logos*, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, *was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. Reason says, if the one were possible, so is the other : and as one is *fact*, so may the other be also. The *possibility* of the thing is evident :—God says the *fact* has taken place—that, therefore, which faith saw *before* to be possible and probable, it sees *now* to be *certain* ; for God's testimony added puts all doubts to flight. The Lord Jesus, the Almighty's Fellow, was *incarnated* of the Holy Ghost, and was made man : and by being *God* and *Man*, was every way qualified to be Mediator *between God and men*, as the Text declares him to be. *God* and *man* met in the *Person* of Jesus Christ : and God was in *this* Christ reconciling the world to Himself. In both these cases, Reason, without going out of its proper province by meddling with things inconceivable, may arrive at such unimpeachable evidence as may satisfy honest inquiry, and silence doubt. Some of the ancients appear to have thought that the word *ανθρωπος*, *man*, in the last clause of the verse, was a *needless repetition* ; and therefore read the verse thus : *There is one Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus*. But that the term is here repeated with *manifest design*, and that it not only strengthens, but explains the sense, will be evident when the fifth verse is considered. Christ Jesus, who was from the beginning,—who appeared to the Patriarchs—and who spake by the prophets—really became *Man*, that he might be qualified to redeem man.

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

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

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

*He gave Himself a ransom for all.*

His *incarnation* might have been supposed sufficient to answer all the purposes of reconciling men to God. Could it be supposed that the good and benevolent God would look on those with indifference, who were *represented* by so august a person—one who shared their nature, who assumed it for the very purpose of recommending them to God, and who, while He felt the sympathies and charities of humanity, was equally concerned for the honour and justice of God; and who, from the perfection of His nature, could feel no partialities, nor maintain, nor advocate the *interests* of one, against the *honour* of the other. I believe the *reason* of man could not have gone farther than this. And, had *Revelation* stopped here, reason would have thought that the *incarnation* was sufficient; and that even Divine justice could not have withheld any favour from such an Intercessor. Even this would have appeared a noble expedient, worthy of the benevolence of God; and a *sufficient reason* why He should receive into His favour the beings who were by this Incarnation united to Him, who from eternity lay in the Father's bosom, and in whom He ever delighted. But God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. Had man never *sinned*, and was only to be *recommended* to the *Divine notice*, in order to receive favours, or even to obtain *eternal life*, this might have been sufficient:—but when he had *sinned* and become a *rebel* and *traitor* against his Maker and Sovereign, the case was widely different: *atonement* for the offence was indispensably requisite; in default of which, the *penalty*, (fully known to him previously to the offence,) must be *exact*ed—“In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:” “for the soul that sinneth, it shall

die." On this account the incarnation alone, could not be sufficient; nor did it take place in reference to *this*, but in reference to His bearing the *penalty* due to man for his transgression; for, without being incarnated, He could not have suffered, nor died—hence the text adds, *who gave Himself a ransom for all*: that is, who *suffered death* upon the cross for the redemption of the world.

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

The word *λυτρον*, from *λυα*, to loose, or to pay a price, has, in *Greek*, nearly the same meaning—the *sum of money* required to be paid for the *redemption* of a *captive*, and thus to *loose* or *dissolve* the obligation the person was under to *serve*, or to be *punished*. But the word *αντιλυτρον*, used here by the Apostle, signifies properly, a *corresponding price*, or ransom—the *redeeming life by life*. Hence *Hesychius* interprets *αντιλυτρα*, by *αντιψυχα*, "*Antilytra* signifies those peculiar sacrifices in which life is given for life,"—or the life of one redeemed by the life of another: and this was the true notion of *sacrifice* in all ages, and among all the inhabitants of the world. *Cæsar* tells us, that it was the opinion of the *Gauls*, among whom *human sacrifices* were prevalent, that "The anger of the immortal gods could not be appeased, unless the life of a man was redeemed by the life of another;" *Quod pro vitâ hominis, nisi vita hominis reddatur, non posse aliter deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur.* Com. lib. vi. s. 15. Jesus Christ gave His life for the life of the world—He laid down His life for the sheep. While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son—for He was delivered for our offences—and God made His soul (life) an offering for sin. With such assertions, the Scripture abounds. The same word, *αντιλυτρον*, is rendered by *Hesychius*, *αντιδοτον*, *antidote*, but this does not signify merely a *medicine* by which *poison* is counteracted or destroyed, but *one thing given in the place of another*, as in the case above, the *life of Christ* given for the *life of the*

*world.* For ALL—that is, for all who had sinned—for all those whose nature He had assumed: for, *He took not upon Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham*—an expression, by the way, which has been misunderstood, and pitifully misrepresented: for it is supposed that by the seed of Abraham, the Jewish people are particularly represented. But when was the covenant made with Abraham—*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed?* Was it while he was in *circumcision*, or in *uncircumcision?* In *uncircumcision*, surely—when he represented the whole of the children of men—before the distinction of *Jew* and *Gentile* had ever taken place: and the covenant embraced not only all the *nations*, but all the *families* of the earth; and is extended to every *individual* of those families, by those solemn words of the Apostle, “Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for EVERY man.” Can the Molochian doctrine of *unconditional reprobation* look these *Scriptures*, or the *incarnated* Jesus, in the face, and not hasten to hide itself in the pit of perdition, from whence it arose!—He died for EVERY man:—

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

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

The original words, το μαρτυριον καιροis ιδιοis, are not easily interpreted, and have been variously understood. The most authentic copies of the *Vulgate* have, *Testimonium temporibus suis*—which *Calmet* translates, *Rendant ainsi temoignage au tems marquè*—“Thus rendering testimony at the appointed time.” *Wakefield* translates, “The testimony, reserved to its proper time.” *Rosenmüller*, *Hæc est doctrinâ temporibus*

*suis reservata*—"This is the doctrine which is reserved for its own times;" that is, adds he, *quæ suo tempore in omni terrarum orbe tradetur*—"The doctrine which in its own time shall be delivered to all the inhabitants of the earth." Here he translates μαρτυριον, doctrine, and contends that this, not testimony, is its meaning, not only in this passage, but in I Cor. i. 6: ii. 1, &c.

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

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

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

The *British, and Foreign Bible Society*, and its *Auxiliaries* in *Europe, Asia, and America*, have performed a work in a few years, which former generations could not have believed possible in *as many centuries.* The Apocalyptic Angel is flying with increasing celerity, in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give glory

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

The whole economy of grace, in the salvation of men, supposes the *Bible* and the minister of the gospel. The Bible is the Divine Testimony—the Christian Missionary is the advocate. This testimony he pleads on, applies, and enforces, in order to lead men not only to the knowledge, but also to the acknowledgement (*εἰς ὁμολογίαν*) of the truth. A man may know the truth, without acknowledging it. To acknowledge it, is not only to allow that it is the truth, but to confess it;—to feel one's own interest in it;—to be affected by its contents;—to be alarmed by its threatenings;—encouraged by its promises, and influenced by its precepts. The Sacred Word is, in general, superficially considered;—it is not duly weighed—it requires the strong exhortations of the messengers of the Gospel to stir up the drowsy and careless—God designs that both shall go together: and hence the age that has been distinguished by an unparalleled dissemination of *Bibles*, has been equally conspicuous for *Missionary* exertions. In almost every instance where the BIBLE has gone before, the MISSIONARY has followed after; and to them who



have received it, the tenor of the first question has been, *Understandest thou what thou readest?* which is the introduction to his preaching unto them *Jesus*. The *truth*—the Gospel of the grace of Christ, must be proclaimed to men; and it is the duty of all who know it, to diffuse it far and wide; and when it is made known, it is the duty of those who hear it, to acknowledge and receive it. This is the proper import of the original word—that they may come, *εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας*, “to the acknowledgement of the truth,”—that they may receive it as the *truth*, and make it the *rule* of their *faith*; the *director* of their *life*, and the *model* of their *practice*.

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

I have already stated, that it is the duty of every man who possesses the truth, to disseminate it as far and as wide as he possibly can. There are many nations containing many millions of immortal spirits, who are *perishing* for *lack of knowledge*; and *starving* for want of the *bread of life*. We have enough and to spare—the *means* of diffusion are in our power, and we shall be highly criminal in the sight of God, if we do not use them. God has given the *Bible*, and God has prepared the *men*. The *first* has been given by the *inspiration* of the Almighty—the *latter* shew that they have received His commission to take it to the ends of the earth.

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

1. Among all the extraordinary messengers whom God hath sent to announce His will to the nations of the earth, there is no *genuine* evidence that he ever used any extraordinary or *supernatural* means to send any of them to the place of his destination. By an *especial* call He pointed out the *men* whom He had commissioned to bear His name among the Gentiles; but He left, what has been technically called, their *out-fit*, to themselves and His people, to be regulated by their own prudence and benevolence, under the direction of His providence. Even *Jonah* himself, who had such an extraordinary commission to minister to the *Ninevites*,

was left to choose the ordinary modes of conveyance: and *St. Paul* and his *companions*, when sent as extraordinary messengers to the Gentiles, were brought on their way by the brethren, and were obliged in the execution of their commission to subject themselves to the general difficulties of land journeys, and to the perils of ordinary sea voyages. Nor did God choose so particularly to interfere with the general dispensations of His providence, as to prevent even a *shipwreck*, which occurred in the ordinary course of things, though He exerted His power to *preserve the lives* of the sailors and passengers, while He left the *ship* and its *cargo* to be destroyed by the storm. Prophets, apostles, evangelists, and all their successors in the Sacred History, while they had the positive command, *to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*, were left to make their way to the places of their destination, by those means which their own prudence and the benevolence of His people might suggest.

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

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

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

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

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

God who made you says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength." And God who *redeemed* you has said, "Thou shalt do so, and love thy neighbour as thyself ;"—and adds, "There is no greater commandment than these : and on these hang all the law and the prophets ;"—to which he adds, "*What you would that men should do to you, do even so to them.*" Now, 1. If we love God, will we not keep his commandments ? 2. If we love our neighbour as ourselves, will we not labour to make him

happy? 3. If we have ever felt the Gospel to be the power of God to our own salvation, will we not endeavour to send it to those who are destitute? 4. If we feel *bound* to do to *others* as we would wish, on a change of circumstances, *they should do to us*, then, from what we now know, had *they* the Gospel, and *we* were destitute of it, how ardently would we desire that *they* would share with *us* that heavenly bread! And how hardly should we think of them, if they had the *blessing* of which we were destitute, and had the *means* of sending it, which we could not command, if they permitted us to perish while they themselves had bread enough and to spare; and giving, however largely, would not lessen their store!—Think of this, and then act under the influence of that conviction which the evidence may bring. 5. There is a maxim in law, “that he who neglects to save life, when it is in his power to do it, is a murderer, as well as he who violently takes it away.” What then must God and considerate men think of us, if we permit Satan to murder those souls, which, by the Grace of God, it is in our power to snatch from the sides of the pit, and pluck as brands from the burning? 6. But this subject is placed in the strongest point of view by God himself: “Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the Word of My mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die: if thou do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man *shall die* in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Ezek. xxxiii. 6—8. Will not these words apply to every man, whether in *Palestine, England, or elsewhere*, who neglects, when it is in his power, either *personally*, or by *proxy*, to turn a sinner from the error of his ways?—We find from the above, that although the sinner, who is not warned, *shall die in his sins*, yet his blood shall be required at the hands of the negligent *watchmen*; and may we not infer, that the Gentile nations, who do not receive that *warning* which it is in the power of Christians to send, *will die in their sins*? And surely they who die in their sins, where God is, can never come.—We know that the Gentiles who act according to the dictates of that Light which lightens every man that cometh into the world, shall, on their death, enter into Paradise; for, in every nation, he that feareth God and

worketh righteousness is accepted of Him ; but how many of the Gentiles, in any nation of the earth, act up to the dictates of that light !—Out of the *millions* of heathens with whom our commerce has brought us acquainted, how few *individuals* have we ever found, who were living according even to the *general rules* of justice, righteousness, and mercy ! In *millions*, scarcely *one* thoroughly moral character appears ! How awful is this consideration !—let us remember, that *vice* uncurbed daily gains strength ; and that *evil habits* become inveterate where there is nothing to counteract them. Myriads are annually sacrificed to superstition—darkness is perpetuated, and becomes thick and gross in consequence—God is not known, and the people are led captive by Satan at his will !—Who will arise, grapple with the destroyer, and pluck the prey out of his teeth.

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

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

## SERMON V.

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### THE CONFIDENCE OF THE GENUINE CHRISTIAN.

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HEBREWS, Chap. iv. ver. 16.

Προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρονῷ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεον, καὶ χάριν εὐρακμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν.

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

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

As they presumed much on their ecclesiastical privileges, the splendour and equipage of their temple service, and saw

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

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

The inference drawn from these considerations and facts by the Apostle, in our text, is exceedingly natural and encouraging. *Having therefore such a High-Priest now appearing in the presence of God for us : Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace, &c.* Far from having any thing dismal to apprehend, we have every thing excellent to expect and anticipate. God is on His throne of grace; Jesus is before it as Mediator, and we may come confidently up to it, and find a free and full pardon, and a plentiful supply of all our wants.

The allusion to the high-priest and his office on the day of atonement is still kept up. The *approach* mentioned here is to the כַּפֹּרֶת *Kaphoreth*, *ἱλαστήριον*, *Propitiatory*, or what we call *mercy-seat*.

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

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

There are too many important *particulars* here, to admit of the text being divided into *heads*, or thrown into the form of *propositions*. I shall treat these particulars in order.

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

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

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

II. To all these, God is represented as *sitting on the throne of grace*. God is great, and of terrible majesty every where, but particularly on His *throne*, for that is the seat of judgment—the place whence he dispenses justice—and from which,



who has any thing to *hope* ? and who has not every thing to *fear* ? But in this place it is the *throne* of GRACE :—the very *place of mercy* :—the source whence bounty is to issue, and from which all the blessings of heaven are to be dispensed. On this God is represented as having *sat down*, for the mere purpose of dispensing *pardon* to the *penitent*—*healing* to the *backslider*—*purity* of heart to the weak *believer*—*succour* to the *tempted*—and suitable *help* to all the *necessitous*.

III. Christ is represented as a *Priest* and *Intercessor* before this *Throne* : and also as the *sacrificial offering* itself. Now, there is one consideration of great importance, on this subject, and it is this,—Christ assumes those characters of *Priest* and *Sacrifice* in reference to MAN only. With Christ, God is ever well pleased : with all that He has *done*, with all that He has *suffered* ; and with the *end* and *object*, in reference to which He has *lived*, *suffered*, and *died*, He is well pleased : consequently, He is well pleased to dispense the benefits of His priesthood, and sacrificial offering to man : God requires no entreaty to induce Him to pardon and save : He is infinitely *disposed* to do so : and He has an infinite *reason* for this disposition. This is a grand *principle* in theology ; and a strong encourager of faith. He that believes that God is thus *disposed* to save his soul, and for the *reasons* above mentioned, can neither feel backwardness nor difficulty in *coming* to the throne of grace, in order to obtain mercy. All the difficulties on the doctrine of faith have arisen from not considering this principle : and it is both painful and shameful to see to what magnitude and number these difficulties have been carried. Cases of conscience, cases of doubt, motives to faith, encouragement to weak believers, &c. have been multiplied by systematic preachers, and dealers in “*Bodies of Divinity*,” to the great distraction of the Church of God, and confusion of simple souls. And this is occasioned either by their not knowing or not attending to the principle laid down above. Nothing is plainer than the way of salvation by faith in Christ, had it not been puzzled and blockaded or broken up by the thrifless systems of men.

IV. The above persons are exhorted to *come*, that they may obtain mercy—*ἵνα λαβώμεν ἐλεον*, that we may take mercy. There is mercy for the *taking*. All things are ready : God is on the throne of grace ; and Jesus is before it in His me-

diatorial and sacerdotal character. What we are to receive is *mercy*—this is opposed not so much to *sin*, as to *merit*. That which is *given*, for which no equivalent is required or received, is *mercy*. Not only no *sinner* can have *merit*, but neither saint nor angel can have any. The whole hierarchy of heaven live on the bounty of God : Michael the Archangel, who is like God, has no *merit*—he is a created, and therefore a *dependent* being ; whatever glories or excellencies he possesses, he has them from God's unmerited bounty—he could not *deserve* his own being : he cannot *merit* its continuance ; for the utmost and constant use of all his powers belongs to God his Creator : and as these powers are God's property, with no kind of use or employment of them, can he, or any created being, have *meritorious* claims upon Him, in whom he lives and moves, and from whom he has his being.

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

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

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

soul, and cause it to increase with the increase of God. **MERCY** forgives sin, and heals backsliding. **GRACE** strengthens and builds up the soul. *Mercy* is laid up at the Throne of God for every *comer*: therefore is it said, let us *come* that we may *take* it. *Grace* is there laid up, but it must be *sought*. The *favour* of God may be obtained, but we must seek it: and the *way* in which we are to *come* for **MERCY**, and the *manner* in which we are to *seek* and find **GRACE** or *favour*, are matters to us the most interesting and important. Let us hear what the Apostle directs in this case.

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

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

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

1. Because they are *invited* to come.

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

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

After a similar manner, we must approach the majesty of God: and the *gift* here, is the *sacrificial death* of Jesus

Christ:—the LAMB *without spot*, is presented before the throne. The offerer is fully convinced of the worth and dignity of this Present; hence, he brings it with *confidence*, and has *full liberty of speech*—of prayer and supplication before his God. *Boldness* is here excluded, as well as *boasting*: but *confidence* of gaining the Divine favour for the sake of the *Offering* which he is about to make, inspires him with freedom and power to speak in his own cause, and plead in his own behalf. Come, therefore, with *confidence* to the throne of grace. Know that it is *such*, and that HE who sits on it, is *gracious*. When you approach, you know you have an Intercessor there: He will introduce you—He will recommend your suit—plead in your behalf—give you full liberty to use His name—to appropriate to yourselves the infinite merit of His Passion and Death, His Resurrection and Mediation; and to avail yourselves of that indescribable nearness He has to the Father, as His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased; and his affinity to *you*, as God manifested in the *flesh*. It is impossible that any thing can be added, to strengthen this *confidence*; or by a more powerful argument to ensure a success, which, from the above considerations, must be certain and absolute.

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

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

The word βοηθεια is properly enough rendered *assistance*, *help*, or *support*:—but it implies assistance afforded, in consequence of the *earnest cry* of a person in distress; for the word signifies to *run at the cry*, *θειν εις βοην*, or *επι βοην θειν*. So even at the *throne of grace*, or great *propitiatory*, no help can be expected where there is no *cry*: and where there is no *cry*, there is no *felt* necessity: for, he that *feels* he is perishing, will *cry aloud* for help; and to such a *cry* the compassionate High-Priest will *run* with assistance. The *time of need* is the time in which God will shew mercy; nor will he ever delay it when it is necessary. We are not to *cry to-day*, that we may be helped *to-morrow*, or in some future indefinite time, or at the hour of death. We are to call for *mercy* and *grace* when we *need* them; and we are to expect to receive them *when we call*. This is a part of our *liberty* or *boldness*; we *come up*, *προσερχομεθα*, to the throne, and call aloud for mercy, and God dispenses the blessings we then need.

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

How necessary are these heavenly directions! How much good has been done by attending to them! and how much evil has been sustained by disregarding them! He who has not a *tender conscience* will not feel his continual need of Divine help—and he who does not feel this need will not care

for a supply : and he who does not call for it cannot be furnished with it, and must therefore fail in the day of battle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. That we should expect to be heard and saved, thus coming ; that we should not *doubt* of His mercy ; and we should be resolved to follow on to know the Lord, that we may find His goings forth as the morning, and His return as the latter rain ; and be assured thus coming, feeling, and calling, that He will guide us by His counsel, and at last receive us to glory.

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

Hallelujah ! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth !

## SERMON VI.

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### EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION, AND ITS FRUITS.

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PHILIPPIANS, Chap. i. ver. 9—11.

9. Καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι, ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον, καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ πάσῃ αἰσθήσει·
10. Εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ᾗτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ·
11. Πεπληρωμένοι καρπῶν δικαιοσύνης τῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον Θεοῦ.

9. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment:
10. That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ:
11. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

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

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

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

But there is an essential difference between the *prayers of inspired men* and those of *private Christians*, how good or holy soever they may be; as the former pray for the church and the world, *according to direct inspiration*, God having determined to grant the blessings for which He excites them to pray. Hence, all such *prayers* may be viewed as *direct promises*, and claimed as such by those in whose behalf they are offered. On this principle, the prayer in the above verses must have been considered by the *Philippians*, as containing a series of promises, the fulfilment of which they had a right to expect, if faithful to the grace by which they were thus favoured. *And this I pray that ye may, &c.* But can we who live at such a distance from apostolic times, take up this prayer in the *same light*, and expect with equal confidence its fulfilment? This inquiry may be fully answered by the following considerations:—1. The Church of Christ is a society of godly people, subsisting in various places, through all ages. 2. The Sacred Writings were given to the Church of Christ. 3. Those Writings do not come to a *particular people, in a particular place*; much less to *individuals, nominally or specifically* considered; but they are sent to *characters and circumstances*. 4. All persons, therefore, of the *same character, or in the same religious state*, and all who are in *the same circumstances*, are those contemplated by the Divine Spirit in the Revelation which He has given. If, then, we are in the *same spiritual state*—wish for the same blessings—and look to the same unchanging God, through that Christ who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;—we have



an equal interest in these promises, may claim their fulfilment, and considering ourselves in the place of the Philippians, receive with meekness that engrafted word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

III. The first view of the effects of this principle's working, proves that it is something opposed to the government of God;

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

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

This principle the Holy Scripture terms, the DEVIL or SATAN, in whom, it says, *the whole world lieth*—which *deceiveth the whole world, and rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience*. I know it is fashionable with some to deny the *existence* of this *evil principle*; but as those persons deny the whole of divine revelation, which they have laboured in vain to disprove, they are worthy of no regard. They are generally men of desperate characters, and desperate fortunes: and as they will not listen to the voice of *reason*, nor the *sacred oracles*; they must be left to their own desperation. *Satan*, who works in the hearts of the children of disobedience, possesses himself of the *corrupt nature* of

man ; produces *bad motives* in a bad heart, *blinds the understanding*, excites *irregular appetites*, and thence *bad tempers*, *evil words*, and *unholy actions*.

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

IV. LOVE therefore is the *principle* that is to *destroy this enmity*. But this love is not the *passion* that is generated in the heart by the sight or description of what is amiable, in reference to animal gratification : or, as it is defined, *passionate affection*. Such love is a mere *human passion* : but that of which the Apostle speaks is a *principle* ; or rather the *effect* of an *energetic spiritual principle*. It is, in a word, the *love of God*, a love which He inspires, and by which the *Divine nature* is pointed out to us, in those remarkable words of the Apostle—*God is LOVE : and he who dwelleth in LOVE, dwelleth in God, and God in him*. It has nothing therefore to do with that *earthly, animal passion*, so well known and celebrated among men. The principle that expels evil is the love of God *shed abroad in the heart* by the *Holy Ghost*. And the Holy Spirit is the Agent who directs the operations of this *principle of love*, to the expulsion of the *principle of hatred*. Love, the opposite to this *enmity and hatred*, is implanted in the heart ; and thus the evil that leads to all misrule, rebellion, and sin, is cast out ; and love, that dictates nothing but what is in accordance to the divine will and law, takes its place : and hence complete *subjection to God*, and every act of benevolence to man. Thus the love of God, begetting love to God, is the sum and substance of all religion, and the fulfilling of the law ; because it expels that *hatred or enmity*—that *carnal mind*, which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

This love is the incentive to all *obedience* : for he that loves God, keeps His commandments : and to such His commandments are not grievous ; for to please those whom we love, is natural to love itself. This love is the religion of the Bible : love to God and our fellows—breathing nothing but glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will among men. Here then is the reason why religion is called *Love* : it expels and destroys the principle of *hatred and enmity*.

V. The Apostle prays, that this *love may abound more*

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

VI. The *manner* in which this love is to *abound*, and manifest itself, is next to be considered. *In knowledge*, says the Apostle, *and in all judgment*, *ἐν πηγύωσι, καὶ παρῆ αἰσθησί.* These point out the constitution of the grand principle of acquisition.

1. *In knowledge*. Knowledge signifies the information gained by trial or experiment: by lectures, discourses, conversation, and reasoning on any particular subject:—but here *theology*, as a *science*, is particularly concerned. He that wishes to excel, and be what the Apostle prays that the Philippians might be, (especially while now the means of spiritual knowledge are so many, and blasphemy against the truth so common,) must acquaint himself well with the *Being* and *Nature* of God. Who this Being is? and the arguments by which His existence is proved:—

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

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

1. The number, magnitude, constituent parts, laws, and modes of existing of bodies in the *visible* HEAVENS—sun, moon, planets, stars, &c.;—their revolutions, various affections, distances, nature, solid contents, mutual relations, connexions, and dependencies, gravitation, and usefulness,—all

these afford a series of arguments the most satisfactory and convincing, of the being, knowledge, skill, power, and goodness of God. See the preceding Sermon on the Being and Attributes of God.

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

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

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

1. God's revelation of Himself in the *Old Testament*—the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and all the *other Holy Writings*. In these, God is seen in His purity, majesty, and omniscience.

2. His revelation of Himself in the *New Testament*—and

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

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

1. *Spiritual sense* produces what is called *experimental religion*—the life of God in the soul of man. This mental perception, or *heart-feeling*, answers, in *religion*, to *palpable experience* in *philosophy*. A simple conviction, and knowledge of *bodies* and their properties, is widely different from this *spiritual feeling*. By the sense of *feeling* we gain a knowledge or perception of bodies and their qualities—of hard, soft, wet, dry, cold, hot, and other tangible properties;—yet this gives us no *mental feeling* of those qualities, so as to demonstrate their truth. But that which is mentioned by the Apostle, implies this feeling,—this mental internal sense: and in this consists the great difference between *theoretical* and *experimental* religion.

2. The Apostle, in another place, explains this spiritual sense in one word: *And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* For the *Spirit himself beareth witness, with our*

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*spirits, that we are the children of God.* Now, the fact to be witnessed is beyond the *knowledge* of man:—no human power or cunning can acquire it: if obtained at all, it must come from *above*. In this, human wit and ingenuity can do nothing. It is to tell us, that we are reconciled to God—that our *sins* are blotted out—that we are adopted into the family of heaven. The Apostle tells us, that this is witnessed by the Spirit of God. God alone can tell *whom* He has accepted—*whose* sins He has blotted out—*whom* He has put among His children: this He makes known by His Spirit, in our spirit; so that we have (not by induction or inference) a thorough conviction and mental feeling, that we are His children.

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

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

1. They know, whatsoever is contrary to that *work*.

2. Whatsoever is contrary to that *spirit*. And,

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

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

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

(3) What comes from *Satan*, leads from *subordination* to

God, and from *benevolence* and beneficence to man. To envy, hatred, and malice, and to all uncharitableness.

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

IX. But, besides this power of knowing and discerning, so as to prevent mental aberration from the truth, and defection of the heart from experimental godliness, this knowledge and spiritual feeling are given to regulate both heart and life; therefore the Apostle adds, *that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ*. There are two points to be considered here. 1st. The state of the heart before God—*That ye may be sincere*. 2dly. The state of the life before men—*That ye may be without offence*.

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

Our word, *sincere*, and *sincerity*, is also a metaphor taken from clarified honey, *mel-sincerum*; that is, *mel sine cera*—honey without wax: that from which the wax has been en-



tirely separated, so that nothing of the comb, nothing impure or gross, can be detected in it. For such a state of grace and purity, the Apostle prays in behalf of the Philippians: and had the attainment of such a state of grace, in this life, been impossible, the Holy Spirit would never have inspired the heart of the Apostle to pray for it.

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

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

X. But wherever this inward change, this heavenly work is wrought, it will be manifest in the life and conversation—in all the *words, works, and tempers*, of the regenerated man. Hence, says the Apostle, *being filled with the fruits of*

*righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

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

By *righteousness* we may understand, in a general sense, the whole work of the Spirit of God in the *soul*: and by the *fruits of righteousness*, all holy *tempers*, holy *words*, and right *actions*: and with these the Apostle prays that *they may be filled*, *πεπληρωμενοι*, *filled up*, *filled full*—no place being left for Satan or sin. Christ dwelling in their heart by faith:—being *all in all*, and *all in every part*.

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

3. Nothing can produce the fruits of righteousness but the

*seed of the kingdom*, and this can grow no where but in good ground ;—and the good ground, our Lord tells us, is an *honest and good heart* ; and this honest and good heart becomes such, by being sufficiently *ploughed and broken up* by that *repentance* that is according to God, which produces the broken and contrite heart, the sighings of which God will not despise. In a word, *they are to be filled with the fruits of righteousness* ;—1. Their *hearts* are to be filled with righteous *purposes* and holy and merciful *resolutions* ; to produce the effects of which, the heart, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, feels continual *tendencies* ;—and, 2. In consequence, their lives are filled up with the *works* themselves ; and hence, the word *πεπληρωμενοι*, *filled up, completely filled*—or, as we would express it in homely phrase, *brimful—running over!*

XI. Lest any should imagine that this state of internal purity and external righteousness could be obtained by any efforts of man, or acquired by repeated acts, which, in the end, might produce *habits*, and these a *system of righteousness* ; the Apostle takes care to remark, that all these blessings, moral changes, gracious dispositions, holy tempers, righteous actions, &c. are by JESUS CHRIST. Without Him, nothing is strong, or wise, or holy. No man could have either *grace* or *space* to repent, were it not for Him. His *sacrificial death* alone is the *cause* why the sword of justice has not cut off every sinner. It is through His *intercession* that any transgressor or backslider is spared—by and through His *merits* the long suffering of God is exercised towards men, and they are thereby led to repentance. It is by the power of His Word and Spirit that repentance and deep contrition for sin are produced in the heart. It is through His *passion* and *death* alone that the penitent is reconciled to God, and receives the remission of his sins. It is the *Spirit* of Jesus Christ that witnesses with ours, that we are children of God. It is His *blood* that cleanseth from all unrighteousness. And it is by His *dwelling* in our hearts by faith that we are rooted and grounded in love, and are filled with all the fulness of God. He is the *Beginner* of our salvation : the *Continuer* and the *Finisher* of our faith. It is by Him that we *devise* what is holy, and by Him that we *perform* what is good. We are accepted through Him, because purchased by Him, and final-

ly glorified together with Him. Thus our whole salvation is *through* and *by* HIM: and if we overcome by His blood, it is, that we may sit down on His *throne*, as He has overcome and sat down with the Father upon the Father's throne. Thus, of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; and to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

XII. Finally, we see here the *ultimate* END proposed—*The glory and praise of God*. 1. God made man for His own glory: not to *increase* that glory, for it is infinite and eternal, and cannot be increased, but to *manifest* that glory. And God's glory is manifested when that which is agreeable to His nature is accomplished, so as to appear to angels and men. The greater the *work of redemption* on the earth, the greater display there is of the *glorious power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth* of God. Even the salvation of one sinner is an exhibition of God's *glory*: it shews the availableness of the *incarnation* and *death* of Christ. It shews, thus far, the accomplishment of the *end* for which Christ died. For these triumphs of His love and mercy, God is *honoured and praised*. He is honoured when the work of His grace thus *appears to men* in the *fruits of righteousness*: and God is *praised* by all the faithful, when His work thus appears. Every genuine follower of God has the *glory* of his heavenly Father in view in all that he does, says, or intends. He is not his own, and therefore he sees the *reasonableness* of glorifying God with his body and his spirit which are His. Such, *study* to glorify their God; they do glorify Him by shewing forth in their *conversion* and *godly life*, the *glorious* working of the *glorious* power of the Lord. 2. Thus the great *end* for which man was created, preserved, and redeemed, is accomplished. God's *glory* is secured; JESUS sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied; the ANGELS rejoice in the accession of redeemed souls, coming from the church militant to the church triumphant; and God, to all eternity, receives the praise that is due to the glory of His grace.

And now, reader, art thou willing to have this apostolic prayer fulfilled to thee? Art thou weary of that *carnal mind* which is enmity to God? Canst thou be *happy* whilst thou art *unholy*? Dost thou *know* any thing of God's love to thee? Dost thou not know that He has *given His Son* to die for thee? Dost thou *love* Him in return for His love? Hast

thou even a *little* love to Him? And canst thou love Him a *little*, without desiring to love Him *more*? Dost thou not feel that thy happiness grows in proportion to thy love and subjection to Him? Dost thou not wish to be *happy*? And dost thou not know that *holiness* and *happiness* are as inseparable as *sin* and *misery*? Canst thou have too much happiness or *too much* holiness? Canst thou be made holy and happy *too soon*? Art thou not *weary* of a *sinful* heart? Are not thy bad tempers, pride, anger, peevishness, fretfulness, covetousness, and the various unholy passions that too often agitate thy soul, a source of misery and woe to thee? And canst thou be unwilling to have them *destroyed*? Arise, then, and shake thyself from the dust, and call upon thy God! His *ear* is not *heavy* that it cannot hear;—His *hand* is not shortened that it cannot *save*. Behold, *now* is the accepted time! *Now*, is the day of salvation. It was necessary that Jesus Christ should die for thee, that thou *mightest* be saved; but He gave up His life for thee 1800 years ago! And Himself invites thee *to come*, for *all things are now ready*. Such is the nature of God, that He cannot be more willing to save thee in any *future* time, than He is *now*. He wills that thou shouldst love Him now, with all thy heart; but He knows that thou canst not thus love Him till the *enmity* of the carnal mind is removed; and this *He is willing* this moment *to destroy*. The power of the Lord is therefore *present to heal*. Turn from every sin,—give up every idol,—cut off every right hand,—pluck out every right eye. Be willing to part with thy *enemies*, that thou mayest receive thy chief Friend. Thy *day* is far *spent*,—the *night* is at *hand*,—the *graves* are ready for *thee*,—and here, thou hast no abiding *city*. A month, a week, a day, an hour, yea, even a *moment*, may send thee into eternity. And if thou die in thy sins, where God is, thou shalt never come. Do not expect redemption in *death*. It can do nothing for thee—even under the best consideration; it is thy last *enemy*. Remember then that nothing but the *blood* of *Jesus* can *cleanse* thee from all unrighteousness. Lay hold, therefore, on the Hope that is set before thee,—re-echo the Apostle's prayer, and apply it to thyself. The *gate* may appear *straight*, but *strive*, and thou shalt pass through! Come unto Me, says Jesus;—hear his voice, believe at all risks, and struggle into God! Amen and Amen.

## SERMON VII.

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SAINT PAUL'S GLORYING ;

OR,

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST THE POWER OF GOD  
UNTO SALVATION.

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ROMANS, Chap. i. ver. 16, 17.

16. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth ; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.
17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
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THERE is no case on record that affords a more decisive proof of the truth of Christianity, than that of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, afterwards called Paul, and constituted by Christ, the apostle of the Gentiles. It is a maxim among men, *never to risk the loss of a present advantage, unless there be a good prospect, and moral certainty of gaining another vastly superior in value.* Paul had lineage, civil rights, learning, influence, credit, authority and power. Such was the state of Christianity in his time, that he who embraced it, lost the benefit of *all these*, and forfeited his character in civil and religious society. This man was also zealously attached to his religious opinions, the religion of his country, and the traditions of his fathers. To change all these for the *cross of Christ*—for poverty, want, obloquy, pain, persecution, and death in its worst forms, could never be a matter of *rational*

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

In considering the general subject of the Text, I shall enquire—**I.** What is the Gospel of Christ?—**II.** Why the Apostle was not ashamed of it?—It brought him salvation.—**III.** What was the *agency* by which the saving tendency of the Gospel is applied?—The power of God. **IV.** For whom were these benefits designed?—Jews and Gentiles. And, **V.** How are they secured and rendered ultimately beneficial?—By faith.—**VI.** Exhortation.

### I. What is the Gospel of Christ.

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

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

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

With other acceptations, it is not necessary to meddle.

**II.** Of this Gospel, the Apostle says he is not ashamed. What were the reasons? This assertion will receive light from Isa. xxviii. 16. and xlix. 23. quoted by the Apostle, chap. x. 11. of this epistle, *For the Scripture saith, Whoso-*

*ever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed, nor confounded.* This is spoken in particular reference to the **Jews**, that they might be reproved—to the **Gentiles**, that they might be encouraged.

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

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

Without this demonstration of its truth and excellence, is there not something in the **Gospel** itself, calculated to make its professors *ashamed* ? 1. The immaculate conception of our **Lord**. We know how this has been blasphemously represented by the **Jews** of old ; and indeed by them and by many other infidels, to the present day. 2. The poverty, and destitute state of **Christ** and His disciples. He had not where to lay His head : and He had no secular means of supporting, much less of enriching, His disciples. 3. In the manner of His trial—He was arraigned and condemned as a felon—as one that strove to destroy the public peace and tranquillity, by exciting the common people to insurrection and rebellion. 4. In the manner of His death—He was crucified as the vilest and most criminal slave ; and, as if His guilt were evident to all, had not one to plead for Him : and as a sanction to the judgement of His enemies, His own disciples abandoned Him, as if convinced of His guilt, or ashamed any longer to confess so traduced a master. But the resurrection of **Christ** dissipated all doubts concerning these points ; and



the out pouring of the Holy Ghost on the souls of believers, filling them with light and power and love, was the demonstration that all was of God ; and that they had not credited a foolish history, or a cunningly devised fable.

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

- (1) Any thing that is unwise or injudicious in its plan.
- (2) Absurd or extravagant in its execution or progress.
- (3) Inefficient or destructive in its issue or end.

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

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

“Saivelling and drivelling nonsense without end,”

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

There are, however, some honourable exceptions. There are a few writers of this class, whose sole aim was to correct the vicious manners of the age, give a proper bias to the understanding, and a healthy direction to the feelings of the heart, and who, because it was popular, chose the form of a

novel to convey their salutary instructions to the public. At the head of these, for pious and benevolent feeling, stands Henry Brook:—for good intention and indefatigable ponderous labour, Samuel Richardson:—and for correct conception, masterly delineation, judicious colouring, and majestic execution, Walter Scott. The first *leads* you directly to God, the Fountain of light, life, perfection, and goodness. The second *conducts* you through many direct roads and fairy by-paths to virtue and propriety of conduct in the various relations of life. And the latter *carries* you through nature and facts to the sources whence history should originate; and raises up not only the recollections of past events, but places you by inimitable description in the midst of generations that have long since ceased to exist, whom, in your presence, he causes to transact all the avocations of their respective situations in life, and exhibit all the peculiarities of the manners and customs of their times, with the whole train of *thinking* and *feeling* which gave them birth. Such writers as these, shall have, from posterity at least, their just meed of praise; and of the general tenor of their *works*; their authors need never be *ashamed*.

*Secondly.* But this may be applied also to many works of civil polity among ancient and modern nations, both *barbarous* and what are called *refined*. In many cases—how foolish the plan—how barbarous the execution of laws sufficiently ill-conceived—how partial the administration of justice—and how oppressive to all, but the framers and higher ranks, the general operation of those institutions which should be the barriers against wrong—the protectors and comforters of the humble mechanic; and the laborious cultivator of the soil. See the oppressed state of the subjects of the Sublime Porte; and the degradation of the peasantry of the Autocrat of all the Russias! And how little better circumstanced are the inhabitants of Spain and Italy; and how capable of improvement is the condition of the people under the Bourbons of France! Of most of these nations may it not be said, They have statutes that are not good, and judgements by which they cannot live. I say nothing of sanguinary laws and brutal punishments, of which, wheresoever found, the *framers* may be *ashamed*, and in which the *people* cannot *glory*.

*Thirdly.* But this applies still more forcibly to all *human*

codes of religion, from the *oral law* of the Jews down to the deistical and demi-atheistical systems of the present day. All, all have been conceived in folly or the lust of power; are carried on by puerile, ridiculous, and extravagant rites and ceremonies; and are daily issuing in perplexity and disappointment.

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

2. And also of the Mosliman religion, built on the jargon of the *Koran*—a system of conceits and solemn fooleries; a stagnant lake of asphaltic water, which would have long since become irrevocably putrid, had not the deadly mass been preserved from total corruption by some portions of living water stolen from Siloah's brook that flows from the oracle of God.

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

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

(1) *ITS PLAN*.—It professes to come from God, the Fountain of wisdom, truth, holiness, and goodness: and if this be its origin, it must be wise, true, holy, and beneficent: and all its operations vindicate its claim to a heavenly origin. It is every way suited to the fallen, miserable state of man. It shews—makes a fuller discovery of the Divine nature, than was ever made before—of its holiness, justice, truth, and goodness. It also gives a more correct view of *man*—of his nature, the soul and its immortality, the *end* of his being, and the way of happiness. The resurrection of the human body, and the state of future rewards and punishments, are asserted,

proved, and illustrated by it. Its promises and precepts are full of wisdom, reasonableness, and encouragement. It is adapted to every want, meets every wish, and satisfies every desire of the human soul.

Let us examine this more particularly.

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

2, In like manner, His *love* is opposed to our *enmity*—and by it, our *hatred to God* and goodness is overcome. *Love* counteracts the whole carnal mind, draws out the heart in affectionate attachment to God, and is the incentive to all obedience, as being the fulfilling of the law. Such a person is not obliged to derive the *principle* of his obedience from any thing *outward*: the moral law is before his eyes; but the love of God, shed abroad in his heart, is the *principle* by which he obeys it. He performs nothing merely as a *duty*; he has the law of God written in his heart, and this ever disposes him to do what is right in the sight of his Judge. If it were not even infallibly true, that a *life of sin* must terminate in *endless misery*, yet he would abhor the way of the

wicked. He has tried the path of disobedience, and found it the road to ruin: he now knows the way of righteousness, and finds it the path of peace and happiness. *Satan*, the enslaver of the world, he found to be a hard task-master, during the long period in which he laboured under chains, in the house of his bondage. God, the Saviour of the world, he finds to be a beneficent Father, and His service perfect freedom. He delights in obedience; it is the element in which his soul lives, prospers, and is happy.

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

This is not *theory*. We know what would be the case in the *mass*, from what we see among *individuals*. In *every case*, where a sinner is converted to God, he is filled with that *WISDOM from above, which is pure, PEACEABLE, GENTLE, EASY TO BE ENTREATED, full of MERCY and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*. Under such influence, men bear each others' burdens, cease from all strife and envying, are courteous, pitiful, and kind. They have in them the mind that was in Christ; and they walk as He walked. Behold then the *wisdom* of the Gospel plan! It does not act by laying on *restraints*, but by *eradicating* evils: it not only takes away those evil dispositions which lead to the

works of the devil and the flesh, but it infuses those principles which lead to peace, purity, and happiness.

(2) And as it is *wise* in its plan, so it is *benign* in its operation: its doctrine drops as the rain, its speech distils as the dew, as small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass. Deut. xxxii. 2. The Spirit of God shines into the heart, to convince it of sin, righteousness, and judgement: in order that it may *feel the need* it has of redemption, that same Spirit takes of the things that are Christ's, and shews them unto it;—the sinner then sees the boundless love of God that has provided such a Sacrifice for sin. He is astonished at the Divine goodness. When he sees what has been done for him, he hates his former life, and loathes himself, repenting as in sackcloth and ashes. He is commanded to *believe* on Him who died for His offences, and rose again for His justification. He lays hold on the hope set before him:—he believes in the availableness of the wondrous Atonement, and “gives up every plea, beside, ‘I am condemned, but Christ has died.’”—The spirit of adoption is then given to him, by which, with a thorough conviction of his own sonship, he is enabled to cry, *Abba, Father!* He is now justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus; and is filled with all peace, love, and joy, in believing; and abounds in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, Nothing can be more *gentle*, nothing more *persuasive*, nothing more *effectual*, than the operation of this grace upon his heart and mind. Whatever part the *great and mighty wind*, the *earthquake*, and the *fire*, might have had in his conviction, it was the *still small voice*, (1 Kings xix. 11, &c.) that announced the presence of that most merciful God and Father, who is now come to put away his sins, and receive him among His children. And now being received into the heavenly family, he continues to believe, love, and obey. And as his *faith worketh by love*, he runs the race that is set before him with alacrity, cheerfulness, and delight. As he finds the service of God to be a reasonable service, so he performs it, not with *constraint*, but willingly; ‘doing the will of God from his heart; rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

(3) As the *plan* was wise, and the *operation* benign, so the *issue* is glorious. The genuine Christian is holy;—and happy,

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

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

III. That the Gospel brings *salvation* to men has already been ascertained, and the manner in which the operation is carried on, has also been pointed out ; but the *especial agency* by which the work is begun, carried on, and completed, has been mentioned only in a general way. The Apostle terms it the *power of God*, *δυναμις του Θεου*, a phrase which ordinarily signifies *such a power as God exerts when He inverts or suspends the operations of nature, to produce effects which, in the ordinary course of things, could not take place.* Such indeed is the salvation of the soul ; so deep is the stain, so radicated the habits of sinning, so strong the propensity to do what is evil ; that nothing less than the *power*, by which the soul was created, can conquer these habits, eradicate these vices, and cause such a leopard to change his spots, and such an Æthiop his hue. The whole change which the soul undergoes in its conversion, is the effect of a *Divine energy* within. This the Gospel promises, when it promises to send forth the *Holy Spirit*. This mighty spirit is given to enlighten, convince, strengthen, quicken, and save, and the change that is effected in the sinner's soul, in his habits, and in his life, is such as no natural cause can produce ; such as no art of man can effect ; and such as no religious institutions, con-

ected with the most serious and pointed moral advices, can ever bring about. It is wholly God's work : and He performs it neither by might nor power, but by His own Spirit.

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

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



IV. And lest that most *sinful selfishness*, which causes multitudes to restrain the grace and goodness of God to *themselves*, (and imagine that all the rest of mankind were passed by, and that the God who hateth nothing that he has made, but is loving to every man, had made no provision for them who did not worship in their way, or receive their creed,) should prevail in any mind, the Apostle adds, *To the Jew first, and also to the Greek*. That is, by the most obvious construction; from the well known application of those terms, *to the whole human race*: for at that time, under the denomination of *Jews and Gentiles*, was the whole human race included. *To the Jew, the first offer* of salvation by Christ was to be made, and the next to the Gentile world. All that did not harden their hearts against God's fear, nor reject the counsel of God against themselves, were made partakers of this grace, and became the *elect of God, holy and beloved*. Those who resisted the Holy Ghost, were *blinded and cast off*: but none was rejected till he had rejected the Lord who bought him.

And that this Gospel salvation was intended both for *Jews and Gentiles*, the Apostle argues thus: *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*, i. e. God's method of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, (as the phrase *righteousness of God* is often used in this Epistle; among others; see chap. iii. 20—26.) is fully manifested in the Gospel, *is revealed from faith to faith*. 1st, It is shewn to be by *faith*, and not by the works of the Law; for Abraham, the father and founder of the Jewish people, was justified by faith, before even the Law was given: and from believing, in reference to the spiritual object held forth in the various ordinances of the Law, and now revealed under the Gospel, he and all his believing descendants have been justified; have received the pardon of sin, and become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 2dly, Thus, the faith of the Old Covenant led on to the faith of the New Covenant, which shews that salvation has been by faith from the call of Abraham to the present time. And from the beginning, all that were *just* or righteous in the earth became such by faith; and by this principle alone, they were enabled to *persevere*, as it is written, adds the Apostle, *The just shall live by faith*. 3dly, And because the Gospel of Christ provides a way of salvation, at once so honourable to God, so illustrative of His justice and mercy,

and so suitable to the state and condition of a fallen, ruined world, therefore, the Apostle could say, and every man who has duly studied and felt the subject, can also say, I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION, TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH.

V. How are these benefits to be ultimately secured?

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

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

2. The *just* or justified person *maintains* this character—by *living*—*i. e.* living to God's glory. 1. He must have all his actions regulated by the *word* and *spirit* of Christ. In the *word* he sees *how* he should act so as to please God. By the in-dwelling *Spirit*, he feels a *power* to act in this way. *That*, shews him his *duty*:—*this*; enables him to fulfil it. 2. Before his justification, he *lived* to no useful purpose—though he *existed*, yet he was considered *dead*;—dead in trespasses and sins—*dead in law*: because his life was forfeited by transgression. His *soul* was *dead* to all religious affections, feelings, and desires; but now he *lives*, yet not he, but Christ

liveth in him ; and when Christ, who is his life, shall appear, then shall he also appear with Him in glory. Christ is, in the believing soul, a well springing up to life eternal. While the streams of this life arise in him, he *lives*—lives to *God's glory*, and his *Redeemer's praise* ; for he shews forth the virtues of Him, who has called him from darkness into His marvellous light. He *lives* also for the *benefit of man*—his light so shines, that others seeing his good works may glorify his Father which is in heaven.

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

VI. And now, reader, What dost thou say ? Dost thou understand the Gospel ? Is it the power of God to thy salvation ? Art thou saved ? Is the power of thy sin broken ? The guilt of it removed from thy conscience ? The pollution of it washed away from thy heart ? Hast thou felt that mighty power which roots up all the seeds of sin ? Art thou then ashamed of this Gospel ?—ashamed to speak of it ?—ashamed to acknowledge it ?—ashamed to patronize it ?—ashamed to own or associate with true believers in it, because they are *poor* or *persecuted* ? Art thou ashamed to own it among

the ungodly? Canst thou hear pure and undefiled religion spoken against, and its followers reviled by the formalist and the profane, and yet hold thy peace, lest thou shouldst come in for a share of the reproach? In a word, art thou ashamed of *Christ crucified*? Of God manifested in the flesh? Of the Maker, Preserver, and Friend of mankind? Of *Him* who will shortly be thy Judge? Then, hear what the Lord God speaketh unto thee:—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy Angels." Mark viii. 38. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. viii. 32, 33. These are words of terror to the half-hearted Christian—to all that wish to walk in the sunshine of public prosperity—to those who love that religion which the *world* approves—for that religion was never yet of God. It is justly said, that "as the laws of Christ give no quarter to vice, so, vicious men will give no quarter to religion." On what principle has the Christian church been honoured with martyrs? On that laid down by the Apostle: *they were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*:—"they counted not their lives dear to them; but overcame through the blood of the Lamb, and their testimony. Therefore, are they before the throne."—On the same principle, Moses refused the honour of being constituted the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Heb. xi. 24—26. But who is of his mind? Who is it that is not continually bartering Christ and the soul's best interests, for the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world? But are there not many, many thousands, that have not bowed their knees to these Baals?—Who love Christ,—His Gospel,—His Messengers,—His People, and even His Cross? There are. And why is this?—Because they know His Gospel to be the power of God unto their salvation. To such therefore I would say, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free." Run the race that is set before

you, looking unto Jesus! Remember, that *the just shall live by faith*:—you *obey*, no longer than you *love*: you *love*, no longer than you *believe*: you *believe*, no longer than you are *looking unto Jesus*. Look at *Him* in His *sacrificial Character*, discerning the *end* for which He was offered up.—Look at him in His *mediatorial* office, and consider the prevalence of His *intercession*. Look at Him in the *meekness* and *gentleness* of His carriage, and endeavour to *imitate* Him. Look at Him in His *benevolence*, *charity*, and *mercy*, and strive to bear His *likeness*. Look at Him in the *universal excellence* of His conduct, and *follow* Him. Look at Him as the *fountain* of your life and the *source* of all your blessings, and continue to derive fresh supplies from His fullness; for without Him, you can do nothing. Thus shall you *live by faith*: be preserved in His salvation: be able “to bear all things—believe all things—hope all things—endure all things:” for you shall have the *charity that never faileth*. And when He doth appear you shall be like Him, for you shall see Him as He is, and have an abundant entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus! Then shall He *confess* you before His Father and the holy Angels, and you shall have an eternal triumph, because you have known, and acknowledged Him before men, and *have not been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ*.

## SERMON VIII.

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### THE DISEASE AND CURE OF NAAMAN.

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2 KINGS, Chap. v. ver. 12.

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

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I do not recollect a more remarkable chapter in the historic books of the Bible, than this out of which I have taken the text. The facts mentioned here occur no where else in the Sacred Writings, nor are they referred to by the ancient Jewish historians. The history of Naaman, as here related, is not even mentioned by *Josephus*, though it most certainly must have been in the *Hebrew* text in his time, from which it has never been absent: and, besides, has always been extant in the *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, and *Septuagint*, all of which must have been known to him. The history, therefore, is very singular;—and the two main facts in it—the *leprosy of Naaman* and its miraculous cure by *Elisha*, and the *transfer* of that leprosy to *Gehazi*, the servant of the prophet—are both as instructive as they are extraordinary, and teach us lessons of sovereign importance. There are some difficulties (not contradictions nor improbabilities) in both accounts, which require study and investigation: but these difficulties belong to some *circumstances* in the accounts, and not to the

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

*First.* To take a general view of the history, paraphrasing its most impressive parts.

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

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

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

1. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria," &c. ver. 1. Of this eminent Syrian we know nothing more than what is related here, as his name is no where mentioned in the Sacred Writings but in *this place*, and by our Lord in Luke iv. 27, who, in His discourse to the people of Nazareth, mentioning the case of Naaman, evidently refers to this place: "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian." Some of the Rabbins say that he is the person mentioned in 1 Kings xxii. 34, who *drew his bow at a venture*, (וּבַל־לֶטֶמְמוֹ,) more properly, with *true aim and all his strength*, and smote Ahab, king of Israel, so that he died; by which circumstance the Israelites were discomfited, and the victory, including in it a *great deliverance*, came to Syria. But this tradition is too uncertain to be entitled to much consideration.

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

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

2. He was a *great man*, (אִישׁ־גָּדוֹל *ish gadol*), worthy of the trust and confidence reposed in him:—had extensive con-

nexions and great influence, especially with the king *his master*, who had trusted the *weal* of the empire entirely to his management.

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

4. He was also a *mighty man of valour*, (*גִּבּוֹר נָאֵר חַיִל gibbor chayil*.) words which seem at once to express the *size and strength* of his *body*, and the bold, intrepid, and *inflexible energy* of his *mind*. Few, probably, could compare with him in bodily strength, and he had the genuine spirit of a *hero*: an enemy never saw his back; and his military career was never tarnished by ferocious cruelty or barbarous plunder, further than the allowed usages of war authorized him to act. In reference to such a character, in such circumstances, this seems to be the unforced meaning of the four characteristics mentioned above. Humanly speaking, what could such a man have or desire *more*? He was possessed of the *three great excellencies* which are the objects of pursuit to all the ambitious of the earth, *honour, power, and profit*. The friendship of the prince, the confidence of the country, and the high emoluments of office: to which may be added, *success* in his military engagements, and the honour of having saved his country, when in imminent danger, from a powerful rival state: "for by him had Jehovah given deliverance unto Syria." Yet in none, nor in all of these things, could he be happy; for, it is added,

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

The wise and just God, often in the course of His providence, permits *great defects* to be associated with *great eminence*, that He may hide *pride* from man, and cause him to



think *soberly* of himself and of his *acquirements*. Let him that most assuredly standeth take heed lest he fall ! and let him who is in honour bear himself meekly, lest God defile his horn in the dust ; for God grants His *gifts*, not that the *creature*, but that *Himself* may be *magnified*.

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

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

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

2. On the case of this *little maid* we may remark—1. That she had been *piously brought up* ; she had known the God of Israel. 2. She acknowledged and respected His prophet. 3. She had a thorough belief in God’s omnipotence. 4. She knew the intercourse and power that His prophet had with

Him. 5. Her pious education was not in vain, for she carried her *fear of God* into the land of her captivity; and, 6. She acknowledged the only true God in an *idolatrous house*, and in a *nation of heathens*.

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

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

5. The conduct of this little Israelitish maid, as far as it concerns the history before us, is next to be considered. She said to her mistress, *Would God! my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy*, verse 3. Here we may first admire the kindness of God, who sent a prophet to such an idolatrous city as Sama-

ria, and among a people who had apostatized in the main, from the true faith: for although they, in a certain way, "feared Jehovah, yet they served other gods," had neither a true temple, a true service, nor a true sacrifice. Well, they stood the more in need of a *Divine teacher*; and, because their blindness was great, and their case deplorable, God sent them one of the *most eminent of His Prophets*, who fearlessly proclaimed the counsel of the Most High, and was endowed with such extraordinary powers as to be able to accredit and confirm his teaching by the most striking miracles.

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

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

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

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

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

It appears that the testimony of the little maid weighed equally with the king of Syria as with Naaman; and as in all countries, where a *form of religion* is established and supported by the state, the clergy or priests are under the authority of the prince, the Syrian king thought that it was best to address the *king of Israel* on the subject, and desire *him* to cure his servant of the leprosy. That the message might appear properly respectable, *he* sent a suitable letter; and *Naaman* took a present of considerable value for the prophet: this was an invariable custom, for *prophets* and *great men* of all descriptions were approached with this ceremony; and the *present* was, in its value, always proportioned to the *eminence* of the person to whom the approach was made, and to the circumstances of the person claiming the interview. *Naaman* took with him "ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment," ver. 5. These *ten talents of silver*, valued at 353*l.* 11*s.* 10½*d.* per talent, amounted to the sum of 3535*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* The *six thousand pieces of gold*, if *shekels* be meant, as is most probable, at 1*l.* 16*s.* 5*d.* the shekel, amount to 10,925*l.* and the whole to 14,460*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* sterling; besides the value of the *ten castans*, or *superb suits of clothing*, which must have been very considerable. This was a princely present: but neither *Naaman* nor his royal master knew that *healing* was the *gift of God*, and that the gift of God *could not be purchased by money*.

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

When the king of Israel had read the letter, (which was as follows, "Now, when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy,") he rent his clothes, and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?—see how

he seeketh a quarrel against me?" ver. 7. The king of Israel spoke thus, under the conviction that *God alone* could cure the leprosy. This was a truth generally acknowledged by all ; and must have been acknowledged in *Syria*, as it was both in *Egypt* and *Israel* ; for this disease was equally prevalent in all those countries, and in all equally incurable. And it was this that led the king of Israel to infer that Ben-hadad sought a quarrel with him, in desiring him to do a work which God alone could do ; and when he should find that the work was not done, would declare war against him, because he did not do it. He either did not know the power of the Lord's prophet, or he knew that he had too small an interest with the Supreme God to expect Him to work a miracle to save one who was a worshipper of the *golden calves* set up by Jeroboam, at Dan and Bethel. *Idolatry* is not only *contemptible* in itself, but it renders its partisans *ridiculous*. In the time of distress, they dare not trust in their idols ; they are satisfied that they have no power—for who, under the influence of a reflecting mind, can put their trust in the stock of a tree ? To expect *supernatural help* in a time of distress, a man must know that there is a God, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. He that will be saved, must pray ; and he that prays, must have faith in a God all-sufficient.

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

8. On receiving this command, Naaman would naturally

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

9. The prophet must be faithful to his God; and he must act so that *he himself* may appear as little as possible in the miracle about to be wrought, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of man; and that God alone may have all the glory. "Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go, and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean," ver. 10. Here Elisha spake as a prophet—the order was from heaven; neither the *will* nor the *device* of the prophet was consulted; he acted under *immediate inspiration*, and was not even permitted to appear in the business. Man may mistake, God cannot. Whatever **HE** says is *good*; whatever **He** commands is *right*: and He so doth **His** marvellous

works, that men may fear before Him. It is the height of presumption for the *creature* to set up his wisdom against that of the all-wise *Creator*. God intended that Naaman should be *cleansed*; but that cleansing shall be effected by washing *seven times in the river Jordan*. Though *seven* was a number that intimated perfection among the Jews, and is often used in this sense; and here it might be supposed that the command meant, *wash sufficiently, wash till thou find that thou art clean*: yet nothing of this kind is intended, the words are to be taken *literally*: for God, in the law, had commanded that the *leper* should be *sprinkled seven times*, in order to his healing, see Levit. xiv. 7. The command of the prophet, therefore, was in strict accordance with the law; and if there were reason for the one, there was equal reason for the other: but the LAW was *holy*; and, therefore, the *commandment* was *holy, just, and good*.

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

11. *Behold I thought*—Hear him express his *thoughts*, for every word is emphatic. 1. *I thought HE will surely come out to ME*—I never thought he would make his *servant* the medium of communication between ME and himself. 2. *I thought he would come out to me and STAND*—Present himself before me, and stand as a servant before his master, to hear the orders of His God. 3. *I thought he would stand and CALL on the NAME OF THE LORD his GOD*—So that his God and himself might appear to do me service and honour. 4. *I thought that he would STRIKE his HAND over the place*—For I can never suppose that any *healing virtue* can be conveyed without *contact*. Had he acted thus, I should have considered myself treated according to the dignity of my master, and might have

expected from such a rational procedure, the cure for which I have come from the land of Syria. Why wash in his *Jordan*? "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel! May I not wash in them and be clean?" If my cure is to be effected by *cold water bathing*, surely I have means at home, superior to any that this country can afford. I am *insulted*; and shall instantly lay the business before my prince. "So he turned, and went away in a rage." ver. 12.

12. Having thus expressed his *thoughts*, he began to act upon them, and was proceeding on his return, till a prudent servant ventured to reason with him thus:—"My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith, Wash and be clean?" ver. 13. "The prescription is easy and un-expensive; thou hast come a great way, and it is worthy of trial: and it is time enough to give way to resentment and displeasure, when after trial, the prescription shall be found inefficient." Won by such forcible reasoning, he directed his way to *Jordan*; "dipped himself seven times, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like the flesh of a little child, and *he was clean*!" Thus, when he began to suspect his own wisdom, repress his choler, pay respect to the command of the prophet, and hearken to the advice of his prudent servants, he used the *prescribed means* with a success that astonished himself, and filled him with gratitude both to God and His prophet. How much *pain* and *misery* should we avoid if we had true *simplicity* of heart, took God at His word, and never leaned to our own understanding, when we found *that* opposed to the positive commands of God! Had Naaman continued to prefer his *own prejudices* to the *directions* of the *prophet*, he would have returned to Syria as loathsome a leper as he came away; and perhaps wreaked his vengeance on others, when only himself was in fault.

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

Naaman, the chief character in this history, was a *leper*; and with him as *such*, we are principally concerned. We have



already seen that the leprosy was a *dangerous* and *inveterate* disease, and the worst of all those that can possibly afflict the human body ; and because it is such, it has by general consent, been considered a fit *emblem* of SIN, in whatever concerns its *Nature*, its *Operation*, and its *Cure*.

(1) Its *Nature*. It was a disorder, howsoever produced, that infected the whole body, had its seat in a *highly vitiated state of the blood and other juices* ; and manifested itself on the *whole surface* by *eruptions*, and *scrofulous scaly excrescences*, till the whole *skin* became *thick*, and *wrinkled* like that of an *elephant*, whence one species of this disorder had its name, *elephantiasis*. In this disorder the *hair falls off* ; the *eyes*, *nose*, *ears*, and *mouth*, become exceedingly ulcerated, discharging a most *fetid* and offensive *ichor* ; the *joints* swell, and in the flexures the *skin* and *external muscles* crack across, so that the *toes* and *fingers* ultimately fall off. *Taste* entirely forsakes the patient, so that he is totally incapable of distinguishing, in this way, any kind of food ; yet at times, a most voracious appetite, and *satiriasis*, the most libidinous and disgusting ; in short, the patient is an object of *extreme horror*. *Areteus*, a Greek physician of Cappadocia, who was well acquainted with this disease, gives us a fearful description of it in the thirteenth chapter of his Second Book, *Περι αιτιων και σημειων και χρονικων παθων*, "Concerning the causes and signs of acute and chronic diseases," from which I shall at present take only one sentence. Speaking of the falling off of the extremities, he says :—*και των μελων προαποθιησκει του ανθρωπου αχρι εκπτωσιως, ρις, δακτυλοι, ποδις, αιδοια, και ὅλαι χειρες*. "The nose, the fingers, the feet, the genitals, and the hands and arms of the man, die, previously to the death of the body." *Dr. Mead*, who had seen a case of leprosy, describes it thus :— "I have seen a remarkable case of this in a countryman, whose body was so miserably seized with it, that his skin was *shining as if covered with snow* ; and as the furfureaceous scales were daily rubbed off, the flesh appeared *quick* or *raw* underneath."

*Mr. Maundrel*, in the Letters at the end of his *Travels in the Holy Land*, referring to the account of *Naaman's leprosy*, speaks thus :—"When I was in the Holy Land I saw several that laboured under *Gehazi's distemper* : particularly at *Sichem*, now *Naplousi*, there were no less than *ten* that came

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

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

*Areteus*, already quoted, observes that the *elephantiasis*, that species of leprosy which he so fearfully describes, has its name from the circumstance of the *skin, knees, and joints*, by swellings, wrinkles, and deeply indented lines, resembling those of the *elephant*. It was called also the *leonis*, the *lion disorder*; and *Heracleiosis*, the *Herculean disorder*, because of its insuperable *strength* and *virulence*. And here a thought suggests itself:—as *Hercules* is represented as having his whole body brought into a state of *insupportable inflammation* by reason of a *poisoned shirt*, so that in *rage* and *despair* he threw himself into the flames of a burning pyre on mount *Æta*, and thus put an end to his miserable life; was it not most probably the *leprosy* by which this ancient savage was afflicted? and, on this account, did he not rather choose to throw himself into the flames, than to endure the anguish and misery occasioned by this affliction? This is very likely to be the *truth* of a *case* which *fable* has so much *disguised*; for *Hercules* was

no fabulous person, though many fables have been made concerning him.

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

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

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

1. The leprosy began with a spot, a simple hidden infection being the cause: for the spot itself was only the first ostensible evidence of the vicious principle within.

This is descriptive of sin: there is a contagion in human nature, an evil principle that is opposed to the truth and holiness of God. This is the grand hidden cause of all transgression. It is a contagion from which no soul of man is free: it is propagated with the human species—no human being was ever born without it;—it is the infection of our nature; is commonly called *original sin*—*SIN*, because it is without conformity to the nature, will, and law of God; and is constantly in opposition to all three. The doctrine of *original sin* has been denied by many, while its opposers, as well as those who allow it, give the most unequivocal proofs that they are subjects of its working. I have seen its opposers and supporters impugn and defend it with an asperity of temper and coarseness of diction, that gave sufficient evidence of a fallen nature; both *Jonah-like*, thinking they did well to be angry! A late Writer on the subject has excelled in this way: and by his

bad tempers spoiled his works. *Evil tempers are leprous spots*, which sufficiently indicate the deeply radicated contagion in the hearts of those, in whose lives they are evident.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That a *sinner* must be, as such, *abominable*, in the sight of God, and of all good men;—that he is *unfit* for the society of the *righteous*;—and that he cannot, as a *sinner*, be admitted into the *church, or kingdom of God*, need no proof. Though God be a God of mercy and compassion—though He have loved the world so as to give His Son Jesus Christ to die for the sin of the world:—yet the sinner against his own soul, who neglects this great salvation, and will not come to Christ that he may have life; and who prefers sin, sinners and their ways, to God, His followers, His angels, and His hea-

ven;—must be *abominable* in His sight. With the wicked He is angry every day, whose *carnal mind* is *enmity* against God, and who are continually in *heart* and *conduct* saying, “Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.” Would it be consistent with the holiness and perfections of God, to look on such with *allowance*, much less with *complacency* and *delight*?

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

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

8. The *leper* was obliged to wear some *mark*, that might designate his state; *put his hand upon his mouth*, and *proclaim* his own *uncleanness*; and sensible of his plague, continue thus humbled and abased before God and man.

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

(3) Its Cure. 1. We have already seen that the *leprosy* was a disorder generally acknowledged to be *incurable* by any *human art* or means: and, therefore, *no attempt* was

made to remove it; for what is directed to be done under the Levitical law, was not in order to *cure* the leper, but to *declare him cured*, and fit for society, when God has wrought such a change. See Lev. xiv.

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

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

To cleanse the spiritual *leper*, the Lamb of God must be slain, and the *sprinkling of His blood* be applied:—for God has ordained, “Every thing must be purified by blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Art thou *stricken in years* and *rooted in transgression*? How kind is thy Maker in having preserved thee alive *so long*! Turn from thy transgressions—humble thy soul before Him—confess thine iniquity—be sorry for thy sin—and implore forgiveness. *Seek*, and thou, even *thou*, shalt *find*. Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!

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

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

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

The *simplicity of the prescription* excited the animosity of the carnal mind in Naaman. I will not go to his *Jordan*:—*Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?* I answer, metely considered as *waters*, they might be *as good*;—merely considered as *larger rivers* than Jordan, they might be *better*. But considered as *rivers* to which God *did not command him to go*, they were of *no worth*. The *ordinance of God* has its *efficacy*, not from any thing in *itself* calculated to produce a



salutary effect ; but from the consideration that God *chooses to make it the instrument or means* by which He will dispense His goodness and healing power. He has ever chosen the *weak* to confound the *mighty*—and the things that *are not* (of no repute) to bring to nought the things *that are* (in high estimation among men)—and this He does that He may bring down the haughtiness of man, and that no flesh may glory in His presence.

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

2. Look at the history of the world, which is properly the history of the *soul, mind, and heart* of man : and what is the great tale that is told in this history, from the foundation of the world down to the present time ? The tale is, “Man is a wretched being through all his generations.” He has been sensible of his wretchedness, and all his struggles have been to find *happiness*. In every *object of sense*, and in every possible state, he has sought it. In *what* is the *chief good* of man to be found ? The *Abana and Pharpar men* of the day were at hand, and pointed out the *thing*, and the *means* to attain it. The *pursuit* commenced—the *means* ardently used : but without success ! The *object*, the thing in the attainment of which happiness was promised, *was* attained, but the *end* was not answered. Other *objects* were proposed, suitable *means* of attainment specified, and a vigorous *pursuit* strongly recommended. These were tried in their turn, and with equal success.

3. The *Abana and Pharpar men* then began to *disagree* among themselves ; some cried one thing, some another, and the greater part knew not what they recommended, nor with what certainty they formed rules : they then *divided* themselves into *sects and parties* ; and each had its *rules*, its *dis-*

cipline, and its followers. Among these the *main object* was lost sight of by their contentions. The *Abana* and *Pharpar* of each class, was infinitely better in their view, and in their mode of argumentation, than those of the others; and in their wordy strife, truth was obscured, and the mind bewildered.

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

5. The world by wisdom knew not God. All those men sought for a happiness which should be the fruit of their own earning—and the Supreme God, as the Fountain and Giver of all goodness, was left entirely out of the question. The spirituality of the soul was rarely considered, and not generally known or understood: therefore no spiritual happiness was sought, because its necessity was not known.

6. God is a *spirit*, the human soul is a *spirit*, and the happiness, suitable to the nature and state of man, must be spiritual. The soul has infinite desires and wishes; and what can satisfy these wishes must be infinite. God alone is that Good: and in Him alone, is this happiness to be found. The *Abana* and *Pharpar* men of all ages have shut their eyes against this light, and refused to submit to the righteousness of God, but have gone about to establish their own righteousness.

7. At length God in His mercy revealed His Son, who was spoken of by all the Prophets since the world began; and men were commanded to hear Him. He spoke of God, of holiness, of heaven, of repentance, of faith, of regeneration, of judgement, of future rewards and punishments, of the final misery of the ungodly, and of the righteous shining like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, the *Abana* and *Pharpar* men of His day, spoke against Him, and blasphemed. They opposed the traditions of the fathers, to the words of life which He taught—and they, in

fact, maintained that those *turbid rivers of THEIR Damascus*, were *better* than all the *waters of Shiloh*, and the *laver of regeneration*. They went further:—they persecuted Him unto death, and He made a sacrificial offering of His life for the sin of the world.

8. His followers, the Apostles, the genuine *Elishas* of their times, proclaimed their *crucified Lord and Master*—commanding all men every where to repent, and to believe in Christ, as having been delivered up to death for their offences, and having risen again for their justification; with the most positive *assurances* that they who did so should receive remission of sins, be made partakers of the Holy Spirit, have their souls cleansed from all unrighteousness, and in consequence be *happy*, because saved from *sin*, the source and cause of *misery*. Multitudes received their testimony, and all that did so were made partakers of the *Supreme Good*. These blessed men went every where, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and forming into holy communities, called *churches*, all who believed in Christ crucified.

9. To preserve them in the state of salvation into which they had been brought, they instituted by the command of their Lord, *baptism* with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as an *initiatory* ordinance into the church; and *bread* and *wine* as a memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ. There were not long wanting *Abana* and *Pharpar* men, who either derided or neglected these ordinances, or changed their *form*, and not only denied their *efficacy*, but also denied the Lord that bought them, and attributed to a *decent, orderly life*, (the *Abana* and *Pharpar* of their own invention,) all that apostolic men attributed to the *sacrificial death* and powerful spirit of the Lord Jesus. They cannot think that God required any such sacrifice, and that He can (*for they have no doubt of it*,) forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin, through His own *benevolence*, without any *Atonement*: and they loudly proclaim that their *Damascene Abana* and *Pharpar* are better than the *blood of Jesus Christ*, which was shed for us; and the *body of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which was broken for us; and all the other doctrines that form the orthodox Christian's creed!

10. To all those *innovators*, or *opposers of the truth of God*, we simply say, "God has commanded us to *believe* and

do, as we believe and practice; and where the *word* of such a *King* is, there is *power*. By these truths, hundreds of thousands are reclaimed from the errors of their ways, and made *holy, happy, and useful*: an honour to God, and a blessing to men." We have, farther, too much reason to state, that not one profligate soul, not one sinner is converted to God, and changed from sin to holiness, by all the Damascene waters which have been so lavishly effused by the *Abana* and *Pharpar men*; while the doctrine of Christ crucified is to them that believe, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

11. A powerful attack has been lately made by some *Abana* and *Pharpar men*, on the *means* of salvation, and particularly on *prayer*:—"God," say they, "*knows what we want*; and if, of His own benevolence, He be not disposed to supply our wants, no *prayers* nor *entreaties* can move Him to do it: and if He be disposed to do it, our wants shall be supplied *without our asking*. Therefore, prayer for these things is *foolish* in the *principle*, *ridiculous* in its *application*, and *useless* in its *performance*." To all such we answer, "Masters, if God had bidden us to do some great thing, should we not have done it? How much rather when He saith, *Ask, and ye shall receive*; *SEEK, and ye shall find*; *KNOCK, and it shall be opened to you*."—*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved. We have the positive *command* of God for *prayer*, for *supplication*, and for *importunity*. *ASK*, says Jesus; there is *PRAYER*.—*SEEK*, says the Saviour of the world; there is *SUPPLICATION*.—*KNOCK*, says the Sovereign of angels and men, there is *IMPORTUNITY*. Shall we, then, put the foolish and indeed contemptible directions and sayings of these *Abana* and *Pharpar men*, in place of the *salutary commands* of the Supreme God? That be far from us!

12. We, therefore, in simplicity, like Naaman in his better mind, take God at His word, acknowledge His *right* to prescribe the means by which we shall receive that salvation which is His *free gift*; we go to the *Jordan* of His prescription, dip seven times according to His order, and we return healed of our leprosy, giving glory to God in the highest, and living to promote peace and good will among men. Hallelujah! Jesus is exalted, and the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Amen.

## SERMON IX.

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### LIFE, THE GIFT OF THE GOSPEL: THE LAW, THE MINISTRATION OF DEATH.

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GALATIANS, Chap. iii. ver. 21, 22.

21. If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.
22. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

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THE people of *Galatia*, to whom the Apostle wrote, had been at an early period of the gospel dispensation, converted to Christianity; and had given ample proofs of their conversion, by their attachment to St. Paul, who had been the instrument of that conversion; and by their obedience to the precepts of the Gospel. But it appears, that certain teachers had got among them, who unhappily succeeded in persuading them, that *an observance of the Mosaic law*, was indispensably necessary to their justification, and final salvation. The Apostle being informed of this unhappy change, wrote this Epistle to them, to call them back to the simplicity of the Gospel: and he does this, *partly* by expostulating with them, and putting them in remembrance of their conversion to God, and the blessedness they then experienced; and *partly*, by shewing them the utter insufficiency of the *Mosaic* or any other *law*, to give life and salvation to men: for, thus he argues in the Text, “If there had been a law given, which could have given life”—insured and made over life temporal, spiritual, and eternal, to those who should observe its precepts; “*then righteousness*,—pardon of sin, and salvation,—*should have been*

by that law ; and the gospel scheme been utterly useless : *but, the Scripture*,—all the declarations of God in the law, and by the prophets,—*hath concluded, συνεκλισει, hath shut, and locked up*, as in a prison, both Jews and Gentiles, because all have sinned ; where they all continue as criminals, condemned to death, till the time of execution should come ; or till a merciful display of the lawgiver's goodness should take place, which is here called the *promise by faith of Jesus Christ*, namely, the promise made to Adam—*the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent* ; and that contained in the covenant made with Abraham, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* : the fulfilment of which promise, containing pardon and salvation, is given to them that believe in Christ, as having made an atonement for sin by His passion and death, thus opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers ; no kind of obedience to any law, being capable of producing such effects.

To see the force of the Apostle's argument and reasoning, we must examine and explain the true import of some of the principal words in the Text. These are, *Law, Life, Righteousness, Promise, and Faith* : and in doing this, the reasoning dependent on each, will be introduced.

1. **LAW**, νόμος, from νέμω, includes the idea of *appropriation and assignment* ; *giving to each his own, and guarding that own, or property, against the claims or aggressions of others*. *Suum cuique*, "his own to every one," is its invariable motto. And as it ascertains property, so it *secures and defends* that property : the ascertainment of rights, and the defence of those rights, being essential to the true notion of a just, or rationally constituted law.

The word law, תורה *torah*, as used among the Hebrews, implied in its ideal meaning, *instruction or teaching*, from ירה *yah*, to teach ; for that law *taught* the knowledge of the true God, and the worship that was due to Him ; and instructed the people in all the duties of life :—and among the Romans, law, *lex*, meant nearly the same, as the word comes from *lego*, I read ; Law being a *system of instruction* committed to writing, and promulgated for the information of the people at large, that they might know their rights, and discern their duties.

• Law, carries generally with it the idea of *binding or restraint*,

it being designed to *prevent* evil, and thus *oblige* men to live according to its prescriptions; and within the limits it has defined. This supposes it to be derived from *ligo* to *bind*.

All law, has professedly for its objects, the prevention of evil, and the good of the governed: and hence the *subject* finds that it is at once both his *duty* and *interest* to be obedient. While the law professes to ascertain *the rights of the subject*, and protect him in those rights, it clothes the *ruler* with *authority* and *power* to enforce and execute all its injunctions. Without *authority* and *power* in the ruler, all law would be idle and nugatory; however excellently conceived, and righteously constructed, it would be of no avail, because there was no effective and acknowledged *energy* for its execution.

2. By LIFE, in the Text, we are not only to understand, on the general principles already laid down,—1. *Security of life and property*—protection against outrage, rapine, spoil and murder, which we have already seen to be the *province of law*, executed by a *just ruler*: but, as the Apostle is speaking of *spiritual things*, he must mean *spiritual life*; the salvation and safety of the soul—preservation from death, with *right to live*. 2. *Spiritual life*, union with God, the Fountain of Life, so that the man lives *through Him, to Him, and for Him*. 3. *Eternal life*, not only *being*, but well-being, infinitely protracted.

3. **RIGHTEOUSNESS**; δικαιοσυνη, not only what is *right* and *just* in itself, and what contains the *principles of all justice and morality*, which is its literal and proper meaning; but, *justification*, i. e. the pardon of sin, reconciliation to God, the removal of condemnation and liability to punishment, for transgressions already committed; but also, the recovery of the *forfeited right to life*—life spiritual and eternal. This is a frequent meaning of the term in St. Paul's writings; and by this word he expresses *God's plan* of saving sinners by Jesus Christ. See Rom. iii. 21, 22. and 25, 26.

4. **PROMISE**. God's *engagement* with fallen man, that He would provide an *atonement*;—and especially, His covenant with Abraham, that *in his seed*, from which the Man Christ Jesus sprang, *all nations of the earth should be blessed*. This *promise* or engagement was made *four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law*; and was formed independently of the *peculiarities* of the Jewish dispensation. It.

was made for the *Gentile world*—when as yet there was no distinction of *Jews*,—*no law*—*no settlement* in the afterwards promised land. Jesus Christ incarnated—preaching righteousness—proving His mission by miracles—suffering—dying—rising again from the dead—ascending into heaven, and becoming a Mediator between God and man, having purchased eternal redemption for them—is what is meant by this *promise*.

5. **FAITH.** Implicit credence in what God has promised, and what He has spoken concerning Christ: trusting to His passion and death as a sacrificial offering, and sufficient atonement for sin. And because every blessing under the Gospel, is to be received by *faith*, hence, the *Gospel* itself is termed *Faith*;—so the Apostle in the context, ver. 26, *But before Faith came*, (before the *Gospel dispensation* was published,) *we were kept under the law, shut up unto the Faith* (the Gospel) *which should afterwards be revealed*;—the law being only a *school-master* (*καταγωγός*, a leader of children to school) *to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified*; have our sins forgiven by *faith*,—by believing in Christ as having died and made atonement for our sins. And he adds, ver. 25, *But after that Faith is come*, (the *Gospel way of salvation* was published) we are no longer under a school-master—under the law, as expecting justification through it, or *salvation* by it; as it was only intended to point out Christ by its *Ritual*, and by its *strict morality*, shew the absolute necessity of such a sacrificial offering as that which was made to Divine Justice by His passion and death.

The terms in the text being thus explained, we shall be able, on a review of the whole passage, to see, and properly apprehend, the force of the Apostle's reasoning.

Four things are here asserted by the Apostle:—

I. That men are under condemnation because of sin, have forfeited their life, and are exposed to death.

II. That no law has been given, that can redeem them from this perilous situation, and give them life.

III. That the great *Promise* of human redemption, fulfilled in the incarnation and death of Christ, is the only means of saving a lost world.

And, IV. That the benefits of this redemption are to be received by *Faith*:



I. That men are under condemnation, &c.—When God made man, He formed him as capable of *doing His will*, as of *understanding* it: and having made him in His own image, the Divine Law was written on his heart: for the Law of God is a transcript of His own righteousness, holiness, and truth. When man had fallen from his fidelity to his Maker, and thus become disunited from Him who was his life, light, and holiness, he was no longer capable of perfectly loving his Creator, and worthily magnifying His name. God had given him a law, the spirit of which was, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, &c.* This was plain, simple, holy, just, and good. 1. It was *plain*—so that it could not be mistaken. 2. *Simple*—so that it could not perplex nor confound by distinctions and subtleties. 3. *Holy*, totally free either from sin or imperfection. 4. *Just*—as requiring no obedience but what the *creature* owed to its *Creator*. And, 5. *Good*—as it led to the continual perfection of the creature, and secured its increasing felicity.

To *love* God is to be happy: to *obey* God is to continue in His love. Man, ceasing to be obedient, did not continue in this love, and consequently lost his happiness.

But this was not the only evil that his transgression entailed upon him: he fell into *condemnation*, because he had broken this law. When a law is broken, not only all the privileges it confers on the obedient, are lost—for the transgressor has no longer any *claim* on it for protection and support; but he is condemned as a transgressor, to suffer the penalty due to his sin. And in a case of this kind, where disobedience implies *treason*, the crime is *capital*; and the penalty is an *everlasting separation from the presence of God, and the glory of His power*.

According to the spirit of St. Paul's language, such transgressors are considered as being *arraigned, tried, found guilty, and condemned* by the law; taken away from the place of judgement, committed to prison, and shut up in it, to await the time of execution. This is the import of the word *συγκλεισιν*, *shut* or *locked up together* in their prison-house, waiting in dreadful expectation the arrival of the order for their execution.

II. No law has been given that can redeem them, &c.—In this awful time of suspense, any appeal to the *law* is vain;

for by that is the knowledge of sin, and by that they are condemned. *Law is justice*: and justice knows nothing of *mercy*. By them it has been broken, and it knows no forgiveness. No law can be made with any provision for the passing by, or pardon of sin. Such a provision would be a provision for transgression, and an excitement to it. The obligations of justice would be at once awakened, if the law held out any hope for the pardon of transgression. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die*, is the language of the law; and cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things that are written in the book of the law to do them; is among the penal sanctions by which God has fortified His law, and rendered it respectable. No abatement of this penalty: no remission of the offence: in vain is *life* requested: life has already been *forfeited*, and no law has ever been *given* that can *give back forfeited life*. God's law is righteous, and can look with approbation only on what is righteous. It is *holy*, and requires holiness in the *motive*, the *purpose*, and the *act*. The transgressor is *unholy*:—the law therefore looks upon him with abhorrence. The law is *true*, and must fulfil all its declarations: the soul that sinneth, it shall die, has already passed the lips of the Lord; and the law cannot give life.

It may be asked, indeed, “Why is the law so inexorable and severe?” I answer, there is no *severity* in it—it is *justice* flowing from righteousness, holiness, and truth;—to be *exorable* would be to resign its claims, and at once to change its nature.

Yet this law is not *vindictive*; it does nothing in the nature of *revenge*. In its requisitions it is calm and steady; so is it in its inflictions of punishment—they also flow from its righteousness, holiness, and truth. As it gives due *warning* by promulgating its determinations, there is no excuse for *ignorance*: it has ascertained the proper line of conduct, and fixed the penalties of transgression. The duties are all reasonable, the penalties are suitable to the nature of the transgressions.

But, with a greater shew of reason, it may be asked, “Is it not out of the power of any man to fulfil the requisitions of this law, as it requires an unvarying perfect obedience, and extends its demands to the very *thoughts* and *purposes* of the heart? Is it not therefore cruel to place a man in such

circumstances, in which he must invariably transgress; as no man, unless entirely pure and holy, could keep such a law: should not, therefore, the powers of the subject be brought up to the spirituality and perfection of the law; or the law be brought down by moderated claims to the abilities and state of fallen, sinful man?"

1. To this I answer, the law is precisely what it should be, as it is an emanation from the righteousness, holiness, and truth of God. It is also perfectly *reasonable*: it enjoins nothing that is not *right*. To love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to serve Him through that principle of love, are so perfectly consistent with reason and good sense, that every man must see at once, that less could not, should not be required. If less than this reasonable service were our *duty*, our interest would be lessened in the same proportion, and our happiness be necessarily incomplete.

2. This law, as it proceeded from the immaculate nature of God, was always the same. It was the law given to our first parents—it was suited to the nature of man, who was created in the image of God: there was nothing in it too hard for him; he was as the commandment—holy, just, and good: and it would be shockingly absurd to suppose, that when man, through his own fault, sinned against his God, and fell from his perfection, that God must then bring down His law to a level with his sinful imperfection, that he might not by transgressing incur farther penalty! The thought, seriously indulged, is blasphemy. A law, thus framed, could be no expression of the Divine mind—could not have His sanction, and could be no rule of moral action.

But, 3. "Might not the law have made provision for such delinquencies, if not by moderating its claims, yet by granting *pardon*?" That is, could not justice reverse its own sentence righteously pronounced? Could it not *condemn* and *acquit* at the same time? For *justice* must condemn an evil action. We have seen already, that no *law* could make provision for *pardon*—that this would defeat its own purposes, and dissolve the bond of moral obligation. No law, therefore, could give *life*, in the case where *death* had been incurred, and the sentence of death pronounced. Hence it is an eternal, invariable truth, that no law has been given among men, or even by God to men, that can *give LIFE*; and, consequently, *righteousness*,

or *pardon of sin*, cannot be by *the law*—*a law*—or *any law*; and for all that the law even of God can do, the guilt and consequent punishment of sin, must remain for ever. If God be disposed to save man, some other method of salvation must be found; or the fallen children of men must sink lower and lower into the gulf of their own impurities and misery, and at last into the bottomless pit of endless perdition.

But if the *law* be so totally inefficient for all the purposes of reconciliation to God, and eternal salvation, may we not then, in the language of the context, ver. 19, ask, *Wherefore, then, serveth the law?* Of what real use can it be in the economy of salvation? I answer, it *serves* the most important purposes:—1. Its purity and strictness *shew* us its *origin*:—it came from God. All religious institutions, merely human, though pretendedly from *heaven*, shew their origin, by *extravagant demands* in some cases, and *sinful concessions* in others. In the *law of God*, nothing of this appears, and therefore we see it to be a transcript of the Divine nature. 2. It *shews* us the perfection of the original state of man; for, as that law was *suitcd to his state*, and the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good, so was his nature: it is, therefore, a comment on those words, *God made man in his own image, and in his own likeness*. 3. It *serves* to shew the nature of sin;—the real obliquity of a crooked line can only be ascertained by laying a straight line to it:—thus the fall of man, and the depth of that fall, are ascertained by the law. 4. It *serves* to convict man of sin, righteousness, and judgement; it shews him the deplorable state into which he is fallen, and the great danger to which he is exposed. 5. It *serves* as a school-master, (or leader of children to school, *παιδαγωγος*;) to convince us of the absolute necessity and value of the Gospel, without which no soul can entertain even a hope of salvation. 6. It *serves* to shew us the perfection and excellence of that state into which we are to be brought by the grace of the Gospel; for that pure and holy moral law must be written upon the hearts of believers; and its precepts, both in *letter* and *spirit*, become the rule of their lives.

The *law*, therefore, though it *cannot give life*, serves the most important purposes in the economy of the Gospel: and unless it be preached strongly and fully, the necessity of a Redeemer will scarcely appear. *Thus, then, serveth the law.*

III. These considerations lead us to the great *Promise* of human redemption, fulfilled in the incarnation, teaching, passion, and death of Jesus Christ, as the only means of saving a lost world.

Man, being utterly undone by his transgression, disabled in his soul through moral evil, and condemned to death because of his sins; and no law or dispensation of any kind or form having been given, that could give him life, and save him from death eternal;—God, in the plenitude of His mercy, *devised means that this his banished should not be eternally expelled from him.* JESUS, the Almighty's Fellow, must come down from heaven, and be incarnated by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of a virgin—live among men—point out, by His teaching, the way of holiness that leads to heaven—suffer in His body, and at last pour out His blood, in order to make an atonement for the sin of the world; and thus, as the representative of the human race, being a partaker of human flesh and blood, bore in His own body, in the garden of Gethsemane, and upon the cross, the punishment which belonged to all who had sinned, and were partakers of that nature. God, manifested in the flesh, made the atonement by giving up His *life*, expressly *purposing* that this death should be *sacrificial*; and should be the price of redemption for the great sinful family, captives to sin, and imprisoned, under condemnation to an endless banishment from God, the Fountain of true and endless felicity. And in reference to this *purpose*, Christ must suffer and rise again from the dead, in order that repentance and remission of sin might be proclaimed in His name among all nations: all mankind being thus called upon to believe on Him, as having been delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification.

Though the hand of *violence* appeared as evidently in the apprehending of Christ, and subsequent maltreatment, as the hand of *injustice* did in His condemnation and death; yet, we must take heed that we attribute not to Jewish *malice* and *violence*, that which was brought about in the order of God's grace and infinite mercy. Jesus must shed His blood, and pour out His life for the sin of the world; and this must be a *voluntary sacrifice*: had there been any *reluctance* on the part of the sufferer, the sacrifice had been *marred*. Had His death been the mere effect of Jewish *malice*, and inflicted

by their *violence*, it would not have been *sacrificial*. The salvation of a lost world, by Jesus Christ, is ever attributed to the *love* of God: from this source, all must flow *spontaneously* and without *compulsion* or *restraint*. Could HE be dragged to *death*, and die by malicious violence, who, if HE had *willed*, might have had *more than twelve legions of angels* to defend and deliver Him? Could HE be *compelled* to appear before Pilate by that most disorderly and unruly mob, to whom, when HE only announced His name, so great was the authority and influence that *they went backward, and fell to the ground?* (John xvii. 6.) NO!—That Person who ever appeared to have all nature under his control, by the miracles HE wrought, could not have His life *reluctantly* taken away by a Jewish mob. HE was Himself solicitous to guard us against an error of this kind, as it would tend directly to vitiate, if not destroy the merit of His offering: therefore, he says, “*I lay down My life for the sheep.*”—“*Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again: NO MAN TAKETH it from Me, but I lay it down OF MYSELF. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up.*” (John x. 15. 17, 18.) No words can be more dignified—none more decisive of the fact. HE gave His life for the life of the world: and His death was as *voluntary* as it was *sacrificial* and *atoning*.

Man in his *natural state* is presented to us, 1. As *guilty*.  
2. As *unholy*.

1. As *guilty*, he needs that *righteousness* or *pardon* which cannot come by the law.

2. As *unholy*, he needs that *purification* and *holiness*, without which none can see God. This *twofold work*, requires a *twofold agency*. 1. To *blot out sin*, Christ must *shed His life's blood*: without shedding of blood, there was no remission, even typified under the law: and the *blood* was the *life* of the beast: indicating that Christ Himself could not make atonement in any other way than by *dying*. 2. To *purify* the soul, to refine and sublime all the passions and appetites, the operation of the Holy Spirit is promised. *Spirit* only can act successfully on *spirit*: and this Spirit is called the Holy Spirit, not only because it is holy in itself; but because it is the *Author of holiness* to them who receive it. Hence, it is represented under the notion of *fire*, because it enlightens,

warms, refines and purifies. It is the property of *fire* either to *consume* and *destroy*, or *assimilate* every thing to itself, with which it is brought into contact. It pervades all things, transfuses itself through every part, destroys or decomposes whatever cannot stand its action ; and communicates its own essential properties to whatever abides its test. Thus the Holy Spirit, the *Spirit of Burning*, destroys the pollution of the heart, and makes pure and divine all its powers and faculties.

As the *first* work was called the work of *justification* or *pardon* ; so the *second* is called the work of *sanctification* or *holiness* : and the one is invariably attributed to the blood of Christ ; and the other generally, to the Holy Ghost. Without the *first* of these, the *second* cannot *take place* ; without the *second* the work is *imperfect*. Without the *pardon of sin*, there can be no redemption from eternal *punishment* : without the sanctification of the soul, there is no *meettiness* for, nor entrance into eternal glory.

Again, as by diabolical influence the soul is rendered *guilty* and *impure*, and thus divested of the image of God, in which it was created ; it is essential to the honour of Jesus Christ and the scheme of redemption, that the soul be brought back to the state in which it was created ; that sin and satan may not only have no triumph, but that they may be destroyed and eternally confounded. Any thing less than this, could not have entered into the divine purpose ; for, as man in the beginning had no more holiness and perfection than was suitable to and necessary for the nature of his being, and the *end* for which he was formed ; so, if he be redeemed at all, and saved, he must be brought back into the same state of holiness in which he originally stood ; without which God's design in his creation cannot be fulfilled. Farther, as the Law of God was *written upon his heart*, but became *obliterated* by sin, it is essentially necessary, that it be again written on the soul : and as the law, in his fallen state, could not be *brought down* in its purity, spirituality and demands, to the sinful and imperfect state into which he had fallen : so it was necessary in redemption, to bring the soul *up to the law* ; and this is done by this purifying energy : and thus the redeemed of the Lord are enabled to love the Lord their God, with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength ; " the very thoughts of their

hearts being cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so that they are enabled perfectly to love Him, and worthily to magnify His name.

IV. As the great *Promise*, fulfilled in the manifestation of Christ, is the only means of saving a lost world ; so, the only means of reaping the benefit of His incarnation and sacrificial death, is *Faith* : for this *Promise*, in all its benefits, is *given*, says the Apostle, *to them that believe*.

From the *nature* of the thing, and from the state of the soul, it is evident, that salvation cannot be obtained by the *works of the law* ; for we have already seen, that no law can be given, that can *give life* ; and therefore, *by the works of the law, can no man living be justified*. If therefore, man is to be saved, his salvation must be *gratuitous* ; it is only *mercy* that can blot out his sin : it is only *mercy* that can sanctify his soul. And as man is an *intelligent* being, *rational* and *free*, there must be some *act* on his part, by which this *mercy* is *received*. That the salvation may be of *grace*, it is by *faith* : that man may not even have the *pretence* of *merit*, he is required only to *believe* in order to receive it ;—that is, to *credit* what God has spoken on this subject ; and to be so convinced of the infinite merit of the great Sacrificial Offering, as to trust the total redemption of his soul to that merit ;—to consider it as a sufficient Sacrifice and Atonement, for his sins : and in this confidence, to bring it to God as the grand and sufficient Price by which that redemption has been effected. Thus *God's grace* provides the *Sacrifice* : *Jesus Christ*, in His infinite love to man, *offers* it : the *Holy Spirit* stands ready to apply and seal it : and *man* by *faith* *receives* it ; the *act* of *faith* being simply his own—though the *power* by which he believes, comes from God. He can therefore, from the mere *act*, have no more *merit* in his own salvation, than the necessitous mendicant has, in procuring the alms of the charitable man, by *stretching out his hand*, in order to receive them.

God requires, yea commands, men to *believe*, and threatens them with *perdition* if they do not ; for He no more believes for men, than He repents, loves or obeys for them ;—the *power* He communicates, but the *use* of that power is their own. The *Jews*, who on the preaching of Christ crucified did not believe, were reprobated ; and continue until this day



monuments of God's displeasure. The *Gentiles*, who hardened not their hearts, but *used* the *power* they had to *believe*, according to the *evidence* that was set before them, received the salvation of God, and were elected in the room of the unbelieving and disobedient Jews. And to this day, the Gospel is the savour of death unto death, or of life unto life, *according* as it is *rejected*, or *received* by men. And this is the grand reason why, under the preaching of the Gospel, some are saved and some not :—for some gladly lay hold on the hope that is set before them ; while others *cavil*, give way to *prejudice*, *harden* their hearts, *disbelieve*, and will not come to Christ that they may have life. This, then, is the condemnation of ungodly men, that light is come into the world, and they *choose* darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil : and so the word preached does not profit them, because it is not mixed with *faith* in them that hear it. There is but one remedy, and this they refuse to apply.

After having shewn that the grace of the Gospel brings a *complete salvation* to the soul ; *justifying* it from all unrighteousness,—*sanctifying* it from all unholiness : it will at once be perceived, *how* it communicates and maintains that *life* which the *law* could not *give*. The believing soul being now restored to the Divine favour and image, regains, 1st, A *right to live* through the whole of his probation :—*before*, he was only *suffered to exist*, and was considered a *condemned criminal*. Now, having his sin blotted out, he is no longer liable to *death* on account of transgression, and he has that *life* which the *law took away*, because forfeited by sin. He is *now free among the dead*, and through the second Adam eats of the *tree of life*, from which the first Adam was excluded because of his apostasy.

2. He lives a *Spiritual life*, for the *law of the Spirit of Life* has made him free from the *law of sin and death*. Christ is his *life* ; and he *lives*, because Christ dwells in his heart by faith ; and the *life* that he lives is by faith in the Son of God. His soul has constantly that *union* with God, in which the *essence* of *spiritual life* consists : and this is a *life*, which, if once forfeited, *no law* can *give* back : for the *law* confers *no grace*, and gives *no privileges* : it only *preserves* to the *obedient* what they already possess.

3. By this change of his circumstances and nature, he has a *right to eternal life*; for being a *son*, he is an *heir*, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Neither could *this life* be given by the law. In case of *perfect obedience*, it only awarded that eternal life, which the person must have merited by his exact and unfailing fulfilment of all its precepts.

While, therefore, in every sense, the man *died by the law*, because of his sins; in every sense, the believer *lives by the gospel*, because of that *sacrificial merit* which has blotted out his offences, and bestows that Spirit by which the heart is purified and made a partaker of the Divine nature.

Being brought into this state of salvation, *he loves God with all his HEART*;—every *affection, appetite, and desire*, being purified, refined, and fixed on and centered in God. *He loves Him with all his SOUL*;—the whole *animal life* being occupied with and devoted to His service: for as he lives *by God*, he lives *to and for Him*. (Such were the *martyrs*,—they counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might properly confess and glorify Him who had brought them out of darkness to His marvellous light.) *He loves Him with all his MIND, his understanding, judgment, and will*—with his *spirit*—the whole of the *intellectual principle*; all his *rational powers* being influenced by the spirit of love, and employed in rendering a *reasonable service* to his God. *And he loves Him with all his STRENGTH*,—all *animal, rational, and intellectual energies* being combined in his acts of *devotion* and acts of *obedience*. As he thus *loves God*, he also loves his *neighbour as himself*. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law:” he lives to God’s glory, by receiving good from Him to do good to men. By the finger of God the moral law is *written on his heart*, and by incessant acts of loving obedience it is *transcribed in his life*.

But who is sufficient for these things!—He in whose heart Jesus lives and rules, and whose blood has cleansed him from all unrighteousness. He who wills in God’s will—lives in His life—is strong in His strength:—who walks by faith and not by sight—who is crucified to the world, and the world to him—whose feet are fixed on the rock of ages,—and who can do all things through Christ, who strengthens him. Reader, All things are possible to him that believeth.

## EXHORTATION.

And now, Reader, what sayest thou to these things. Art thou *alive* under the *Gospel*, or *dead* under the *law*? A *dead* man knows not the state he is in: he has *eyes*, but he *sees* not: *ears*, but he *hears* not: a heart, but it *feels* not. His *senses* are locked up, and he is neither *terrified* at the approach of *danger*, nor *gladdened* at the prospect of honour, wealth, or power.

The *living man* knows he is *alive*:—his *eyes* see—his *ears* hear—his *heart* *feels*. He can apprehend danger, and provide for his escape. He sees prosperity, and gladdens at its approach. As it fares with the *naturally dead* and *living*—so with him who is dead in trespasses and sins, and with him who is alive to God, by faith in Christ. He who is under the *death* that the *law* has denounced against the workers of iniquity, knows not his state, and is not sensible of his danger. He sees not that he is under the *curse*—he considers not that the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men—he knows not that the displeasure of God abideth on him—he trembles not, though Tophet from beneath is moved to meet him at his coming—he walks on frowardly in the hardness of his heart—he fears no danger—he is under no alarms—and the glad tidings of salvation gladden not his heart. O, how awful and dangerous is this state!

On the other hand, the man who is *alive to God* knows it, because he *feels* this Divine life. His eyes by faith see the King in His beauty, and the land that is afar off. He knows that he is of God, by the spirit which God hath given him—he *hears* the voice of the Son of God and lives—he feels the powers of the world to come, and tastes the good Word of God! O how glorious is this state! He knows he is standing on the brink of eternity, but redeemed from the fear of death, he rejoices in hope of the glory of God.

*Sinner*, this is not *thy* case: thou art still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. And canst thou, with this fearful looking for of fiery indignation, sport and play, laugh, jest, sing, and be merry! O terrible delusion and fearful state! *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and*

*Christ will give thee light.* Is not God even now quickening thee? Breathe, O Divine Spirit, on these slain, that they may live! and let thy breath come unto them!

Dost thou not begin to *feel* the necessity of caring for thy soul! To-day then, while it is called to-day, arise and shake thyself from the dust, and call upon thy God. Jesus hath died for thee, to redeem thee from the curse of the law—to blot out thine iniquities—to sanctify thy soul—and save thee unto eternal life! Now, turn unto Him with all thy heart—humble thyself under the mighty hand of God—take refuge in the infinitely meritorious death of the crucified Jesus—and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life! Implore Him to grant thee that *spiritual regeneration*, without which thou canst not see the kingdom of God.

But perhaps some one is ready to say, I have Abraham for my father. I have got that regeneration. I have been baptized by the proper authority, in the name of the holy and ever-blessed Trinity, and am therefore a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

Stop!—If thou be a *member of Christ*, thou hast the *same spirit* in thee, that is in the *living Head*. If a *child of God*, thou art *holy*; for *holiness* is the *Divine nature*; and every child *partakes of the nature of his father*. If an *heir of the kingdom of heaven*, then thou must be a *son*,—for, if a *son*, then an *heir*—an *heir of God*, and *joint-heir with Christ*. And if a *son* and *heir*, then because *thou art a son*, *He hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into thy heart, crying, Abba, Father!* Gal. iv. 6, 7. Hast thou these evidences of thy *regeneration*? If thou have not, and art still trusting to what was only an *outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace*,—*viz.* a death unto sin, and a *new birth* unto righteousness—thou art in a mortal deception: and thy teacher is the *blind that leadeth the blind*: and if God's mercy interpose not, thou and he shall soon fall into the ditch of remediless perdition? If even that doctrine were true, (whereas it is both *absurd* and *anti-christian*,) thy baptism can avail thee nothing, if thou have fallen into sin, and *wickedly* departed from God, since it was administered unto thee:—If thou have not regularly through life, *renounced the devil and all his works; the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh*: if thou have *not kept God's holy will and commandments*,

and walked unblameably in the same, thou hast *renounced thy baptism*—thy circumcision is now uncircumcision; and as a *sinner*, thou art a member of the mystical body of Satan, a child of wrath, and an heir of perdition. Strange, that those who have taught thee, that water-baptism is all that is implied in spiritual regeneration—or, that when baptized with water, thou wert *then* spiritually regenerated,—had not warned thee that if ever thou didst renounce thy baptism, by taking the *yoke of Satan* on thee instead of the *yoke of Christ*, thou should immediately apply to him that taught thee this absurd and dangerous doctrine, that he might administer a *second baptism*, and continue to *repeat* it as frequently as thou hast relapsed into sin!—The latter teaching would not have been less absurd than the former. Trust in nothing of this kind: it is the *blood of Jesus* alone, that *cleanseth from all sin*. This alone will be to thee the *laver of regeneration*, and will bring with it the *renewing power of the Holy Ghost*: and thus, when born of water and the Holy Spirit, thou mayest enter into the kingdom of God. O, let nothing divert thy attention from the absolute necessity of this most important change! Without the application of the atoning Blood, even the baptism instituted by Christ will profit thee nothing: it will be only as that *law that cannot give life*: and verily righteousness cometh not by that law. Trust to nothing that has passed merely *upon thee*: look for the remission of sins, and the renewing of thy soul in righteousness and true holiness, after the image of Him who created thee. Death is fast advancing upon thee—and the judge is at the door. But Jesus is *nearer*. Hear His voice! “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.” Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

## SERMON X.

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### THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE.

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JAMES, Chap. iii. ver. 17.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

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THE preaching of the Gospel does not necessarily imply, that we should in every Sermon dwell on the *fundamental articles of the Christian faith*. Where a people are known to have a *right creed* and a thorough *Gospel ministry*, these are necessarily supposed in every Sermon.

1. Our *coming together* in a religious assembly necessarily supposes that we believe there is a God—for he that cometh unto God must believe that He is. This, therefore, need not be a constant subject in proof.

2. Our *making prayer and supplication* before Him, necessarily supposes that we believe He hears prayer, and concerns Himself with the interests of His creature, and must imply our belief that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

3. Our *offering praise and thanksgiving* necessarily supposes that we believe in His *moral government of the world*; that He is the *Author and Dispenser* of every good; that all

our good has been derived from Him ; that *we* deserve nothing at His hand, and having *received much* should be *thankful*.

4. Our *confession of sin* and *deprecation of God's wrath* necessarily supposes that we acknowledge *we are sinners*, are exposed to His judgement, and in danger of endless punishment ; and that He alone can save us from perdition.

5. Our *praying in the name*, and *imploing mercy for the sake of Jesus Christ*, necessarily supposes that we believe Him to be the *only Saviour of sinners* ; that we seek redemption in His blood, and have no confidence in any merit of ourselves or others.

6. Our *praying for grace* to enable us to stand, work, and be faithful, necessarily supposes that we are persuaded of *our own utter insufficiency* to do any good without Divine assistance, and that we are constantly dependent upon God. Therefore these articles, for the reasons above alleged, need not be brought into continual proof.

This *foundation* is therefore always supposed to be laid— all our preaching is in *reference* to it, and is *built* on it ; but there are principles which are derived from these doctrines, (as necessary in their place as these doctrines themselves,) which should never be forgotten, yet are seldom kept sufficiently in view :—thus, we are always laying the *foundation*, but advance not the *superstructure* :—always *learning*, but seldom coming to the *full knowledge of the truth*. I shall therefore have recourse to some of those principles, fairly deducible from the text, in order to explain what effects the religion of Christ should produce in our *souls* for our *personal salvation* ;—and in our *lives* for the *conviction and edification of others*.

*Religion*, properly speaking, is a species of commerce carried on between God and the soul : it supposes His continual *agency and operation*, as well as the soul's agency with Him. The work of holiness is a Divine work, and can only be produced and carried on by the Divine Spirit : and it is from this that the soul has its light and life.

It is impossible for God, who is a *spirit*, to be *inactive*. *Matter* is necessarily inactive and motionless till moved ; and without this, must be always *inert*. *Spirit* is ever active, and it requires as much of the activity and energy of God to maintain the works that He has made, as it required to pro-

duce them. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* God is still working to *preserve* what He originally *worked* to *produce*. As He is the Fountain of *light* and *power*, without Him we can neither *know* nor *do* any thing. To be *well instructed* in this point is of the greatest consequence; for if we *err* here, we shall be *right* no where. We shall neither understand what is *true*, nor practice what is *just*. As none but He can diffuse the necessary *knowledge*, so none but Himself can supply the requisite *power*. The true light must shine out by means of the Gospel, and be reflected on our souls from the face of Jesus Christ.

*Religion*—that teaches these things—that points out God to man—that shews him his ignorance, darkness, sinfulness, guilt, and weakness—is termed here by St. James, *WISDOM*;—and to designate its nature, *The wisdom that cometh from above*. There are various other names by which it has pleased God to point out to the eye and attention of man, the same glorious principle:—The *Law*—the *law of liberty*.—The *Gospel*—and to shew its nature—the *Gospel of God*—the *Gospel of our salvation*.—*Life*—the *word of life*.—The *kingdom of God*—the *kingdom of heaven*.—*TRUTH*—*FAITH*.—The *way of God*, &c. These cannot be separately considered in this place, as each would require a distinct discourse for its elucidation, and therefore we must confine ourselves to the term *Wisdom*, used by the Apostle in the text, which I shall—

I. Analyse and explain.

II. Shew its fruits and effects.

I. *WISDOM*.—I have sometimes found it necessary in explaining portions of Scripture, to quote and analyse the original words, whether *Hebrew* or *Greek*, from which they were taken; and this has often given us an *extension* and *force of meaning*, which we could not have otherwise acquired. Though this might be done profitably in the present case, by a consideration of the *grammatical meaning* and *general use* of the word  $\Sigma\phi\iota\alpha$ , employed by St. James, it will serve more for the purpose of general instruction, to analyse and explain the term *Wisdom*, one of the relicts of our ancient maternal language.

$\pi\eta\tau\omicron\mu$  is compounded of  $\pi\eta\tau\epsilon$ , from  $\pi\tau\alpha\lambda\alpha$ , to *know* or *understand*, and  $\omicron\mu$  or  $\omicron\mu\epsilon$ , judgement, sanction, decree,



and sometimes *power*, which itself comes from *ðeman*, to judge, to deem, to have power to determine :—from *witan*, to know, comes our term *wit*, which originally signified the same as *wisdom*, expressing both *ingenuity* and *knowledge*. A shade of its meaning is preserved in our illative particle, to *wit—to know* ; or, in order to know or understand—hear farther—read on. This meaning we sometimes express by the contraction *viz.—videsis*, you may see—or *vide licet*, you are permitted to see farther. But *wit* now signifies *facetiousness—repartee*—or the giving a curious or pleasant turn to an expression or action, so as to excite mirth, &c. But the word was originally used to express the whole *intellect* or *powers of the mind*, with all the *knowledge* they had acquired by *cultivation, learning, experience, &c.*

The termination *dom*, among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, was added to nouns to shew their *state, condition, quality, or property* : as *free-dom*, the *state of liberty* ;—*whore-dom*, the *condition or state of prostitution* ;—*king-dom*, the *state, place, dominion, or condition of a king* ;—*Christen-dom*, the *condition or state of Christianity*, under particular governments ;—*wis-dom*, the *state or dominion of knowledge or understanding, or the place or condition of the wise man.*

If we take the term in its common acceptation, it signifies the power of judging rightly—the knowledge of divine and human things, and a judicious conduct as the consequence.

The term *wisdom*, is used also to signify *dexterity, cunning, skill to over-reach, to get gain, to out-wit*, as we sometimes express it, the *ignorant and simple*. Thus our Lord—“The children of this world are wiser (*more subtle, crafty, dexterous,*) in their generation, than the children of light.” This is the *wisdom* of which St. James speaks in the context, ver. 15, which is *earthly, sensual, devilish* ;—it is *from beneath* : it causes the man to seek his happiness in *earthly things*, through the medium of *animal passions*, and is totally under the direction and influence of the *devil*. It is the *state of the diabolical regimen*, in the soul of a sinner :—it teaches him to *find out and invent the most prompt and effectual methods* of serving his master, and ruining himself.

But the *wisdom* which the Apostle recommends, is *from above* ; it comes immediately *from God* : it is what God has taught man by His word ; and what He impresses on the un-

derstanding and heart of man by His SPIRIT. As God is *the only wise God*: so all wisdom must come from Him. He has not created a stock of *innate knowledge* in man; but He has given him a *capacity* to know: and in that *capacity* He works by His *all-enlightening Spirit*; and gives, for subjects of knowledge and principles for conduct, His own *Revelation*—the BIBLE—a book of the most consummate learning and wisdom that can be conceived.

It is highly worthy of remark, that the utmost ingenuity of man, has not been able to add a *single principle* to the system of divine truth laid down in the Bible; nor to discover *one attribute* of God, beyond those laid down in the Old and New Testaments. Nor have they found out any thing *new* relative to the human soul, though they have written various essays both on the nature of God, and the nature of man: there is not one new discovery relative to God and spirits in their writings, nor a single article in *morals*, but what existed in the Bible, and what they borrowed from it.

This is a most important matter, and what should be carefully considered by all; that all the art, ingenuity, learning, and wisdom of man, howsoever employed and exerted through all the generations of his being, has not been able to add a *previously unknown attribute* to the *Divine Nature*—a *single article* to the *system of morals*,—nor to discover one *property* of the spirit or soul of man, besides those taught by *that wisdom that is from above*.

- This wisdom,—teaching a man the knowledge of himself and of his Maker—leading him to the Fountain of light, life, might, mercy, and purity, for instruction, life, power, pardon, and holiness, which it freely imparts, when earnestly requested,—makes him a new creature: so that all his former counsels, designs, and practices are passed away; and all things in his heart, his life, and conversation, are become *new*. Hence the *wisdom that comes from above* is another name for his religion: it is the *kingdom of heaven within*; and the *life of God in the soul*.

II. This Divine wisdom is an active principle, and shews its nature and origin by the *effects* it produces, or the *fruits* which it bears.

Of these the Apostle lays down several; and though not *all*, yet enow to shew the nature and heavenly origin of the

principle whence they are derived. Those that he does mention are *essential*, and can never be absent from the *heart* and *life* of the man where the principle is in operation. I shall consider these in order.

1. The *wisdom from above* is, first, *pure*: *αγνη*, means such a purity as is implied in *chastity* of thought, word and deed; and is opposed to all inward and outward *pollution*.

It is worthy of remark, that the very *first dawn* of the light of God in the soul of man, discovers and renders horrible to the view, all *moral defilement*; and gives the soul an *insatiable thirst after holiness*: and this desire is so intense, often, even in penitents, that they are led to seek *sanctification* before *justification*. For, as this wisdom comes from God, it shews His *nature*. It shews that *image* in which the soul was created; and which it lost by its fall, and which it is to regain by Christ Jesus. This image of God or purity of heart, contains in itself a summary of the whole work of God, in the soul of man. Holiness is all that the soul needs to *receive* in order to its happiness: and the attainment of it is what is required by the spirit and design of all the commandments of God: Be ye holy, for I am holy, (Lev. xi. 44. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.) is the uniform language of the *Law*, and the authoritative command of the *Gospel*.

But as holiness is produced in the soul by the Holy Spirit, and that Spirit is not an inmate of the heart, till the soul is justified; hence *justification*, or the *pardon of sin*, must precede *sanctification*: the conscience must be purged or purified from guilt, from ALL guilt; and from all guilt at once: for in no part of the Scripture are we directed to seek remission of sins *seriatim*; one now, another then; and so on. Neither in any part are we directed to seek holiness *gradatim*. We are to come to God for as instantaneous and complete a purification from all sin, as well as for an instantaneous pardon. Neither the *seriatim pardon*, nor the *gradatim purification*, exist in the Bible. It is when the soul is purified from all sin, that it can properly grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ:—as the field may be expected to produce a good crop, and all the seed vegetate, when the thorns, thistles, briars, and noxious weeds of every kind, are grubbed out of it.

2. *Peaceable*, εἰρηνικῶς, living in peace, having a good and comfortable understanding with God—with one's own conscience—and with one's neighbour. Enmity to God and holiness, is destroyed—self-contradiction—self-reproach—and a guilty conscience are at an end—harmony and order are restored within, and prevail without: Did this heavenly religion prevail in the world—there would be no private quarrels—animosities—strifes—contentions, bloodshed, murder, or wars in the world.

3. *Gentle*, πραΐτερος, meek, modest, of an equal mind—the opposite to *anger*—irritability of temper. Not offending others, and receiving no offences itself. A mind always in even balance.

4. *Easy to be intreated*. Expressed in one word, εὐπειθεύς, easily persuaded to do any thing that is right, just, holy, and proper in itself; or what may be profitable to others. A mind always open to conviction—ready to receive light, and to act by it. The opposite to *stubbornness*, *obstinacy*, *untractableness*, *morosity*, and *mulishness*.

5. *Full of mercy*. The Apostle felt that he could not go through all the attributes of such a character; and he begins to *sum them up*. The man is *full of mercy*—he owes all to God's mercy—the Divine mercy has begotten in him its own similitude, and filled him with its own disposition. He is ever ready to pardon a transgression, and to shew kindness and compassion to men. His *heart* is full of *benevolence*, and his *life* of *beneficence*. He lives to act towards others, as God has acted towards him.

6. And being *full of mercy*, he is full of *good fruits*. Every grace of God in his soul is a heavenly *seed*, bearing fruit suited to, and descriptive of, its nature. His head, heart, tongue, hands, and feet, are all full of *purposes* and *acts* of beneficence. The fruits are as *various* as they are *numerous*. Every fruit has its *tree*—every tree its peculiar *seed*; and every seed the same *origin*, GOD. And all grow and thrive under the continual *light* and *heat* of the *Sun of righteousness*.

7. *Without partiality*, ἀδιακρίτως—without making a difference—rendering to every man his due—never swayed by self-interest, worldly honour, or the fear of man. Diffusing the fruits of his mercy through all mankind; being as liberal,

and as compassionate to his *enemy*, as to his quondam *bene factor*, when he finds them in equal destitution or distress. The difference of religion, country, kindred, make no difference with him.

8. *Without hypocrisy, ἀνυπόκριτος*—acting no feigned part ; being sincere in all that he *professes* ; and in all that he *does*, without *pretence* or *simulation*—doing nothing to be *seen* or *applauded* of men. Having no *cloak*—*borrowing no foreign character*, but ever acting in his own : in a word, *a man without a mask*, seeking nothing but God's glory ; and using no means to attain this end, than those prescribed by God Himself. This is the man who has *the wisdom that comes from above* ; who *knows* what is *right*—*judges* what is *fit*—and *does* what is *good*. He lives in the *state, condition, and power of knowledge*, as the *king* does in his *kingdom*. His state is *wisdom*. He *knows* the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent : and in this *knowledge* he has the commencement and anticipation of LIFE ETERNAL.

We may now see the reasonableness of what has already been hinted, that we must have the life of Christ in our souls, for our personal salvation,—and must shew forth its *fruits* in our *lives*, for the conviction and edification of others. How can an irreligious man know any thing of the nature of true religion, but as he may see it exemplified in the conduct of others. The *conversion of sinners* under the preaching of the Gospel, is a standing proof of the *truth of Christianity* : as it is of the *efficacy* of the doctrines it teaches. Here is a notorious drunkard who has been suddenly reclaimed and relapses not again : he has been known indeed to have lately been pensive and sorrowful, to have read the word of God and been diligent in the means of Grace :—but he is suddenly become cheerful and happy ; he is no longer overcome of evil : he has power over all his old sins, and is an example of godly living to all that are round about him.

If he be questioned on the change that has taken place, he is at no loss to give a *reason* of the *hope* that is in him ; and the *means* by which he was made a partaker of that *hope*. Others observing and hearing these things, are prompted, first by *curiosity*, to use the same means, or to hear the same doctrine zealously preached by some remarkable man ; and the consequence is, they also are convinced of sin, led to God

through Christ for salvation ; and thus the kingdom of Christ becomes extended and established in the earth. If we had no conversions, we should be without those evidences of the divinity of our religion which are within the reach of the common people ; and by which alone, they can be affected and convinced. It is as vain to boast of an excellent *fruit tree* which a man has in his garden, and which never produces any fruit, as it is to profess our belief in Christianity, and profess ourselves the disciples of Christ, while we bring not forth the fruits of the spirit. If religion do not make us *honest*, it does nothing for us in reference to *this world* :—and if it do not save us from *bad tempers*, it has done nothing for us in reference to the world to come. A dishonest man is no Christian : an *ill-tempered* man is no disciple of Christ. Every thing contrary to *meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering*, is of that *wisdom that is from beneath*. It is *earthly, animal, devilish* ; it is the work of the *subtle serpent* : it came from hell, and goeth into perdition. Let him that heareth understand.

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## SERMON XI.

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### GENUINE HAPPINESS THE PRIVILEGE OF EVERY REAL CHRISTIAN IN THIS LIFE.

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PHILIPPIANS, Chap. iv. ver. 4.

Χαίρετε εν Κυριω παντοτε· παλιν ερω, χαίρετε. \*

Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice.

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It is generally supposed that the church at *Philippi*, to which this Epistle is directed, was founded about the year of our Lord 53, and that the Epistle itself was sent to them about *ten years* after. From the time of their conversion to Christianity, they were a very steady people, and although disturbed by false teachers, yet continued firm in the faith. They were more attached to the Apostle than any of the other churches ; testified their affection by sending him supplies, even when he was labouring for the welfare of others, and they seem to have been the only church that did so. See chap. iv. ver. 15, 16.

That the Apostle was *pleased* with them, is sufficiently evident from the Epistle, which is written in a very pleasing and easy style, every where bearing evidence of that happy state of mind in which he then was, and of his great affection for the people in that place.

Being truly *happy* himself, he endeavours to promote the happiness of others ; being satisfied that to rejoice evermore

—to pray without ceasing—and in every thing to give thanks—was the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning all believers.

The epistle consists of *doctrines* and *exhortations*; and though all coming from the same *spirit*, and tending to the same *end*, it is well to distinguish between them.

God, who has spoken to men at *sundry times*, has also spoken to them in a *variety of manners*, by all His inspired servants, both under the Old and under the New Testaments.

The addresses of prophets, evangelists, and apostles, to men, relative to their salvation, are either in **DOCTRINES, OR ADVICES AND EXHORTATIONS**, founded on those *doctrines*.

We ought to distinguish between *doctrines* and *exhortations*, as we do between *theory* and *practice*; or between the *principles* of a *science*, and the *operations* on those principles.

*Doctrine* simply signifies *teaching* of any kind. Whatever can be taught to man, and whatever man can learn.

A Divine doctrine is what man learns concerning his own salvation, and is either, **1. Founded on the *perfections* of God**; or, **2. Drawn from the *declarations* of God**; or, **3. Inferred from the *operations* of God**.

Nothing can properly be denominated a *Divine doctrine*, that has not its origin in *one* or *other* of these.

1st. It must be drawn from the infinite *perfections* of God, and *agree with all those perfections*; or,

2dly. It must be deduced from the *revelation* of God, and *agree with all parts of that revelation*; or,

3dly. It must be inferred from the *operations* of God, in His works of *creation* and *providence*:—in His government of the *world*, and of the church; and,

4thly. From whichever of these sources a doctrine professes to be derived, it must not only be *fairly* and *indisputably* deduced from *that source*, but it must agree with *all the others*: e. g. 1. A doctrine professedly derived from the *nature of God*, must not only *agree with all the perfections of that nature*, but also with the *revelation* of God, and His *conduct* in governing the *world* and the church. 2. Again, a doctrine professedly drawn from *Divine revelation*, must not only *agree with that revelation in all its parts*, soberly understood, without *figure, metaphor, or type*; but must also agree with the *operations* of God, and the *perfections* of His nature. And,



lastly, a doctrine professedly derived from the *conduct of God* in governing the world, and managing the affairs of the church, must agree, without constraint or inference, positively and directly with *Divine revelation*, and the *perfections of the Divine Nature*. Doctrines not thus derived; and not thus agreeing with these essential principles, should not, in matters which concern the salvation of the soul, and the eternal interests of man, be received as *doctrines of God*. They are either, 1. Doctrines of *men*; or, 2. Doctrines of *devils*; or, 3. Precarious assumptions, on which no confidence should be placed, and to which no credit should be given:

The *advices* and *exhortations* of inspired men are always founded on such doctrines as above mentioned: and, properly speaking, such advices are the *uses* that should be made of such doctrines. If God *will, teach, and exemplify* by His *conduct*, that such are His *designs* in reference to the sons of men: then, their *duty* is, 1st. To believe what He has thus discovered:—2dly. To *venerate and love Him* for that discovery; because it has for its object their present and eternal happiness:—3dly. To *use whatever means* may lead to the accomplishment of this *end*:—and, 4thly. To be *obedient to His will* in all things; as He Himself has promised them a sufficiency of power to enable them thus to obey.

In this verse and the context the Apostle does not speak to the Philippians by *doctrines*, but by *advice* and *exhortation*; founded on *doctrines* already delivered.

Knowing the infinite *benevolence* of the Divine Nature; and contemplating that astonishing manifestation of it in the *incarnation of Christ*, (“who took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself unto death, even unto the death of the cross,” chap. ii. 6—8,) he might have at once *inferred*, that the design of God was to make His intelligent creatures *happy*: but he had more than *inference* and *deduction* for his opinion; for now, writing under the immediate inspiration of God, he sees it plainly; and announces it strongly from the *direct impulse* of the Divine Spirit in the words of the text, saying, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again, I say, rejoice.”

As I conceive that the text speaks of *human happiness*, and by exhorting to its acquisition, shews the *possibility* of its

attainment, I judge it necessary to inquire a little into the subject—define the term—shew the general opinion that has been formed of it—and ascertain the sense in which I conceive it to be intended here.

I. When the Apostle exhorts the Philippians to *rejoice*, I conceive that the term implies the same as *be happy*: and, as he exhorts them to *rejoice always*, then he must mean, *be constantly happy*: and, to be *constantly happy*, is to have *happiness*—or, to be in the *state of happiness*. Reasons for this will be given in other parts of the discourse.

Our term *happiness*, it is most likely, comes from *hap*, which is usually defined *chance, fortune*; or *that which occurs fortuitously, or without design*. This term is equally applicable to *good or ill*; and other words are often joined to it, in order to indicate the sense in which it is taken. *Mis-hap*, is *evil accident or fortune*; and, *good-hap*, signifies a *fortunate event, good luck, or favourable occurrence*. But out of this term, the adjective *happy*, and the noun *happiness*, are made; *happy* and *happiness* are taken exclusively in a *good sense*, and require no other terms to qualify their meaning. *Happy* applies to *state, place, person, thing*; and, *happiness*, to the *state of being happy*.

II. We have many foolish, and some good definitions, of the term or thing called *happiness*; among the latter, is the following, *That state in which the desires are satisfied*; or, according to *Hooker*, “Happiness is that estate whereby we attain the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired: and containeth in it, after an eminent sort, the contentation of our desires—the highest degree of all our perfection.” Others define it, “The durable possession of good, without any mixture of evil: or, the enjoyment of pure pleasure unalloyed with pain: or, a state in which all the wishes are satisfied:”—in which senses, say they, “*Happiness* is known only by *name* upon the earth.”

Mr. *Locke* observes, “The various and contradictory choices that men make in the world, argue that the same thing is not good to every man alike: this variety of pursuits shews, that every one does not place his *happiness* in the same thing.”

Others assert, that “The word *happy*, when applied to any state or condition of human life, will admit of no positive de-

inition, but is merely a relative term : that is, when we call a man *happy*, we only mean, that he is *happier* than some *others* with whom we compare him—or, than he himself was in some other situation."

Mr. Archdeacon *Paley* says, " In strictness, any condition may be denominated *happy*, in which the aggregate of pleasure exceeds that of pain ; and the degree of happiness depends on the quantity of this excess."

In discussing this subject in his *Principles of Philosophy*, he endeavours to shew in what happiness *does not*, and in what it *does consist*.

" 1. It consists not in the pleasures of sense, in whatever profusion or variety they may be enjoyed.

" 2. It does not consist in any exemption from pain, labour, care, suspense, molestation, &c.

" 3. It does not consist in greatness, rank, or elevated station.

" But, 1. It does consist in the exercise of the social affections.

" 2. In the exercise of our mental and corporeal faculties in the pursuit of some engaging end.

" 3. In settling the *habits* in such a manner, that every change may be a change for the better.

" 4. It consists in health, freedom from bodily distempers, and tranquillity, firmness, and alacrity of mind, or *good spirits*."

In all these definitions, and they are the best I have been able to select, there is not one word of happiness in reference to the *soul* of man—not one word of happiness *in* or *from* God ! Nay, the *soul* appears to be entirely out of the question ; and, as to *regaining* the *image*, or *enjoying* the *approbation* of God, these make no part of the inquiry ! The *animal man*, and the *animal mind*, are the alone subjects of consideration : and the great question is, What *happiness* may man, merely considered in reference to this world, and to his animal nature, possess in this life ?

III. It is not in this light I take up the subject : my inquiry relates to man as possessing an *immortal spirit*—standing in relation to God as his Creator, Governor, and Judge, and as a candidate for eternal glory.

If the present state be only the *threshold* of being—if it be a state of probation—if man, in the estimate of reason an

religion, should be guided by *wisdom*; and true wisdom is that which directs to the *best end*, by the use of the *most proper means*: then, that must be the *best end of man*, that has in view his *true blessedness in this life*, and his *eternal glorification* in the world to come. "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and with what shall we be clothed?"—in a word, how shall we acquire *animal gratification*? are inquiries with which the *Gentiles* may be endlessly exercised; but he who has the revelation of God should have higher objects of pursuit, and such as become an immortal spirit.

This is the subject on which St. Paul addresses the Christians at Philippi, and, through them, all, in every place, who profess the *Christian name*. He speaks to them of *spiritual happiness*, exhorts to its acquisition, and shews in what it consists.

I shall, therefore, give a definition of what I conceive true happiness to be; copying, in the main, the words of a preceding definition:—It is *that state of mind in which the desires are all satisfied, by the full possession of that which, for its own sake, is to be desired above all things, as containing in itself every thing that is suited to the nature, capacity, and wishes of an immortal spirit, with the rational conviction that this state may be permanent*;—and this, without circumlocution, I state to be, the *approbation of God in the conscience*; and the *image of God in the heart*. Where these are, there must be *happiness*: where these are permanent, there must be *permanent happiness*. The actual existence of these things, or the possibility of their attainment, I consider to be directly implied in the exhortation of the Apostle, Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice. He who can rejoice is so far happy: but no man can *rejoice*, even in the slightest degree, but from a *consciousness of happiness* at the time; and happiness implies perfect *satisfaction or contentment of mind*, from a gratification of its *wishes and desires*. And this necessarily implies these *two things*:—1. *Actual possession* of that which gratifies or contents; and, 2. *Comfortable persuasion* that the possession shall be *continued*. For, 1. If a man possess *not* that which his soul has earnestly desired, and without which he could not be comfortable, he cannot have *rejoicing in himself*; and, 2. If he have not a well grounded hope, and full persuasion that this possession, and his conse-

quent happiness, may be *continued*—that none can deprive him of it, and that it cannot be lost but through his own fault, he cannot *rejoice*. Hence, therefore, it is evident, that the *thing* that constitutes happiness must be so far in *possession*, as to leave no craving desire ungratified ; and must be so sure in *prospect*, in reference to its *future continuance*, as to leave no anxious apprehension of *unavoidable* privation,

IV. When, therefore, the Apostle exhorts the believers at Philippi to *rejoice*, he means *be happy*:—happy in the present *gratification* and *contentment* of your ardent, heavenly wishes, and in prospect of its future continuance. When he says, *rejoice always*, he means, *be always happy*:—ye need never be *wretched*—ye need never be miserable: and when he adds, *again, I say, rejoice!* he shews the possibility of the case, the attainableness of such a state, and that God by positive injunction, makes that their *bounden duty*, which is their *sovereign felicity*.

Here is the possibility of human happiness *asserted* by Divine authority, and consequently the *attainableness* of it *proved*. But these great questions will naturally arise—In what does this happiness consist? And, by what means is it to be acquired?

Even the Divine assertion, that we *may be happy*, and that we *should be happy*, and *always happy*, does not answer these questions; but the *qualification* in the text meets the first: *rejoice IN THE LORD*: from which we learn that it is the *Lord*, the *God* who made it, who constitutes the happiness of the human soul; for He alone, can content its desires.

Every human being *desires* happiness: every intelligent spirit *hates misery*. God has made the soul capable of happiness, and having endowed it with a capacity for happiness, designing that it should be happy, He says in the text, *Rejoice always!* Be uninterruptedly happy in your God.

But it may be objected, how can God will the happiness of man, when He has brought him into such a state of existence that he is encompassed with unavoidable evils? I grant that the world is full of evil and misery; and if I could believe that these were the result of Divine counsels, and Divine operations, I must also say, vain is the command to be happy, when by such evils, the cup of blessedness is dashed from the

lips of mortals, as frequently as they attempt to taste it. But I deny that God is the author of what is strictly styled *evil*.

*Evil* is that which necessarily entails misery, and is opposed to *good* and *happiness*. *Evil* stands in opposition to the Divine nature—to its infinite perfections and eternal beatitude.

V. *Evil* is properly distinguished into *two* kinds, **NATURAL** and **MORAL**.

1. **NATURAL** *evil* implies some derangement in the operations of nature, by which they are totally hindered or opposed, or thwarted, so that regular effects are not produced; *violence* and *disorder* taking the place of uniformity and design: and thus effects contrary to the original ordination of a wise and intelligent Mind, are produced. It is, in a word, whatever destroys, or in any way disturbs the perfection of natural beings; or produces mischief, prejudice, or damage. This supposes *two* things: 1. The *evil* cause which produces this disturbance, prejudice, and damage; and, 2. The *evil* effects produced by this cause. *Earthquakes* are most probably produced by *electricity*: the inordinate quantity and disorderly action of the *electric matter* is the cause; the *convulsions* of the earth, the consequence. So an *obstruction* of the *nervous fluid* may be the cause of *paralysis*: and a *peccant humour* the cause of *blindness*. The *obstruction*, therefore, is the cause of the *paralysis*;—*blindness* the effect of the *peccant humour*.

God is not the Author of death, neither hath “He pleasure in the destruction of the living.” Hence, in the class of *natural evils*, we must rank every thing that impairs the human constitution, produced by the present operations of nature, inducing morbid activity, or morbid debility in the nervous or muscular system; and consequent sickness, infirmity, diseases, and deaths. Among these also may be classed, violent alterations, and commotions in the earth; such as *earthquakes*, *volcanoes*, and all such causes as produce vegetable sterility. Also, all violent alterations in the structure and state of the *atmosphere*—Pestilences, plagues, endemic and epidemic diseases; lightnings, tempests, tornadoes, pestiferous alterations in the atmosphere, from a deficiency or superabundance of any of its component principles; *too much rain* in one case, producing injury to *seeds* and *plants*; or sweep-

ing away men, cattle, property, and the vegetable surface, by floods or inundations : on the other hand, *too little rain*, so that the earth is exhausted of its radical moisture, and plants and seeds are entirely parched up.—Sudden deaths, maiming, and heavy losses, ultimately terminating in the beggary and destruction of the sufferers, may also enter into the catalogue of *natural evils*.

2. *MORAL evil* is usually defined, “The disagreement between the actions of a moral agent, and the rule of those actions.” It consists properly of *two parts* :—1. The *evil principle* in moral agents, which induces them to depart from truth, purity, and goodness : and, 2. The *disagreement* between the *actions* of a moral agent and the *rule of those actions*. The first implies an *evil nature* in moral agents ; the second, *transgression*, or the breach of the *moral law*, or rule of morality.

*MORAL evil* is that which is opposed to the wisdom, holiness, goodness, and perfections of God ; to the peace, comfort, and happiness of intelligent beings. That which, in a word, blinds the understanding of man ; perverts his judgment, and depraves his affections and passions ; leading him to seek his happiness in this life, in mere brutal or sensual gratifications ; and causing him to transgress those laws which God has given him for the regulation of his life. *Moral evil* shews itself particularly, in the obstinate opposition of man to the will of his Maker ; the *transgressions* by which he is disgraced and cursed ; and the *evil tempers*, disorderly *affections* and *passions*, which constitute his own inward hell, and turn him into a malignant spirit among his fellow creatures. Hence come discord, contentions, seditions, debates, popular ruptures, anarchy, confusion, battle, bloodshed, and war, in all its wide wasting varieties, and desolating consequences. Now, there is no evidence that God, the *Author* and *Rule* of regularity and order, could bring such disorder and desolation into the works of His own hands. Nor can He influence the soul with such unholy passions as lead it to oppose His will, insult His Majesty, and produce its own ruin.

VI. These considerations will lead to another question, “Are all evils *unavoidable* and *necessary* ?” I answer, all *moral evil* is avoidable, and unnecessary : because man may

cease from sinning against his Maker : and all those natural evils which are the immediate consequence of transgression, are also avoidable. The principal part of our sufferings, most of our diseases, and the general calamities that fall upon nations and individuals, by wars, &c. are all *avoidable*, because they are all the fruits of *voluntary* and *obstinate* sin and transgression. An eminent physician has asserted that the *three* great sources of disease, are, *indolence*, *intemperance*, and *disorderly passions*. All these are avoidable ; and if so, all their consequences, and for each, and the whole of them, genuine religion is a cure. *INDOLENCE* is *disgraceful* ; *INTEMPERANCE* *brutal* ; and *disorderly PASSIONS* *unreasonable* : common sense may correct the two former ; and the grace of God is sufficient to subdue and destroy the latter. These three sources of evil dried up, there is then an end to the major part of the diseases which constitute the chief calamities of life. From this view of the subject, we greatly *diminish* the *number* of unavoidable evils ; and see, that *natural evil* is in general, the consequence of *moral evil* : and moral evil the effect of our own wilful *obstinacy* against God, *yielding* to the solicitations of the wicked one. Through them, we may be solicited to sin against the Almighty ; but they cannot *force* us to do it. A man must *consent* to sin, before he can sin. God has so constituted the human *will*, that it cannot be *forced*. Satan may present false *images* to the imagination, darken the mind, and confound the memory ; but he cannot *force* the *will*. He may flatter, soothe, and promise pleasure in order to *gain over the will* : but before he can ruin us, he must have our consent. Were the case otherwise, we could not possibly be saved. God has given a power to the human will, so insuperably great, that all the armies of heaven, the hosts of hell, and the united energy of the whole human race, cannot move, force, or subdue. In all circumstances, in all solicitations to sin, we are safe, if we consent not. We have entrenchments which our most powerful adversaries cannot force ; and which God will not. He can so enlighten our minds, influence and sway our affections, and convince our reason, that it is our highest interest to close in with the overtures of mercy, that we shall cheerfully lay hold on the hope set before us : but in this case, there is no force, no power, argument or persuasion applied,



that is irresistible. Will is the principle of freedom or choice : to force, would be to destroy it.

The question about *free will* has long agitated *divines* and *philosophers* : with their contentions I have nothing to do :— but the *subject* of their controversies, as far as the *term* which they use is concerned, is absurd. *Will* necessarily implies *mental freedom*, or a *power in the soul to choose or refuse* :— the addition of the word *free* to it is absurd and ridiculous, because *freedom* is essential to the *being* of *WILL* ; *bound will* or *will over-ruled by necessity*, is equally absurd ; because *binding* and *necessitating* imply in themselves, when connected with *will*, or the *power to choose and refuse*, essentially opposite ideas : *WILL bound or necessitated*, is *WILL annihilated*. When *free volition*, in reference to *choice* and *refusal* ends ; then, the thing itself *ceases to exist*, and *another principle* takes its place. The *forcing* of the *will*, implies such an essential contradiction, and impossibility, that it is one of those things which cannot be done by Omnipotence itself ; because it implies *absurdity* and *contradiction*. God may annihilate the will ; but He cannot *force* it ; for this would be to undo, by an absolute contradiction, the work of His own hands.

God gave man this faculty, that he might be a *free*, rewardable, or punishable *moral agent* : and by His own eternal power and energy. He supports this faculty, rendering it *superior to all force or constraint*, that He may continue man a rational creature ; preserve his accountableness, and render him capable of salvation. On this supposition, and on this alone, is the whole *Revelation of God* addressed to man, in all its promises, threatenings, exhortations, entreaties, expostulations, and warnings. It is on this ground alone, that the Holy Blessed God is every way consistent with Himself, and the discoveries of His will to mankind, when He addresses them in such solemn language as this : “ See, I have set before thee this day, *LIFE*, and *GOOD* ; and *DEATH* and *EVIL* ;—in that I command thee to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgements, that thou mayest live ;—but if thine heart turn away, that thou *WILT NOT* hear—I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you *LIFE* and

DEATH ; BLESSING and CURSING ; therefore *choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*" Deut. xxx. 15—19.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and YE WOULD NOT!" Matt. xxiii. 27. "YE WILL NOT come to Me, that ye might have life," John v. 40. But it is needless to multiply scriptures, for this is the spirit of Divine Revelation, from the beginning to the end.

That Satan can never lead a soul into sin till he *gain its own consent*, has been well stated by that deep and nervous writer, the Rev. John Smith, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, in his Discourse on *A Christian's Conflicts* : "The certainty of success to all those who resist the devil : *resist the devil and he will flee from you* : he cannot stand when opposed in the strength of God ; he will fall down as swift as lightning ; he cannot bear the glory of God shining in the souls of men. Here, it is no more but *stand and conquer ; resist and vanquish*. For, first of all, *the devil and sin, in themselves considered, are but weak and impotent*. They cannot prevail over the soul which *yields not* to them ; the evil spirit then only prevails over us, when we ourselves *consent* to his suggestions : all his strength lies in our treachery and falseness to our own souls. Though those wicked spirits be perpetually so near us, yet *they cannot bow or bend our wills* : there is a place of defence in the souls of men, into which they cannot enter : they may stand at a distance, allure and entice them ; but they cannot prevail over them, except they *wilfully and shamefully deliver over their strength* into the enemy's hand. It is, indeed, nothing else but hell itself in the souls of men, that gives the devil such free entertainment there. Men are, therefore, so much captivated by him, because they *voluntarily take his yoke upon them*. Could we, or would we, resist *sin and Satan*, they could not hurt us. Every thing is weak and impotent, *according to the distance it stands from God*, who is the only Fountain of life and power. Let us not impute the fruits of our own *sluggishness* to the *power* of the evil spirit without ; or to God's neglecting of us. Open thy windows, thou sluggard, and let in the beams of Divine light that are there waiting upon thee—then shalt thou find the shadows of the night dispelled and

scattered; and the warm beams of light and love enfolding thee; which, the higher they arise on the horizon of thy soul, the more fully they will display their native strength and beauty upon thee, transforming thee more and more from darkness to light; from the similitude of Satan, into a participation of the Divine Image. What the Jews have observed of *error*, is true of all *sin*, שֶׁכֶר אֵין לוֹ רַגְלִים sheker ein lo ragelim; *Falsity hath no feet*: no basis of its own to subsist and rest on. Let us withdraw our *will* and affections from it, and it will soon fall into nothing." SMITH'S *Select Discourses*, 4to. Lond. 1660, p. 474.

Notwithstanding all this, there are, it must be granted, many *unavoidable* natural evils, but most of them originate in avoidable *moral evil*:—Many men *will* sin, and so be a curse to themselves, and a plague to others; and there will be desolating storms, tempests, dearth, famines, and in process of time, those infirmities that tend to dissolve the connexion betwixt soul and body, and finally terminate in death. But none of these is a reason against the possibility of *mental happiness* here below, because none of these can have any moral evil effect upon the soul; on the contrary, if properly managed, they may become instruments of our eternal blessedness: for all things work together for good to them who love God.

In considering this subject, we should make as broad a distinction between *happiness* and *gratification*, as we do between *body* and *spirit*. As the former implies "that state in which all the faculties and desires of the mind are filled and satisfied with that good which is suited to their nature," therefore it belongs to *spirit*. As the latter implies a sufficiency of food, raiment, drink, rest, ease, sleep, &c. and such things as are suited to the nature of animal desires; therefore it belongs to *body*.

Happiness therefore does not belong to the body; what this requires, is *gratification* and *ease*. As it is a *natural* being, it is affected by natural things. For the body, God has given the *earth* and its *productions*. *Animal* desires are gratified by these material things: food, when hungry; drink, when thirsty; rest, when weary; ease, when in pain; sleep when exhausted by the day's labour, with suitable clothing to preserve from the inclemency of the weather, are all that the

*body* requires to satisfy its wants, and thus produce *gratification* and *contentment*.

To the *soul*, therefore, *happiness* belongs : of this, it alone is capable, and as it is a spiritual being, the happiness of which it is capable, must be *spiritual* and must be produced by the possession not of an *earthly*, but of a spiritual *good*. A man may have as many houses as he can inhabit ; as many clothes as he can wear ; as many beds as he can lie on, and as much food as he can eat ; and with all, possess sound health and strength ; and yet his *soul* be in misery, while his *body* has not one wish *ungratified*, nor a single want unsupplied. *Like* may cleave to and assimilate with *like*. The productions of the earth are suited to animal wants : but what relation have food, raiment, gold, silver, and earthly possessions, to an *immortal spirit* ? The *abundance* of them does not satisfy it ; the *want* of them does not distress it. These are not made for *soul* or *spirit* ; they have nothing in their nature suited to the nature of a spiritual substance. God constituted the *body* so as to receive *gratification* and support from natural things ; and endowed these natural things with such properties, as renders them suitable to those bodies ; but he made the *soul* of a different nature, and designed it a happiness which no sublunary things can communicate, affect, or remove.

He gave it unbounded capacities and infinite desires. I mean by this, that its capacities are not limited by created things ; and its wishes extend beyond all finite good and excellence. As, therefore the capacities of the soul extend far beyond all created material good and excellence, God alone must be its *portion* :—He alone can satisfy its infinite desires :—He alone can make it happy. Therefore the Text says, *Rejoice* (be happy) *in the Lord*. It is, therefore, *in God* alone, that happiness is to be found.

VII. But *how* is this effected ? And what does it imply ? These were questions of great and solemn importance among the ancient sages of the heathen world. And after long search and much discussion, they came to the general agreement, that "Happiness, or the *supreme good*, consisted in having the animal nature subjected to the rational." In order to this, they took incredible pains, invented copious rules, and prescribed ascetic discipline of the most painful and difficult na-

ture. But alas, all was in vain ; the *animal* rose above the *rational* ; and the *brute* ran away with the *man*. Their fine maxims, prescriptions and discipline, were burnt threads, when opposed to the resistance of their gigantic fallen nature. Of one material point, they were generally unapprehensive : viz. that *reason* itself was perverted : that the thing by which they hoped to effect the cure, was itself diseased by habits of sin. *Reason* needed as much a controlling, regulating, healing power, as the animal passions themselves. Hence, they made no progress : all their doctrines, maxims, rules and discipline, were inefficient.

As Divine revelation shews us the depth and inveteracy of our disease, so it shews us our only cure. As God alone is the *Source of happiness*, so He alone can prepare the soul for it :—He alone can save us from our sins ; He alone can purify the soul ; can bring a clean out of an unclean thing ; can subject the *animal* to the *rational* ; and the *rational* to the *spirit* of His holiness. The HOLY SPIRIT of God influences the spirit of man :—enlightens its understanding, rectifies its judgement, removes obliquity from the will, and purifies and refines the affections and desires. Thus, *our best reason is taught reason ; and our will taught rectitude*. The soul is purified unto himself, and thus becomes a fit habitation for God through the Spirit.

But how is this to be acquired ? The same Revelation tells us : “ God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that they who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “ The Lord Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost.” “ He was delivered (unto death) for our offences ; and He rose again for our justification ;” and “ we have an entrance into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus ;” for “ His blood cleanseth from all sin.”

To shew that the *exhortation, Rejoice in the Lord* always, is founded on a *doctrine* which springs from the *Divine nature*, we need only to have recourse to 1 John v. 11, 12. “ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life ; and this life is in His son : he that hath the son hath life, and he that hath not the son of God, hath not life.” This being the *doctrine* or *principle*, the *advice* is founded on it. God has given us eternal life ; but this life is *in His Son*. If so, no man can have the *life*, unless he have the

*Son.* Hence then, says the Apostle, Rejoice *in the Lord*. Be happy in having Christ in you the hope of glory. Your souls were made *for God*; and God alone can fill and make them happy

But is this the will of God? Is there sufficient evidence that it is His desire to make us happy in this life? That He desires to do this, there can be no doubt: 1. The very constitution of your souls proves this. He has made you *capable of enjoying Himself*; and if He have not designed to become Himself the portion of the immortal spirit, He must have designed its *misery* and not its *happiness*; for He has provided *no other portion* for it. Nothing that His hands have formed, can satisfy the wishes of a human spirit, or fulfil its desires. 2. That He must have designed it for happiness, and intended to fill it with Himself, the infinite *goodness* of His own nature proves: He could not have made it capable of endless and immeasurable happiness, placed this happiness fully in its view; and rendered the enjoyment eternally impossible, by refusing to communicate *Himself*! His goodness, for ever disproves this. 3. Though the soul be fallen from its primitive righteousness and perfection, and is altogether become unclean; yet it has not lost its *powers* and *capacities*: and to redeem it from the power, the guilt, and the infection of sin, He has given His own Son Jesus Christ to die for it, that it might be reconciled to Himself, have all its sins blotted out, and be adopted into the family of Heaven. He has also sent forth His own *Spirit* into the souls of believers, to purify them from all unrighteousness, and bring them up to that standard of perfection, from which they had fallen. 4. His whole *Revelation* proves this; His institution of so many means of salvation; His continual influence on the heart, and the invariably favouring current of providential operation. 5. The text itself gives no slight indications of this willingness to make His creatures happy. The Holy Spirit by the Apostle says, *Rejoice, i. e. Be happy. Rejoice always! i. e. Be always happy. Rejoice in the Lord!* Look for *spiritual happiness*; such as is suited to your nature, and such as God can give. *Rejoice in the Lord!* not merely because you know *there is a God*: not merely because you know that His *word has free course and is glorified*. Not merely because you know that the *Church of God* is in a

*prosperous state ; that religion gains ground, that infidelity loses countenance, and that your friends, neighbours, and relatives, are among the genuine converts to the Lord Jesus :— though these are all subjects of real joy and thankfulness to a Christian mind, yet this is not all that the text means : it speaks particularly to you, to every individual. Have thou God for thy continual portion. Know him as thy Saviour and thy Sanctifier. Dwell thou in God, and God in thee. Be one with God, and God with thee. Have the prayer of your Lord fulfilled in you. “ I pray,” said He, “ that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me—that they may be one, even as We are one, I IN THEM, and THOU IN ME, that they may be made perfect in one.” John xvii. 21—23.*

The slightest reflection on this subject will be sufficient to shew, that this constant happiness, arising from the constant abiding of God in the soul, cannot be the portion of any heart which is *not cleansed from all sin*. The heart in which Christ constantly dwells, He completely fills ; and *holiness* becometh His house for ever. He binds the strong armed man ; spoils his goods ; and casts him out : and then having sanctified the house, makes it His permanent dwelling. If it be His will that the *happiness lost by sin*, should be restored to believers in Christ, then it is His will that they should be made *holy*. *Misery* was never known till *sin* entered into the world : and *happiness* can never be known by any man, till *sin* be expelled from his soul. No holiness, no happiness ;—and no plenary and permanent happiness, without plenary and permanent holiness. I repeat it, that to give true and permanent happiness to believers, is the *design* of that God whose Name is Mercy, and whose Nature is Love. The *duplication* of the exhortation in the text, speaks this strongly : *Rejoice in the Lord always ;—and*, as if peculiarly pleased with the advice inspired by His own Spirit, God seems to say to His servant :—“ Paul, this is so agreeable to the benevolence, mercy, and goodness of My nature ; so consistent with all My counsels and designs ; so necessary for the creatures on whom I have set My heart, and for whom I have given My Son, that I will have them explicitly and fully in-

formed of it; therefore, repeat the exhortation." And the Apostle immediately adds, *And again, I say, REJOICE!*

*When* may we expect to attain this happiness, is a question of great importance, and requires a pointed answer. But there is no difficulty in it. From every view of the subject, it appears that the blessing of a *clean heart*, and the *happiness* consequent on it, may be obtained in *this life*: because *here*, not in the future world, are we to be saved. *Whenever*, therefore, such blessings are offered, they may be received: but all the graces and blessings of the Gospel are offered at *all times*; and *when* they are offered they *may* be received. Every *sinner* is exhorted to turn from the evil of his way, to repent of sin, and supplicate the Throne of grace for pardon. In the *same moment* in which he is commanded to turn, in *that moment* he may and *should* turn. He does not receive the exhortation to repentance *to-day*, that he may become a penitent at some *future time*. Every *penitent* is exhorted to believe on the Lord Jesus, that he may receive remission of sins;—he does not, he cannot understand that the blessing thus promised, is not to be received *to-day*, but on some *future time*. In like manner, to every *believer*, the *new heart* and the *right spirit*, are offered in the present moment; that they may, in *that moment*, be received. For as the work of cleansing and renewing the heart, is the work of God, His almighty power can perform it in a *moment*, in the *twinkling* of an eye. And as it is *this moment* our *duty* to love God with all our heart, and we cannot do this till He cleanse our hearts, consequently He is ready to do it this moment, because He wills that we should in this moment thus love Him. Therefore we may justly say, *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation. He, who in the beginning, caused light in a moment to shine out of darkness, can in a moment shine into our hearts, and give us to see the light of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. This moment, therefore, we may be emptied of sin, filled with holiness, and become truly *happy*.

Before I conclude, I shall anticipate another question, the answer to which has already been partially, though, perhaps, not sufficiently given. "May not *mental happiness* be so affected by *natural evil*, as to impair it, suspend it, or even destroy it?" I answer, *no*. I have already shewn, that the



happiness for which I contend, consists not merely in the purification of the heart from all sin, the cause of misery, but in the continual *in-dwelling of God*; in communion with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Ghost. Happiness, therefore, arising from such a source, is not affected by the changes and chances to which mortal and sublunary things are exposed. It depends on the continual *presence and approbation of God*, and most certainly no *natural evil occurrence* could induce the holy and blessed God to suspend His influence in the soul of His loving, obedient follower; or cause Him to hide His face, or withdraw the evidence of His approbation from him whose motto is, *believe, love, obey*. But it may be asked, further, "Can a man's mind be truly happy, while his body is pressed with *want, sickness, and pain*?" Undoubtedly, for the reason already given, viz. that *natural evils* of what kind soever they may be, have no tendency to produce *moral evil*. They are themselves, in a certain sense, the *consequences* of moral evil, but they never did and never can produce it. Such a *cause* is wholly inadequate to such an effect. Moral evil did not produce natural evil as its *immediate* effect; but man's disobedience brought *God's curse* upon the *earth*, and thus natural evil was the immediate consequence of that *curse*. Hear the Scripture: "And unto Adam he said, because thou hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it, *cursed is the ground for thy sake*; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread; till thou return unto the ground; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. iii. 17—19. Happiness in God does not prevent the sensation of pain, grief, and distress, no more than it prevents us from feeling hunger, thirst, cold, fatigue, &c. But these need not affect nor interrupt our happiness. I have known cases where persons were in what might be literally called *excruciating pain* and *agony* for weeks together, and yet indescribably happy in God, and even returning Him thanks for every exacerbation of pain, and paroxysm of distress!

But these are not strange things to the genuine followers of God. I may appeal to every man who has found redemption in the Blood of the cross, that when the Spirit of God

bare witness with his spirit, that he was a child of God, he felt unutterable happiness! "Being justified by faith, he had peace with God, through our Lord Jesus—rejoiced in hope of the glory of God; and could even *glory in tribulation.*" Such persons can adopt the language of the poet, feeling that these very strong expressions owe little either to enthusiastic colouring, or poetic licence:—

"I rode on the sky, freely justified I,  
Nor envied Elijah his seat;  
My heart mounted higher, in a chariot of fire,  
And the moon it was under my feet."

They felt the presence and approbation of their God; and should they who possess this blessing, be brought to the fiery furnace, or the valley of the shadow of death, they could neither be appalled by the flames, nor moved by the terror; all is heaven where God *reigns*. The holy man has remounted to his source; he is re-united to his God, the Source and Cause of all blessedness. The grave has no terrors for him, and death no sting. Of him it may be truly said,

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas:  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

Virg. Geor. ii. v. 490.

He has received that *perfect love which casteth out all fear that hath torment*. 1 John iv. 18. In him the *end of the commandment* is accomplished, for he has *love out of a pure heart and good conscience, and faith unfeigned*. 1 Tim. i. 5. The great *promise* so solemnly and impressively announced by the Prophet, is fulfilled in him. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgements, and do them.* Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. All this is summarily expressed in that prayer, which you have often offered up to God in the most solemn act of your religious service.

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, CLEANSE the

THOUGHTS OF OUR HEARTS by the INSPIRATION of thy HOLY SPIRIT, *that we may PERFECTLY LOVE THEE, and WORTHILY MAGNIFY Thy holy name, through Christ our Lord!*" Amen.—Collect before the Communion Service.

As *sin* is the fountain of all *misery*, and *inward sin* is the sole cause of *inward unhappiness*, and as nothing less than the *mighty energy* of the *Spirit of God*, applying the salvation purchased by the Blood of the covenant, can purify the fallen, depraved, and unclean spirit of man; and as he who feels *inward sin*, evil tempers, and unholy propensities, which often lead into *transgressions* of the law of God, must necessarily feel *guilt* and *wretchedness*; so, he who has got even the *thoughts of his heart cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*, and is enabled in consequence to *love God perfectly, i. e.* with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to *magnify His holy name worthily*, must necessarily be *happy*. He cannot be *wretched*, for the cause of *wretchedness* is destroyed; and he loves God with all his heart: he cannot feel *guilt* and *condemnation*, for he is enabled *worthily* to *magnify God's holy name*. Thus we see that in him the *power*, the *guilt*, and the *nature* of *sin*, are destroyed. To him, "*The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared: by it he is taught, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he should live soberly, righteously, and godly in THIS PRESENT WORLD; looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, and PURIFY us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*" Titus ii. 11—14.

It is not, therefore, in *another state*, that we are to be restored to this *purity* and *happiness*, but in *this present world*; in the place where we can *perfectly love God*; and as *love* is the *principle* and *incentive* to all *obedience*, where we can *worthily magnify God's holy name*. And is it not proper that *where sin* has been contracted, *where* the atonement for it has been offered, that *there* it should be destroyed? Hence *salvation* from *sin* is to be received in *this life*; and *glorification* of the body and soul, as the consequence, in the *life to come*. In the whole Bible, there is not one intimation that *sin* shall be destroyed either in the article of death, or in the other world. *Here, we are to rejoice in the Lord always.*

*Here*, we are to wash our robes and make them white through the blood of the Lamb. *Here*, we are to be saved out of the hands of all our enemies ; and here, we are to enjoy that *happiness* which shall qualify us for *glorification* in the eternal world.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory : glory be to thee, O Lord, Most High ! Amen.

## SERMON XII.

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### LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

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PHILIPPIANS, Chap. iii. ver. 20, 21.

For our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

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BEFORE I enter on the consideration of the Text, there are several circumstances of *Time*, *Place*, and *Occasion*, which require to be noted.

And first, of the *Time*. Several *deaths* having recently happened among some of the principal families who attend the worship of God in this place:—the deaths, particularly of some young persons, have been very edifying, though deeply solemn and impressive.

Secondly, of *Place*. We behold many people in *mourning*, (and the chapel itself hung with black,) on account not only of their private and domestic distresses, but chiefly on account of the lately arrived intelligence of the sudden death of the Rev. Dr. Coke; who, being on his passage to the Island of Ceylon, with several missionaries, to proclaim the gospel of Christ to the heathen, died within a few days' sail of the place of his destination.

Thirdly, (added to all this,) the doctrine of the *text*, which is taken out of the *Epistle for the day*; and which being in close association with all the above circumstances, induces me to enter on a consideration of the deeply important subjects of **LIFE, DEATH, and IMMORTALITY**—Subjects which all allow to be the most interesting that can fall under the consideration of the human mind—Subjects which should be considered not only in a *moral* and *religious*, but also in a *physical* point of view—not only that we may know what God says of them in the revelation with which He has favoured us; but also that we may obtain a philosophical acquaintance with the *nature* and *constitution* of the subjects, (the *body* and *soul* of man,) to which they refer.

In this latter point of view, they are seldom considered in public discourses—not so much because the ministers of the Gospel are incapable of thus viewing them, but because they are discouraged by their congregations from all discussions of this kind: a certain class of unthinking people terming them *carnal reasoning*, and consequently proscribing them as being contrary to what they call *evangelical preaching*.

It would be easy to prove that discussions of the kind which I now propose, are authorized by the whole tenor of divine Revelation, and sanctioned particularly by the word and example of our blessed Lord, who is ever teaching us, though we are slow of heart to learn, to ascend to things spiritual and eternal, by means of those that are natural and transitory.

Though the text speaks professedly, only on the glorious state of the human body after the general Resurrection; yet, as that necessarily implies both *death* and previous *life*, I shall take these subjects in the order of nature, and try how far a philosophical consideration of what is laid down in Scripture relative to them, may tend to remove our darkness, and strengthen our faith.

In order to this, it may be necessary, first to define the terms themselves, that we may use them in a strict and determinate *physiological* sense.

**I. LIFE** has been defined, "*the union of the body and the soul,*" and this definition necessarily follows from that given below, of *Death*. But it is as plainly absurd in the one case, as it is in the other; and supposes that in *all cases of life*, a soul or immortal principle is formed to be connected with a

body, in order to produce the vital functions. I shall therefore leave this, and adopt that given by the most accurate physiologists, "Life is the assemblage of those functions by which death is resisted." But in the *human* being an immortal spirit is always present.

II. DEATH, is generally defined, "The separation of the soul and body." This definition, though it conveys scarcely any knowledge to the mind, as it gives no distinct idea of the thing itself, may nevertheless answer the general purposes of morality and religion. But in the present inquiry we must consider the subject in a nearer and more correct point of view, that we may know the subject itself, without attempting to explain it by *negative* propositions. That in *death* the *immortal spirit* is separated from the body, with me, admits of no doubt: and *this spirit* admits neither of death nor decay.

I therefore take up the definition which the most accurate physiologists adopt, and say, "Death is the total and irrecoverable cessation of all the functions of a living animal."

This definition is highly proper, as, 1st. it distinguishes this *final cessation* of the animal functions from *accidental suspension*, as in those cases of swooning, suffocation, and drowning, from which persons have been resuscitated; and therefore, very properly termed by medical men, *cases of suspended animation*. And, 2dly, from that state of organized bodies, where *putrefaction* has taken place, and the solution of the parts has been the consequence.

III. By IMMORTALITY, I mean as it regards man, not only the restoration of the human body to life, in circumstances in which death shall be forever impossible; but also the re-union of the immortal spirit with it in the eternal presence of God.

After these definitions, it may be just necessary to state, that all animals have their ORIGIN by *generation*—their GROWTH by *nutrition*—and their TERMINATION by *death*.

### Of Life.

I. *Life* has never been detected in its *first principles* or commencement. For a time, the animal continues in connexion with the *parent*, or in the *nidus* in which its rudiments are formed. By and bye, it becomes detached from the *womb* or *nidus*, and lives in a state of independence. But, wherever

it is discovered, it is found in a state of *complete activity*; associating to itself those principles necessary to the construction of the *aggregate* of that body *in and by* which it is to operate.

An animal, therefore, can be traced to its *parent*—that to its *parent*, and so on through the whole series of beings of that species: but the *commencement* of life in any is indiscoverable:

It is true that *organization* is supposed by many to be the *principle of life*.

But, that the *principle of life* does not consist in organization of any kind, appears from this, 1. That the organization may be perfect, and the principle of life extinct.

2. That death often takes place where the organization exhibits no proofs of *morbid alteration*.

3. Organization may be perfect *before life commences*: instanced in the scriptural account of the creation of man. *God made man out of the dust of the ground*. Here was a perfectly *organized body*, in its full maturity and growth—no principle of *life* had ever yet acted upon it, and therefore this organization did not proceed from the operation of a *vital principle* inherent in that body—for it is added that after this body was thus formed, *God breathed into the nostrils of the man the breath of life, and he became a living soul*. Gen. ii. 7.

Let us examine this account. It has been already observed that *life* is never discovered in its *commencement*. We find it a perfect and efficient principle as soon as we can detect its being. We have seen that it exists in connexion with the *parent* or *nidus* in which it first became manifest—and afterwards existed without either: we have traced it from *parent to parent*—and here we trace it to God. *God breathed into the nostrils of the perfectly organized Adam*—his lungs were inflated—his heart began its pulsations, and the *mass of blood*, torpid in the arteries and veins, now began to *circulate*—and the new-made creature found himself capable of *motion and thought* in the same moment.

The original is emphatic; *God breathed into his nostrils*, נשמת חיים *nishmat chayim*, the soul or principle of LIVES, in consequence of which *double principle*, he became נפש חיה *nephesh chayyah*, a *living soul*: or a *compound creature*, being



both a soul and an *animal*—to inform and actuate each of which, viz. his *animal* and *intellectual* natures, he had the *breath* or *inspiration* of LIVES; so that he became a perfect *animal* and a *rational* being; for it is said, Job xxxii. 8. "There is a spirit in man, רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים וְנִשְׁמַת שְׁדַיִם *ve-nishmet shaddai tobinem*, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

To prove that he was endued with *animal* life, and *intellectual* powers, God brought to him every beast of the field and every fowl of the air to see what he would call them. And he gave names to all—and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. Gen. ii. 19, 20. Here he had the full proof of his own *intellectual* powers. He discerned the *qualities* and *habits* of the different creatures brought before him; and gave them names expressive of those *qualities* and *habits*. This is proved from the signification of the names of the different animals mentioned in the *Hebrew* Scriptures—the language in which Adam named those creatures. He was רַחַיִּיחַ *chayyah*, an *animal* like them—but he had a נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*, or נִשְׁמַת שְׁדַיִם *neshmet shaddai*, an *intellectual* principle, by which he could discern their *natures* and *habits*; and he gave so full a proof of his *intelligence* here, that God ratified his nomination, and did not change one of the names which he had imposed!

Here we find *soul* or *intellectual* principle, distinct from *life* or the *animal* principle—both distinct from *organization*—and both immediately proceeding from God Himself.

God therefore is the Author of both *soul* and *life*, and organized *body*; and is it not on this ground, that *life* has never been detected in its commencement, or in a state of imperfection?—from the first moment we discover it, it is perfectly performing all its functions!

The doctrine of materialism is evidently absurd—there could be no such principles as *life*, *thought*, and *intelligence*, if the Almighty Spirit did not move, actuate and work every thing according to the counsel of His own will or pleasure; and thus become the principle of life and reason to all animate and intelligent beings.

The doctrine of materialism, if it do not owe its birth, yet has had its *embellishment* from our greatest poet, Milton: who in his fifth book of *Paradise Lost*, exhibits the angel Raphael teaching and explaining the doctrine at large to

Adam and Eve. It will not be improper to produce the passage here, that his admirers, who have asserted that the imputation of such an opinion to this divine poet is a positive slander, may learn to speak more cautiously. I shall first give the sum of what he says, and then produce his words.

The poet asserts, 1. That God made one *first matter*. 2. That he endued this first matter with *various forms*. 3. That out of it he produced *all life*. 4. That this *life* is capable of continual *refinement*, till *body* itself is *transmuted* into *spirit*. 5. That the food received into the human stomach being digested produces *blood*—*blood vital spirits*—*vital spirits animal spirits*—*animal spirits intellectual*. 6. That from these spring *life, sense, fancy, and understanding*. 7. That from our aliment the soul receives *discursive and intuitive reason*, which is its essence. 8. And that, in short, all spirits and *intellectual* beings, are formed out of *matter*—and that from a *prima materia, men, angels, and archangels*, derived their *being*. The words follow from which I have drawn the above particulars.

To whom the winged Hierarch replied :  
 O Adam, one Almighty is from whom  
 All things proceed, and up to Him return,  
 If not depraved from *good*, created all  
 Such to perfection, *one first matter all*,  
 Endued with *various forms*, various degrees  
 Of *substance*, and in things that live, of *life*;  
 But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,  
 As nearer to him placed, or nearer *tending*  
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,  
 Till *body up to spirit work*, in bounds  
 Proportioned to each kind.

To illustrate this doctrine, he produces the following *simile* from the *vegetable creation*, to prove that the *soul* receives its *being* and *reason* from the food which is digested in the stomach; as *fruits* and *flowers* have their *savours* and *odours* from the *root* that bears them.

So from the root  
 Springs *lighter* the *green stalk*, from thence the leaves  
 More *airy*, last the bright consummate *flower*  
 Spirits' odorous breathes; *flowers* and their *fruit*,  
 Man's nourishment, by *gradual scale* sublimed,  
 To *vital spirits* aspire, to *animal*,  
 To *intellectual*; give both *life* and *sense*,  
*Fancy* and *understanding*; whence the soul  
*Reason* receives, and *Reason* is her *being*,  
*Discursive* or *intuitive*.

Paradise Lost. Book v. l. 468—488.

Here is a doctrine pretended to be taught by an angel from heaven, at once disgraceful both to God and man, and demonstrably both unphilosophical and false.—See *Drew's Essay on the Immateriality of the Soul*.

### *Of Death.*

II. Having considered *life* in its origin and operations, let us next view that change which passes upon animated beings, in what is termed DEATH, which we have defined to be, *the total and irrecoverable cessation of all the functions of a living animal.*

It has been observed, that all animals have their *origin* in generation—their *growth* in nutrition—and their *termination* in death. *Life* and *nutrition* are widely different. *Nutrition* is that power which an animal has of assimilating certain substances to itself, by which its *volume* is increased to certain dimensions. Every species of animal is prescribed *within certain dimensions*, which that species in general, never surpasses. The accretion of bulk to form these dimensions, proceeds from *nutrition*—nutrition is carried on by a three-fold operation, or rather by three different kinds of absorption. 1. By substances taken into the stomach—there digested, and afterwards taken into the general circulation, and by a certain indescribable process of nature or operation of the *living* principle, absorbed and assimilated to the body, into which they are introduced. 2. By matter absorbed from substances floating in the circumambient air, which is a proof that the living principle exerts an influence beyond that body in which it is resident;—and, 3. By the air itself, or certain essential parts of it taken into the lungs, and there absorbed, decomposed, thrown into the circulation, and, by these means, compacted with the system.

In a general sense, independently of mere aliment received into the stomach, and the matter absorbed by the external surface, *air*, *humidity*, and *heat*, are the grand means which the principle of life uses to support the organized system: and while that assemblage of functions which are said to constitute *life*, continues in animal organized bodies, *death* is prevented. When these cease, *death* can be no longer resisted, and life then becomes extinct.

In order to have a more correct notion of *death*, let us

view the changes which pass on a human body when deprived of life.

Suppose, as is not unfrequently the case, a person taken off in the bloom of beauty and vigour of mature life. A moment before, every thing that was *lovely* and *interesting* was combined in the *shape, mien, motion, eyes, lips, and accents*, of this master-piece of God's lower works. Death takes place, the muscles become flaccid—the inexpressibly delicate lines and contours, which form what is emphatically called *the line of beauty*, almost totally disappear—the *angular* processes of the bones become apparent—the *eyes glassy* and *in-expressive*, being utterly destitute of *speculation*—the *lips livid*—and the extremities cold and rigid; all voluntary and involuntary motion being entirely at an end. Here we behold the *termination of life*, and the *commencement of death*. I say *commencement*, for the *changes* which have already taken place, may be considered only as the medium between *life*, and the desolations produced by *death*. A succession of changes soon follows those already mentioned, which are *awful, degrading, and even horrible*. Exposed to the air, this body, deprived of its vital principles, becomes *blue*—then *green*—next *black*;—*decomposition* takes rapid place—a part of this once lovely system is thrown off in the most *noisome effluvia*; others are resolved into the most *putrid and offensive sanies*, which also soon becomes dissipated; and a small portion of *earth* and *salts* are the apparent remains of a structure that required the skill of God to plan, and His *omnipotence* to execute.

What were the proximate causes of these fearful changes? They are generally acknowledged to be *air, humidity, and heat*; the very means which the vital principle used for the *support* of this wonderful machine, now, in the absence of that principle, become the *destroyers* of the fabrick which they were the instruments of raising, and to the support of which they so essentially contributed.

In like manner, vegetables are *nourished* by *air, humidity, and heat*, while in connexion with the earth:—pluck up the plant, and the same agents *decompose* and *destroy* it.

#### *Of Immortality.*

III. It may now be inquired, seeing man is liable to such

degradation and corruption, was he made so in the intention of his Creator, or has something intervened which has afforded Infinite Wisdom sufficient reason to destroy this most accomplished work of its own hand?

That man was created *perfect*, the perfections of his Maker most profoundly argue. That he is now in a state of wonderfully comparative perfection, both as to the structure of his body, and structure and power of his mind, all are convinced, who have examined the subject as they ought;—and that God never made such a curious and complicated machine to pull to pieces, and consign to final destruction after having exerted His providence in the support of it for a few years, we may safely assert. On this head, what says God in divine revelation? *The body is dead, because of sin!* When the commandment was given, *death* was threatened as the penalty of transgression. *In the day thou eatest thereof*, (the tree of knowledge,) *thou shalt surely die*; מוֹת תָּמוּת *mot tamut*, dying thou shalt die. Thou shalt become mortal, and by a variety of decays, &c. thou shalt at last fall under the empire of death. But immediate *spiritual death* was the *first* consequence of the transgression.

That the *immortality* of the human creature was designed by the Creator, we have at least an indirect evidence in the *tree of life*, which was planted in the garden of Paradise—by eating of which, it appears, *mortality* would have been precluded, and *immortality* secured. And when man had sinned against God, and brought *darkness* into his *understanding*, and *irregularity* and *disorder* into his *passions*, lest he should eat of the *tree of life*, and live for ever in that *dark and disordered state*, and the penalty be prevented which justice had decreed, *therefore God drove him out of the garden, and placed at the entrance Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way*, to prevent his re-entering, and having access to that *tree of life*, the use of which, even in that condition, would apparently have secured his *immortality*.

Here, then, we find him abandoned to the influence of all those *causes* which would naturally bring about the execution of the Divine sentence; and utterly precluded from the use of those *means* by which that execution might be prevented.

In this state, a gracious Promise is given in behalf of the *soul*, whose moral condition was greatly changed and totally

deteriorated ; but whose *immortality* does not appear to have been at all impaired.

A state also of *probation* is fixed for the human being : at first of considerable duration, but afterwards gradually *shortened*, and at last bounded by certain fixed *limits*, beyond which, in a general way, it should not be permitted to pass :—and this state was assigned for the purpose of the soul's re-acquiring the knowledge of God, and regaining that *moral* image of its Maker, righteousness and true holiness, in which it was created. *Means* also were amply furnished, in this state, for the accomplishment of this important purpose ; the principal of which was the commerce God himself held with man, by *immediate communications from Himself*, and by the ministry of *angelic beings*.

These, we may safely presume, were common to all the *original* inhabitants of the earth, during the whole of the *patriarchal* dispensation. We have the history only of a few families, and of a few individuals in those families ; and we find that the communications and ministry above referred to, were common to them all, and extended to those who were not immediately in covenant with God : and it would be absurd to suppose, that they were withheld from the others, who stood equally in need of them, or similar helps, for their salvation.

After the *patriarchal* age, in which the above means were commonly employed, God began by *Moses* to give a written revelation of His will, relative to the salvation of the soul. This revelation was continued for nearly 2,000 years, receiving occasional *additions* by various men called Prophets, who wrote by immediate inspiration from God, till the whole Canon of Scripture was completed, which God, in that dispensation of grace and justice, thought necessary for the instruction and salvation of man. During this dispensation, *angelic ministry*, not being now so necessary, though not entirely laid aside, was very rare.

In all these dispensations the *immortality* of the SOUL is continually supposed—but we hear scarcely any thing of the forfeited *immortality* of the BODY being restored. God leaves this under an impenetrable veil and cloud, through which it seldom appears, except in certain indistinct and indefinite gleams of light, which are so transient as not only to

elude examination, but also so evanescent as to prevent the mind from forming any distinct apprehension of them.

The translation of *Enoch* in the *patriarchal* age, and of *Elijah* under the *Mosaic*, are the only *evidences* we have that the thing was *possible*;—and though not professedly exhibited to beget faith in this important subject, or excite hope, yet in all likelihood designed for this gracious purpose.

Till the *New Testament* dispensation, this doctrine was not *fully* known. Indeed, it was not a *doctrine*, or system of *teaching*, as that word should be understood; for it was only by Christ and His Apostles, that it was professedly and formally introduced. Of it the whole of the *New Testament* is full; and it is every where made a most essential *article* of the *Christian creed*; *life* and *immortality* being brought to *light by the Gospel*; and the doctrine illustrated and confirmed by the *resurrection* and *ascension* of the *human body* of Christ Jesus.

This circumstance is strongly confirmed by the *reality* of the death of Christ. There is not only no reason to apprehend that His case was a case of *suspended animation*; but there was every *possible evidence* that there was a *total cessation of all the animal functions*; and that these functions must have continued in an *irrecoverable state of cessation*, had not a miraculous power interposed.

He expired on the cross; and to prevent all *after* suspicion of *merely suspended animation*, God so permitting, a *soldier* pierced his side with a *spear*, and forthwith came there out *blood and water*—a proof that the spear had traversed the diaphragm and pericardium, and wounded the heart itself.

It is on the ground of the *reality* of the *immortality* of the *body* of Christ, that the text asserts the *immortality* of ours. He will change our *vile body*, μετασχηματισει το σωμα της ταπεινωσεως ημων, He will alter the appearance and condition of this body of our humiliation—(this *body that is dead*, adjudged to death, because of sin)—that it may be like unto his *glorious body*, εις το γενεσθαι αυτο συμμορφον το σωματι της δοξης αυτου, that it may bear a similar form to His glorified humanity, and be so changed, as to be capable through its *immortality*, not only of enduring eternally, but of the infinite spiritual enjoyments at the right hand of God.

As many cases of drowning and suffocation have occurred,

in which the persons, by the use of proper means, have been restored to life; and which, in consequence, are termed cases of *suspended animation*; and without which means, death, in the proper sense of the word, would have ensued, and the vital functions have irrecoverably ceased; so the human body, dead, and under the power of corruption, and the uttermost dissolution of its component parts, must continue finally and eternally under that corruption, if the sovereign power of God be not exerted as in its original formation, to build it up as at the beginning—to restore the *vital principle*; re-connect with both, the *immortal soul*, so that man shall become that  $\rho\eta\ \psi\upsilon\chi\eta\ \nu\epsilon\phi\eta\sigma\eta\ \chi\alpha\iota\iota\upsilon\alpha\eta$ , or animated *rational being*, which he was in the beginning.

Against the *possibility* of this work, there can be no objection, because the power by which it is to be produced, is omnipotent—the very same which was employed in its original formation: and therefore the Apostle states that this great event is to be brought about *according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*,  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \epsilon\iota\sigma\pi\upsilon\lambda\iota\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \delta\upsilon\lambda\alpha\mu\beta\alpha\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \nu\upsilon\kappa\omicron\tau\alpha\zeta\alpha\iota\ \dot{\iota}\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\ \tau\alpha\ \pi\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$ , according to that *energy*, or all-pervading, all-controlling, powerful activity, by which He is able to subject all things to Himself, and cause them to answer the purposes of His will, in reference to all those *original* determinations concerning man. As He has purposed its final immortality, therefore the human *body*, between death and the resurrection, may be considered in a state of *suspended immortality*, and analogous to what takes place in suspended animation in cases of drowning.

From what the Apostle says here, we have some intimations, and not obscure ones, of the original state of the body of Adam. Many conjectures have been formed relative to his original state, and perfection of body and mind. That his body possessed the same *form* and *essential qualities* which the human body possesses now, there can be little doubt. It was formed out of the earth, and there is no intimation that its *essential* and *distinctive* fashion was ever changed. It was in all probability, what it *will be* after the resurrection:—for it is plain from the whole economy of the Gospel, that God designs, according to His grace and justice, to restore what was lost—and it is as likely that the body of Christ, as it appeared in the transfiguration, as well as those of Moses and Elijah,



were not only the same as the glorified body shall be after the resurrection, but similar to that which Adam had in his original creation.

As the Apostle, therefore, seems to refer to the transfiguration of Christ, and, as I suppose, the body of this second Adam did, at that time, exhibit the appearance of the body of the first Adam, while in his state of perfection and innocence, I shall spend a few moments in the consideration of this subject, before I conclude.

It is said, Matt. xvii. 2, Mark ix. 3, Luke ix. 29, That Christ was transfigured—that the fashion of His countenance was altered; that is, that it did shine as the sun—that his raiment became shining—white as the snow—and as light, and glistering, and so white that no fuller on earth could so white them. These are the circumstances mentioned by the three Evangelists who give this relation; and from the whole of them we learn, that though there was a most significant and visible alteration in the appearance, there was none in the form or lineaments of the body. The glorious image of God filling the soul, the matter forming the body being refined, was rendered pervious to the light and glory which dwelt within, which beamed forth from every part, and was particularly observable in the countenance, on which there was no covering; and the rays of this glory transmitted through the body, pervaded also the raiment, so that whatever its colour might have been, it was totally lost in the effulgence of that splendour, as we know all colours are, in strong and dazzling light.

Here, then, according to my view of the subject, was an exhibition in the person of the second Adam, of the appearance of the first Adam in his state of innocence; and of that appearance which shall be exhibited of all glorified human beings in the realms of bliss.

As a farther proof that the immortality of the human body is predetermined by the Almighty, even the interment of the body in the grave, is represented by divine inspiration as the seed of a future and more glorious body; for, says the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 42, &c. *It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. Thus*

*this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality, and then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."*

From this account we find that the grand characteristics of this future body are, *incorruption—glory—power—spirituality*—and also IMMORTALITY; for *death*, together with the possibility of future corruption and dissolution, shall be destroyed, and swallowed up in victory. Then shall it appear that *these bodies of our humiliation are fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the all-conquering and all-pervading energy by which He has power to subdue ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF.*

### CONCLUSION.

If these things be so—and we have a hope of this *immortality* in a state of eternal blessedness—how should we live? how should we act? The Apostle tells us how the primitive Christians lived and acted, who had this hope. *Our conversation, says he, is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

That is, we are a *spiritual* people; this earth is considered by none of us as his *rest*—we seek not our *happiness* below—we consider ourselves in a state of probation—we have an appointed time upon earth, and all the days of that appointed time, we wait till our great, glorious, and final change come. For, says the Apostle, *ἡμῶν τὸ πολιτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπαρχει*, our *citizenship*, with all the rights, immunities, and privileges which belong to it, are *heavenly* and in heaven—and the *course of our life* resembles the *place* to which we belong—we are *spiritual* in our *views*—*spiritual* in our *motives*—*holy* in our *hearts*—*righteous* in our *lives*—*enduring*, as seeing Him who is invisible: we are labouring to promote the welfare of our fellow creatures—*living* to receive good, and to do good—*building up* ourselves on our most holy faith—*praying* in the Holy Ghost, and keeping ourselves in the love of God, we are looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. As His *glorious body* is the model and pattern according to which our bodies are to be raised, so His *pure* and *benevolent* heart, His *holy* and *useful* life, are the models according to which our hearts and conversation are to be re-

gulated. As we hope to live with Him in eternity, we look to have Him to live in us here—for we know that the conscience that is not justified by His blood, and the heart that is not purified by His spirit, can never be associated with Him, in His ineffable glory.

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**P. S.**—This is but a sketch of a discourse on the subject in the title : and it was with reluctance that the writer gave consent to its being published, as he was not in a state of health to complete it at the time that the other discourses in this volume were expected by the public.

## SERMON XIII.

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### THE FAMILY OF GOD AND ITS PRIVILEGES.

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EPHESIANS, Chap. iii. ver. 14—21.

14. Τούτου χάριν καμπτῶ τα γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ,
  15. Ἐξ οὗ πᾶσα πατρία ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομαζέται·
  16. Ἴνα δῶῃ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, δύναμι ἐκραινωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ, εἰς τὸν ἐσω ἀνθρώπον,
  17. Κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως, ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν·
  18. Ἐν ἀγάπῃ ῥιζιζώμενοι, καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι, ἵνα ἐξισχυσθῆτε καταλαβεσθαι σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἁγίοις, τὸ πλάτος, καὶ μήκος, καὶ βάθος, καὶ ὕψος,
  19. Γινῶναι τε τὴν ὑπερβαλλούσαν τῆς γνώσεως ἀγάπην τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα πληρωθῆτε εἰς πάν το πληρῶμα τοῦ Θεοῦ.
  20. Τῷ δὲ δυναμῆν ὑπὲρ πάντα ποιῆσαι ὑπὲρ ἐκ περισσοῦ, ἃν αἰτοῦμεθα ἢ ἴσομεν, κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν ἐνεργουμένην ἐν ἡμῖν,
  21. Ἄυτῳ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, εἰς πᾶσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰῶνων, Ἀμήν.
14. For this cause, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
  15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
  16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man:
  17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love,
  18. May be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19. And to know the love of God that passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.
20. Now, unto Him who is able to do more exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
21. Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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THIS Prayer of the Apostle, for the church at Ephesus, is the most grand and sublime in the oracles of God. The *riches* of the grace of the Gospel, and the *extent* to which that grace carries the salvation of the soul of man in this life, are most emphatically expressed in the various petitions of which it is composed. The Prayer itself is an immediate inspiration from Heaven ; and its different words, though chosen out of the richness of the incomparable language in which the Apostle wrote, are evidently inadequate to express the mighty working of the Divine Spirit in his mind, while making intercession for this church, partly by groanings which cannot be uttered ; and partly by words, which however well chosen, fall infinitely short of explaining the feelings of that Eternal Mercy which has provided salvation for a lost world : and such a salvation or deliverance from sin as the necessities of the soul require ; and as become the majesty and benevolence of God to give.

To such a composition, no paraphrase can do justice ; and few commentators seem to have entered into its spirit ; deterred, perhaps, by the apparent difficulty of the subject, and the unparalleled sublimity of the language. After carefully weighing every expression, in order to ascertain the *literal meaning*, and the *spiritual ideas* to which this meaning refers, much must be necessarily referred back to that Spirit by which these words were originally given ; and which alone can fully explain the deep things of God.

For the sake of observing order, where the subjects have an evident distinction, it may be necessary to consider :—

I. The *Manner* in which the Apostle approaches the Divine Majesty.

II. The *Persons* who are the objects of His prayer.

III. The *Prayer* itself in its several petitions. And,

IV. The *Doxology* with which it is concluded.

I. The *manner* in which the Apostle approaches the Divine Majesty. This refers partly to the *state* of his *mind*; and partly to the *posture* of his *body*.

1. The *State of his mind*. The Apostle was now in *prison* at Rome, and did not yet know how his trials might issue. By external circumstances, the mind is ever less or more affected; and the loss of *liberty* must be always grievous, let the sufferings induced by it, be ever so unrighteously inflicted. It must have appeared to St. Paul, a very strange dispensation, that he who had got a commission from God to preach the Gospel to the heathens, should, by his captivity, be rendered incapable of performing the work which his Master had given him to do!—But though his *body* is *bound*, his *spirit* is *free*. If he could not *labour* in the word and doctrine for the conversion of the heathen, he could write for the edification of the churches:—if he could not *preach* in public, he could *pray* to his Father who saw in secret. Even in *prison*, he seemed to feel himself a *free man*; his spirit was unsubdued and unbroken; and although he saw and felt his *bonds*, yet he will not confess himself to be under the *power* of *man*; he is not the *prisoner* of the *Jews*, nor the *bondman* of the *Romans*; but, *Paul the prisoner of the Lord*. He looks through secondary causes to the First Cause—he knew that his enemies could not prevail against his *liberty* or his *life*, but by the permission of God—and as He permitted him to be thus tried, he was persuaded that his present circumstances were those in which he could bring most glory to his Sovereign and Master. His *faith*, his *hope*, his *love*, were in full exercise; and each brought forth its respective fruit in abundance. He had the strongest *confidence* in his God; a vigorous and invincible *love* to his Redeemer, and the *Flock* purchased by his blood; and a *hope* that seemed to realize what it anticipated, that all should issue to the glory of God and the good of men. He had *access to the Throne* of glory; and he appeared to live not in a Roman prison, but in the heavenly Jerusalem; not on the confines even of Blessedness, but within the precincts of Heaven itself! That this statement is not too strong, hear his own solemn and energetic words, ver. 12. where speaking of Christ Jesus the Lord, as Mediator between God and man, he says—Εν ᾧ ἐρχομεν τῆν πατρίδαυτον, καὶ τῆν προσεγγαγῆν ἐν πεποιθήσει, δια τῆς πίστεως αὐτοῦ

— *Through whom we have this liberty of speech and this introduction, being led as by the hand to be introduced to the Divine Presence, with the fullest confidence of success, by the faith of Him.* Nothing can exceed the mental persuasion, and full confidence expressed by the Apostle in these words. He saw God upon His Throne, as his Father and his Lord : he is introduced to the Divine Presence, by the only Mediator : he lifts up his face with joy, for his Father smiles upon him : he has liberty of speech—for his inmost soul hears.—*What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted :* in consequence, his mind has the fullest persuasion of success, through faith in that Jesus who having given up His life a sacrifice for sin, is now the all-prevalent Mediator between God and man. On Him as the Saviour and Intercessor, he founds all his confidence ; and through Him he sends forth all his desires into the bosom of that Father of the Spirits of all flesh, who is a stream of incessant Benevolence to all his intelligent offspring. This was the Apostle's state of mind : and after considering it, we need not wonder at the astonishing prayer that succeeds.

2. His spirit being thus prepared and excited, how does it act upon his body, in bringing it forward to the Divine Majesty ? We already see him introduced, his soul full of confidence and reverence, and being ushered into the presence of his King, he falls on his knees before him—I bow, says he, my knees unto the Father.

The posture of the body in our approaches to God, is not a matter of trifling importance. We should ever consider the immense distance that is between the Creator and the creature in point of dignity. His Nature is infinitely perfect, ours indescribably imperfect. The consideration of this may well inspire awe, accompanied with the highest respect. But He is not only infinitely exalted in His own nature, but He is our King, and we are His subjects ; He has given us His laws, and we are bound to obey them :—we have broken these laws, and traitorously rebelled against His authority :—we have admitted another Sovereign, His enemy and ours ! We have bowed down to his authority, and instead of living invariably to God's honour and glory, we have given our hearts, our bodies, our souls, to the service of the arch rebel, the Chief of disorder and misrule, the dispenser of wretchedness and

misery!—We have *sinned* against God and our own souls; how then *shall we come before the Lord, and bow ourselves before the High God?* We should approach Him as *criminals* do their *judge*; and especially when we see the perdition to which we are exposed, with only one ray of *hope* penetrating the dense and insupportable gloom in which we are involved. With what reverence and humility, with what self-abasement and godly fear, and with what anxiety and mental energy, should we as criminals cry out, *save, Lord, or we perish! Heal our souls, for we have sinned against thee!* Blind and thoughtless, if not hardened, must that man be who rushes into the presence of God, as the horse does into the battle; and how little different is he who uses an undue *familiarity* with his Maker, while urging his plea of *God be merciful to me a sinner!* The most holy and devout, when approaching the Divine presence, should never forget that they *have sinned*; and that though now they have boldness to enter into the Holiest, it is by the blood of Jesus!

But there is a wide difference between the Apostle and most common Christians. He was already reconciled to God, through the blood of His Son:—He was filled with the heavenly unction; he was deeply taught in the school of Christ. He had his instructions perfected in the *third heavens*; and in consequence, he *taught wisdom among them that were perfect*. He had long and close communion with God, and if any man might come with boldness to the Throne of Grace, it was *à fortiori*, the privilege of the *Apostle of the Gentiles*. But with all his *boldness of access*, and *confidence* by the *faith of Jesus Christ*, (v. 12,) we find him here *on his knees* before his heavenly *Father*.—The humblest posture we can use, is certainly the most suitable to *saint* or *sinner*. KNEELING is that which is allowed to express the greatest degree of *humility*, *reverence*, and *respect*. This is the *posture* of the Apostle; and this is that which every Christian should use in such a solemn act as prayer. I know what a pious Prelate has said, “In prayer I will always either *stand* as a *servant* to receive my *Master’s* commands, or *kneel* as a *subject* before my *Prince*.”—This may appear *fine*, and to express a proper distinction: I must say, I cannot esteem it. It is neither the doctrine of his *Church*, nor of his *Bible*. It is a portion of Genevan practice, which Bishop Hall probably



imbibed with several exceptionable parts of a Genevan Creed. God's *commands* we receive in His *word* :—when we come into His presence, it is *not* to receive His *commands*, but to *ask mercy* for the pardon of our sin, in breaking these *commands* ; and *petition for grace to help us in time of need* :—*grace* to enable us to act according to the *commands* which we have already received from His word. God says, *Every knee shall bow to Me* ; Isai. xlv. 23, Rom. xiv. 11, Phil. ii. 10. SOLOMON *kneeled on his knees*, when addressing his Maker in behalf of the Church and people of Israel ; 1 Kings xviii. 54, 2 Chron. vi. 13. EZRA *fell on his knees and spread his hands* before God, when making intercession for the people ; Ezra ix. 5.

DANIEL *kneeled on his knees three times a day and prayed* ; Dan. vi. 10. PETER *fell down at Jesus' knees* ; Luke v. 8, and *kneeled* to make prayer when he raised Tabitha to life ; Acts ix. 40.

STEPHEN *kneeled down* when he was stoned, *praying the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit* ; Acts vii. 60.

PAUL, after his preaching at Ephesus, *kneeled down and prayed with them all* ; Acts xx. 36. And at Tyre, he *kneeled down on the shore and prayed* ; Acts xxi. 5. And this, doubtless, was his common practice. And, to complete all evidence on this point, when JESUS, the Almighty Saviour, was in His last agony, *He kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me!*—*And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly ; and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.* Luke xxii. 41—44. After all these *examples*, which we may consider as so many *precepts*, should we not join with the PSALMIST, and in all acts of *social and public worship*, say, *O come, let us worship and bow down ; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!* Psal. xcv. 6.

I grant that a man may exercise the true *spirit of prayer*, in *any posture* ; *sitting, standing, or lying*, when neither *place nor opportunity* can afford *convenience for kneeling* : but I contend, that, according to the Scriptures, in all our *private and public addresses to God*, we should *kneel*—as the most suitable, the most humble, and the most becoming posture for persons who have nothing to bring—possess no merit—and who have every thing to receive from God's *mere*

MERCY. I ask, what can any man think of himself, who in his addresses to God, can either *sit* on his seat, or *stand* in the presence of his Maker and his Judge?—Would he *sit* while addressing any person of a little more than ordinary respectability? If he did, he would be reckoned extremely *rude*. Would he *sit* in the presence of the *king* of his own land? This he would not be *permitted* to do. Is God then to be treated with less respect than a *fellow-mortal*? Surely not. Paul thought otherwise, and *bows his knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

Having seen the *manner* in which the Apostle approached his heavenly Father, implied in the *state of his mind*, and manifested in the *posture of his body*, we come now,

II. To consider the *persons* who were the objects of his prayer. They were the *children of God*—the family of the Great Father. They were the *saints at Ephesus*—the *faithful in Christ Jesus*, ver. 2. Those who *had redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins*, ver. 8. Those who, though once *dead in trespasses and sins*, God had *quicken*ed; or *made alive*, chap. ii. ver. 1. So that they became *fellow-citizens with the saints*, and of the *household, or domestics of God*. Ib. ver. 19. And they were *built up together for a habitation of God through the Spirit*. Ib. 22.

All these expressions shew that these were *genuine* Christian believers—persons who had laid hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel—who had been justified freely through the redemption that was in Jesus—had the constant witness of God's Spirit in their souls, that they were quickened by the Spirit of their Head, and had passed from death unto life, and lived in God's Church, as faithful domestics live in the house of their master.

The *religious character and spiritual state* of the persons to whom the Apostolic Epistles are directed, should be carefully considered, as this often throws much light on the phraseology of the Epistle itself; and without this, many passages may be misapplied and misinterpreted. As it was to a Church of God, bearing a very high spiritual character, that St. Paul sent this Epistle, the petitions in the following prayer, and the terms in these petitions, were in every sense applicable to those who were in a state of grace so advanced, and who earnestly desired to *follow on to know the Lord*.

The Apostle views them as a part of the *family of God*; which he intimates, consists of *two vast divisions*; one, resident in heaven, which we call the *Church triumphant*; and the other, sojourning upon earth, which we term the *Church militant*.

Now, God has but **ONE** spiritual *family*; these two parts constituting the great *whole*.

As the whole of the Israelitish Church or people, though they consisted of *twelve* distinct tribes, constituted but *one family*, because those twelve tribes were the sons of the *same father*; so, all believers in Christ Jesus, being children of God, and heirs of the *heavenly Canaan*, are considered as *one family*. They are all, as the Apostle says, *children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus*. Gal. iii. 25. And because they are sons, *God hath sent forth, the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father*. Galat. iv. 6. And they are denominated the *brethren* of Christ Himself—for, *He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren*. Heb. ii. 11. Hence, as there is but **ONE** Father, there is but **ONE** family; whether the members of it be found under several names, scattered over the earth, or, having been faithful unto death, and having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, have been received into heaven,

“ Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in.”

The Apostle does not say, of whom the *families* in heaven and earth are named, as if *each* formed a distinct *household*; but he says *family*, because they are all one, and of one. And he states that all this *family is named*—derives its origin and being from God, as truly as the twelve sons of Jacob, or the children of any other family, derive their name from him who is the father of the family. So the descendants of Jacob, surnamed *Israel*, were called *Israelites*; and believers in Christ, becoming children of God through faith in Him, are called *Christians*. This may be carried much higher: for, as God made of *one blood* all the nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth; and made but *one human pair*, through whom this blood should circulate—from which that generative influence should proceed by which the successive generations of

men should be propagated over the whole terraqueous globe ; so, there is, properly speaking, but *one human family*, of which Adam and Eve were the progenitors ; and God, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, the Head and Source. But the Apostle evidently refers here more particularly, to *believers in Christ*, who are children of God by adoption through grace—are made *partakers of the divine nature*, and escape the corruption that is in the world. These form the *household or family of God* ; among whom He resides, and in whom He lives. To none others can the words of the prayer be applied ; nor are any others capable of receiving these blessings, till saved as those were ; this *bread* is for the *children*—this *strong meat* *belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*, Heb. v. 14 :—such, then, are the *objects* of the Apostle's prayer.

III. We must now consider the *prayer* itself, in its several petitions.

1. His first petition is, that they may have a great increase of spiritual strength :—*That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man*, ver. 16.

Man, by his fall, is reduced to a miserable state of spiritual *imbecility*. And of the fall, the Apostle produces this, as one of the sad consequences ;—Rom. v. 6. *for while we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly* ; for, a sinner as such, has neither strength to do the will of God, nor successfully to resist sin. Now, as our spiritual adversaries are numerous and potent, we need much *power* to resist and overcome them ; and, as the *moral law* is exceedingly extensive, pure, and holy, (and, under this law, believers are created anew in Christ Jesus,) so we need, at all times, the mighty energy of God's Spirit to enable us perfectly to love Him, and worthily to magnify His name. Such strength must be received from God. He is the *fountain of might*, and every energetic principle of action must be derived from Him. There are *two ways* in which the soul may receive an increase of mental energy. 1. By considerations, drawn by way of encouragement, from its present circumstances—remembrance of *past mercies*, from the known goodness and mercy of God—from the truth of His promises,

and His fidelity in fulfilling them. These things lead it to put forth the strength that it already possesses—to be a worker together with God—to act on the principle already received. This is not so much a *real accession* of strength, as a *farther and better use* of that which God had before given.

2. The *second way* in which the soul may be said to be strengthened is, by receiving an increase of the *principle of might*, so that it may have more *power* to act, than it previously possessed. This is the thing here intended; for the Apostle prays that they *may be strengthened with might*—*δυναμις κραταιωθῆναι*—not merely that strength or excitement which a person may feel, while under strong encouragements to act; but a *fresh* or additional *accession* of the *principle of power*; so that he has *might* not only to *resist*, but to *overcome* and *triumph*: *power* not only to *wish* and *desire* to give God his whole heart, and labour against the strong man armed, (who, though he is not able to overcome the upright man, yet often brings down his strength in the day of battle,) but that *might* by which sin is dethroned, by which the adversary is not only chained, but cast out, and his goods spoiled. In a word, that *might* by which he is enabled to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength; and his neighbour as himself. Thus, he has written on his heart, the two great commandments of the law—on which hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Now, as *might* always implies an *agent* in which it resides, and from which it is put forth, the Apostle shews us here, that the *might* he prays for, comes from the *Spirit of God*; not merely a spiritual might communicated, but *might*, proceeding from its Fountain and Source, not by distant streams or emanations, but from the Holy Spirit itself dwelling in the soul:—*That ye may be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man*: and thus we find the *might* to proceed from the *indwelling spirit*: a *might* that works not merely in some *particular mental faculty*—but in the inner man—the *man within us*, that is, the *soul*, in all its powers and faculties. Every man is a compound being, he has a body and a soul. The *outward man* is that alone which is *seen*, and considered by men: the *inner man* is that which stands particularly in reference to God and eternity. The *outward man* is *strengthened* by earthly food, by air, exercise, &c.; the *inner man*,

by spiritual and heavenly influence : knowledge, love, peace, and holiness, are the food of the *inward man* ; or rather Jesus Christ, that *Bread of life*, that came down from heaven ; he that eateth this Bread, shall live and be strengthened by it. The *soul* is as truly fed, sustained, and nourished by *heavenly* food, as the body is by the earthly aliment suited to its nature. And the Holy Spirit of God must ever live in it, to afford it that nourishment, which is to produce the *might* by which it is to be *strengthened*.

The Apostle prays that this *might* may be given *according to the riches of God's glory*.—The *measure* that man uses in speaking of, and recommending the salvation of God, is like himself, *narrow* and *scanty*.—In these things, man seldom has that *liberal heart*, that *deviseth liberal things*. It is the study of the major part of the Christian world, to find out, with how little grace they may escape hell, and get to heaven : the doctrine of *entire holiness*, is their abhorrence—they fear nothing so much as to be persuaded, that they may be saved from *all sin* in *this life* ; but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, we are not straitened in Him, but in our own bowels. The Apostle who stood in the full liberty of the children of God, well knowing that HE *saves to the uttermost*, prays that the Ephesians may receive that *MIGHT*, *according to the riches of God's glory*—according to the measure of His eternal fullness ; God's infinite mercy and goodness, being the *measure* according to which we are to be saved. In giving *alms*, it is a generally received maxim, that every man should give *according to his ability*, and the *necessities* of the supplicant. It would be a disgrace to a *king* or a *nobleman*, to give no more than a *mechanic* or a *peasant*. God acts up to the dignity of His infinite perfections, He gives *liberally*—He gives *according to the riches of His glory* : i. e. all that the necessities of His creatures require. The *supply* is as great as the *want*—open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. Let us not cease praying for the bounty, till God withholds His hand.

We should remember, that we have many *enemies*, cunning and strong ; many *trials* too great for our natural strength : many *temptations* which no human power is able successfully to resist : many *duties* to perform, which cannot be accomplished by the *strength of man* : therefore we need *di-*

*vine strength* : we must have *might*, and we must be *strengthened every where*, and be *every way fortified* by that *might* : i. e. we must be mightily and most effectually fortified by the energy of the Holy Spirit. This is *according to the riches of His glory* ; and he is glorified in dealing out such riches. And let us remember, that what we receive is a *free gift* from God—it is His *grant* ; and it is His grant through Christ Jesus. We come, therefore, not to receive a *debt*, but a *gift* ; a *gift* to us, though *purchased* by the Blood of the Covenant.

2. The SECOND petition is, *That Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith*. In this, as well as in chap. ii. 21. and in several other passages, the Apostle compares the *Body* or *Church* of true believers to a *temple*, which, like that of Solomon, is built up for a *habitation of God*, through the Spirit. Here, as Solomon did, at the dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. vi. 1. &c., Paul, having considered the *Church* at Ephesus *completely formed*, as to every external thing, with all the rudiments of every gift and grace, prays that God may come down and *dwell in it*. He may be considered as now dedicating the Christian Church, that then was, and that ever should be, to God, and praying for those blessings which should ever rest on and distinguish it ; and having *knelt* down after the example of Solomon, he invokes Him, to whom the first temple was dedicated, and who had made it a type of the Christian Church, to come down, and *fill it with His presence*. And, as there could be no *indwelling* of God, but by *Christ*, and no indwelling of Christ, but by *faith*, He prays that they may have such *faith* in Christ, as shall keep them in the constant possession of His presence and love. God, in the beginning, made man to be His *living Temple* ; and while in a state of innocence and purity, He inhabited this temple ; and when the temple became defiled He left it. In the order of His eternal mercy, Christ, the repairer of the breach, comes to purify the temple, that it may again become a fit *habitation for the God of glory* ; this is what the Apostle points out to the believing Ephesians, when praying that *Christ might dwell, κατοικησαι*, might *intensely and constantly dwell* in their hearts by faith ; for, that man's heart which is not God's house, must be a hold of every foul and unclean spirit ; for Satan and his angels will

endeavour to fill what God does not. We have already seen that Christ does not *dwell* in the heart, but by *faith*: that *faith* which receives him as the Saviour of the world, and the Saviour of the soul. The faith that receives him as *Jesus*, who is to *save His people from their sins*; for he came to *put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*; and to *reconcile us to God by His incarnation and sacrificial death*. On his constant indwelling, all our happiness and holiness depend; and on this indwelling, the following blessings are to be *founded*.

3. THIRDLY, He prays that *they may be rooted and grounded in love*. *Εν αγάπῃ ἐρριζωμένοι, καὶ τεθεμελιωμένοι*. Here is a double metaphor, one taken from *Agriculture*, the other from *Architecture*. As *trees* of God's right hand planting, they are to be *rooted in love*; this is the *soil* in which alone the Christian soul can grow. Into the infinite love of God their souls were to *strike their roots*; and from this love, derive all that nourishment which is essential to their full growth; till they have arrived to their *fulness of vigour*, and by the genuine light and heat of the sun of righteousness, have their juices all properly concocted and dulcified, so that they may have the mind in them that was in Jesus, and as it is said below, till they are *filled with the fulness of God*. Sour godliness is not of Christ; but all fruit must be *acid* until ripened by the *sun*. Their *leaves*, their *blossom*, their *fruit*, must spring from this *love*. A healthy *leaf* is indicative of a healthy *blossom*; a healthy *blossom* is the forerunner of a healthy *fruit*; and a mature and wholesome fruit answers the expectation of the *planter*. It is the will of Christ that His followers should *bear much fruit*, and that this fruit *should remain*; for, *every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire*.

As a *building*, their *foundation* is to be laid in this *love*. *God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that they who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. Here is the *ground* on which alone the soul and all its hopes and expectations can be safely *founded*. This *foundation* cannot be shaken: and it is from this alone, that the doctrine of redemption flows to man; and from this alone has the soul its form and comeliness. *In this love, as its proper soil, it grows; ON this, as its only foundation, it*



*rests.* These two expressions are often used proverbially, to signify a *complete acquisition* of some science, or point of knowledge; so as to know both the *theory* and *practice*; the *principles*, and the *proper mode of application*. So, to be *rooted and grounded in love*, is to know it *thoroughly*; to *possess it wholly*; to know its *nature*, to feel its power, and to bring forth its *fruits*.

4. **FOURTHLY**, the Apostle prays that they may have a vast increase of saving practical knowledge: That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, ver. 18. The words *ἵνα ἐξισχυσητε καταλαβεσθαι*, which we translate, *that ye may be able to comprehend*, are so exceedingly nervous, and full of meaning, that it is almost impossible to translate them. The first word, *ἐξισχυσητε*, (from *ἐξ*, *intensive*, and *ισχυω*, *to be strong*;) signifies that they might be *thoroughly able*, having been *strengthened with might* by God's power. The second word, *καταλαβεσθαι*, (from *κατα*, *intensive*, and *λαμβάνω*, *to take, catch, or seize on*;) may be translated, *that ye may fully catch, take in, and comprehend* this wonderful mystery of God. For it requires a considerable *preparation of the mind* by such impressive teaching as the Spirit of God furnishes, to render the soul *apt to take in*, and comprehend these deep things of God. These are subjects that the *carnal mind* cannot comprehend—they are *spiritually* known and discerned; and God alone can strengthen the human intellect to conceive and duly apprehend them. *What is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* Here the Apostle still keeps up the metaphor, comparing the Church of God to a *building*. And as, in order to rear a proper building, constructed on scientific principles, a *ground-plan* and *specification* must be previously made, according to which the building is to be formed—the Apostle refers to this; and such *plan* and *specification* must be thoroughly understood, before such a building can be erected. These believers were to be *builded up, a heavenly house, a habitation of God through the spirit*; and this must have its *latitude, or breadth*; its *longitude, or length*; its *altitude, or height*; and its *profundity, or depth*. These things are easily understood when spoken of a *material building*; but what can he mean, when he speaks of the *breadth, length, depth, and height* of the *LOVE of God*?—Imagination can

scarcely fancy any satisfactory mode of answering such a question.—Let us, however, try what help a literal examination of these terms may afford. These four terms take in every thing relative to the *computation* of all *solids* or *bodies*. Nothing more can be said of any substance. It has either *length*, without *breadth* or *depth*—or it has *length* and *breadth*, without *thickness*; or it has *all these*, *length*, *breadth*, and *thickness*. A mathematical *point*, has neither *length*, *breadth*, nor *thickness*—a mathematical *line*, has *length*, without *breadth* or *thickness*. And a simple *surface* may be said to have *length* and *breadth*, without *thickness*. *Depth* and *height* are properly the same as *thickness*; but the former apply to the *situation* of a body, particularly a building, signifying *how deep* the foundation goes *below* the *surface* of the ground on which the building appears to stand, and *how high* it reaches perpendicularly *above* that surface. If we hold, for example, a razor in a horizontal direction before our eyes, we can discern the *edge* as a *LINE*, to which we can assign neither *breadth* nor *thickness*. Hold the *side* of this instrument in the same direction, and we can see a *surface*, or *breadth*, to which we can assign *length* and *breadth*, but we can perceive no *thickness* or *depth*. Turn the back of the instrument to the eye in the same direction, and we can see the *thickness*, taken in *opposition* to the *edge*, where we could perceive *length* only. This rude example may be sufficient to give some satisfactory idea of these things to inexperienced minds. These terms, then, of *breadth*, *length*, *depth*, and *height*, express the *whole* affections, or *essential properties* of *matter*. No *body* or *solid* can have more than the *three dimensions* of *length*, *breadth*, and *thickness*; for *height* and *depth* are only relative terms to express *depth*, as we have seen before.

Now, as these three terms express all the possible dimensions of matter, when applied metaphorically to any subject, accident, or thing, of a moral or spiritual nature, they must signify the *whole of that thing*, either in respect to its *nature*, its *properties*, or its *influence*—and these, as far as they are knowable, perceptible, or communicable. Hence, the *breadth*, *length*, *depth*, and *height* of the love of God, signify the *whole love* of God, in its *manifestations*, *operations*, and *effects*. They mean the love that sent Jesus into the world—the love

that caused Him to taste death for every man—the love communicated to the soul of man, and that destroys the *hatred* or enmity of the carnal mind—in a word, the love which renders all that receive it, unutterably happy in God, and obedient even unto death:—the principle that produces all the *moral good* that is in the world, and that alone, through which the Christian Church has been illustrated by *Martyrs*. *God is Love*: and in this, an infinity of breadth, length, depth, and height, is included:—or rather, all breadth, length, depth, and height, are lost in this immensity. It comprehends all that is *above*, all that is *below*, all that is *present*, all that is *past*, and all that is *to come*. In reference to *human beings*, the love of God in its *breadth*, is a *girdle* that *encompasses the globe*, or a *mantle* in which it is wrapped up. Its *length* reaches from the *eternal purpose* of the mission of Christ, to the eternity of *blessedness* which is to be enjoyed by the pure in heart, in His ineffable glories. Its *depth* reaches to the *lowest fallen* of the sons of Adam; and to the *deepest depravity* of the human heart. And its *height*, to the infinite *dignities* of the throne of Christ. “He that overcometh will I give to sit down with Me upon My throne; as I have overcome, and sat down with the Father, upon the Father’s throne.” Thus we see that the *Father*, the *Son*, and all *true believers* in Him, are to be seated on the same throne! this is the *height* of the love of God; and the height to which that love raises the souls that believe in Jesus! This love, in all these dimensions, is to be *comprehended*, *laid hold on*, and *possessed* by all those who are faithful unto death. They *experience* its influence, *prove* its efficacy, and *enjoy* its blessedness through that duration that can never terminate! O thou infinite and ineffable Being! what can the children of men render unto Thee for all Thy benefits! In the presence of this subject we see a consistency in the apparent contradictory words of the poet:—

Through all eternity to Thee, a joyful song we’ll raise,  
But O, eternity’s too short, to utter all thy praise.

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!”—“Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but, we know, that when He doth appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Well

might both the *Prophet* and *Apostle* exclaim, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Isai. lxiv. 4. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

5. FIFTHLY. Having spoken of the Salvation of God, and prayed that they might be able to comprehend its breadth, length, depth, and height, he prays here, ver. 19, that *they may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*

God's love is manifested in giving His Son Jesus Christ to die for a lost world: CHRIST'S love is manifested in His humiliation, taking our nature upon Him, suffering and dying in our stead, taking human nature in its first fruits into heaven, and ever appearing in the presence of God for us. It is only by the *love of Christ*, that we can know the *love of God*. The love of God to man, induced Him to give Christ for his Redemption: Christ's love to man, induced Him to give His life's blood a ransom for his Salvation. The *gift of Christ to man*, is the *measure of God's love*: the *death of Christ for man*, is the *measure of Christ's love*. *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son—Christ loved us, and gave Himself for us.*

But, it may be asked, how can *the love of Christ that passeth knowledge* be *known*?—Many have puzzled themselves with this question without real cause. There are two methods of solving it, at once both scriptural and rational. If we take the verb *γινωσκω*, *I know*, in the sense in which it is frequently used in the New Testament, to signify *I acknowledge*, *I approve*, *I acknowledge with approbation*; and the noun *γινωσις*, *knowledge*, to signify *comprehension*, then the principal difficulty will be removed. "That ye may acknowledge, approve, and publicly acknowledge that love of Christ which surpasseth knowledge." We can *acknowledge* and *approve of* that which may surpass our *comprehension*. We cannot *comprehend* God; yet we *know* that He is; *approve of*, love, adore, and serve Him. In like manner, though we cannot *comprehend* the immensity of the love of Christ, yet we *know* that He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood: and we *approve of* and *acknowledge* Him as our only Lord and Saviour. In this sense we may very justly be said, *to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*

But, although this be a very satisfactory solution, yet it is

most probable that the word *γνῶσις*, *gnosis*, which we translate *knowledge*, signifies here, *science* in general; and particularly that science in which the *Rabbins* boasted; and that, in which the *Greeks* greatly exulted. The *former* professed to have the *key of knowledge*, the *secret* of all Divine Mysteries. The *latter* considered their *Philosophers*, and their systems of *Philosophy*, superior to every thing that had ever been known among men; and on this account reputed all other nations, *Barbarians*. They seem to have used the words *γνῶσις*, *gnosis*, *knowledge*, and *σοφία*, *sophia*, *wisdom*, as we do the word *Humanities*, for a complete system of *academical education*; for a thorough *knowledge* of all that their *Philosophers* taught relative to learning in general, but particularly in reference to the *supreme good*. When the *Apostle* prays that the *Ephesians* *may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*; he may refer to all the boasted *knowledge* of the *Jewish Doctors*; and to all the greatly extolled *science* of the *Greek Philosophers*. For, to *know*, to *understand*, and *experimentally feel the love of Christ*, in point of *satisfaction* to the mind, and *gratification* to the *soul*, infinitely surpasses all other *science*; and especially that among the *Greeks*, so far famed, so loudly boasted, to which he seems here more particularly to refer. This *love* should be *acknowledged*, both in *private* and *public*, as that only which can make men *happy*, *holy* and *useful*: that alone which is the *sum* and *substance* of all *Divine* and *useful knowledge*; and without which, all *knowledge*, *wisdom* and *learning*, are of no *vital* and *lasting importance* to the *human soul*. The *Jews* may require a *sign*, and the *Greeks* seek after *wisdom*, but the *love of Christ* which induced Him to take our nature upon Him, and suffer death in our stead, infinitely surpasses them all: and to *know this experimentally*, as far exceeds in *true profit* and *blessedness*, all *human knowledge*, whether in *languages*, *sciences*, or *arts*, as the *attainments* of an *angel*, are superior to those of an *ape*.

The *public acknowledgement* of this *love of Christ* was required from every *Christian Convert*—and this was made by every *adult* in coming to *baptism*. And it was from this *public acknowledgement*, that we have had *confessors* and *martyrs* in the *Christian Church*. To be *able to make such an acknowledgement*, was a full *proof* of the *sincerity* of the *Convert*, and of

the power of that grace, which through Christ crucified, he had received.

6. The Apostle concludes his prayer with, *That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God*, ver. 19. ἵνα πληρωθῆτε ἐν παντὶ τὸ πληρωμα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Among all the great sayings in this prayer, this is the greatest. To be filled with God, is a great thing:—to be filled with the fulness of God, is still greater:—to be filled with all the fulness of God, is greatest of all. This utterly bewilders the sense and confounds the understanding, by leading us at once to consider the immensity of God, the infinitude of His attributes, and the absolute perfection of each! But there must be a sense in which even this wonderful petition was understood by the Apostle, and may be comprehended by us—as we have already found one, in which the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge, may be comprehended by genuine believers.

Most people, in quoting these words, endeavour to correct or explain the Apostle, by adding the word *communicable*. But this is as idle as it is useless and impertinent. Reason surely tells us, that St. Paul would not pray that they should be filled with what could not be communicated. The Apostle certainly meant what he said, and would be understood in his own meaning; and we may soon see what this meaning is.

By the fulness of God, we are to understand, all the gifts and graces which He has promised to bestow on man, in order to his full salvation here, and his being fully prepared for the enjoyment of glory hereafter. To be filled with all the fulness of God, is to have the heart emptied of, and cleansed from all sin and defilement, and filled with humility, meekness, gentleness, goodness, justice, holiness, mercy, and truth; and love to God and man. And, that this implies a thorough emptying of the soul, of every thing that is not of God, and leads not to Him, is evident from this, that, what God fills, neither sin nor Satan can fill; nor in any wise occupy. For, if a vessel be filled with one fluid or substance, not a drop or particle of any other kind can enter it, without displacing the same quantum of the original matter, as that which is afterwards introduced. God cannot be said to fill the whole soul, while any place, part, passion, or faculty, is filled, or less or more occupied, by sin or Satan: and as neither sin nor Satan can be where God fills and occupies the whole, so the terms

of the prayer state, that Satan shall neither have any *dominion over* that soul, nor *being in it*. A fulness of *humility* precludes all *pride*—of *meekness*, precludes *anger*—of *gentleness*, all *ferocity*—of *goodness*, all *evil*—of *justice*, all *injustice*—of *holiness*, all *sin*—of *mercy*, all unkindness and *revenge*—of *truth*, all *falsity* and *dissimulation*: and where God is loved with *all the heart, soul, mind, and strength*, there is no room for *enmity* or *hatred* to Him, or any thing connected with Him; so, where a man loves his *neighbour* as himself, *no ill* shall be worked to that neighbour; but on the contrary, every kind affection will exist towards him, and every kind *action*, as far as power and circumstances can permit, will be *done* to him. Thus, *being filled with God's fulness*, will produce constant, pious, and affectionate obedience to Him, and unvarying benevolence towards one's neighbour, *i. e. any man, any and every human being*—such a man is *saved from all sin*; the law is fulfilled in him, and he ever possesses and acts under the influence of that *love* to God and man, which is the fulfilling of the law.

It is impossible, with any scriptural or rational consistency, to understand these words in any *lower* sense; but how much *more* they imply, (and *more* they do imply,) who can tell!

As there is no end to the *merits* of *Christ* incarnated and crucified; no *bounds* to the *mercy* and *love* of *God*; no *let* or *hindrance* to the *Almighty energy* and *sanctifying influence* of the *Holy Spirit*; no *limits* to the *improvability* of the *human soul*; so, there can be no *bounds* to the *saving influence* which *God* will dispense to the heart of every genuine believer. We may *ask* and *receive*, and our *joy* shall be *full*! Well may we bless and praise *God*, “who has called us into such a state of salvation;” a *state* in which we may be *thus saved*; and by the grace of that state, continue in the same to the end of our lives!

As *sin* is the cause of the ruin of mankind, the Gospel system, which exhibits its *cure*, is fitly called *good news*, or *glad tidings*: and it is *good news*, because it proclaims Him who *saves His people* FROM *their sins*; and it would indeed be dishonourable to that grace, and the infinite merit of Him who procured it, to *suppose*, much more to *assert*, that *sin* had made *wounds* which it would not *heal*. Of such a triumph, Satan shall ever be deprived,

IV. The *Doxology*.—*Now unto HIM*.—The Apostle having finished his short, but most wonderfully comprehensive and energetic *prayer*, brings in his *doxology*, or *form of praise*; giving thanks to *Him*, from whom all *blessings* come, and to whom all *praises* are due.

There is a dignity here in the use of the *pronoun* instead of the *noun*;—*HIM*:—there is a similar mode of expression in the conclusion of the Epistle to the *Romans*, chap. xvi. 25. “Now, to *HIM* that is of *power* to establish you.”—And in the conclusion of the Epistle of *Jude*, ver. 24; “Now, unto *HIM* who is *able* to keep you from falling,” &c. So here, “Now, unto *Him* that is *able* to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.” He does not say, unto the *Lord*—unto *God*—unto the *Creator*, &c. but *ΑΥΤΩ*, to *HIM*—that *Being* of *Beings*—that *Cause* of all causes: that *eternal Fountain* of all perfection and excellencies—that *Source* of innate, eternal goodness—or, as *Cicero* in one place expresses it, *illud inexprimibile*, that ineffable entity, which no name, no attribute, can worthily define or express.—That *Being* of which the Apostle had already said *so much*, from *whom* he had prayed for *so much*, and *who* was *able* to do all that he had asked for, and infinitely more—unto this *Being* alone, endless praises are due, and to *Him* alone, they shall be forever ascribed. In every approach to the Majesty of God, we should endeavour to conceive aright of *His Nature*, and of *our obligations* to Him. The Apostle elsewhere tells us that He is a *consuming fire*—and commands us to worship Him with *reverence and godly fear*—and it is only through His incomprehensible goodness that we are permitted to approach His Throne. See what has been said on ver. 14. We should also have a becoming sense of our *obligation* to Him: *praise* springs from *gratitude*; *gratitude* from a sense of *obligation*; *obligation* from a sense of *benefits received*: and this sense of benefits received, will be in proportion to the *magnitude* of the benefits, and the *sense* we have of *our own unworthiness*.—But to return to the *Doxology* itself.

Having considered the *magnitude* of the benefits which he asks of God in behalf of the believers at Ephesus, he is led to view Him in His unlimited *power*, that he may appear to be justified in the extensive petitions he has made. Who can overthrow the *power of sin*, but God!



Who can *pardon* its *guilt*, but God !

Who can *cleanse* the human heart from *all unrighteousness*, but God !

Who can raise a *body* that is dead because of sin, from *death* and *corruption*, but God !

Who can endue it with *immortality*, *unite it* to its proper *Spirit*, but God !

And who can bring *both* to His own everlasting glory, there to dwell *eternally*, but God !

And what being can do all these things, but He who possesses *Almightiness*, or *unlimited power* !

The Apostle meets all such inquiries as these with *unto HIM who is ABLE*.—Can your God do all these things? Yes, says the Apostle, *these*, and *more—more abundantly than all these—yea, above all that we can ask or think*. This at once settles every objection, silences all doubt, and prepares the soul to meet and claim the promises with strong and implicit faith.

When the two blind men came to Jesus, in order to be restored to sight, He saw the necessity of asking them, *Believe ye that I am ABLE to do this*. Matt. ix. 28. Even God puts not forth His strength to work such miracles of grace, till faith has received a full conviction of His *ability* to do them. Let any man search his own heart, and he will find, that although in a general way, he believes that God is *Almighty*, yet he entertains many doubts relative to His *ability* to do these works, especially *to cleanse the soul from all sin in this life*—most men believe it to be *morally impossible*. And hence, whatever may be the promises of God, it has become an article in most creeds, that, “no man can be saved from all sin on this side death and the grave.” In reference to this point, let us consider the subject of God’s *potency*.

Every attribute of God is *equal*. Each is infinite, eternal, unoriginated, and without bound or limit. Such is the *potency* of God—it can do all things that do not imply *absurdity* or *contradiction*—it can do *any thing*, in *any way* it pleases ; and it can do any thing *when* it pleases : and it *will* do any thing, that is *necessary* to be done, and *should* be done, *when it ought* to be done, and *when* the doing of it will most manifest His own *glory* : and His glory is chiefly manifested in *promoting the happiness*, and *saving the souls* of men. **These**

positions are self-evident, and have their reason in the *perfections*, and especially, in reference to us, in the *goodness* of the Divine Nature.

It is granted, that *sin* has a *mighty power* :—and that *Satan*, who *arms* himself with the vile affections of man, and *rules* in the uncleanness of the heart, has a *mighty power* also. But what is *power*, howsoever *great*, howsoever *malevolent*, howsoever *well circumstanced*, to accomplish the purposes of its malevolence, when *opposed* by *infinite potency* ! All *power* must originally emanate from God. *Power*, in the above sense, must be lodged *in*, and be exercised *by*, some intelligent being. Now, all such beings, as well as others, must be *dependent* on Him, who is the Fountain whence they were derived. Hence, they can neither *exist* nor *act* but as *He wills*, or *permits* : and hence, it is evident *He* can at any time *counteract*, or *suspend*, or *destroy* all exertions, of all finite beings. Therefore, be the power of sin and satan what it may, this can be no objection against the destruction of sin in the heart of man. *He* is *ABLE* to do *THIS*. And, if it be to *His glory* as *GOD* ; if it be to the *glory of His grace* as *SAVIOUR* ; if it be to the *perfection and happiness* of *His* intelligent creature ; if *He* have made it the duty of that creature to *be* or *do* at all times, what he can *neither be nor do* while his heart is *sinful*—and none but *God Himself* can remove and destroy that sinfulness ;—hence we powerfully infer, that *God will do* this thing, if that intelligent creature apply to *Him* as commanded by *Him* who is able to save to the uttermost—*i. e.* in every *degree*, and in *all times*. Now, *God* has commanded men to be at all times *holy* as *He* is *holy*. At all times to love *Him* with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength—to give *Him* their hearts—to worship *Him* in the beauty of holiness ; and to do *His* will on earth as it is done in heaven. And does *He* not know, that all these are utterly impossible to man while under the *power*, *guilt*, and *pollution of sin* ? If, then, it be their *duty* to *be* and *do* all that is mentioned above, (and who will deny this ?) then it must be *His will* to *break* the *power*, *pardon* the *guilt*, and *cleanse* the heart from the infection of sin. And if it be *His will*, *His power* can execute the purpose of that *will*, and *His goodness*, from which springs this *will*, will induce *Him* to exert *His power* that the thing may be done, and the creature be restored to the *image*

of God, in which he was originally created, and from which he has fallen. For this very end, Jesus Christ came into the world—He was manifested that He might take away our sins—that He might destroy the works of the devil—that He might deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, so that we might serve Him in righteousness and true holiness, without fear, before Him all the days of our life. In a word, that we might be *emptied* and *cleansed* from all sin, and be *filled with all the fulness of God*.

This will appear still more evident, from the following words :—He is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all—παντα ποιησαι υπερ εκπερισσου*—words similar to some with which we have already met in this prayer; words that cannot be translated but by periphrasis. God is Omnipotent, therefore He is able to do all things, and *superabundantly, above the greatest abundance*—(and who can doubt this, who has any rational or Scriptural views of His *power* and His *love*?)—*above all that we ask or think*. This refers to the knowledge we have of our wants, and the desire we feel to have them supplied. When, on the conviction that our hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked, (and what heart is otherwise till God cleanse it?) we *think*—deeply reflect on our state; and by *thinking* and reflecting, see the provision that God has made for our salvation;—then we shall *ask* the blessings we need, in proportion to the evidence we have of the willingness and ability of God to supply these wants. Now, what does all this imply?

We can *ask* every good of which we have heard—every good that God has promised in His word :—and we can *think* of and *imagine* goods and blessings beyond all that we have either seen, heard, or read of :—yea, we can imagine good things and enjoyments to which it is impossible for us to give a name :—we can go beyond the limits of all human descriptions :—we can imagine more than even God Himself has specified in His Word; and can feel no bounds to our imagination of good, but *impossibility* and *eternity*! And, after all, *God is able to do more exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think*—and His *ability* here, is so necessarily connected with His *willingness*, that the one indisputably implies the other :—for, of what consequence would it be to tell the Church of God, that He had *power* to do so and so,

if there was not implied an *assurance* that He *will* do what His power *can* do, and what the soul of man needs to have done?

To make this more impressive, and to excite the greater confidence, the Apostle adds, *according to the power that worketh in us—κατα την δυναμιν, της ενεργουμενης εν ημιν*. As if he had said, “All that He can do, and all that He has *promised* to do, will be done *according* to what He has *already done* by that power, which *strongly*—with *great energy*—worketh in us.” This power acts with energy in our hearts, expelling evil, purifying and refining the affections and desires, and implanting heavenly dispositions—transfusing its own Divine nature through our souls in proportion as we credit the promises, shake ourselves from the dust, take up our cross, abstain from every appearance of evil, and exercise the grace we have already received. Let no man expect *more grace*, who is not *using* that which has already been conferred upon him; and let none expect that God will purify his heart, while he is *knowingly* indulging any of its evil propensities. When first convinced of sin, we hated and fled from it, and sought God in every means of grace: nothing could satisfy our souls but a sense of God’s pardoning mercy through Christ; we sought, and we found. Now, *according* as God *then* worked in us, and we were workers together with Him, so will He work, and we by faith must work with Him in the purification of our souls. By faith and prayer we work to receive: by His Almighty energy, He works in us to *destroy* evil. We know how we *were* brought to the knowledge of God through Christ—we had forgiveness through His Blood—this was applied to our souls by His Spirit:—it is the same Blood that cleanses from all sin—and its efficacy is applied by the same Spirit. We were *justified by faith*, we are to be *sanctified* through the same—this was the way in which He saved of old; whether Jews or Gentiles, he put no difference, purifying their hearts by faith, and giving them the Holy Ghost.

*Unto Him be glory in the Church.*—The Apostle, having pointed out this Supreme Being as possessed of unlimited power and goodness, ever disposed to give more than we can desire or deserve, ascribes to Him that honour, which to Him alone is due.

*To Him be glory.*—The word Δόξα, which the Apostle uses here and in many other places of his Epistles, is difficult to explain; but we see at once, that it must imply such *acknowledgements* of the power, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, and goodness of the Divine Being, as are at once indicative and expressive of His infinite excellencies; our dependence upon Him as the only Source of perfection and goodness; and our gratitude to Him for the benefits we have already received. The word δόξαζω, signifies to *make luminous, illustrious, splendid, eminent, glorious, &c.* Hence, a circle of rays round the head is called a *glory*, *i. e.* splendour, intense brightness, &c. Now, we may be said to give *glory* to God, when we exhibit, in the *clearest light*, and in the most impressive manner we can, the various excellencies of our God and Father; and when we do this so that by our *example* others are led to esteem, adore, and put their trust in Him, we *glorify* Him by shewing forth the *glory* of His various attributes—telling forth how effectually He teaches, how powerfully He upholds, how mercifully He saves, and how kindly He supplies all our wants, succours us in distress, stands by us in difficulties, defends us in dangers, guides us by His counsel, and promises at last to receive us into His endless glory. By recollecting these things, we may be said to *excite* our own gratitude towards Him; and thus encourage ourselves to trust more in Him, to love Him more reverently, and serve Him more faithfully. This *glory*, the Apostle orders to be given *in the Church*—that is, in the *assemblies* of true believers—of those who have felt the mighty workings of His spirit—who know the grace of God in truth. They who have *tasted* the goodness of God can best estimate that goodness—they, in whose hearts Christ dwells by faith, can best praise Him for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace. In the *Church*, God should be glorified: and it is not by what is generally termed *singing His praise*, and *to His glory*; (which, by the way, is very seldom done, by those who make a profession of doing it;) but by *speaking* of His work on the souls of men; *proclaiming* His doings among the people; making mention that His Name is exalted. God receives most *glory* in those churches, or Christian assemblies, where the fulness, freeness, and universality of His salvation are held forth—where His grace that bringeth salvation to all men, is

exhibited ; and where a complete redemption *from all sin in this life* (like that pointed out by the Apostle in the preceding verse) is explained, illustrated, defended, and pressed home by powerful exhortation on the souls of the people. How little glory does God get from those, who exhibit His *sovereignty*, to the utter discredit of His *justice, mercy, and love*—who inform the world “that He is more glorified by saving *two* than by saving *ten thousand*!—that He beholds a very small few with everlasting love ; and so, infallibly provides for their salvation ; while He beholds millions of millions, with an eternal aversion and hatred, dooming them, while unborn, to everlasting perdition, without ever furnishing them with the slightest means of escape.” Let such know that God is as *sovereign* in His *mercy* as in His *justice*—that hatred to man exists not in Him ; and that He is a sovereign everlasting Fountain of love and compassion to every human soul ; that through this, He gave his Son Jesus to die for the sin of the world ; who, in that dying, tasted death for every man ; and let such learn, (for it appears they know it not,) that His Blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness.

In these things God is *glorified* :—in the churches where these truths are exhibited, God is honoured. In such displays of God and His works, all His attributes blaze forth in full splendour and harmony : while on the opposite system, one excellence is wounded by another ; justice and mercy never meeting together ; righteousness and peace never kissing each other. I refer here principally to that horrible caricature of the *Sovereignty of God*, by ELISHA COLES—a work which has made several Socinians and Deists, but never yet, one genuine Christian. Such a work can draw no man to God ; but may well affright many *from* Him. See Mr. SELLON'S Answer to him,

But this *glory* is to be offered *in the Church* by CHRIST JESUS. This may be easily understood, for it is *by* Christ Jesus that the glory of God has been revealed to the world—*by* Him, the worlds were made—*by* Him, man was redeemed—*through* Him, God meets with, visits, and saves man—*in* Him, was God the Father, reconciling the world to Himself—and *in* Him, dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. *For* Him, and *by* Him, and *through* Him, are all things : He is the only Mediator between God and man. *Through* Him

alone, can we approach to God, and *through* Him alone, will God receive our prayers and praises. He that cometh unto the Father through Him, shall in no case be cast out.

This saving of man by Christ, and bringing glory to God, through Him, is not to be a limited or transient work. The *Patriarchal system* lasted only about two thousand years :—the *Mosaic system* belonged principally to the Jews, and was to be in force only till the *Messiah* should come, and then to give place to the *Christian dispensation* :—thus, having lasted about two thousand years more, it was abrogated also, but the *Christian system* is to endure *throughout all ages*—*εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεάς*, *through all succeeding generations*; that is, while the race of human beings continues to exist on the face of the earth. The *Patriarchal dispensation*, was *initial and imperfect* : the *Mosaic dispensation* was *typical and representative* : the *Christian dispensation* was the complement or perfection of the whole ; hence, it is to last *for ever*. Being perfect, it needs no addition : being the completion of all that preceded, and the fulfilment of all that was promised—and all *was* promised, that man needed for his present and eternal happiness—it is to be succeeded by no other. It fully exhibits Him who was to come ; and hence, we are to look for none other. A fuller Revelation cannot be made to man of what is necessary to his happiness and perfective of his being : for it is impossible for the human soul to *receive* or *wish* for more than is here promised. By the preaching of this Gospel of the grace of God, the *Church*, the Congregation of true believers, is to be preserved on the earth ; and in that Church, Jesus Christ is to be proclaimed as the full, sufficient, and only Saviour : and through the preaching of this Christ, souls are to be converted from sin to holiness ; and through *this*, God the universal Father and Lord, is to be incessantly *glorified*. But the *effects* of this salvation given to man, are not to be confined to the limits of time. They are to last to eternity ; and God to eternity be glorified for them ; and therefore the Apostle adds, *World without end*—*τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ αἰῶνος*, *Of the age of ages*—or, *the duration of durations*—that duration which is infinitely beyond all that can be measured, or marked by the revolution of the heavenly bodies : in a word, **ETERNITY**—where there shall be no more time, no more change—where sorrow

and sighing shall be no more : for it is that eternal Sabbath or Rest that is reserved for the People of God.

The *song of praise* to God, through Christ, begun on *earth*, and protracted through all the generations of men, till the end of time, shall be continued in *heaven* by those, who, having here received the Salvation of God, and continued faithful unto death, in the resurrection of the Just are taken to that ineffable glory, where, being like Him, they shall see Him as He is ; and being raised to His right hand, have fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore : in which state, æras, limits, and periods, are absorbed in one eternal Duration.

It is in vain to attempt to describe this state : when we say, that in it there is *no SIN*, we at once see that in it there can be no *pain*, no *misery*, no *death*. From it all *evil* is *absent*, and in it all *good* is *present*. There the *introduction of evil* is impossible : and there, the *loss of good* is equally so. The time of *probation* is only on *earth* : the day of trial with the blessed, is for ever ended ; and now they are in that state in reference to which their probation existed. This duration we often express by, *world without end, i. e. the world*, or state, that has *no end*. Sometimes by, *for ever and ever*—that is, one *ever* or duration, that is *endless*, succeeding one that *has ended*. And sometimes by a yet more forcible expression,—*for evermore* : that is, *for ever*—through the *whole lapse of time* ; and *more*—the unlimited duration that shall succeed it. All these are phrases which labour to express what is at once both ineffable and inconceivable.

The Apostle concludes the whole with *Amen*, the common seal to all such instruments as this. *Amen*, signifies he was faithful and true ; and the use of it here refers at once to God, to whom the prayer is offered, and from whom all those blessings came ; and also to the truth and stability of the promises relative to the salvation mentioned here, and the glory that should follow. *Amen*—so be it ; so let it be ! and, so it shall be ; for all the counsels of God are faithfulness and truth ; and not one jot or tittle of His promise has failed from the foundation of the world to the present day ; nor can fail, till mortality be swallowed up of life ; and the *more* have succeeded the *ever*, and God, in His eternity be the Centre, in which all Holy Spirits shall infinitely rest.

Therefore, to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,



be glory, dominion, power and thanksgiving, now, henceforth and for ever, Amen and Amen.

From God we came, and to God we shall return.

### CONCLUSION.

With such a portion of the word of God before us, how can we be said to credit conscientiously the doctrines of Christianity, and live satisfied with such *slender attainments* in the Divine Life? Can any person who pleads for the *necessary* and *degrading continuance* of *in-dwelling sin*, believe what the Apostle has written?—Can *we* who profess to believe it, be excusable, and live under the influence of any temper or passion that is alien to the mind of Christ? Will it be said in answer, “This is only a *prayer* of the Apostle, and contains his *wish* from the overflowings of his heart, for the spiritual prosperity of the Ephesian Church.”—I ask farther, was the Apostle *inspired* or not, when he wrote this prayer?—If he were *not* inspired, this prayer makes *no part* of Divine Revelation; if he *were* inspired, every petition is tantamount to a positive *promise*: for, what God inspires the heart to pray for, that God purposes to *bestow*: and if this prayer, thus given by inspiration, be given not merely for the comfort of the Church at *Ephesus*, but for the *Christian Church in general*;—then it is his *will* that all these blessings should be enjoyed by His followers in every age and nation: and the prayer is, that Christ would dwell in their hearts,—that they should be filled with all the fulness of God; and that He would do more abundantly for them than they could either ask or think. And as the prayer is not in reference to gifts to be given in the *eternal world*, does it not necessarily follow, that he prays for their deliverance from all sin, *inward* and *outward*, in *this life*? Can any man expect to be saved from his inward sin, in the *other world*? None, except such as hold the Popish anti-scriptural doctrine of *purgatory*. But this deliverance is expected at death.—Where is the promise that it shall *then* be given? There is not one such in the whole Bible!—and to believe for a thing essential to our glorification, without any promise to support that faith in reference to the point on which it is exercised, is a desperation that argues as well the absence of true faith, as it does of right reason. Multitudes of such

persons are continually deploring their *want of faith*, even where they have the *clearest and most explicit promises*; and yet, strange to tell, risk their salvation at the hour of death, on a deliverance that is no where promised in the Sacred Oracles! “But *who* has got this blessing?”—Every one who has come to God in the right way for it. “Where is such a one?”—Seek the blessings as you should do, and you will soon be able to answer the question. “But it is too great a blessing to be expected.”—Nothing is too great for a believer to expect, which God has *promised*, and Christ has *purchased* with his Blood. “If I had such a blessing, should not be able to retain it.”—All things are possible to him that believeth. Besides, like all other gifts of God, it comes with a principle of *preservation* with it—and upon all thy glory, there will be a defence. “Still, such an unfaithful person as I, cannot expect it.”—Perhaps the infidelity you deplore, came through the want of this blessing:—and as to *worthlessness*, no soul under heaven *deserves* even the least of God’s mercies. It is not for thy *worthiness* that He has given thee *any thing*, but for the *sake of His Son*. You can say, “When I felt myself a sinner, sinking into perdition, I did then flee to the Atoning Blood, and found pardon—but this *sanctification* is a far greater work.”—NO—speaking after the manner of men, *justification* is far greater than sanctification. When thou wert a sinner, ungodly, an enemy in thy mind by wicked works, a child of the devil, an heir of hell—God pardoned thee, on thy casting thy soul on the merit of the great Sacrificial Offering—thy sentence was reversed—thy state was changed—thou wert put among the children—and God’s Spirit witnessed with thine that thou wert His child. What a change! and what a blessing! What then is this *complete sanctification*?—It is the cleansing of the blood that *has not been cleansed*—It is washing the soul of a true believer from the *remains* of sin—It is the making one who is already a child of God, more holy, that he may be more *happy*, more useful in the world, and bring more glory to his Heavenly Father! *Great* as this work is, how little humanly speaking is it, when compared with what God has *already* done for thee! But suppose it were ten thousand times greater, is any thing too hard for God? Are not all things possible to him that believes? And does not the Blood of

*Christ* cleanse from all unrighteousness? Arise then, and be baptized with a greater effusion of the Holy Ghost, and wash away thy sin, calling on the name of the Lord.

“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.”—*Collect for the Communion Service.*

## SERMON XIV.

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### THE DIFFERENT METHODS WHICH GOD HAS USED TO BRING MEN TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIMSELF.

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PSALM *xix.* ver. 1—8.

1. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.
  2. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
  3. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.
  4. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world: in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.
  5. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man, to run a race.
  6. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.
  7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
  8. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
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It may be deemed a fortunate coincidence when those portions of Sacred Writings, which are appointed by our Church for the Sabbaths, or other solemnities of the year, are found to contain pointed reference to charitable or benevolent institutions; which were not even contemplated when our Reformers selected those portions, and assigned them their respective places in the calendar. This is the *fourth*

day of the *month* ; and the first Psalm appointed for the morning of this day, is the *ninth*, out of which I have read the preceding verses : and on this day, the annual appeal in behalf of one of the greatest of the numerous benevolent institutions of this country, (the Methodists' Missionary Society,) is appointed to be made. A Society that has for its object the *illumination* of the whole world, by sending the everlasting Gospel to every nation, and people, and kindred, and tongue—a subject predicted by the royal Psalmist, in words too plain and appropriate to be misunderstood : and which, in application to this or such like institution, was not thought of by our ancestors ; nor the appointment of this day, in reference to this Scripture, contemplated by the managers of the institution. May the coincidence be hallowed to the grand object of this Society ! and may we take encouragement from the text to proceed in this excellent work, with a steady pace and a liberal hand !

This Psalm, which is one of the most beautiful and noble compositions in this extraordinary Book, seems intended to shew the means which God employs to teach the knowledge of Himself to the whole human race, and His gracious designs towards them : and also contains a prophetic declaration of the diffusion of His Gospel over the habitable world, in these latter times ; so that the earth shall be as literally and efficiently filled with the *glorious light* and influence of the healing *rays of the Sun of Righteousness*, as it is by the *light and heat of the natural sun*.

To assert this from such a portion of Scripture, would appear hazardous and disputable, unless it could be supported by some other portion, evidently giving this direction and meaning ; and plainly shewing that such was the design of the Prophetic Spirit.

That such was the intention of the Prophet, is proved by a quotation from this Psalm, by the Apostle Paul, who, considering what God was doing in his own day, to *enlighten* both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, quotes verse 4, “ Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world,” Rom. x. 18. ; in which he evidently compares the preaching of the *Gospel of Christ* to the *SUN* shining upon the whole earth : and the *Apostles*, as the *planets* reflecting the solar

light and heat on the people who sat in darkness; conveying the spirit of life and health to those who sat in the region of the Valley of the Shadow of Death; and thus, as the *heavens declared the glory of God*, Jesus was the *light* that enlightened the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. As the *kins*—rays and influences of the heavenly bodies—went throughout the earth; and their *voice*—the testimony that their harmony, order, and usefulness, bore to the Being and benevolence of God—went to *the end of the world*; so, the *preaching* of the *Apostles* and their successors, went over the *whole land of Judea*, and to every *department* and *colony* of the *Roman Empire*. And, in the present day, Nations, of whom neither the ancient *Romans* nor the *Apostles* had ever heard, hear the glad tidings: for, to *them* it may be truly said, *Arise and be illuminated, for thy light is come*, and the *glory of the Lord* is risen upon thee. And from the Prophet in the text, and the Apostle in the quotation, we learn, that the design of God is to shed the light of His Gospel *as far* as the *sun* shoots forth his beams, and the *moon* reflects his light, till every part of the habitable globe shall have heard of the Salvation of God, by means of the *Holy Scriptures* and the *Missionaries*, whose *line* is now going forth to *all the earth*, and *their words to the end of the world*.

In order to the accomplishment of this glorious end, I shall shew that God has provided two Books. I. The Book of Nature; and, II. The Book of Revelation; that mankind may be brought to the true knowledge of Himself, and finally to eternal glory.

### I. *The Book of Nature.*

1. The Psalmist commences this sublime ode with this self-evident truth, *The heavens declare the glory of God*, and the *firmament sheweth forth His handy-work*. As the original text is very expressive, I make no apology for inserting it; מניר הרקיע אל ומעשה ידיו מניר הרקיע *ha-shamayim mesaphe-rim cabod El; u-ma'aseh yadaiv magid ha-rakiã*. “The heavens number out the glory of the strong God, and the firmament shews forth his handy-work.” *Glory*, generally means an excessive brightness of splendour; continued coruscations of light—not *flashes* like lightning, which dazzle and

confound the sight, and immediately disappear. This brightness is permanent; not only luminous in itself, but giving light to others: feeding upon no fuel, but being an essential splendour, is sustained by itself, yet appears to grow more and more luminous, because of the communication of itself to the subjects on which it shines, all of which partake of its splendours.

To this property of brightness, or, in other words, of the Divine glory, St. Paul alludes, 2 Cor. iii. 18—*For we all with unveiled face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to glory by the Lord the Spirit.* This glory diffuses glory; and the glory diffused impregnates and irradiates those on whom its rays are directed, so that they become luminous, though their light is but *borrowed and reflected.*

Thus the SUN and STARS receive their splendour from God, and the planets, and their secondaries, become luminous by the glory reflected on them by their primaries. Even a first view of the starry heavens, strikes every careful observer with astonishment at the *power* by which they were *made*, and by which they are *sustained*—when a sufficiency of science is brought to the examination of the *wisdom* and *skill* displayed in the contrivance of such a great variety of bodies of different magnitudes, affections, and motions, increasing astonishment is produced, and we are forced to exclaim, these are the works of the *strong God.*

*The firmament*—the whole visible expanse, not only containing the celestial bodies already mentioned, but also the *air, light, clouds, rains, dews, &c.*—and when the *composition* of these *principles* is examined, and their great *utility* to the earth and its inhabitants properly understood, they afford matter of amazement to the wisest mind, and of *adoration* and *gratitude* even to a comparatively unfeeling heart.—Above, we see the *strong God*; here, we see the *Author of Providence*, the *Fountain of mercy.* Every view we take of these stupendous works, adds something to our *knowledge* and *amazement*; for they continue to *number out* more and more of the glories of the Creator. They are the works of His *power*, and the works of His *skill*; His *hands* have *made* and *fashioned* them; He has given them their *weight* and *measure*, and has adapted them to their *use.*

*Day unto day uttereth speech*, יום ליום יבט אמר *yom leyom yobiâ omer*.—Each succeeding day has something to add to the knowledge gained in the preceding one, and labours to make its communication. The verb יבט *nabâ*, signifies to boil, gurgle, or bubble up, as water from a spring—and seems to be used here merely to express the difficulty there is to describe the works of God in suitable words, howsoever clear their ideas may be in the mind.

*Night unto night sheweth knowledge*, ולילה ללילה ידע ודעה *se-layelah le-layelah yechavveh daâth*—“and night clearly demonstrates knowledge (or science) unto night.” The word דעה *daâth*, not only signifies knowledge in general, but science or systematic knowledge: and דחה *chavah*, signifies not only to declare, but “to demonstrate clearly and perspicuously, without any ambiguity.”—See *Taylor*.—And it is highly worthy of remark, that while *one day* is only gurgling out a speech—some particular fact, unto another day; unto another day; the *night* is represented as bringing forward a mass of science, “clearly demonstrated without ambiguity or doubt.” How natural are these two sentences of astronomical knowledge; how little is gained by *day*—it is only a saying, a speech, that one day can add to another: but by *night*, the heavenly bodies are all visible—their phases, motions, relative situations, southings, and settings, are all clearly distinguishable. And thus, while *day* teaches a fact, *night* produced a mass of science. To nocturnal observations, we owe almost the whole of our astronomical science.

Verse 3. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Leave out the expletives here, and our translation is a tolerably correct rendering,—אין אמר ואין דברים, *ein omer, ve-ein debarim beli nishmâ kolom*,—“No speech, and no words, their voice without hearing;” אין אמר ואין דברים, *u-bekitsêh tebel milleyhem*—“Into all the earth, hath gone out their sound: and to the extremity of the habitable world, their eloquence.” The sense is well given by *Bishop Horne*, “Although the heavens are thus appointed to teach, yet it is not by articulate sounds that they do it. They are not endowed like man, with the faculty of speech; but they address themselves to the mind of the intelligent beholder in another way: and that, when understood, a no less forcible way; the



way of picture or representation. The instruction which the heavens spread abroad, is as universal as their substance which spreads itself in *lines* or *rays* : by this means, their *words*, or rather their *significant actions* or operations, מליהם *millehem*, are every where present : and thereby they preach to all nations, the *power*, the *mercy*, and the *loving kindness of the Lord*."

The word ק *kav*, which we translate *line*, is rendered *sonus*, by the *Vulgate*, and φθογγος, *sound*, by the *Septuagint*, and St. Paul uses the same term, Rom. x. 18. Perhaps the idea is taken here from a *stretched cord*, that emits a sound on being struck or twitched ; and, therefore, both the ideas may be included in the same word ; and hence ק *kavam*, may be either *their line* or *cord*, or their *sound*. In them hath He set a tabernacle for the sun, מלכהם שם אהל בהם *le-shemesh, sam ohel ba-hem*. The *Septuagint*, (and all the ancient versions, the *Chaldee* excepted,) have translated the passage thus :—εν τῷ ἡλίῳ εθετο σκηνωμα αυτου—In the sun He hath placed His tabernacle : though erroneous, this version has much force. As the sun is the most splendid and glorious of all the celestial bodies, it was supposed, and even by some of the best of men, that if the Supreme Being had any *local habitation*, it must be in the sun. There His presence was supposed to be manifested by *excessive glory* or *brightness*.—There, He held His court—and from that residence, He sent forth His *light* and *heat* to all the parts and inhabitants of the earth. Nor could such persons put the *residence* for the *resident*—(though others in ancient times had done so)—but as often as they saw the sun going forth in his strength, they would naturally lift up their hearts to Him that thus dwelt in *light unapproachable* ; and magnify Him, as well for the influences of His *power* and *goodness* in the natural world, as for those of His *grace* on the souls of men. Even in our own times, a sensible and learned man has supposed the sun to be the *seat of the blessed*. But our version strictly follows the Hebrew ; and the thought conveyed by it, is philosophically beautiful. We know, by incontrovertible evidence, that the sun is in the *centre* of what is called the *solar system*—about Him, all the planets and their secondaries revolve ; and all have their motion, light, and heat, from Him. In ancient times, it was supposed that the *earth* was the *centre*, and that

the whole heavens were whirled about it every twenty-four hours! Had it been so, we might have expected to see *ohel le-arets*, a tabernacle for the earth, instead of *ohel le-shemesh*, a tabernacle for the sun; but the Hebrew shews that the sun has his tabernacle; his fixed central position among them, that is, among the heavenly bodies; and this is not said of any other body in the whole system. The author of the Psalm might not have been aware of the philosophical precision with which he spoke; but God, who inspired the words, knew His own meaning; and this, as it must be, is beautiful and correct. What is said after, when comparing the sun to a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, refers to his apparent rising in the East, and proceeding along the heavens with increasing splendour and heat; and is a metaphor taken from that part of a Jewish matrimonial ceremony, where a canopy or veil is raised on four poles, which four persons hold over the bridegroom's head, and from under which he comes with his splendid and ornamental vestments. To these ornamental garments the sun is compared, because of the glory and splendour of his rays; and to a giant or strong man running a race, because of the power of his light and heat. Even Sir Isaac Newton speaks of the rising and setting of the sun, though these are only appearances, for the sun never rises nor sets—he has his tabernacle, his fixed dwelling among the heavenly host:—like a general in his pavilion, surrounded by his officers and troops: for the appearance of rising and setting is occasioned by the diurnal revolution of the earth on its own axis, from west to east.

Ver. 6. *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*—This is spoken either of the apparent motion of the sun from east to west—(for he appears to rise in the former, and set in the latter, which, as we have seen before, is occasioned by the diurnal revolution of the earth round its own axis, from west to east, which causes the sun to appear as if he were going the contrary way, i. e. from east to west:)—or the first clause may refer to this, and the second, most probably, to the earth's annual motion in its orbit or course between the tropics, on which the vicissitudes of all our seasons depend, and by which the necessary proportion of light and heat is dispensed to all the inhabitants of the earth, from

the *tropic of Cancer* to the *tropic of Capricorn*. His going forth is from the end of the heaven—from the east to the west, forming the *natural day*; as his circuit—his annual revolution in its orbit round the sun, is unto the ends of it—from tropic to tropic, so that there is nothing hidden from the heat thereof:—every part, from the *arctic* to the *antarctic* circle, having that proportion of *light* and *heat* which the nature of the soil and the necessity of the *inhabitants* require. Should it be said, there is a less proportion of light and heat towards the *poles* than on other parts of the earth's surface; if so, the reason is plain—*less is required*. Within the whole *antarctic* circle not a foot of land is known to exist; and as to the inhabitants within the *arctic circle*, and they are very few, it has never yet been known that their *long days* have not amply compensated for their *short ones*; nor has it been heard that the *fruits* which grow in those regions, have not had *light* and *heat* sufficient to mature them. For, even in those regions, as well as in others, it may be justly said, as in the text, *there is nothing that has been hidden from the heat thereof*. God's power has lighted up the sun in the firmament of heaven; God's *providence* has dispensed his *light* and *heat* in their just proportions, and *divided* the influences of the celestial bodies to *all the nations under heaven*; and His *mercy* "makes His sun to rise on the *evil* and the *good*; and sends *rain* on the just and on the unjust."

This is the *BOOK OF NATURE*, which God has opened before the eyes of all men; filled with characters the most legible and intelligible, formed out of the alphabet of a *universal language*, which all the inhabitants of the earth can read; and thus, the *invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*, even His *eternal power and Godhead*: so that they who have not profited by this book, are without excuse. Rom. i. 20.

## II. *The Book of Revelation.*

The Psalmist having shewn what God has done in *nature*, in order to give to all men correct ideas of His *eternal power and Godhead*, now proceeds to state, that He has added to the above a *direct revelation of His will*, containing a more perfect description of the *DIVINE NATURE*, particularly in refe-

rence to His *justice* and *mercy*; and of MAN, in his fallen state;—what He requires him to *know*, that he may become *wise unto salvation*; and what is necessary to be done for him, and *in* him, that he might be saved from his sins, and become an heir of eternal glory.

I. He has given him His LAW;—characterized as being *perfect*: the use of which is, to become the instrument of *converting* and *restoring* the soul. In this we must consider the following points:—

1st. It is a LAW: תּוֹרָה *thorah*, from יָרָא *yarah*, to *instruct*, *direct*, put *strait*, and to *guide*. 1. Man is *ignorant* and must be *instructed*; *general instructions* will not be sufficient, therefore he must receive the most *particular directions*. 2. His *paths* are all *crooked*, and his mind is *crooked*, therefore he must be *set strait*. 3. He can never go on *by himself*, and therefore must be *guided* in the way.

2. This Law is the *Book of Divine Revelation*, contained in the *Old* and *New Testaments*; as *created things* are the *book of nature*:—the things which God has made to make Himself known by. This *second book* or *law* of God is a code of *instruction*, in which God makes Himself known in the *holiness* and *justice* of His nature, His displacement at sin, and His love of righteousness;—as also to manifest Himself in the magnitude of His *mercy*, and readiness to save. In a word, it is God's system of *instruction*, by which men are *taught* the knowledge of their Creator and of themselves—*directed* how to walk so as to please God—*redeemed* from *crooked paths*—and *guided* in the way that leads to everlasting life. This is what those who know it best have in all ages and countries agreed to call the Bible, Βίβλος or Βιβλία—the book or the books—The Book, by way of eminence—the book made by God:—the only book that is without blemish or error—the book that contains the TRUTH, the *whole* TRUTH, and nothing but the TRUTH. That without which we should have known *little* about God, less concerning ourselves, and *nothing* about heaven, the resurrection, or a future state. The book that contains the greatest mass of learning ever put together—the book from which all the sages of antiquity have directly or indirectly derived their knowledge:—by means of which the nations who have studied it most, and known it best, have formed the wisest code of laws, and have become the

wisest and the most powerful nations of the earth. This LAW is described here by a variety of names. It is not only GOD'S LAW, but it is GOD'S TESTIMONY—HIS STATUTES—HIS COMMANDMENT—HIS FEAR, or that which teaches reverence to Him, and the proper manner of His worship—and His JUDGMENTS : for all these are parts or characteristics of what is here called, THE LAW OF JEHOVAH.

Some of the ancients, those called *primitive fathers*, thought that God had a *threefold LAW* : or, that He had given *three laws* to mankind :—

1. The *law* of NATURE, which teaches the knowledge of God, as to His eternal power and deity, by the visible creation.

2. The WRITTEN *law*, or code of laws given to Moses and the prophets, which teaches more perfectly the knowledge of God, His nature, His will, and our duty.

3. The *law* of GRACE or mercy, given by Jesus Christ, which teaches the necessity of an atonement, and shews in what that atonement consists ; the sanctification of the soul ; the resurrection of the body ; and, clearly, the future condition of all human beings, in an eternal state of misery or blessedness, according to the use or abuse they have made of the mercy of their Redeemer.

The first of these laws was written in hieroglyphics in the earth and the visible heavens.

The second was written on tables of stone, on Mount Sinai.

The third is to be written on the heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The three laws all emanate from the same source, and are given for the same end. They are three distinct ways by which God has chosen, in three distinct times, to make Himself known to mankind. They have also been termed, three Dispensations ;—*i. e.* of mercy and justice ; each having its peculiar excellence, and its peculiar mode of teaching the same subject ;—*i. e.* the knowledge of the true God ; in reference to the same end, *viz.* the edification and salvation of man.

Now, God has at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoken in times past unto the Fathers—the first inhabitants of the earth ; and from them downward, to the time in which He sealed up vision and prophecy in the days of the Messiah. And, it is worthy of remark, that each of these laws, or dis-

pensations, in their successive order, discovered an increasing depth in the matter of instruction which they contained.— They held out an increasing light, which shone more and more to the perfect day. They might be compared to the morning star—the rising sun—and the sun in his meridian height, strength, and glory.

1. The Law of Nature was calculated to instruct man in his primitive, uncultivated state; it contained but few ideas, and taught a few original important truths, and those principally relating to the existence, power, wisdom, and providence of that Being, who was the Cause and Creator of all things; and, consequently, the adoration due to Him as such. Thus it was calculated to prevent idolatry of all kinds.

2. The Law which was written and delivered to Moses, and by him to the people called Israelites and Jews, while it contained the same truths as that above, gave greater evidence concerning each; and added a great variety of important instructions relative to the most essential attributes of God, especially His holiness, justice, and truth—His power in supporting, and His providence in preserving. It taught also what *sin* is, and the evil of it;—the happiness and safety of the righteous;—and shewed, by a great variety of significant rites and ceremonies, that a dispensation of law and justice was, in the fulness of time, to be introduced, that would fulfil the design, and perfect the teaching of all that had gone before, and proclaim and exhibit God in the plenitude of His excellency, especially in the splendour of His justice, and the bright effulgence of His mercy.

3. The Law of Grace or mercy, given to man by Jesus, the Christ, or promised Messiah—including all that the preceding laws, or dispensations, taught concerning the Being and attributes of God—pointing out more precisely the reference and intention of all rites and ceremonies contained in the preceding law; and, especially, what was designed by its sacrificial system—shewed the fulfilment of all the declarations of the Prophets—opened a new communication between heaven and earth by the Holy Spirit—added exceeding great and precious promises of peace, happiness, and salvation, to all them that believe—introduced in its fulness that most important doctrine of the One only and sufficient Atoning Sacrifice for sin, which Himself was to make by His death upon the cross,

and its grand consequence, (not before discovered,) justification by faith, (without the deeds of the law,) or pardon of sin through believing in Christ as having died for the offences of man, and risen again for his justification. For, as all had sinned and had come short of God's glory, so none was capable of making an atonement for his own transgressions; nor, by any merit or moral obedience, could buy off his own soul from the curse pronounced upon it by that just and holy law which he had broken; that, therefore, if the mercy of God were intended finally to triumph over the requisitions of justice, it was necessary that the promised Messiah, the Almighty's Fellow, should assume the nature of man, suffer in his stead, and thus give the Divine Justice a sufficient reason why, consistently with all its just requisitions, mercy might flow in a perennial stream from the throne of God—glory to all that were partakers of that nature which the Messiah had assumed, to the last human family that should be found upon the face of the earth, till the voice of the archangel should be heard, and the blast of the last trumpet should summon the living and the dead to appear before the bar of God, each to receive according to the deeds done in the body. As in this law of grace, Christ promises to restore true believers to the favour of God, by blotting out their sins; and to the full image of God, by purifying their souls from all unrighteousness; and, as He promises the utmost perfection of which they are capable in this life, so that they shall have Himself dwelling in their hearts by faith, be rooted and grounded in love, and be filled with all the fulness of God:—as all these things are so, we cannot expect a fourth law or dispensation. All the laws preceding the manifestation of the Messiah, were evidently imperfect; *i. e.* did not contain a full revelation of God's will in reference to man; so it was necessarily implied that they were only the forerunners which were to prepare the way for others which should give more ample information concerning God and the salvation intended for man. Man needs no more—nor is the human soul capable of receiving more than God has promised to bestow in this life: so, the *gospel days* are emphatically termed, *The last times*.

Now, we see clearly that the *law of nature* was introductory to, and prepared men for, the *law of Moses*: the *law of Moses* was introductory to, and prepared the way for, the *law*

of *Christ*, or the Gospel dispensation : and the *Gospel dispensation* is introductory to, and prepares true believers for, the state of *eternal beatification and glory*.

We have now before us, the various *means* which God has used from the commencement of the world, to *instruct* man : and were we to begin the instruction of any nation in its *rudest* and most *heathen* state, it is not probable that we could invent a more effectual, and gradually illuminating mode of instruction, than that laid down in the above *three laws*, or dispensations of God's power, wisdom and grace towards man.

Were I, as a missionary, now to begin my ministerial labours among the stupid Hurons of North America,—the Samoeids of the northern Frozen Ocean,—the Namaquas of Southern Africa,—the Esquimaux of Labrador,—or Aborigines of New Holland ;—I would proceed with them in the very manner that God has given His laws and dispensations to the human race.

1. By *day*, I would call their attention to the *sun* in the firmament of heaven ; by *night*, to the *moon*, the *planets*, and the *stars*. I would endeavour to tell them *what* they are, *where* they are, *what* their *use* is, and *what* we may *learn* from them. In substance I would thus address them ;—“ You feel that the *sun* gives you *light* and *warmth* by day, and when your days are longest, and the sun brightest and warmest, then the grass, and the yams, and the various things on which you feed, grow most plenteously. *Whence* did these things come ? Did they make themselves ? Can any thing make itself ? Can a thing begin to work before it has any being ?—You see this vessel, I turn it upside down ?—Is there any thing in it ? ‘No, there is nothing.’—Could then this *nothing*, this *emptiness*, build that *hut* ?—Make that *rock* ?—Produce this *great tree* ? You see, you know that it could not.—It has neither *eyes*, nor *feet*, nor *hands*, nor *instruments* of any kind—nor is it *any thing* that you can *touch*, or *see*, or even *think* of ; for it has *no being* ; it does not exist—it is *nothing*—consequently it has made *nothing*, and *can* make *nothing*. Then do you think that the sun, the moon, the stars, &c., have *made themselves* ?—They can no more make *themselves*, than the *nothing* in this vessel can make your *hut*, yon *rock*, or that *large tree* ! Who made the *hut* ; why *yourself*, for it could not make it itself. Then,



who made the *sun*, the *moon*, the *stars*, the *earth*, and *all things*? For the reason already shewn you, *they could not make themselves*. 'We do not know who or what made them, nor any thing else:—' 'Do you know?' Yes. It was that *Being* that we *worship*—that we *pray* to—and to whom we sing those hymns, with the sound of which you seem so pleased.—We call Him God. This word in our language signifies the *Good Being*. This Being is so *strong*, that He could take up the whole earth, with all its seas, and rivers, and islands. He could dash them all to pieces, and in the same moment, make them as they were before, or make them in any other shape, or put them in any other place. He is also very *wise*;—He *knows* every thing; and can *teach* you to know any thing that might do you good. You think that *we* know much more than you. It is so; and it is so, because we *know this God*, and we *pray* to Him, and He teaches us:—He makes our *hearts* wise and our *heads* wise. We see also that He is *very good*;—He made the *sun* to give us *light* and *heat*, and to make our crops grow in the ground; and He made the moon and the stars to give light by night; and the earth to provide us with food. So, from the *sun*, and the *moon*, and the *stars*, and the *earth*, and other wonderful things which we see, none of which *could make themselves*, we have first learnt, that a *strong* Being, a *wise* Being, and a *good* Being, could alone make all these things; and as we see that *He made them for our use*, and for our *advantage*, we then know that He must *love* us; and we feel from that, that *we should love Him*. Now, if we love Him, we know that we should not do any thing that would offend Him. We should not do any thing that is *bad*, for that would offend the *good* Being. We should not do any thing that is *foolish*, that would grieve this *wise* Being. We should not use our *strength* to hurt one another, to oppress each other, to strike, to kill or destroy our friends, our neighbours, or any one else, for thus, the *strong* Being never employs His strength; and what strength we have, He *gave it to us*, for He *made us*: it would grieve Him if we should do *wrong* to one another. 'But where is this strong, wise and good Being?' 'We never saw Him.' We answer, He is every where—He sees every thing, because He is *every where*—He fills *all things* and *places*. But He has not a *body* like us—He is

a *spirit*:—now a *spirit* is that which *knows, thinks, and works*, without using *any bodily* form. ‘Then, if He have no *body*, and we cannot see Him, how can we know that there is such a Being?’ I answer, Look at that *grass*; what makes it *wave*?—look at that *tree*; what makes its *leaves and branches shake*?—look at the *clouds*; what makes them move along the sky? ‘We tell you, it is the *wind* that does these things.’ Well then, can you *see the wind*? Have you ever *seen it*? Have you ever heard that any of your forefathers have seen it? ‘No.’ Then you see that *something may exist and work* which you *cannot see*. Have you not seen that this wind blows down your *houses, tears up great trees* from their roots, raises up the *waves of the sea*, that they appear to touch the clouds? Yet you have never *seen it*; but you see from its effects that it can do wonderful things—terrible things! Now, our God made that very *wind*. He cannot be seen, because He is a *spirit*;—it cannot be seen, because it is *thin air*. But though you cannot *see the wind*, you may *feel it*; it blows upon your bodies, it blows your garments about, it has sometimes no doubt blown you off your feet, and its cool breeze has often refreshed you when weary. Thus you know by *feeling* it that it exists. So you might feel our God, though you cannot see Him. Have you ever felt any *good desire*? Have you felt *grieved* with yourselves when you did some *wicked thing*? ‘Yes, we have.’ Well; it was God that gave you that *feeling*:—and were you to *pray* to Him, suppose thus:—‘O thou *strong* Being, I am weak in my heart, and cannot do the things that are right, be thou pleased to give me *strength*!—O thou *wise* Being, I am very *ignorant* and very *foolish*, wilt thou be pleased to give me *wisdom* that I may know what is right!—O thou *good* Being, I have a *bad heart* and do many bad things, oh, take away my *bad heart*, and give me a *good heart*.’ Now, I say, this God who is *here*, for, he is *every where*, and hears what I teach you, will hear your prayer, and give you to *feel* that He *strengthens* you:—He will *teach* you, and you will *feel* that you grow *wise*:—He will take away your *bad heart*, and give you to *feel* that He has given you a *good one*. And you will *feel* His *inward working*, so powerfully, that you shall be as sure that He *exists*, and that He *loves and works* in you, as if you could see Him with your *eyes*, and *feel* Him with your *hands*.

And you will be soon able (when I have given you more instruction from a Book that we Christians have, which was given to us by this God) to call Him *your Father*, as your son can call you *his father*."

Thus far I could, as a missionary, go with the rudest savages, teaching them from the *law* or *book of nature* that there is a *Being* who has *made all things*; and that He is *strong*, and *wise*, and *good*:—that He may be *felt*, though not *seen*:—that men should *pray* to Him for *power*, and *wisdom*, and *goodness*, and that He will *hear* them, and grant their requests. But this plan of teaching the rude and uncultivated, may be almost *endlessly* varied—every thing around us, offering new arguments, and new modes of illustration.

2. Having prepared the minds of my heathen auditory by such plain arguments and illustrations as were necessary to give them some notion of a *First Cause*—to point out to them the Almighty, Omniscient, and Infinitely good Being, and the necessity of *knowing*, *loving*, and *serving* Him; the SECOND LAW, or mode of discovery which God has made of Himself to mankind, should be introduced: and in such circumstances as those mentioned above, I would introduce this subject after the following manner.

"I have already shewn you, that the being which we call God, was before all things—and that the heaven and the earth were made by Him: that *no-thing*, *no-being*, could make *itself*; and that *this* Being, has made all things by His *wisdom* and *power*; and that he made them for the *use* and *good* of mankind; which is a proof that He *loves* man, and is always disposed to make him *wise*, and *good*, and *happy*; and, therefore, *we should love Him*, and do nothing that might displease Him. But in order to *know* Him fully, for our happiness, He has given us a *Book*, that teaches, how He has *made* all things; *how* He *governs* them, *what* He would have us to *know*; and also gives us an account of what He *hates*, and we should *not do*; and of what He *loves*, and what we should perform. This *Book* teaches us that all men came from *one father* and *mother*, whom this God formed out of the ground, and made them with very *good hearts*, without any *evil thought* or *bad passion*—it tells us also, how man *lost* his *good heart*, by *doing* what this God told him *not to do*; and that misery, woe, and death, came in consequence, into the world. Now, the

accounts that we have in *this Book*, we know to be *true*, for they tell us what we know and feel to be true ; for the descriptions that are given, answer exactly to the things themselves—and these things we could not have found out, had we not been taught them by *this Book* ; and no people in the world, that have not *this Book*, know these things—for instance, *you* do not know them, because you have not *this Book* ; and all the men in the world were in the same state of ignorance, as you are now, before God gave *this Book*. And God, *this good Being*, pitying the state of man, through the great love that He bears to him, spoke all the words contained in *this Book*, in the hearts of men which He had *made good*, that they might receive and remember these good things : and He caused them to *write* them down in a *Book*, that they might copy them into other books, and thus hand them down from father to son, as long as that sun shall shine by day, and the moon and stars give light by night. Now, I will *read* to you the account that God gives us in *this Book* ;—how He made the *heavens* above, and the *earth* below—how He made the *sun*, the *moon*, the *stars*, the *trees*, the *grass*, the *fish*, the *fowls*, the *beasts* ; and how he made *men* and *women*. Now, listen attentively, and you will hear a most beautiful account—and if any thing you hear me read, does not appear sufficiently plain to you, when I stop, ask me, and I will explain it fully.”—Here, then, I would read a part of the first chapter of *Genesis*, and, at successive opportunities, the *whole* ; with the account of the temptation and fall of man. I would give also the history of the *people* to whom God originally gave those Scriptures—of the Israelites in their *origin*—in their slavery in Egypt—their Exodus—miraculous support in their travels, and their settlement in the *Promised Land*. When all this was done, I would proceed in some such way as this :—“ Now, as God loves man, (for I would take care to have the *love of God to man*, as the foundation and cause of all His acts towards the whole human race,) and He saw that he was become so very *ignorant* and *wicked*, that he had no proper knowledge of *good* and *evil* left ; God tells him in *this Book*, what he *should do*, and what he *should not do* : and that all might easily learn and remember these things, he divides them into *ten Commandments*, or Divine orders, telling each what he should perform, and what he should leave un-

done." Here the *Decalogue* should come in—every precept be explained at large, shewing at the same time, the reasonableness, necessity, and usefulness of each part, and of the whole. Having completed this part of my plan of instruction, I would proceed to the account of *sacrifices*, and endeavour to explain their *nature*, their *reference to sin*, in order to shew what each sin *deserved*, (*viz.* death)—and shew that the same God who prescribed them, had told the people that they were insufficient of *themselves* to take away the guilt of sin : and that they were intended to *point out a glorious Being*, infinitely pure, spiritual, and good ; who was to come from heaven to earth, and become a *man*, like to one of ourselves, though in that *pure and spiritual nature*, which dwelt in that man, he had infinite power, wisdom, and goodness ; and was Himself to become a *true sacrifice*, by *dying* for the sins of mankind—and that God had revealed this great design, *many hundreds* of years before it took place, to holy men who were commanded to *write* what God had declared on this subject, in the same Book : and then, the various promises concerning the *Advent of Christ*, should be *read and explained* ; and care should be taken to shew that these prophecies were delivered several hundreds of years before any such events as were foretold in them, had taken place. I would also shew strongly the necessity of such a sacrifice as that promised, 1st. To *blot out the sins* that were past. 2. To *procure grace*, or Divine help, by which we might live a holy life. 3. To *purify the heart and mind* from all *badness or sinfulness* ; and thus to prepare the soul for, and finally bring it into an everlasting state of happiness with the good God, in the kingdom of heaven.

3. Having added line upon line, and precept upon precept, on these subjects, then I would introduce

The *THIRD Law*, or *Revelation of God's will* to mankind, the *Gospel dispensation*—shew that, exactly at the time which the Prophets referred to, Jesus Christ came into the world, and appeared as *Man* among men—but the wisdom of His words, and His wonderful miracles, (which should be carefully detailed,) proved that, in that *Man*, dwelt an *infinite power and goodness*—that according to the *Prophecies*, long before delivered, He permitted Himself to be *nailed to a cross*, on which He *expired* ; and that, in three days, He raised up that slain

Body from the dead—lived and conversed with his friends for many days—and then in the sight of several, went up into heaven, having given commandment to His Disciples, (persons whom He had before instructed,) to go into all the world, and preach the *good news* of what He had done and suffered, to every man:—and that all who should hear these things, and believe on Him, as thus having lived, suffered, died, risen again, and gone up into heaven, to pray and plead for them, should receive the *forgiveness of all their sins*, and that *purification of heart*, promised by the Prophets, so that when they should die, their *souls* should go straight to heaven, a state of indescribable happiness; and that at no great distance of time, even their *bodies* should be raised from their *graves*, and never feel sickness, or pain, and never die more. And, it is in consequence of His command, that we are come so many thousands of miles over great oceans, to preach to and teach you, that you may be made happy.

I have said that the plan of preaching to the heathen, which I here propose, is sanctioned by the manner in which God exhibits those works by which He makes His eternal power and godhead known to the world.

*Prophets and Apostles* have followed the same plan. When writing to the heathens in Babylon, *Jeremiah* not only uses their own *language*, but also this same *manner* of teaching: *The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.* Jer. x. 11.—See the first Discourse in this Volume.

See the great Apostle Paul:—when he addresses the *Jews*, he quotes the *Law* and the *Prophets*, and his appeals to their *Scriptures* are incessant—and out of the *law* and the *prophets*, the divine authority of which *they allowed*, he shews their wickedness in rejecting the *Gospel*, which *Moses* and the *Prophets* foretold.

But view him *writing* to *heathens*, or *preaching* to a *heathen audience*, and what do you hear?—the finest appeals to the *Book of Nature*, to prove the *being*, *providence*, *justice*, *wisdom*, and *goodness* of Him who made the heavens and the earth. Hear him at *Lystra*, where all were *heathens* and *idolaters*, and took him and his companions for gods, and were about to offer them sacrifices, Acts xiv. 15—27. “Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions

(feelings and constitution) with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:"—“He hath not left Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” No appeal to *Scripture* here, and why, because they neither acknowledged it, nor knew any thing of it.

Hear him preaching at the *Arcopagus*, to the *Athenian magistrates*:—he does not begin to announce Christ and redemption through His Blood;—if he had done so, he must have lost his labour—they did not believe in the Supreme God—for they did not know Him: to know the *true God*, is the first *principle of true religion*;—taking advantage of the inscription on one of their altars, *To the Unknown God*, he commences with, “Him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, *For we are also His offspring*. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device,” &c. Acts xvii. 22—29. To such a people, *Moses* and the *Prophets* would have had no authority; but a *Greek poet* of their own, *Aratus*, had; and, therefore, he quotes *him*, and argues on the quotation—*We are His offspring*—If so, then the Godhead is not like unto gold, silver, stone, &c.

And so nicely does this chief Apostle discriminate, that when He addresses *Felix*, half a *heathen* and half a *Jew*, he does not dwell on *either* system, but refers to *both*. The *resurrection* of the dead was generally credited among the *Jews*, all believing it, except the *Sadducees*. This he mentions in his defence before *Felix*: and then, as was the prac-

tice of the *Ethic philosophers*, he “reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come,” Acts xiv. 21—25; referring to *both systems*, as far as they were likely to bear on the understanding and conscience of this demi-heathen. They who do not follow such a plan in preaching to the heathen, but rush in upon them with the *mysteries of Christianity*, before they are convinced that there is a God who has created all things, though they thus “cast their bread upon the waters,” are not likely to find it, even after many days.

I need add no more relative to what might be said in the endlessly extended teaching of this *third law*: no direction can be needed on this point: and I introduce this method of instruction, to show that in preaching to the *heathen*, we should *begin* with the *simplest truths*, and rise by degrees to the most *sublime*, one degree of knowledge preparing the way for another: and thus we should copy the method which God has used in the communication of His will to mankind, as has been before observed, (p. 262 :) the *patriarchal dispensation* making way for the *Mosaic*: the *Mosaic* preparing for the *Christian* dispensation; and the *Christian* dispensation making way and preparing for the heaven of heavens in all its glories.

It is absurd to commence the instruction of heathens by the preaching of the *sublime doctrines* and *mysteries* of Christianity. We never set our children to read MILTON'S *Paradise Lost* before they have learnt the ALPHABET; and how to write and compound the LETTERS into SYLLABLES; the SYLLABLES into WORDS; the WORDS into SENTENCES; and the SENTENCES into *regular DISCOURSE*.

But it is time to return to my *Christian congregation*, from a long digression, which has led me away to a heathen auditory in the ends of the earth.

1. The grand characteristics of that revelation of God, called here *The Law of Jehovah*, (or, as the Margin translates, *The Doctrine of the Lord*;) we have already seen; and what the word here used signifies; (see p. 259 :) it is God's system of *instruction*, and of it the Psalmist says, *it is perfect*: תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה *torath Yehovah temimah*—“The law or doctrine of Jehovah is perfection.” The revelation that God has given of Himself to man is a *perfect system of instruction*. It reveals no more than we ought to know; it keeps nothing back that would be profitable. It gives us a proper view of



the nature and authority of the *Law-giver*. It shews the *right* He has to govern us. This right He derives from being our Creator, our Preserver, and incessant Benefactor. He has *made* us, and therefore we are *His*: "We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." All well constituted and wisely enacted laws are for the *benefit of the subjects*. This is emphatically the case with the law of God. He needs not our allegiance—He wants not our *tribute*. He is infinitely perfect, and needs nothing that we can bring. There was the utmost necessity for this law:—He that is without law is without *reason* and *rule*. He has no line to walk by—nothing to teach, restrain, or correct him. He is led astray by his passions, and lives to his own ruin and destruction. God in His mercy has given him a law to *bind*, to *instruct*, and to *lead* him. In this law He has shewn man at once his *duty* and his *interest*; and by it He has shewn him his own *weakness* and *sinfulness*; and the necessity of receiving mercy from his Creator, because he has *broken* it, and cannot *repair* the *breaches* he has made; and the need he has of *continual help* from his God, that he may be able to walk in conformity to that moral law, not only in all his outward deportment, but also in all the workings of his understanding, judgement, will, and affections. All these things are included in the *letter* and *meaning* of the *perfect law* of the Lord. By it is the *knowledge of sin*; and by it is shewn the *absolute necessity of a Saviour*. It shews also the nature and *demerit* of *crimes*, and declares and appoints the *punishment*.

It is PERFECTION—it is *perfect in all its parts*:—and when we take the word in the whole extent of its meaning, it includes the instructions of the *new law*;—it gives testimony to Him, *by whom is preached unto us the forgiveness of sin; and by whom we are to be freely justified from all things, from which we could not be justified, (pardoned and saved,) by the law of Moses.*

2. It is therefore said of this Law, not only that it is *perfect*, but it CONVERTS the soul: מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ *meshibath nephesh*—*convert*ing (or, as the margin, *restoring*) the soul. The soul of man has been *perverted*—turned from God to SIN and DEATH. It is to be *converted*—turned FROM sin and death TO God and life eternal. It has *fallen* into sin, misery, and ruin; and is to be *restored* to holiness, happiness, and endless

salvation. *The law, (or, as the margin has it, the doctrine of the Lord,) received as coming from Himself, and under the influences of His own Spirit, turns the soul back (shews the method of reconciliation) to God; and how it is to be restored from its ruined state, built up as at the beginning, and made a habitation of God through the Spirit. Thus the soul is converted to Him, and restored by Him. And the doctrine of the Lord is the grand means that He uses and will bless to the conversion and restoration of the souls of both Jews and Gentiles;—of practical heathens and nominal Christians.*

3. It is immediately added, ver. 7. *The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: עדות יהוה נאמנה כחכמים פתי* *éduth Jehovah neeminah, mechocimat peti.* The word *עדות* *éduth*, which we translate *testimony*, from *עד* *ád*, on, beyond, forward, signifies a *reference* to something *beyond itself*—to *time forward*; and may here be referred to *typical things*;—to such as gave *testimony* to things to come, as things, of which the present were *representatives*. These may include *all the types* by which the great Saviour of the world was prefigured,—His glorious dignity—His incarnation, preaching, miracles, passion, death, resurrection—the preaching of the Apostles and their successors, and the *glory* that should follow in the establishment of the Christian church; and the diffusion of the knowledge of God over all the nations of the world by the dissemination of the word of truth, and by the teaching of the many, now called *missionaries*, who run to and fro, and by whom knowledge is increased. There is not one of these points that is not mentioned in the BIBLE, either in the *direct words of prophecy*, or by the *testimonies*, the *types*, and *representatives* of future glorious things mentioned above.

4. It is said of these *testimonies*, that *they are sure or true*. Yes, we may say with David, *true from the beginning to the end*. Every *type* has been illustrated and fulfilled by the *antitype*. There is not one *testimony* in the Bible, relative to Christ, that has not been fulfilled in Him. Very trifling circumstances, apparently, have been predicted, or typically represented; and these very circumstances have been fulfilled with the *utmost exactitude*. The *truth* of God's word is not seen more in any thing than in the fulfilment of circumstances, which from their nature would appear to be wholly

*fortuitous*. Among these, the betraying of Christ by one of His disciples,—the selling Him for a certain sum of silver,—His scourging,—nailing to the cross,—the piercing of His side with a spear,—the not breaking His legs, which was a *coup de grace* to all that were crucified,—the laying His body in the tomb of a rich man, &c.—are circumstances of this kind, worthy of the most attentive regard. These were all *sure*, true, and fixed,—and were fulfilled to the utmost precision. But we cannot wait now to point out distinctly those *testimonies*, shew their *references*, and mark their *fulfilment*.

5. The *operation* of these *testimonies*, and their *use*, are next mentioned. *They make wise the simple*. The term *simple*, which is borrowed from the Latin, *simplex*, is a metaphor taken from a *cord* or *thread* formed of one *strand*, as *spun from the wheel*: and is opposed to the word *complex*, which signifies *many* of such *strands twisted together*, in order to make a *rope* or *cable*. Applied to *man*, it signifies one who has no *double views*,—no *duplicity*, or *sinister modes of acting*;—one who is as he appears to be. One who *aims at the best thing*, and *pursues* it by the best, most *legal*, and *simplest means*. In a *theological* sense, it means one who has nothing in view but the *glory of God* in the *salvation of his soul*. This he is ever seeking, in all his reading, hearing, working, and thinking. This *one thing* he does, forgetting what is behind, he presses forward to the prize of his high calling. Such a person is *ever learning* wisdom, from every portion of the Divine Testimonies:—when he looks into the *Old Testament*, he sees many things that speak of the Christ that *was to come*, and he is greatly edified. When he consults the *New Testament*, he reads much of the Christ that *is come*, and of the *glory* that has *followed*; and each reading increases his knowledge and wisdom.

The word *pro peti*, from *pro patah*, signifies one easily *drawn aside*, or *persuaded* to any thing, whether *good* or *bad*, and sometimes it means what we call a *simpleton*, one easily drawn aside, which amounts to the definition already given:—and it is very remarkable, what an influence the word and Spirit of God, have upon such persons. I have known many cases of this kind—persons who appeared to have *little sense*, and *little understanding*, till the light of the word and Spirit shone into their minds—their intellect, in consequence, became

highly improved, and they drank in knowledge, as the thirsty land does the showers from the clouds—and though before *easily warped*, and *turned aside*, even from good, became as steady as steel, and never turned to the right hand or to the left from following their God!—In their case, I saw two Scriptures fulfilled, that in the *Text*, viz. *the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple—and the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein*; *Isai. xxxv. 8*. These could say, *we know that the Son of God is come, and he hath given us an understanding, that we might know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true:—this is the true God and Eternal Life*; *1 John v. 20*.

Some say, “Civilize the heathen, and then teach them Christianity.” Civilization never was the medium of conveying Christianity: but Christianity invariably brings civilization in its train. Teach them to *know God* first, and they directly feel from this knowledge, that they should *cease to do evil*, and *learn to do well*. The bare idea of God impresses this upon their hearts, and then they feel the necessity of avoiding indolence, intemperance, and disorderly passions, and hence civilization. I have preached to heathens, and to the uncircumcised and the unclean; and I never gained an inch of ground by previous lessons of *domestic economy*, &c. I have known this *plan* tried upon a large scale, *i. e.* civilizing in order to Christianize, and it totally failed: but I never found an instance where Christianizing did not produce civilization.

Without proceeding any farther in our examination of the *other attributes* or *characteristics* of this *LAW* or *Revelation* of God, which we find in the following verses, for which there is not sufficient time, I shall make a general statement of what has already been said, and apply it to the purpose of the present solemnity.

1. We have seen the hand of the infinitely wise and powerful God, manifested in the *formation of the heavens and the earth*; and so covering them with the *characters* of His *conserving power* and *Providential goodness*, as to make intelligible to mankind, when attentive to those wonderful works, his *independent Being*, *eternal power*, and *undervived Deity*—so that, all they who continue *Atheists*, are without *apology*, and without *excuse*.

2. We have seen also, how the same kind and merciful Being, has given us His *written law*, that knowing the mind of God from himself, we might at once discover our *duty* and our *interest* ; what is *right* and what is *wrong*—what, from the holiness and perfection of His Nature, he must hate ; and what he must love : also the *worship* which He requires from man, and the advantages which man is to receive from that worship. And we have seen at the same time, the numerous rites, ceremonies, types, and ordinances, by which he signified that he would *yet make greater discoveries of his goodwill towards men*, by providing a *complete remedy* for the Spiritual Diseases of the great human Family, and connect heaven and earth more intimately than they had been from the Creation.

3. In tracing the operations of God downward, we have seen all those gracious designs executed—all vision and prophecy fulfilled—all types, ceremonies and references to good things to come, realized ; God and man connected by the incarnation of the Great Messiah ; and through His preaching, passion, death, and glorious resurrection, ascension, and mission of the *Holy Ghost*, life, and immortality brought to light ; and the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, ordered to be proclaimed to all the inhabitants of the earth.

4. We ourselves *have lived*, and *do live*, in those times in which this great God is carrying on His glorious work of the *moral renovation of the world*. Those professing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, having freely received the unspeakable Gift, have felt it their duty to endeavour, according to the directions of our blessed Lord, to send the Records of our salvation to every Nation and people, and in every tongue ; and thus go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature—and their benevolence and Christian charity have been excited to go yet farther, and send *multitudes of Missionaries* to every quarter of the globe, with the *Book of Knowledge in their hand*, and the *love of Christ in their hearts*, to testify to all, that God so loved the world, that He had given His only begotten Son, to the end that all might believe on Him ; and that they who believed, should not perish, but have everlasting life.

To this general representation I have to state, that the people whom I here represent, who have been among the

*first*, and in most cases the *very first*, to send the glad tidings of salvation to thousands of the most destitute of the inhabitants of the earth—that they have at present one hundred and thirty-eight stations in Europe, Africa, Asia, and America, which are occupied by one hundred and eighty-eight missionaries, who have left their country, their connexions and friends, and, taking their *lives in their hands*, have gone among the Gentiles to *preach the unsearchable riches* of Christ. We have seen also that God has, in a most remarkable manner, blessed their ministry—that they have now, independently of multitudes already saved and gone to heaven, not less than 34,892 true Scriptural converts, in church fellowship; and not less than 27,606 of those the servile progeny of Ham; *slave negroes* in the West India Islands. You know that by this work a vast deal of expense is incurred;—by the transport of so many missionaries and their families across such immense tracts of ocean and forest wilds—maintaining them among the heathen—filling up their ranks when diminished by death—with other incidental expenses too minute and numerous to be detailed;—that all these expenses have been hitherto covered by the people who sit under our ministry, who have always shewn themselves willing to the utmost of their power, yea, and beyond their power, to divide their bread of life with all those who, for lack of it, were ready to perish. The same *necessity* for these benevolent exertions still exists—*louder* and more *numerous calls* are now heard. *Come over and help us!* is the cry of many nations and peoples—and to hear these cries our ears will not be slow, our hands unready. Do, then, my friends, as God has done for you, *hear* and *act* according to the influence which God's grace has diffused through your hearts—and according to the *good* which His *providence* has entrusted to your hands.—And while you help by your property, be not backward with your prayers; for, eminently, in this work, if *Paul* himself were to plant, and *Apollos* to water, God alone could give the increase.

On all the earth thy Spirit show'r,  
The earth in righteousness renew;  
Thy kingdom come, and hell's o'erpow'r,  
And to thy sceptre all subdue!

Like mighty winds or torrents fierce,  
Let it th' opposers all o'erturn;

278 GOD'S METHODS OF REVEALING HIMSELF TO MEN.

And every law of sin reverse,  
That faith and love may make all one!

Grant this, O holy God and true,  
The ancient seers thou didst inspire;  
To us perform the promise due;  
Descend and crown us now with fire!

From all that dwell below the skies,  
Let the Creator's praise arise:  
Let the Redeemer's grace be sung  
In every land, by ev'ry tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord!  
Eternal truth attends thy word;  
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,  
Till sun shall rise and set no more!

Amen, *yesse!*

## SERMON XV.

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### THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL, THROUGH THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

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1 PETER, Chap. i. ver. 3—5.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
5. Who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

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PERHAPS a stronger proof cannot be produced from universal nature, that man was created in a state of *happiness*, than the intense desire which every human being feels after it. A desire, uniformly felt by every race of men, in every country, and through all the ages of the world.

The soul, without giving us any distinct ideas of its primitive happiness, or of *that* in which this happiness consisted, does not fail to afford us sufficient intimations that it has been in such a state; that it has lost its happiness, and that it always feels from the operation of that wonderful principle called *hope*, the possibility of being restored to that state; though of the *means* of that restoration, it has no distinct knowledge:—hence from this ignorance of the *thing*, and of the *means* of acquisition, (in any distinct way,) it acts without



rule, and runs at random, seeking in *any thing* and in *every thing* what it has lost : bearing about with it the continual *expectation* that its search must be ultimately crowned with success. Yet, in this *feeling*, and the consequent *search*, we find still no distinct idea of the *thing* sought. There is a general sense of *discomfort*, occasioned by the *loss of some good* : a general *persuasion* that what is lost may be found ; but *where, when, or in what*, there is no knowledge ; nor would it ever have been otherwise, had not Divine Revelation made the discovery.

Now, this desire after happiness, which is a universal human feeling, seems as if planted in the heart by God Himself. No creature loves *evil* as such—it is an abhorring to all flesh. *Pain* and *suffering* are universally deprecated and execrated ; and the *privation of good* is considered a *real evil*. Man is miserable, and he cannot bear it. He is obliged often to augur evil—he sees every where the possibility of its occurrence ; and he is generally alarmed, and often to distraction.

But what is this *happiness* so universally desired and pursued ? “ It implies, (according to some,) the gratification of all reasonable desires : ” and it is generally supposed, that to have things suitable, necessary, convenient, and comfortable, would content this universal wish :—in a word, the *mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy or sound mind, in a healthy body : and in having every thing within reach, that can keep them so. This, as far as animal nature is concerned, may be sufficient.

Mr. Hooker gives a diffuse definition of happiness, which, I am afraid, is but little to the purpose. “ Happiness is that estate whereby we attain, so far as possibly may be attained, the full possession of that, which simply for itself is to be desired ; and containeth in it, after an eminent sort, the contentation of our desires, the highest degree of all our perfection.” There is not a clause in this definition that may not be disputed. Who desires any thing *simply for itself* ? or desires it because it is that, which, *simply for itself is to be desired*. This is mere waste of words—man desires happiness for *himself*, and he feels he cannot be happy till he has that which absolutely gratifies every desire—in which case, all his wishes are satisfied ; and nothing is left behind to excite desire, as every desire has fully met with its gratification.

As all *souls* are of the same nature, and all seek happiness, it may be fairly presumed, that the *same thing* is intended to be the means of rendering all happy—this must therefore be a *universal* and *sovereign good*. Men seem to suspect each other to be wrong, because of their *different* pursuits—and from this, Mr. Locke thinks that, “The various and contrary choices that men make in the world, argue, that the same thing is not good to every man alike: this variety of pursuits shews that every one does not place his happiness in the same thing.”—Now, if from the *nature of the soul*, it can be shewn, that what constitutes human happiness, must be *one thing*, and this a *sovereign good*; it will from this appear, that the whole human race are wrong; and that all are running themselves out of breath for no prize. They are seeking not that which can make an immortal spirit happy; but that which can gratify and content the animal nature. But I have discussed this subject in another place, and therefore shall only add, that the soul of man was evidently made for God, that its wishes are immense, if not infinite; and that nothing but God the Sovereign Good, can gratify those wishes. I have only touched the subject here, for the purpose of introducing that hope of complete happiness, of which the Apostle speaks in the text, and which is a subject of the utmost consequence to man.

1. Every man *hopes* for happiness; and it is this hope that bears him up through all the ills of life. He *sees* and he *feels evil*, but he *hopes* for *good*. *Despair* is the opposite to *hope*: where this takes place, a total derangement of all the mental faculties ensue; and generally, if not soon relieved, the wretched subject dies, or puts an end to life.

2. While we retain our old Saxon word *hopa*, *hope*, from *hopian*, to *expect*, we espouse the word *despair*, from the French *desespoir*. In the same language, *esperance*, and *espoir*, signify hope: and *desesperance*, and *desespoir*, despair, the *loss of hope*—the opposite to hope—the state in which there is no expectation of good, happiness, or success. What then is the proper definition of hope? The following is the most common, and probably the best:—“The expectation of future good;” an expectation too, that arises from *desire*. It must be *good*, else it could not be *desired*: it must be *future*, or it would not be an object of *expectation*—*good* in

*possession*, precludes *hope*—"Hope that is seen (possessed) is not hope; for, what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Rom. viii. 24, 25. A thing that was *once* an object of *hope*, may have been *attained*; and if so, *hope*, in reference to that, is at an *end*. Hope is never exercised, but where there is a conviction, less or more deep, of the possibility of attaining its object. As hope implies *desire*, it must be a natural or moral *good* that is its object, for nothing can be desired that is known to be *evil*. That which is good, can alone gratify the heart; and to *gratify* is to please, *satisfy*, and *content*. When *Milton* puts in the mouth of Satan, the following speech; PARAD. LOST, Book iv. l. 108.

"So farewell *hope*, and with *hope* farewell *fear*,  
Farewell *remorse*: all *good* to me is lost;  
*Evil*, be thou my *good*."

The poet does not mean that the nature or operation of *evil* can be changed; but that the diabolic heart might be *pleased*, *satisfied*, for the time, and contented with it, as a *means* of gratifying *revenge* and *malice*; as all good was then to him beyond the reach and sphere of hope. None but THE devil could have uttered such a speech; as none but that *archangel ruined*, could bring the fellest malice and revenge into successful action, so as to derive gratification from the result. Could Satan have taken *evil* in the *place* of *good*, so as to have rested *satisfied* with it, in that moment the nature of evil must have been changed to him, and hell cease to be a place of torment. But it is a diabolic boast, and has neither truth nor reason in it.

3. In examining this grand subject farther, I would observe, that hope may be considered in a *three-fold* sense:—  
1. *Simple HOPE*. 2. *Dead HOPE*. 3. *Living HOPE*.

1. *HOPE*, simply considered in itself—according to its definition above, *the expectation of future good*;—this shews the existence of the thing, without activity in itself, or operation in reference to its object. It exists, but in a state of carelessness and *unconcern*. This sort is nearly common to all men; is not only without *profit* to them, because not *used*, but is generally in its *flutterings in the breast*, like the *ignis fatuus*, that instead of leading *aright*, leads *astray*, causing its possessor to rest in mere *expectation*, inoperative and *indefinite*

—without any *time* to commence, or *place* to act in ; a principle which from its *misuse*, rather *deceives* than *helps* the soul. In consequence of this, it has been called *delusive* hope, *false* hope, *vain* hope, &c. : but *hope* in itself, which is a gift from God, is neither *deceptive*, *false*, nor *vain*. It is the *misuse* or *abuse* of it, that *deceives*, *leads astray*, *fills with vanity*, &c. If properly *used* and *applied*, it may become even the *anchor of the soul* : and is that *power* or *principle* on which the grace of God works, in order to bring forth in the end, that *faith* by which even *mountains are removed*. A wicked man may have this *simple hope*, and so may a *hypocrite*, and neither receive *benefit* from it : yea, they may *abuse* it to their eternal damage ; and thus every power of the soul, and every gift of God, may be *abused*, and in reference to this, we may apply the homely, but expressive lines of old *Francis Quarles* :—

“ Thus God's best gifts, usurp'd by wicked ones,  
To poison turn by their con-ta-gi-ons.”

2. *Dead HOPE*. I do not mean by this, *hope* that is *extinct* ; for then it would cease to be *hope*, or any thing else. Nor do I mean hope that is entirely *inactive*, and which may on this account be considered as *morally dead* : but I mean that hope which has for its objects *good things to come, after life is ended*—a hope that expects fruition of the objects of its attention, when the present state of things closes for ever on its possessor. Nor do I mean the *hope* that has for object the glories of the invisible world : but the hope that *misplaces* its objects—that refers things which belong to the *present* state of being, to a *future* state : as it does the things which should be *received here*, in order to *prepare* for glory hereafter. This is a species of *religious hope*, it has to do with *religious matters*—such as *pardon of sin, sanctification of the soul*, and the *acquisition* of those graces that *constitute the mind that was in Christ* :—in a word, that holiness without which none shall ever see the Lord. It expects none of these in *this life* ; and that no consciousness of having received pardon can take place *before death*, if even *then* ; nor can any person, according to this hope, be *saved from his sins till his body and soul are separated*. Hence, all its operations are in reference to *death*, and the *separate state* immediately succeeding. This hope, or this perversion of simple

hope, paralyzes the Christian spirit, and in effect grieves the Spirit of God. No man ever receives *good* from it: it serves indeed to *amuse* the mind, and in the proper sense of the word, *divert* the soul:—it *turns it away* from seeking *present blessings*, because its owner has made up his mind, that none of these blessings can be received *before death*, and therefore he neither *seeks* nor *expects* them. It has the *form*, but it is the *bane*, of every *good*. In many, this species of hope, or this *abuse* of hope, is associated with much *uncertainty*, and sometimes with a degree of *despair*, even in reference to the things which it professes to have for its object, till at last the man doubts the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body; and in fine, the joys of heaven become problematical! This is *dead hope*—the hope that is looking for no spiritual good before death; and generally appears to be *inactive* and *unconcerned* even about them. It is the inhabitant of a *dead soul*—of a *lifeless, careless, Christless, professor of Christianity*:—one who, though he have a name to live, yet is *dead*; and who will find, when he comes to that bourne where his hope is expected to *act*, and be *realized*, that it is like the *giving up of the ghost*:—he gives up his *ghost* and his *hope* together. It is also the *hope* of the *wicked*—they expect to find God's mercy when they come to die—but the *hope of the wicked*, in death, perisheth. Of such persons, none can entertain *hope* but *themselves*.

3. *Living HOPE*.—The hope that lives and flourishes by hoping! This is *simple hope*, in its *greatest activity* and *operation*:—hope with all the *range of possible good*, in its *eye*, its *expectation* and its *desire*. Its objects are necessarily *future*; but all is future that is in the least degree removed from the *present*;—hence, the *future*, properly speaking, *verges* on the time *that now is*. The blessings that are necessary *now* it *sees* at hand—*desires* the possession—*believes* the possibility of immediate attainment—*claims* the grace from God through Christ—and thus *realizes* its object. Having received this blessing, it is strengthened to go out after more; sees, desires, and claims the next in course; receives this, and thus *realizes* another good, that a short time before was *future*; and continues to be *future* still, to all *others* who do not act in this way.

This hope is ever *living* by receiving. *Pardon* and *holi-*

ness—the forgiveness of all sin—and purification from all unrighteousness, must be attained here. This it sees;—of this it is convinced;—and these blessings are the first objects of its attention. It claims them by a living energy, through faith; for hope cannot exist nor act without faith; and by faith is its work made perfect. Thus it is ever receiving. All future blessings, belonging to the human state of probation, which extends from the cradle to the grave, in the whole series of their approximations, becoming present, are realized in their order; and the innate power of the last received, serves to support that which was received before, and thus, on all the increasing glory there is a defence.

This hope takes up all God's blessings in their places and proper series. There are some of its objects as stated above, which necessarily belong to this life; others, that as necessarily belong to the world to come. It will not refer the blessings to be obtained here, to the state after death; nor will it attempt to anticipate those blessings which belong to eternity, in the present state. It is a discriminating grace, for it is ever supported by knowledge and faith. It walks uprightly, and therefore, surely,

“Grace is in all its steps, heaven in its eye:  
In every gesture, dignity and love.”

St. Peter calls this a LIVING HOPE. God, says he, hath begotten us again, *εἰς εὐελπίδα ζῶσαν*, to a living hope—and here he probably refers to his own case, and that of the Apostles, at the time that the Jews had put Jesus Christ to death: they had actually lost their hope, it had died, was become extinct; as it was before founded on the life of Christ, who they expected was about to restore the kingdom to Israel. When they found that the Jews had power to crucify Him—that He actually died and was buried; and that He lay under the power of death; for, as yet, they had not seen Him, nor heard of His resurrection; and, therefore, they seem to have lost all hope in Him as the King of Israel: but, when assured of His resurrection, then their hope sprang up afresh. The Apostle represents God as having, *ἀναγεννησας*, begotten them again,—as giving them a second birth by this resurrection of Christ. They began to live a new life, having a lively faith in Him, who, though delivered to death for their offences, was raised again for their justification.

From all this we learn, that *hope* of *pardon*, *holiness* and *heaven*, depends wholly on the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ from the dead. The *atonement* was made by His *passion* and *death*. The *grand sin-offering* had been made—but the resurrection was the *evidence* that this was the *true sin-offering*; and that this sin-offering had been *accepted* by the Lord.

1. If Christ had not *died* for man, no soul could have been saved. There was no *remission of sins* without the *shedding of blood*; and no *atonement* in the shedding of blood, unless that blood had been of *infinite value*.

2. As Christ was put to death as a *malefactor*, had He not *risen again* from the dead, it would have been a presumptive proof that He had suffered *justly*. But as He *did rise* according to His own prediction, this was a full proof of His innocence, and God's acceptance of His offering. That crucified body—that pierced heart—could never more have been restored to life, but by a *miracle of the Lord*; and had He been a *malefactor*, God's power would never have employed itself in raising a body that had suffered the *sentence of the law*; as this would have been an accrediting of *iniquity*. The Resurrection, therefore, eternally precludes all suspicion on this head.

3. The resurrection of Christ was not only a *proof* of His *immaculate innocence*, and of *God's acceptance* of the sacrificial offering that He had made, but also of *our resurrection*. It was the *human nature* of Christ that *died*; it was the *human nature* that *rose again* from the dead. It was absolutely necessary that there should be incontestible proof of the reality of Christ's death, in order to establish the fact of His resurrection. If it had only been a *suspended animation*, His revivification could have been no miracle. But the Jews saw Him nailed to the cross—the Roman soldiers saw this also. When He, and the malefactors that were crucified with Him, had hung the due time, they were examined to see whether they were dead, that if not, the *coup de grace* might be administered—the *breaking of their limbs*, to put them out of pain. The two malefactors were not quite dead, therefore they *brake* their bones; but they found *Jesus dead already*, therefore they brake not His bones; but, to make sure work, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear,

and from the wound issued *blood and water* : a full evidence that the spear had traversed the pericardium, and wounded the heart. And this was, no doubt, what was designed by the act : to fulfil the purpose of the sentence, and to ensure the certainty of His death.

After this act, *that body* never could be *restored to life* but by the *miraculous* power of God : and that *miraculous* power, never could be applied to accredit iniquity or imposture.

That all imposture might be prevented in His rising again, they took care to seal the tomb with the governor's seal, which it was death to counterfeit or break ; and a guard of Roman soldiers was set to keep watch, till the third day should be elapsed, after which Christ had said He would rise again. Notwithstanding all this care and caution the *Resurrection* took place,—was sufficiently evident,—was attested by the *guard* themselves ;—but who were persuaded by the Jewish rulers to tell a most clumsy falsehood, which confuted itself, that they fell asleep (which was *death* if they did) and that while they slept, *His disciples came and stole away the Body*. If they were *asleep*, they could not know whether He *rose Himself* or was raised by others ; and if by others, how could they know that they were *His disciples*, as they acknowledged that at the time they were *asleep* ? The soldiers got *money*, and they reported what they were desired to tell ; and the governor was *persuaded* to wink at the thing. See the account, Matt. xxvii. 62—66. xxviii. 11—15.

But this falsity and malevolence were defeated by the *manifestation of Christ Himself*, who, after He was risen, *shewed Himself openly to His disciples* ; ate and drank with them, for about fifty days ; was seen and known by many, and at one time by more than 500 persons ! See the different Gospels, and 1 Cor. xv. 3—8.

Such was the evidence of these facts to the disciples, who were so influenced by them, (though naturally hesitating and doubtful,) that they could never doubt more ; but with the greatest power bore testimony to the resurrection of our Lord ; and the evidence was so great, cumulative, and conclusive, that many even of the Jewish priests, became obedient to the *faith* : and multitudes both of Jews and Gentiles, were converted to Christianity. Thus then, Peter and his brethren



were begotten again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

4. The ascension of Christ to heaven, and His sitting down on the right hand of God, is a proof that He has regained the forfeited inheritance of mankind; and this inheritance, all His genuine followers have a right to expect. Hence the Apostle says, we are begotten to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

It is an inheritance. The children of God only can possess it. Those who are begotten again—that have had a new birth, being born of the Spirit. By our first birth, we are born children of the old corrupt Adam—children of wrath, i. e. condemned persons, dead in law—and who cannot inherit; for, having sinned and been traitors against God, we have forfeited the inheritance. But as Christ has died and risen again from the dead—by a second birth—the being born from above—we become children of God by faith in Him; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. But we must become children in order to be heirs. For to none but these can eternal life be given: for even in heaven the lot is dealt out according to law: if children, then heirs; if not children, then not heirs.

This inheritance is,

1. *Incorruptible*, Αφθαρτον. It has no principle of dissolution or decay in it; and therefore must be totally different from this earth. The title is good;—it is legally conveyed;—there is no flaw in it;—it cannot be vitiated. Originally, it was a gift from God's Eternal Bounty, but the forfeited gift was recovered by purchase; and a most valuable consideration was paid down for it. It is signed, sealed, and witnessed, and is ready to be delivered; for the time of seisin, or taking possession, is just at hand.

2. It is *undefiled*, Αμικτον. It has not only no principles or seeds of dissolution in itself, but it cannot be defiled—nothing impure can enter it; therefore its corruption or deterioration is impossible.

3. It *fadeth not away*, Αμαρατον. It cannot wither—Neither the soil, the air, nor the water, can ever change. The soil cannot be exhausted; the air cannot be contaminated; and the water cannot be corrupted. It is always in bloom. It is a metaphor taken from those flowers that never lose their

hue nor their fragrance. From the Greek word *αμαραντος*, we have our flowers called *amaranths*, because they preserve both *hue* and apparent freshness for a long time. This *inheritance* is as *unfailing* as its *heirs* are :—their day of probation is past ; their lot is fixed ; they can sin no more ; paradise cannot be lost a *second* time : therefore the inheritance is for ever. This inheritance can never more go out of the family : it is their *own* ; unchangeably so. Not *tenants at will*, under the caprice of a landlord—nor the inheritance a *place* that can be *assailed* or *taken from them* either by *force* or *fraud*. It is no such tenure, nor so exposed. Their right in it is indefeasibly established. Satan attempted once to dispossess them eternally of the terrestrial inheritance, and all that was dependent upon it : and though he *partly* succeeded, yet *God devised means that His banished should not be expelled from Him*. Jesus repurchased and reconveyed it unalienably. So the attempt of the great adversary has been completely defeated. Glory be to God for His unspeakable gift !

On the subject of this inheritance of the people of God, I met with a very curious piece in an ancient Latin MS. on Vellum, that contains discourses for all *the Sabbaths of the year* ; how early composed I cannot tell, but the collection was made by *John Felton*, Vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Oxford, and written about the year 1450. I shall translate this curious piece as a specimen of the theology of our forefathers. He observes :

“ It was a custom in this country, (England,) that if a tyrant or oppressor had driven the true heir from his inheritance, and appropriated it to himself, and the oppressed man could not get any legal redress, (for on the side of the adversary there was power,) his last remedy was to challenge the tyrant to *single combat* ; and if he overcame him, he was reinstated in his inheritance, and the oppressor lost his life. But if the lawful heir was an *old* and *infirm man*, and could not undertake the contest, if he had a stout healthy son who was a knight or a soldier, the law permitted *him* to fight the tyrant or oppressor, in his father’s stead, as the right of the inheritance would, on the father’s demise, fall to him. In like manner the Scripture gives us to understand, that *Adam*, the first man, was right and true heir of *Paradise* ; but was

driven from it by the *craft* and *subtlety* of the *devil*. And although he might have claimed the combat, in vindication of his right to the inheritance, yet being old and feeble, he was incapable of doing it. But his son, a strong, active warrior, claimed the battle in place of his father, fought with and overcame the tyrant and oppressor, and gained a glorious victory for his father and brethren. And having done so he conveyed the *inheritance* to his father and brethren by the following CHARTER :—

“ ‘ Know all men present and to come, and all in heaven and in earth, that I, JESUS CHRIST, Son of God the Father, and the Virgin Mary, God and Man, on account of My inheritance unjustly and traitorously taken away from My family, and long detained in the hand of the adversary, have descended into the Stadium, fought with and overcome him, and gained a glorious victory; by which I have recovered and taken proper seisin of My inheritance, at the Passover; and with My heirs have received it according to the appointment of My Father, to have and to hold, freely, fully, and peaceably, in length and in breadth, for ever and ever, on the simple condition of paying annually and daily to God, the tribute of a clean heart and pure mind. In testimony of which, I have written this present charter with My blood, and order it to be read publicly by the whole world: and have affixed to it the seal of My divinity, with the testimony of the Father and the Holy Spirit, for these Three give witness in heaven.

“ ‘ Written, read, confirmed, and delivered to men, on Mount Calvary, on the sixth day of the Passover, in the five thousand two hundred and thirty-third year from the creation of the world. To remain open and public FOR EVER ! ”

The *ordeal by battle*, or *single combat*, in doubtful cases, where it was supposed that God alone could decide, was allowed in England till between the eleventh and twelfth century; as well as the *ordeal by fire*, *hot iron*, *scalding water*, &c.; but that to which the author here alludes, was in high repute. The reader will at once see, that the *inheritance* was the same as that of which St. Peter speaks here. The *tyrant*, the devil—the *old infirm man*, Adam after his fall—the *warlike Son*, the Lord Jesus—the *combat*, His passion and

death—the *Magna Charta*, or *great charter* of human salvation, the New Testament—the *tribute*, or acknowledgement for possession, a new heart and a holy life. For, without holiness, no man can see God; and, without practical holiness no man can please Him. By allegories of this kind were our forefathers instructed in the simple truths of the Gospel. It is worthy of remark, that the charter was delivered to *all men*, was published to *all men*, and was ordered to be *every where read*. The Scriptures had not, at that time, been authoritatively withheld from the people.

Having referred to the ancient way in which lost inheritances were recoverable, I come now to consider the remaining characteristics of *this inheritance*.

4. *Reserved in heaven for you.* Such a place as that described above, is not to be expected upon *earth*. It is that which was typified by the *earthly Canaan*; and, in reference to which, the Patriarchs endured all kinds of trials and difficulties in this life, as seeing Him who is invisible. Therefore, the inheritance must be *after this life*; for to this, as its ultimate point, does *hope* tend. There, it is to be *kept*, *τηρημενην*, guarded and watched, for them to whom it belongs; and there is no fear of its being lost or alienated.

5. But for *whom* is it kept? Ans. For *them who are kept by the power of God*: *τους εν δυναμει Θεου φρουρουμενους*—for them *who are defended as in a fortress, by the power of God*. There is a remarkable correspondence between the *two verbs* used in this sentence:—the first verb, *τηρω*, signifies *to keep watch, guard*; and *τηρησις*, is a *place of custody or prison*; and the other verb, *φρουρω*, from *φρουρος*, a *sentinel*, signifies *to keep as under a military guard*. The true disciples of Christ are under the continual *watchful care* of God; and the inheritance is *guarded* for them. In some countries *military posts* are continually kept up on the *confines*, in order to prevent irruptions from a neighbouring people; and in many places, *heirs*, while in their *minority*, are kept in *fortified places* under *military guards*, lest they should sustain any injury, or be carried away.

The *heirs* in the text are *kept by the power of God*; *εν δυναμει Θεου*, by the *mighty miraculous power of God*: for nothing less is necessary to keep and preserve in this state of continu-

al trial, a soul from the contagion that is in the world. God's *providence* is the *safe place*, and God's *power* is the *guard* in that safe place. As it requires the same power to *preserve* that it required to *create*, so nothing less than the sovereign power of God will suffice to keep that soul in a state of *purity*, which that power has *purified*. Thus the *power* and *grace* which *save* us, are still necessary to *keep us* in the *saved state*.

But *how* is this power exerted? Ans. By *faith*. He that shall ultimately get the inheritance, is he who shall be found *faithful* unto death. *Faith* interests the power of God in behalf of His follower; and the power of God *preserves* the inheritance for the *man*, and the *man* for the *inheritance*. No persevering without this *power*, and no *power* without *faith*. The oracle of God is, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life*. This is *salvation*, redemption from sin in and during life, and glory after death.

6. This *salvation*, σωτηρια, this final state of safety, is ready to be revealed; εις σωτηριαν ετοιμην αποκαλυφθηαι—it is prepared to be revealed. The oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready for the marriage. There is but a short step between any man and death; and there is but a *hair's breadth* between the true believer and glory. But it will not be fully revealed till the *last time*. The inheritance is prepared, but its *glories* will not be revealed till we have *done with life*;—till we have *passed through our probation*, having held fast faith and a good conscience.

Some by this clause understand the deliverance of the Christians at the *sackage of Jerusalem* by the Romans; the end of the Jewish polity being called the *last time*: others refer it to the *day of judgement*, and the glorification of the body and soul in heaven. But it may with equal probability be applied to the *Gospel dispensation*, for it is the *last*, and shall not be *succeeded* by any other; and it is during this *dispensation* that all the miracles of God's grace shall be wrought. Here, under the continual influence of the grace of God, the soul is to be saved. In the *other world*, the *issue* of this salvation is to be found. Indeed, the time in which *we live* may be called the *last time*; in this we have our *last day*—and how *near* may this *last day* be! *The END of all*

*things is at hand.* The end of the *enjoyments* of the *wicked*—the end of the *trials* of the *godly*. To all of us the Judge is at the door! and the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

Though there has been a general application of the substance of this Discourse, during its progress, yet it would not be well to leave such momentous things without some inquiries relative to our knowledge of the subject, and our experience of its truths.

You have heard a fact stated, viz. the whole of mankind are in pursuit of *happiness*, and but *few* find, what was designed for *all*: and why, because they seek it not *where* it may be found. Some miss it through *ignorance*—some through *unsettledness* of character.

Have you attained it? You who are so fully instructed in the *nature* of this blessing, and the *Source* whence it springs? You know that it is to be obtained in the possession of true religion: in the life of God in the soul. Will you seek in earthly things, in worldly *pleasures*, *profits*, *honours*, &c. what you know can be found in God *alone*?—If you will, and die in this state, how awful must the account be, which by and bye, you must render to God! As you know not what a moment may bring forth, delay not to give your hearts fully to Him, that He may purify them from an evil conscience, and fill them with His holiness.

I have spoken to you much about *hope*—the *simple*, the *dead* and the *living* HOPE. What *sort* is yours? Are you also putting off the good things of the Gospel, till the day after death?—If so, do you call this *wisdom* or *madness*?

Have you got the operative *living* hope? The *hope* that *lives* by *hoping*?—see then that you give it its full scope. Let it be the *pioneer* for your soul—let it get forward, descry the route, and clear the way. Keep it alert—and let Faith act its part in conjunction with your hope.

You have also heard much about the *inheritance* of saints in light. Do you see *your own* inheritance then? Are you, after the example of your Lord, for the joy that is before you, enduring the cross, and despising the pain? Do you know that your treasure is in *heaven*, by *feeling* that your *hearts* are *there*?

Do you anticipate its blessedness? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God? And if a *child*, then an *heir*.

But are you scripturally and experimentally assured of your sonship? Can you bear to be in *doubt* on a subject of such awful importance? Are you struggling after earthly possessions, rising early, sitting up late, and eating the bread of carefulness, that you may increase your earthly property, or accumulate wealth, while your desires are languid, and your prayers lifeless, in reference to this permanent eternal good?

There is an inheritance, yea, a kingdom for you; will you let any one take your *crown*?

But you think you have a good hope through grace. Well, are you kept in the Faith? Is *yours* as strong as it ever was? Does it live as much in heaven, as it formerly did?—It formerly removed *mountains*—Is it now stumbled at *mole-hills*?

When you had most hope, faith and love, you needed *more*, in order to qualify you fully for heaven: If you have less now, are you getting to glory?

But you can say, *My heart and my flesh long for the living God*. Then you are near to the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. Hear one word which may be applied to your case; *If you seek Me let those go away*. Part with every thing so that you may gain a full meetness for the inheritance. God does not desire you to cast any thing away, that is *useful* or *profitable*. He will strip you only of rags and incumbrances.

You say you have many trials in the way. And what way is there, that is exempt from them? Take courage! He hath said, "Cast thy burthen on the Lord, and He will sustain thee;"—that is, He will bear both *thee*, and thy *load*. Remember, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,  
And looks to that alone;  
Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, "It shall be done."

Keep still in view the great Sacrificial Offering. He has

pu-chased all blessings by His own Blood; and He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Continue looking unto Jesus! Hear Him *preaching*—see Him *suffering, dying, rising, reigning*:—and you can never more be troubled with doubts concerning the goodness of God, and His readiness to save to the uttermost all that come unto Him through the Son of His love.

O thou Fountain of Mercy! Prepare us all for, and take us at last to Thy eternal glory, through Christ Jesus! Amen.



## SERMON XVI.

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### CHRISTIAN MODERATION.

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PHILIPPIANS, Chap. iv. ver. 4—6.

4. Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice.
5. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.
6. Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

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ONE thing is peculiarly remarkable in Christianity : it gives blessings and talents to *all*, and finds employment for *all* these *blessings* and *talents*.

Every member of the Church of Christ, has something to do *in* and *for* that Church. 1. We find from the context, that two women, *Euodias* and *Syntiche*, had laboured with the Apostle—that they were valuable and useful members of the Church—that there were some minor points on which these pious women differed ;—and that their usefulness might not be hindered, the Apostle exhorted them to *be of the same mind in the Lord* : for without a *union of sentiment* and *affection*, it is not likely that they could labour together with so much success.

2. He intreats a *true yoke-fellow* of his at Philippi, to give all possible assistance to those good women ; who doubtless were employed in visiting, instructing, and relieving the sick : and he urges this duty on his fellow Apostle, on the ground

that those women, *συνηθλησας*, had *wrestled together* with him in the work of the Gospel.

3. As he had appointed to all their work, so he shewed them *all* that it was their privilege to be *happy* in that work : and therefore says, *Rejoice alway, and again rejoice*—as if he had said, it is your privilege to be *constantly happy*—but there is no happiness but *in the Lord*—and those who rejoice, must rejoice in *Him*. That this might be the case, he exhorts them, ver. 4, *Let your moderation be known unto all men* : and urges it from this consideration, *The Lord is at hand*.

I. Before I enter into the particular examination of the *first* clause in this verse, which shall be the principal subject of my discourse, I must say a few things on the *latter clause*, viz. *The Lord is at hand* ; as there is a difference of opinion among commentators on the meaning of this phrase.

1. *Grotius* and several others have supposed, that not only the primitive *Christians* in general, but the *Apostles* themselves, were under the continual conviction that the *day of judgement* was at hand ; and that this is the point which the Apostle has in view in the expression, *The Lord is at hand*—and that from the conviction which they had of the *proximity* of this awful event, they used the exhortation on all convenient occasions, as a *spur to diligence*, and a  *motive to perseverance*. *Grotius* is certainly wrong in his supposition ; for the passages which he referred to this event, belong solely to our Lord's coming to execute judgement upon the disobedient Jews, in the subversion of their state. To suppose that the *Apostles*, under the inspiration of the Almighty, could have been under such a *mistake*, would go to the destruction of their *credibility* : for nearly 1800 years are elapsed since that time, and the final *judgement* has not yet taken place ; therefore they must have been most capitally *mistaken*, and all the *doctrines, cautions, exhortations, &c.* which they delivered in reference to this imaginary event, must be all *erroneous*, and, consequently, should be expunged from the Sacred Writings. But, when we apply the Scriptures in question to the desolations which were then coming on the Jewish people and state, and they can apply to nothing else, the event shews they were divinely inspired, because the predictions were punctually fulfilled, and the exhortations in reference to them, appropriate and highly applicable.

2. The clause has been understood by *others*, as having something *cautionary* or *monitory* in it, as if the Apostle had said, see that you do all right, for the Lord is ever present, and His eye is upon you. He has appointed you your *work*—He offers you *grace* to enable you to perform it aright—He is the sole Judge of it—and He alone will punish or reward it.

3. As the Christian Church has selected this portion to be read the Sabbath previously to *Christmas-day*, her design was to call to the remembrance of the faithful, the blessings which the *Advent of Christ* has procured; and to lead them to expect a *repetition* of the same blessings. According to this view of the subject, *The Lord is at hand!* the mind should go forward in the expectation of peculiar blessings and mercies at this season of the year. This is a use of the present portion, which I hope none of my hearers will neglect.

I would not dismiss this part of my subject, without making a few remarks in reference to our profiting:—

1. Jesus came and destroyed the Jewish polity, according to His prediction. Let this teach us that every prediction of God is absolutely *true*—that all that remain yet to be fulfilled, shall be fulfilled in their season, as those have been, of whose accomplishment we have had the fullest evidence.

2. As it is no less true that God is *always at hand*, let us endeavour so to *begin, continue, and end every work*, that it may meet with His approbation; which it cannot meet with, unless it bring *Him glory, us good, and our neighbour profit*. It is a most consolatory thought, that *God is ever nigh us*, protecting us with the shield of His power;—directing us by the counsel of His Spirit;—and providing for body and soul out of the endless stores of His providence and grace.

3. As the season is at hand in which we commemorate the *incarnation* of our Lord, let us expect especial blessings. It is for this purpose, as we have seen, that our Church selects this passage, and appoints it to be read the Sabbath before the *Nativity*, that the people of God might have their expectations enlarged, and, in consequence, actually receive an increase of every grace of Christ's Spirit. The subject taken up in this *threefold* point of view, cannot but administer both edification and improvement. The use of it in reference to the grand subject of the text, we shall afterwards consider.

I come now to my main point, and which I believe to be the main point which the Apostle had in view, *Let your moderation be known unto all men.*

I believe the term *moderation* is to be applied to the *passions* and *operations* of the human *mind*; and that, as the Apostle exhorts that *moderation* should regulate and govern the whole, so he intimates, that without this *moderation* there will be a sinful *excess* on one hand, or a sinful *deficiency* on the other.

The original word *ἡπιότης*, from *ἐπι*, upon, and *εἶσα*, I yield, though it may be applied to *meekness*, *gentleness*, and *patience*, yet from the connexion in which it stands here, it is sufficiently evident that our translators have given it its proper meaning, by rendering it *moderation*. We may therefore suppose the Apostle to say, As the *Lord is at hand*, and you have a great work to do, in which both your *soul* and *body* must be employed, take heed that all your *passions* and *appetites* be properly regulated and directed, that there may be no sinful *deficiency* or *exuberance* in any; that ye may do every thing from a proper *motive*, in its proper *time*—in its due *place*—in its necessary *proportion*—and in reference to its proper *end*.

*Moderation*, from *modus*, a *measure*, whether to ascertain *length* or *quantity*, is a very proper term to express a *ruling principle* applied to the *passions*, *feelings*, *operations*, or *excursions* of the *mind*.

By *passion*, I mean something in the mind that is *acted on*, by something *without*; in consequence of which, certain *feelings* are produced which form themselves into what are called *desires* and *aversions*.

*Desires* are excited by the *seeing*, *feeling*, or *hearing* of things which appear to be *suitable*, *useful*, and *profitable*.

*Aversions* are excited by seeing, feeling, or hearing of things which are apprehended to be *unsuitable*, *unprofitable*, and *injurious*.

Perhaps all the *passions* of the human mind, may be, with propriety, reduced to the above simple classification.

*Desires*, will include all the *concupiscible* passions:—*aversions*, all the *irascible*.

Under the *first* head we may class *desire*, simply consider-

ed; *hope*, springing from desire; and *love*, produced by the realization of *hope*.

Under the *second*, we may class *dislike*, *fear*, *anger*, *terror*, *horror*, *hatred*, and the like.

All these passions, whether *concupiscible* or *irascible*, imply some degree of *acquaintance* with the things that are their objects.

In the first case, that things do *exist* which are *desirable* in themselves, and attainable by proper means.

In the second case, that there are things which are *evil* in themselves, and may possibly occur, unless opposed by proper *preventatives*.

GOOD, *real* or *supposed*, is always the object of *desire*.

EVIL, *real* or *imaginary*, is always the object of *aversion*.

1. The nature of the soul must be changed before it can *desire evil*, knowing it to be *such*—and before it can *hate good*, when convinced of its goodness, and, particularly, when convinced that that good is *attainable*. *Desire* is opposed to *aversion*—*love* to *hatred*—*hope* to *despair*.

Desire is excited on the knowledge of the existence of an *attainable* good. The good once possessed or enjoyed, produces *love*. Properly speaking, we cannot love a good that is not enjoyed. God Himself is not loved till enjoyed:—*We love Him because He first loved us*. Previously to enjoyment, all is *desire*—but desire more or less intense, according to our apprehension of the excellence, usefulness, and profitableness of the good we have in prospect.

Desire associates to itself *hope*—“hope is the expectation of future good.” The soul may consume in *desire*, because there is no *enjoyment*; fruitless longings drink up the spirit. “Hope deferred,” says the wise man, “makes the heart sick;”—utterly disappointed, slays it. “But when the desire cometh,”—when the thing desired is possessed—then, says the same authority, “it is a tree of life;” its *fruit*, or, in other words, the *enjoyment* of the thing desired and hoped for, is the food of the soul; because it is found to be fitting, useful, profitable, &c.

*Despair* is not a *passion*. Despair is the utter and final disappointment of *hope*. It is a conviction that the thing *desired* and *hoped for*, is *absolutely* and *eternally unattainable*. In this case, *desire* does not exist: because desire always im-

plies not only the knowledge of the existence of a certain good, but also, that there is a *possibility* of its attainment. *Wishes* may subsist with *despair*, and thus modify themselves; "O, that such a thing *were attainable!* but it is not—it is for ever, eternally impossible!" This may shew us the proper difference between *wish* and *desire*.

2. Where *desire*, *hope*, and *love*, cannot exist, there *aversion*, *despair*, and *hatred*, must live. *Hatred* produces *malice*—malice, *revenge*. But *revenge*, *malice*, and *hatred*, are not properly *passions*. They are the irregular, unbridled, *unmoderated* workings of *aversion*:—as *foolish fondness*, *lanquishing hope*, and *pinning wishes*, are not passion, but the exuberance, the unbridled, and *unmoderated* workings of *desire*.

As the soul is naturally led to *desire good*, and *hate evil*—and as *good* may be lost and *evil acquired*, God has set before man, *life* and *death*—a *blessing* and a *curse*. If the *life* and *blessing* are not attained, then *death* and *cursing* must take place: the GOSPEL, therefore, holds out to our *desire* and *expectation*, every *possible good*—such good as is suited to the *nature* of the soul, and to the *state* and *condition* of a human being;—a good that can never be *useless*, must ever be *profitable*, and will endure eternally. On the other hand, it exhibits to our view a real and substantial *evil*—the possibility of the loss of all good for time and eternity, and the possession of all evil—every thing that the soul can suffer from unavailing wishes—endlessly blasted hopes—and deep sinking and illimitably overwhelming *despair*. And this glorious and benevolent system, shews all this to be only the *consequence* of an *obstinate* rejection of proffered *good*. To excite *desire*, *hope*, and *love*, God unbosoms His endless mercy to us in Christ Jesus:—Here is every thing that the soul can desire, which is suitable to its nature, and perfective of that nature in time and eternity.

The work of His grace begins on the passions. By the teaching of His spirit we are called from *imaginary* to *real good*. By the operations of His grace, *sin* is *forgiven*, and the *peace of God* communicated. The work of the Spirit is to refine and rectify the passions of man—not to *create new ones*, nor to *destroy old ones*; but to influence, purify, regulate, direct, and moderate the whole. We did not *lose one*

passion by the FALL—we do not *gain* one by *regeneration*. Every passion we have is essential to the being of the soul : and if we had any other passions than those which we possess, we could not be creatures of the *same class*—we, therefore, could *lose* none, and can gain none, if our identity and *link* in the *chain*, or degree in the scale of beings, is to be preserved.

Sin has defiled the whole—grace is to purify and refine them. Sin has rendered all disorderly and irregular—grace is to regulate the whole and moderate their operations. The apostolic counsel, “ Let your moderation be known unto all,” is another word for, “ Be ye saved into the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.” Get *evil* cast out—get *good* brought in. Get from under the government of irregular passions and appetites ; and come under the direction and government of the correcting and harmonizing spirit of the God of *light* and *order*. In order to have the passions regulated, we must endeavour to get an *acquaintance* with our own *minds*. How few know any thing of what is within them ! Hence, not knowing our passions, we have no rule by which to guide them ; and they are under no discipline.

Do nothing without thought. Let this be a sacred rule from which you will never permit your soul to depart. To act on the immediate impulse of passion or feeling, is the property of a brute. When any thing is proposed to be said or done, consider the possibility of doing or saying *too little* or *too much*. The rule of moderation must be here applied. Bring the subject immediately before your mind—let *attention* consider it—*judgement* weigh it—*will* or *resolution* determine concerning it, as to what is to be done—how *much* or how *little*, and *when* and *how*.

We are always in extremes, or prone to them ; moderation seldom rules. What are all the vagaries, irregularities, and extravagances of man, but transgressions of this sacred rule—Moderation.

Be determined to *act* when action is necessary—to *perform* what is necessary and no more ; and never to be satisfied with doing less than is required. *Moderation* will also dictate with respect to the place, the *time* and the *manner*.

Every *place* is not equally proper for a particular action , therefore, select the place that is proper. All *times* are not

equally good. An action, not done in proper time, may not only be useless but injurious ; which, if done in proper time, would have been highly profitable.

The *manner* also should be particularly studied :—a bad mode of doing an action of the highest importance, may render it useless or disgusting ; and spoil all its fruit. An action inconsiderable in itself, may be rendered productive of great utility and pleasure by an appropriate and gracious manner. In all these things let your moderation be known unto all men.

Apply this rule also to your *attachments*, and to your *opinions*. Be not *hasty* in forming friendships or intimacies—appearances are seldom sure guides—they may be good *land-marks* ; but examine the road and every bearing ; connect these appearances with spirit, temper, action, manner, and judge from the whole ; and then the judgement is likely to be according to the rule of moderation.

*Opinion* and *judgement* are often confounded ; but they are very different. *Opinion* is generally formed on *appearance—judgement on investigation* *Opinions* are often crude, irrelevant and inconsistent—*judgement* is systematic, regular, and consistent. The former is the fruit of *passion* or *feeling*—the latter of *reason*.

In *religious* and *political* opinions, men are greatly divided—Every man thinks his own right :—for, if he did not think so, he would not adopt it. Each, therefore, should give another credit for his *sincerity* and *uprightness*, in what he professes to believe : and not endeavour to obtrude his own opinion upon his neighbour, unless he can give him a sufficient *reason* that his is right, and that his neighbour's is wrong. This will lead to *discussion*, and discussion may produce *moderation*.

*Moderation*, in reference to a religious or political opinion, is widely different from what is termed *indifference* about religion, politics, &c. *Moderation* avoids *excesses* of all kinds, while laboriously studious to preserve the *golden mean*. *Indifference* is careless and unconcerned, whether the thing be *true* or *false*, *right* or *wrong*. To indifference, all systems of religion and politics are the same. The indifferent man is a *latitudinarian* in religion. He has no fixed *Creed*, nor does he think it of importance to form one. In *politics*, his



indifference so far prevails, that he cares not what form of government he is under. Arbitrary power and rational liberty, are to him the same, provided he suffer not under one of them, in his person or in his property. To him the *British* constitution and that of *Spain*, are equally good. A person of an opposite mind is generally a *fury*, if not influenced by moderation. All who are not of his *religious opinions*, are heretics, and should be committed to the flames : all who are not of his *political* creed, are traitors, and should be expatriated or hanged. In such cases, how much need for the Apostle's advice—"let your moderation be known unto all."

The more common matters to which moderation should be applied, I have left unnoticed :—he must have but a little *religion*, and less sense, who does not see that he should be moderate in his food, sleep, clothing, domestic expenses, pursuits of whatever kind, and in every thing that concerns him, either as an *agent* or a *patient*. To give this exhortation the fullest effect, let us remember the manner in which the Apostle enforces it—"The Lord is at hand." He is your Judge—His eye is ever upon you—He hates evil—He loves good—all excesses in action and passion, are opposed to the order and harmony of His Spirit, and His administration among men. He is *at hand* also to *help* you, to support you in trials—succour you against temptations—to direct your hearts into His love and fear : and, in a word, to give you grace according to your day.

II. Having considered this important branch of the Apostle's exhortation, let us see how the other parts concord with this, and the views of it which have been already presented.

*Be careful for nothing, μηδεν μεριμᾶτε—Be not ANXIOUSLY concerned about any thing.* *Carefulness, circumspection, and diligence*, are never prohibited by the Gospel ; on the contrary, they are strongly recommended and enforced. He who is without *care*, in the proper sense of the word, is without *prudence*, common sense, and reason ; but *anxiety*, which argues *doubtfulness, diffidence, distrust, and perturbation* of mind, is always ruinous. The *anxious* man has no confidence in himself—all is *hurry* and confusion—*apprehension* and dismay—he has no confidence in his God, either in His *providential* management of the world, or in the displays of His grace and mercy :—his mind is unhinged ; he is a prey to

conflicting passions, each of which predominates by turns. In the present, he is miserable ; and every *future* prospect is gloomy and distressing. *Anxious carking care*, is the very opposite to *moderation*. By the *former*, the government and balance of the soul is lost : by the latter they are preserved. The *anxious* mind is a *hurried* mind : it is necessarily *distracted* ; and, in consequence, always *indecisive*. He is tossed about with illusive *hopes*, every one of which terminates in disappointment, because not founded in reason or probability : and he is tortured with fears, which have no place but in his own imagination. He is without *prayer*, without *confidence*, and without God : and all his labour is marred, and his life poisoned by the *anxiety* he feels for the issue of every thing ; and the gloomy apprehensions he has, that the result will be *evil*. In a word, he is a *burden* to himself, and a *plague* to others.

To prevent such a state of mind, the Apostle prescribes *moderation*, on the consideration mentioned before, *the Lord is at hand*. To shew the use of this, he exhorts that *in all things our requests should be made known unto God, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving*.

It may be said, "How can any considerate man be free from *anxiety*, who is conscious that there is so much *natural* and *moral evil* in the world, and who cannot foresee what is in *futurity* ; but has reason to conclude, from what *has* taken place, that every arriving moment will come laden with trouble, disappointment, affliction, and death." It may be farther asserted, "That the *changes* and *chances* of this mortal life, are subjects of the most serious and solemn apprehensions ;—because they come *unforeseen*—they cannot be *prevented* : and not being known, no provision can be made against them."

To meet this objection properly, we must allow that there are what we call *chances* in the world—*i. e.* *accidents* and *occurrences*, which howsoever under the direction of the Divine Providence, appear to us *unconnected*, *insulated*, and *fortuitous*. And that these *chances* produce *changes*, which could not enter into the comprehension of prudence or foresight to descry, is also to be conceded. But what is all this to the point, as long as there verily is a God who ruleth in the earth, and who loves mankind ? *Chances* or accidental occurrences

in human affairs, are under His eye and government. To the changes produced by them, He can give what *direction* He pleases. The man who trusts in his God, need fear no evil : for should the *chance* produce a *change* which, in its natural operation, would be *unfriendly* to him ; the power of God can turn it aside, or give it a contrary direction, so that it shall not come nigh to him to do him evil. God has way every where, and all things serve the purposes of His will ; and it is His *will* and *purpose* to save to the uttermost all that come to Him through the Son of His love.

Whatever a religious man's *request* may be, let him *make it known unto God*—whether it concern his *present* or his *future* well-being. He wants a blessing *now* ;—let the *request* be made known. He is afraid of *coming evil* ;—let him *pray* for protection and safety. *Prayer*, which is the *desire of the heart*, is also the *language of dependence*—and without dependence on God for continual direction and protection, *anxiety* is unavoidable. *Prayer* continued, is *supplication*. PRAYER, or the desire of the heart after God, may be *one act* ; SUPPLICATION is *many*. *Prayer* simply *requests* : *supplication* *begs, entreats, pleads, and continues* in all these, till the answer is given.

*Prayer* and *supplication* should ever be accompanied with *thanksgiving*. Innumerable mercies have already been received :—for these, *gratitude* is reasonable ; and *thanksgiving* is the outward expression of gratitude. A man may expect to receive additional good from the hand of God, when he comes with a *grateful heart* for favours already bestowed.

It is not likely that God will *trust* that man with *more mercies*, who is not *thankful* for those he has received. By *gratitude*, we in some sort *return* the divine favours back to their Source.—Those only who are faithful to restore a loan, have reason to expect they will be again entrusted.

We are commanded to *make our requests known to God* :—this argues no imperfection in the Divine knowledge. By *making them known*, we are to understand *enumerating them*—spreading them before Him, not that *He* may see or know them, but that *our eye* may affect *our heart*. He who says, “ As God knows all things, He knows my *wants* better than I can know them myself ; and therefore I need not *pray*,” only shews that he has *no sense of his wants*—and that on *him* Di-

vine benefits would be *lost*:—for, not knowing the *want* of them, he could not know the *worth* of them; therefore, that gratitude which springs from a sense of *obligation*, could never be felt by him: and as *obedience* is the proper expression of a *sense of obligation*—in the life of such a man, it cannot be found. God, therefore, requires that *in all things*, with *prayer* and *supplication*, we *make our requests known unto Him*. And when we know that His wisdom, power, and goodness, are interested in our behalf, we shall be free from all *anxious* and *corroding cares*.

The necessary result of all this must be, that *the peace of God shall keep the heart*. As these directions are given to the *church of God* at Philippi; we may suppose that the members of it were made partakers of that *peace* which flows from a *sense of justification* or pardon, Rom. v. 1; but this *peace* will have many interruptions, if it should not be wholly destroyed, where *moderation* is wanting, and where *anxious carking cares* are indulged. Where *moderation in all things*, with proper dependence on the providence, and faith in the mercy and goodness of God, prevail, there *PEACE rules*, and *keeps the heart* as in a *garrison* or *fortified place*, for so much does the term *φρουρησι* imply: the *heart*—the whole system of *affections* and *passions*, which relate to man and his animal nature, in reference to this world—for he that thus makes his requests known unto God, has a firm dependence on God's providence for supplies and support.

And this same *peace* will keep the *mind*, *νοηματα*—the *understanding*, *judgement*, *will*, and *reason*—all the higher faculties of the soul which relate to man in his reference to God and the eternal world; and this *peace* will keep the *heart* and *mind* from all extravagance—from all hurtful imaginations—from all foolish, precarious, and uncertain *fancies*, in a continual humble dependence on the eternal mercy of God, through Christ Jesus, from the full conviction that He who has done all things well, will continue to send forth His mercy and His truth, and save to the uttermost all who thus trust in Him.

As the *peace* which God has promised *passeth all understanding*, it must necessarily exceed my comprehension—and if so, all my powers of description. It is known best by its existence and government in the soul. It is better felt than

expressed ; and it is God alone that can make it known to the hearts of my readers.

- In a very few lines, the late Dr. *Byrom*, of Manchester, has given a mass of excellent advice on the subject of this discourse, and with them I shall close it.

With patient mind, thy course of duty run ;  
 God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,  
 But thou wouldst do thyself, couldst thou but see  
 The end of all events, as well as HE.

Now, to Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy ;—to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen.

END OF VOL. I.











1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Clarke, Adam							Call Number	
AUTHOR Discourses on various							BT	
							101	
TITLE subjects relative to							.C58	
							v.1	

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Discourses on various	101
subjects relative to	.C58
the being and attributes	v.1
of God.	

